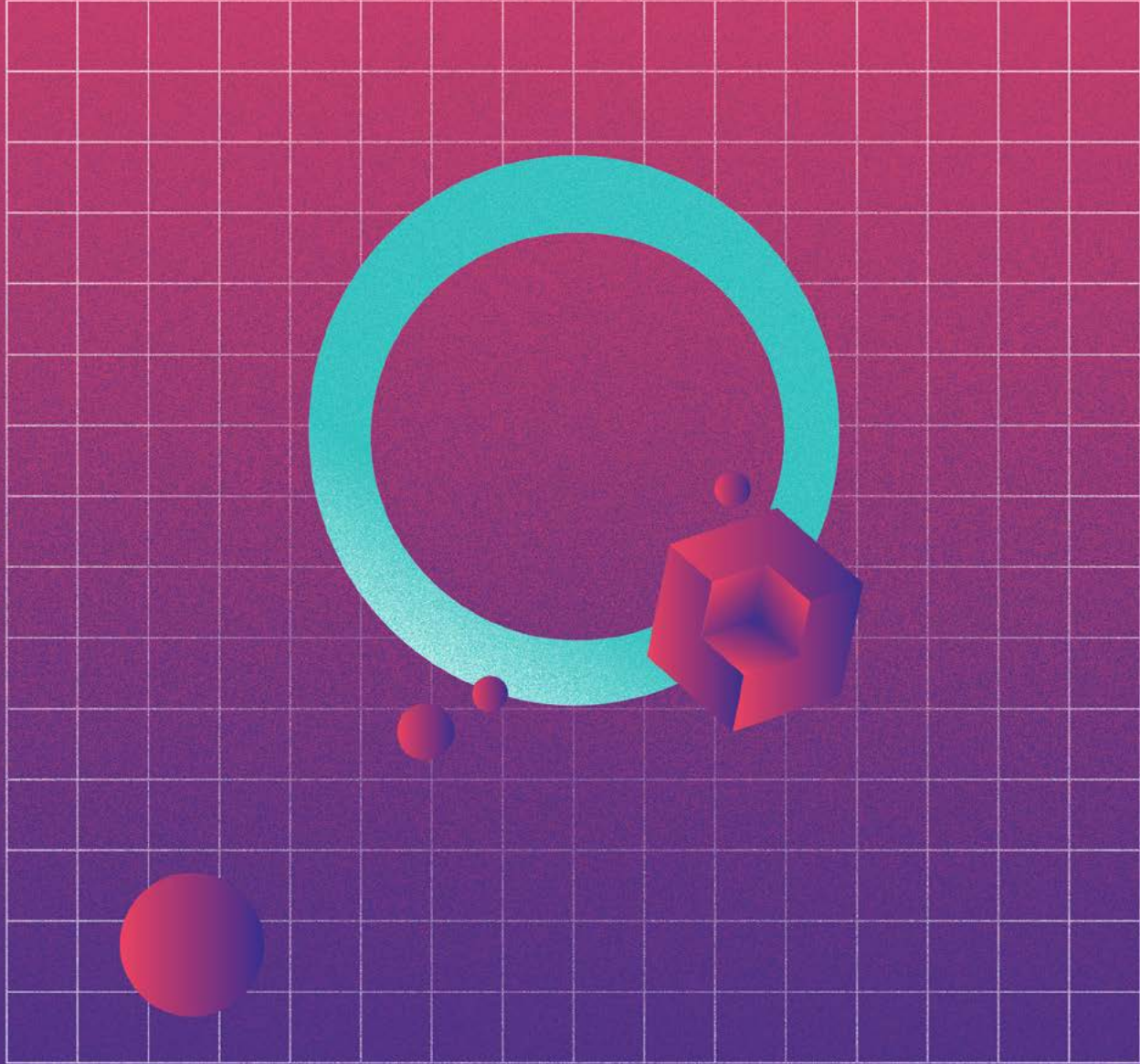Cultural education
in Warsaw

Cultural education in Warsaw

Introduction

The *Cultural Education in Warsaw* document develops, supplements and further clarifies the concepts regarding cultural education contained in the #Warszawa2030 Strategy (including the executive programs for objective 2.2 Culture close to home and 4.1 Developing our creative potential) and the *Cultural Policy of the City of Warsaw*. It contains recommendations, guidelines and inspirations on the subject matter of projects, ways and methods of working with the recipient, as well as support tools for persons conducting activities in the field of cultural education. In our assumption, the document *Cultural Education in Warsaw* intends to aid in planning not only individual educational activities, but also comprehensive strategies of institutions in which cultural education plays an important role.

This document is addressed to implementers of activities in the field of cultural education: both practitioners executing various projects and undertakings in this field, as well as persons managing and creating educational and artistic programs in institutions, educational facilities or organizations, as well as persons organizing grant competitions for cultural education activities in Warsaw.

The *#Warszawa2030 Strategy*, focusing on the person – the creator and user of the city - emphasizes that "the cultural, social and professional competences of Warsaw's residents, as well as their sense of community, are the basis for the city's further development" [1]. This approach is developed in the *Cultural Policy of the City of Warsaw*, which describes the priorities in thinking about culture and cultural activity in our city[2]. One of these priorities is *Education: competences and participation*, i.e. "recognition of culture as an educational tool shaping competences, participatory attitudes and ways of speaking about the world".

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1   *#Warszawa 2030 Strategy*, Warsaw 2018, p. 9 [access: 8.08.2022].
2   *Cultural policy of the City of Warsaw*, annex to the ordinance No. 1007/2020 of the President of the City of Warsaw dated August 5, 2020

Cultural education can contribute to many of the *Strategy's* objectives. It provides many opportunities for reaching residents, engaging them in various activities, developing their creative, social, civic and professional competences, as well as building a community, creating networks of cooperation and cooperation.

How was this document developed?

2020 saw the completion of the Warsaw Cultural Education Programme (PL- Warszawski Program Edukacji Kulturalnej - WPEK), under which a number of activities and initiatives were carried out to support the development of educational practices in the field of culture, jointly coordinated by the Office of Culture and the Office of Education (with the support of other offices of the City of Warsaw). The program was evaluated, and the results were used to initiate work on a new proposal for the development of cultural education in Warsaw.

The WPEK evaluation indicated several activities that are worth continuing:

↗ networking and development of the cultural education implementers' environment,

↗ opening cultural education to new people,

↗ training courses for implementers,

↗ actions promoting cultural education,

↗ promoting partnerships between education and cultural institutions,

↗ preparing publications with practical tips on how to operate in the field of cultural education.

Exploratory workshops organised by the Office of Culture were a key element of designing the new task map of cultural education. Its practitioners were invited to participate in these workshops. It is a large and diverse group consisting of: representatives of cultural institutions, non-government organizations, individually working animators, artists, instructors, educators, activists, craftsmen and craftswomen, creators of culture in its material dimension conducting educational activities around their work. It also includes teachers dealing with cultural education in kindergartens, schools and out-of-school education.

 Edyta Ołdak – artist, cultural animator, pedagogue, graphic designer, graduate of the Faculty of Painting of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw and doctoral studies at the Faculty of Arts of the Pedagogical University of Krakow, founder and long-time president of the Association "Z siedzibą w Warszawie" (EN- Based in Warsaw) was invited to conduct the workshops and create a new task map for cultural education.

A total of 11 meetings (77 hours) were held, attended by 162 implementers from about 100 different Warsaw institutions, such as: schools, out-of-school education institutions, theatres, musical institutions, non-government organizations and unaffiliated people, museums, libraries and cultural centres. It is worth noting that one of the meetings was intended exclusively for young people, who acted as a cultural education organizer and implementer, and not simply the recipient of such activities. The workshop was preceded by a diagnosis of the state of cultural education in the city and the condition of the cultural and educational sector in recent years. During the meetings, the conclusions of the study were analysed and referred to the strategic objectives of the executive programmes for the *#Warszawa2030 Strategy*: 2.2 Culture close to

home and 4.1. Creative potential of residents of Warsaw. The aim of the workshop was to jointly define new cultural education tasks and working methods – both in a team and with the recipient. An attempt was made to formulate adequate ways of strengthening the executors and implementers, and naming the values they follow in their work.

Reflection on the tasks and working methods, which are set out in this document, was preceded by an analysis of reports on the state of Polish education and methods of practicing culture after 2020. The workshops diagnosed and named the crises, which had an impact on the design of tasks and work methods of educators: refugee, climate, economic and social – caused by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, as well as educational – caused by numerous reforms and the introduction of remote education. Workshop participants were also invited to a conversation and personal statements concerning changes after 2020. As part of the workshop exercises, an image of the needs and challenges for cultural education was outlined. It coincided with the analysis of reports, but was more complete, deepened with specific working methods indicated by practitioners operating in this area.

During the report analysis and during the workshop talks, the following issues were strongly raised:

↗ the need to maintain the online event formula for recipients who find this model suitable,

↗ deepening social divisions and intensification social debate; radicalisation of attitudes,

↗ increasing economic divisions in society,

↗ crisis of dialogue and inability to reach a consensus – we do not understand each other, which facilitates manipulation by means of propaganda (scaring with "strangers", threats, etc.) and results in increased disinformation in the media space,

- ↗ increasing anxiety and depression among children and adolescents. Mental health crises among adults,

- ↗ erosion of the value system,

- ↗ lack of media education, inability to filter content, succumbing to pressure and influence from the media, ignorance of the existence of so-called deepfakes[3] in the network and media space,

- ↗ lack of engagement in the existing phenomenon of co-opetition[4] (relations characterized by simultaneous cooperation and competition),

- ↗ issues of school education: insufficient cooperation of schools with parents and caregivers, overloading of the core curriculum, lack of effective methods of combining science and art in the education system (rigid division into subjects), insufficient effectiveness in shaping the competences of the future, politicization of textbooks, lack of time/guidelines for introducing effective pedagogical methods that would strengthen the potential of children and young people (e.g. through shaping assessment or work focused on the process, not the effect),

- ↗ professional burnout of employees and workers in the cultural field.

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3 Deepfake is a technique involving modifying images, allowing, for example, to change faces in video footage. Ref. Olga Wasiuta, Sergiusz Wasiuta, *Deepfake as a complex and deeply false reality*, "Annales Universitatis Pedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia de Securitate", 9 (3), 2019.

4 Tomasz Szlendak, Arkadiusz Karwacki, *Tensions, clashes, discharges. Solitary bowling in the field of culture*, Elbląg, 2015, p. 12.

For balance, it is also worth pointing out the positive trends in culture and society that emerged from reports and workshop meetings. These include:

↗ democratisation and elimination of the hierarchy of culture,

↗ reflection on cultural overproduction,

↗ strengthening the commercial and private sectors, expanding the non-institutional offer, civic movements in the field of education and upbringing,

↗ the possibility for cultural education to address difficult subjects which, for various reasons, have no place at school.

Dorota Ogrodzka – pedagogue of the theatre, director, and social artist, tutor and researcher, vice-president of the Theatre Pedagogues Association was invited to describe the tasks and methods of work, taking into account the needs, challenges and difficulties diagnosed during the workshops.

How do we understand the concept of cultural education?

Cultural education involves activities and practices, short- and long-term processes, actions and events, ephemeral or developing over several years. It includes debates and talks, events, workshops, laboratories, seminars and meetings. Visible and spectacular or hidden and discreet, stubbornly and persistently working "within the tissue" of the community. Cultural education is conducted by institutions, organizations, collectives and groups, as well as animators, artists and educators who in large cities

and smaller towns consistently design activities that help to better recognize culture.

Cultural education is primarily driven by participants. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between those who design and implement cultural education and those who participate in it. Education understood this way involves a constant exchange and building relationships.

Cultural education enables reflection on culture, while also being a field for creating of new models of participation. It can make us begin to appreciate everyday ways of working and creating rarely associated with art. Cultural education helps to understand the past, and simultaneously triggers the imagination, helping to imagine how culture can develop and shape.

Cultural education also recognizes how differently we participate in culture and what tools we use to engage with it. It mindfully examines these differences and draws on their wealth, but does not evaluate them. Doing that, it would become a tool of control, a way of confirming a narrow vision of the world, in which only certain types of knowledge, sensitivity, expression have meaning and the right to exist. Meanwhile, cultural education helps to recognize the diversity of the world and culture, and then propose actions that strengthen awareness, openness and respect for other ways of life.

Cultural education is closely linked to social experience and the changes taking place in the world, so it should be part of these changes and search for ways to respond to them. Therefore, it constantly searches for a new language and newly formulated tasks that resonate with what is happening in social life.
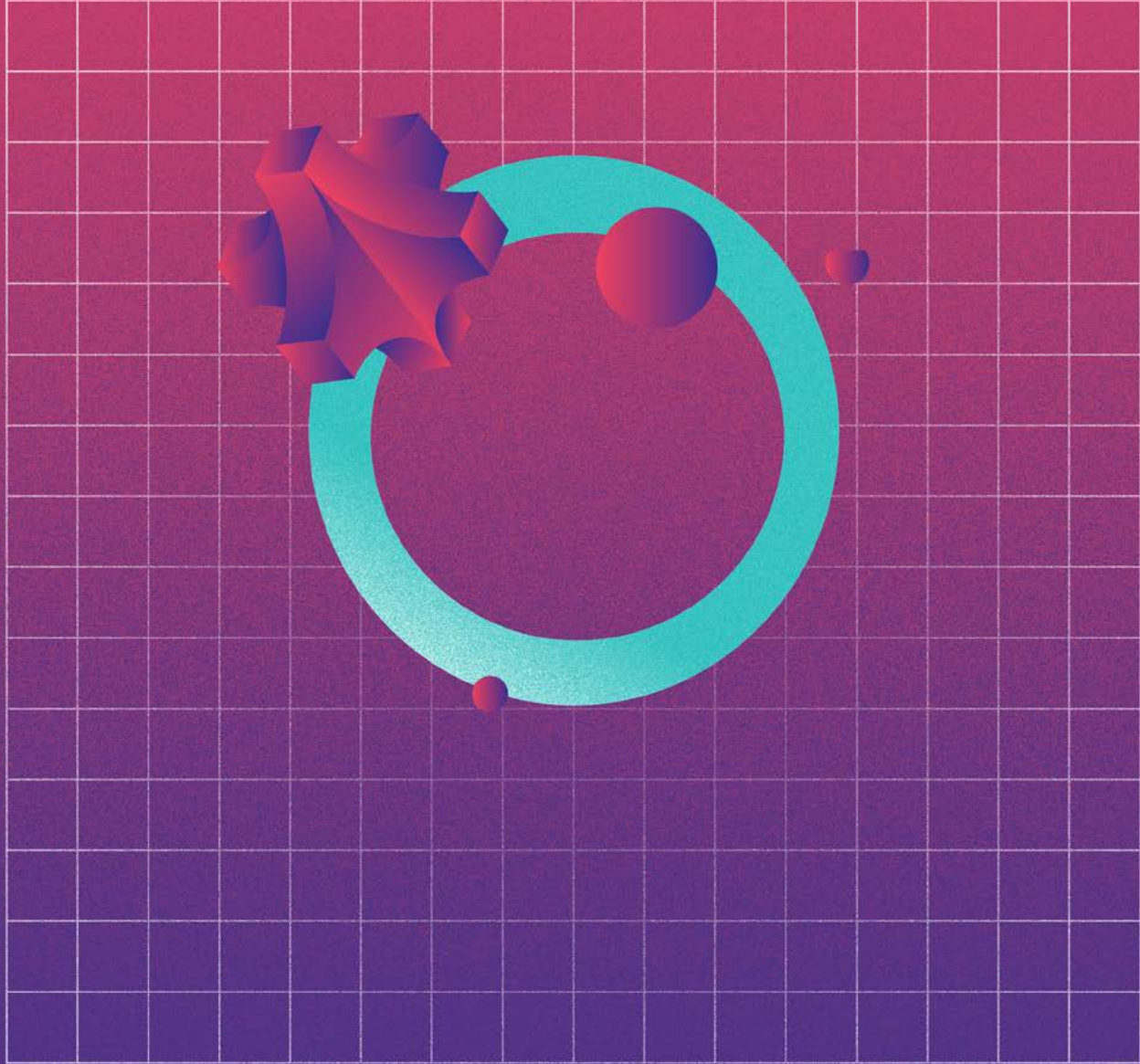
Assumptions of cultural education in Warsaw

Recommended tasks

We want cultural education to enable understanding and transforming the world in the spirit of solidarity, mindfulness and recognition of all individuals and groups as important and legitimate. The tasks we set before it concern issues related to social activity, participation in culture, development of individual potential, but are also a response to the challenges we face.

① Taking up current social topics

The proposed topics are not an exhaustive list. Rather, they are an attempt to determine which threads of contemporary culture and social life seem "hot", pulsating with meanings, doubts, hopes, tensions. These are the topics of newspaper headlines and social media posts. They are situations, formulations, events around which the collective imagination and its energy revolve. They are what we talk or argue about. That which triggers our responses. What the city or neighbourhood lives for. When elaborating on this task, we try to capture these topics, name them as precisely as possible, and suggest a set of questions and slogans that accompany or define them.

Topic 1: A diverse and multicultural society

Warsaw's society is changing and diversifying. We're not a monolith. Every person living in the capital has next to them (at school, in the yard, at work, in a local grocery store) someone who speaks a different language, has different values, has a different economic situation, thinks differently about themselves and their identity, about politics, work, family, gender, about your role in life. Cultural education can provide an opportunity to meet in diversity, to talk and act together creatively. The possibility

of experiencing these differences during the creative process, neighbourly activism or artistic activities, creative workshops, discussions, meetings or other situations is a potential to replace resentment and uncertainty with real experience. From this, curiosity, reflection, knowledge and trust can be born.

This topic is particularly important in the context of the aftermath of the war in Ukraine. We believe that cultural education has the potential to make it easier for refugees to integrate into local communities, and for the latter to deal with the anxiety caused by a new and yet untamed situation.

Topic 2: Local and national identities

What does it mean to be a Varsovian?

How was this identity once understood, and how is it understood today? What kind of experience falls within the concept of Polishness? What symbols, customs, gestures, slogans do we use to identify ourselves with our country, our city, our neighbourhood? Do we even identify with them at all, and if not, why? Who shaped the history of Warsaw – apart from the figures we know from monuments? Who is shaping it today? What does it mean to be a citizen, and how to practice civic engagement? Finally, what do contemporary inhabitants of the city identify with: what ideas, worldviews, lifestyles, values?

Cultural education should ask these questions without a thesis, opening space for an exchange of experiences, as well as for building bridges between history and the present. Examples can include creative projects based on local stories, exhibitions devoted to the history of a factory or a housing estate, meetings connecting different groups of residents or inviting one of these groups to work, undertakings referring to a civic matter or specific event in the city, stimulating civic responsibility or tam-

ing differences in terms of gender, ethnic or cultural identity. Thanks to such forms, we discover that not everyone of us in one city was, is or will be alike and similar. And that we can build a non-monolithic identity for the city, taking all these differences into consideration.

Topic 3: The environment and climate

We live in a time in which climate concerns become one of the primary social objectives. Cultural education may foster contact with nature; it may provide opportunities to spend time in the forest,

in the park, on the Vistula river, among the wild nature of the Zakole Wawerskie or Olszynka Grochowska. It can facilitate learning about nature, deriving pleasure and strength from it, while being respectful and mindful. Educational and cultural activities encouraging contact with nature become a source of respite and an incentive to experience the world through the senses. They can also promote climate-responsible attitudes and inspire everyday care for the environment. This is a particular challenge for cultural institutions and organisations, which should design their projects in a way that avoids over-exploitation of materials and resources, and reduces their carbon footprint. The fact that the workshop will incorporate reusable and recyclable raw materials and products, that we will serve tap water for drinking and will forfeit printing leaflets, will certainly not affect the immediate repair of the reality in which we function. However, in the changed world for which we want cultural education to work, we will pay attention to sustainable production of events, and we will all understand why.

Topic 4: The media and virtual environment

As users of technology, we can continuously develop our skills and awareness. Cultural education can not only be increasingly bold in creative in taking advantage of technological achievements, but also

teach participants to choose tools vigilantly and to be responsible for their digital activity.

Where does the information or image come from? What does it have to do with reality? What does it mean that something is authentic? Who created the recording, video or infographic? What are the consequences of the digital life of images, sounds or other forms of communication?

Cultural education can stimulate the ability to move in this complex and multi-level, information-filled reality and develop the ability to refer to its realities with a critical eye. It can inspire activities involving various remote, digital and electronic tools. The pandemic has shown that there are many possibilities: a neighbourly podcast, performance workshops on communication platforms, performances via Zoom – these are just some of the examples of how we can think of cultural education in this context. Cultural education can also create opportunities for alternative work with information, for example through the implementation of projects in the field of civic journalism, or various forms of visual education, where the way we look at things, communicate, hear and broadcast, becomes a topic in itself.

Topic 5: School and the education system

Looking at school and other forms of education in our country gives us an opportunity to look at the values of society. Cultural education projects in schools allow students to ask relevant and bold questions. Regardless of whether we are dealing with a spectacle devoted to school reality and the difficulties faced by students and teachers, or with workshops for educators, helping to conduct engaging and developmental lessons involving creative means, or finally with a laboratory class during which young people invent their dream school and, while doing so, talk about what they are experiencing in the current school. Each of these example activities

can provoke an interesting and valuable discussion about what kind of knowledge we want to transfer in our culture and how and why we want to do it.

② Organizing creative processes

One of the most important objectives of cultural education is to initiate creative processes, to which we invite people not professionally involved in art. Cultural education provides opportunities for individual or group creativity/creation, allows to influence the course of work and the shape of the resulting performance/film/installation/collection of texts/event. These are some of the most unique qualities that cultural education can offer – especially when these processes are experimental and relate to the most important social phenomena or topics relevant to a given group.

It is thanks to such activities that people integrate, tell their own stories, develop their creativity, the ability to cooperate with others, feel their own agency. They also create artistically unique content. In recent years, art has been expanding its spectrum more and more clearly. Artistic activities involve people who do not identify themselves as professional artists: community members, residents of a given area, school students, representatives of various occupations or stakeholders in a given matter. During the creative processes, such groups develop relationships between the project participants, the ideas worked out together, the exchange of experiences and energy all become the subject of a shared work.

Creative endeavours in cultural education drawing on art with a community should differ from precisely planned classes or the vision of an artist/instructor/educator who from the outset knows the scenario and shape of the final work. Rather, they can be an invitation to a shared, not entirely predictable adventure, improvisation, to gradually discover the meanings and collectively develop the effects that arise in the process – at the interface of sensitivity, willingness and ideas of all people involved.

Cultural education can also develop new ways of managing creative work, help in the search for innovative forms of engagement and participation. An equally important challenge and a huge value can be to enable participation from the beginning to the end, at all stages of the process. If the goal is participation, it is necessary to ensure that the participants involved can have an actual impact on the course of work, so that they can not only create content, but also propose formal

and organizational solutions. It is important for them to have the opportunity to refer to the original assumptions, contribute matters relevant to them, and know the stage they are in throughout the entirety of the project.

It is worth adding that these processes can also join artists with amateurs who do not professionally identify with art. This meeting may bear the fruit of non-obvious results: bringing interesting discoveries to both groups, showing new perspectives, giving the opportunity to exchange experiences or share creative tools.

③ Development of talents and skills

The area of cultural education related to the development of talents, acquisition of new skills, training in techniques, can be called artistic education. It is not the same as cultural education, but its development is one of its most important objectives. Undoubtedly, guitar classes, dance workshops, a film laboratory or a drawing course can allow one to participate in culture, actively create it and – as such – are a hugely needed form. It is important that such activities are available not only to children and youth, but to everyone interested in them, regardless of whether it will be a way towards a professional artistic path, a way to stimulate creativity or simply a source of respite, pleasure, or a sense of agency. Cultural education, in the area concerning this type of artistic education, can also support an approach according to which specific skills

or creative techniques, as well as knowledge of them, are not taken out of context, but rather shown as elements of broader cultural activity. If we teach capoeira or break dance during the workshop, it is good to show their cultural contexts and social significance, in addition to the inspirations flowing from them today.

However, the objective of developing talents and skills can be viewed even more broadly. As art increasingly reaches out to social themes or forms of work with the community, the horizon of educating people who want to be involved with it is also changing. Playing guitar and drawing classes are needed, but workshops teaching the creation of a community choir or showing how to approach preparing an installation in the public space with the participation of residents is no less important as a form of artistic education. In other words, cultural education can also create development opportunities for those who want to work at the intersection of creative endeavours and activism. It can teach how to function in one's community: within a neighbourhood, in a district, in the city. Traditional thinking about talents usually limits them to learning, sports disciplines or a field of art that is closed in a workshop or film studio. Meanwhile, cultural education should also help in the development of artistic and social, as well as activist and community worker talents – from the area of broadly perceived cultural and culture-creating activity; inspire and educate those who will invent, organize and implement creative activities with the local community, or who will themselves engage in the development of cultural education. This means that in addition to classes on the history and practice of painting, music or theatre in our cultural institutions and organizations, we need courses on the tradition of cooperatives or the history of urban movements, programs for the development of young activists or social art laboratories.

④ Appreciating different ways of participating in culture

Culture does not always begin in the philharmonic and does not necessarily end in the gallery. Of equal importance are the various strategies and ways of practicing it in the neighbourhood, local knowledge and skills, examples of the resourcefulness and inventiveness of people who would not call themselves creators, and yet

creatively shape everyday life and the reality around them. Unconventional use of social media, neighbourhood communication habits, table culture, spaces and places considered important by the community of a given district, small customs and rituals, ways of arranging home balconies or gardens – all this and many other such examples provide a great wealth of urban culture. One of the objectives of cultural education is to appreciate and notice these cultural resources, stimulate them and create a space for them to reveal and develop themselves. Another aim is to change the narrative around them, so that they can be perceived as fully-fledged forms of participation, and not be disregarded or depreciated.

They are, after all, forms of cultural repertoire – created from the bottom up, arising from authentic needs, implemented on the basis of individual skills, knowledge and creativity. In this perspective, gardening workshops at a housing estate do not have to be an inferior form of cultural participation than a sophisticated discussion about a museum exhibition. They are simply different.

There is space for both in cultural education.

⑤ Dialogue with existing cultural works and heritage

In recent years, many animators, teachers, social artists, and educators have proposed workshops or creative and interpretative processes, for which the starting point is to refer to existing works, texts or cultural output. As an example, visual education programs that teach people how to look at photography and art, stimulate them to think about what and how we see. These can also be pedagogical and theatrical workshops for a performance, during which viewers are invited to actively participate in creative activity, inspired by the form and content of the performance or its chosen contexts. Another idea may be communication workshops concerning a museum exhibition or creative exercises referring to the work of contemporary artists. Another example is a creative activity around a social archive or a collection of objects and photographs brought by neighbours from a given district. These are just some of the suggestions to show how something that has already been created by someone can today become a pretext for meeting, exchanging thoughts, reflection or the process of creation. Such proposals also become part of the programme of cultural and educational institutions, as well as the activities of non-government organisations and artists.

Essentially, the goal is for cultural heritage – both contemporary and historical – is to not be an exhibit enclosed in a display case. Rather, it is intended to be a living point of reference, which today can provide contemporary residents of Warsaw with inspiration for reflection and cooperation. Looking at a performance, sculpture, photo, video recording, a crafted work or architectural element through the prism of one's own experiences and contemporary context may turn out to be an experience that broadens one's perspective, a source of individual and collective enlightenment. Thanks to such an approach, art and culture begin to concern us and become a pretext for a different view of the world,

deepening our knowledge about ourselves, an impulse for thought or our own activity. It is important to allow yourself and the participants to freely express thoughts and follow various associations in the process of activities focused on works of art and culture. To that end, we must dare to move away from the classical interpretative model, according to which the task of the reader/viewer/recipient is to guess "what the author had in mind".

Instead, it is worth asking the question, what experience does the text, artwork, building, photograph or collection of objects entail? What significance can it have for us, contemporaries, gathered in a specific place and time? But also: how can you look at it from a different perspective, using other filters characteristic of our present day? How to view it through the prism of phenomena and languages, such as: democratization, feminism, colonialism, conflicts and polarization of social attitudes, climate change or moral changes?

⑥ Supporting the competences of the future

We recognize the competences of the future as attitudes relevant to the community at the present time. We want to move away from the paradigm of rivalry and dominant productivity, as well as abandon the vision of education as obedient, uncritical acceptance of someone else's opinions and view of the world. Instead, we want to develop other competences: critical thinking, the ability to engage in dialogue and recognize different levels of communication, and accurate assessment of information, the ability to cooperate and co-decide, understand oneself and one's community in the conditions of a changing reality; solidarity and social empathy, mindfulness, respect for diversity, creativity.

Critical thinking is the ability to look at a given phenomenon from different sides, to see its significance in a broader perspective. It is

a skilful assessment of information – its status and sources. It is efficiency/proficiency/invention in asking questions, and vigilance in the face of imposing answers.

The ability to engage in dialogue is a willingness to meet, communicate with someone with different values, ways of thinking or lifestyle. Dialogue does not have to lead to an ultimate agreement or admission of either party being right, but should imply a fundamental recognition of the dignity and equal presence of people who are different in various respects. Dialogue can be conducted with words, but it can also take place in creative and artistic work, during an exchange of stories, the shared experience of some aspect of culture, nature or social life.

The ability to accurately assess information allows one to orient oneself in reality saturated with a mass of media content of varying quality (sometimes – as in the case of the aforementioned deepfakes – consciously misleading the recipient). The ability to work together, to properly understand oneself and one's relationships with other members of the local community today seems more important than ever. The same can be said of the solidarity, empathy and respect for diversity that for the bonds of every community – but such bonds need to be regularly strengthened, especially now, at a time of growing antagonisms and social unrest.

In educational and cultural projects, democratic cooperation can develop both at an organizational and creative level, when every participant contributes ideas, forms, topics that they consider important. Traditional hierarchies and decision making methods are not the only possible ones, and trying to find new ones can not only provide satisfaction in terms of effects and new qualities, but also give a sense of value and agency to those whose voice is usually considered.

Mindfulness can mean a willingness to draw on the current reality and experiences of the participants – the questions they bring, the stories

they share. It is the courage to not run towards universal and distant topics, but provide space for conversations about what people live and are faced with. This may be uncomfortable and requires flexibility, but it allows us all to meet each other in a human, relational dimension. Mindfulness is also the willingness to change plans and make it so the proposed action allow fulfilling (or at least noticing) the needs of all participants, so that it concerns them in the deepest sense.

⑦ Working in a sustainable action model

The assumption of this task is caring for the welfare of all people involved in education and cultural activities. It is necessary to abandon the overexploitation of people and the overproduction of resources in favour of sustainable projects that consider the circumstances, the constraints of all participants in the process, as well as the socio-political context.

One of the primary themes during the exploratory workshops with persons implementing cultural education in Warsaw was burnout, accompanied by a sense of enormous fatigue, uncertainty, draining working conditions and the inability to go beyond the primacy of overproduction of events. Overproduction is a constant compulsion to act and produce, without time to reflect (let alone rest). It primarily burdens individuals, often those whose work is not only insufficiently compensated, but also invisible and underestimated. Changing this paradigm should, therefore, be one of the essential postulates and new directions for cultural education in Warsaw.

Rather than pushing for increasing the number of events and measuring effectiveness with quantitative indicators, we should consider a sustainable way of organizing events, assuming concern for the well-being of all process participants. Not only those whom we invite to workshops, de- bates, and laboratories, but also those who develop these events, write

applications, promote, implement, and then settle, provide technical support, report, fill out the forms, and finally clean the room, take back chairs and turn off the lights. If we want cultural education to have significance and impact on the lives of individuals and communities, if we believe that this impact (regardless of its scale) can be positive, conducive to a more equal, solidary society – we cannot ignore the conditions of production. It is important what repertoires our theatres have, what topics we raise in our projects, and what activities we organize in community centres. However, the conditions in which these projects are developed, as well as the emotions accompanying work on their implementation, are perhaps of greater importance. Cultural institutions are, after all, laboratories of social practices, which means that it is there that the ways of treating people, establishing relationships and communicating are created, consolidated and legitimized. There may be a change in this area. To put it bluntly - the number of performances devoted to justice in the world we produce is less important than the fairness of condition sin which these performances are be created. The invisible sphere of labour has the strongest impact – on both employees as well as participants. Therefore, one of the most important objectives is changing the strategy in this area. Abandoning overproduction and the focus on quantity and pace of action, in favour of mindfulness, care, subjective treatment and internal consistency. So that the values declared in substantive programs are reflected in the actual work.

RECOMMENDED MODES OF ACTION AND WORK METHODS

In cultural education, what we do and what topics we introduce are just as important as the modes of action – the methods, style of work, formal and organizational premises.

It is not only about whether the projects employs the medium of theatre, film, music, or maybe proposes a series of discussion meetings, performative experiences, activist actions, neighbourhood clothes exchange or joint viewing of photographs.

It is about something more: the boundary conditions, stances and attitude, what we emphasize, what structure of action we propose. It is also important to ask what kinds of relationships we establish with participants, how we invite these people, what role we foresee for them in a given project, how we share responsibility and obligations, how we run the entire project. Modes of work cannot be briefly described using simple instructions or scenarios. They arise from values, directions, specific tasks, as well as practical possibilities (e.g. how much space, time and money we have at our disposal, how big the implementation team is). Therefore, in this part of the text, we forfeit detailed guidelines and precise, practical navigation around the world of work methods. You will not find lesson outlines or workshop scenarios, nor will you find answers on how to take care of the community working together step by step. We believe that every person who performs activities in the field of cultural education, every group, collective, organization or institution can find their own, original exercises, ideas and formulas, and is able to carefully and consciously match them to the goals they set themselves.

① Practicing relationships and good communication

The most important postulate in the field of relations and communication is recognising the subjectivity of all project members and being aware that every educational and cultural activity is a process that develops and looks different at every stage, and requires different support. This is facilitated by modes of action based on openness, appreciation of diversity and mindfulness.

We recommend all methods in which the opportunity for process participants to speak comes first (this may be an opportunity to express their opinion, tell a story, or express their own thoughts non-verbally). It is important at this stage to refrain from judging and assigning value to the contribution of participants.

We recommend jointly determining the rules of communication and organization in the process (e.g. through group contract creation or jointly discussing work rules, so that everyone knows what they care about, what the needs of the group are and how to try and fulfil them together). It is worth deciding to collectively set goals or present those that were previously established in a clear way that provides a sense of security.

All methods that take into account the specificity of the group process and the situation based on collaboration deserve a separate consideration. Every cultural education project – whether long- or short-term – should take into account the fact that a group that operates with each other goes through different stages of collaboration and that the diversity of emotions, commitment, sense of security, courage and ability to take responsibility depend on the stage of the project. It is worth including methods of research and checking what stage the group is on, what it thinks of itself, what it experiences, and draw from this knowledge, both creatively and by sharing it with the participants.

Methods that support cooperation and collective creativity will also be helpful here: exercises and integration situations, accompanied by reflection; tasks in which participants in various constellations (pairs, threes, groups of several people) can get to know one another, gain mutual trust, confront each other, share common experiences, answer each other's questions or discuss established topics.

Cultural education can also draw upon methods inspired by knowledge in the field of non-violent communication, based on respect and recognition of equality of all people involved in a given conversation or action. All forms of expressing needs, giving feedback, communicating on one's own behalf, sharing one's own perspective without judging other people's views are useful here.

② Supporting creativity and creative processes

Key methods of educational and cultural activities include those that stimulate participants, as well as the implementers to seek new solutions, meanings, content and forms.

We recommend active, causative and subjective activities of the participants (e.g. conducting interviews on their own instead of limited to materials or someone else's research, writing original texts or creating visual materials instead of interpreting and talking about existing ones, preparing an original walk around the area instead of sticking to the routes in the guidebook).

Both in the original creative process and in the work, for which the topic, an existing object or text is a starting point, cultural education has a chance to focus on various interpretation methods, without judging and dividing them into proper or improper.

Creativity and creative output will certainly be stimulated by methods based on combining concepts and objects, taking them out of the traditional

context, as well as techniques based on recycling and collage. It is also worth using collective ways of developing knowledge (such as mind maps, brainstorming, asking questions and collecting answers from the group, but also various other workshop forms of collecting material). The reference point here can be any tools from the *design thinking category*[5].

Particularly noteworthy are interdisciplinary methods which involve combining means and forms, going beyond the classical division into art genres or cultural areas, as well as virtual, remote, technological or hybrid methods that combine analogue and digital tools. They allow us to reach new recipients, but also to refer to the changing world of digital communication.

③ Recognizing the specific nature of a given community/group

Cultural education, when addressing topics relevant to a given group or community and establishing cooperation with it, should recognize patterns, values and practices characteristic of it. All activities supported by social inquiry/diagnosis are extremely valuable. This can include collecting stories and objects, referring to everyday methods of celebrating, establishing relationships, or gathering knowledge important to a given group. Exchanging clothes, a garage sale or cooking together may prove to be a more effective method of establishing cooperation, getting to know the group and building relationships with it than precisely organized workshops.

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5   *Design thinking* is an approach to creating products and services (e.g. projects) based on recognizing the users' needs, defining problems and generating solutions.

It is worth getting to know local leaders in the field of cultural education, active people who are willing to be guides in a given matter and working with them, trusting that they know their area best.

At the project planning stage, it is also advisable to consider what language, communication method, and form of work will be the best suited to a given group. Certainly, high school youth, seniors living in one housing estate, as well as a multigenerational group originating from different districts all function in a different context. Local activists or teachers will define themselves one way, while migrant people who do not know the language well will define themselves in another. It is not about simplifying and stigmatising or using clichés, but about how to establish mindfulness and a focus on a specific place, time and social environment the chosen mode of action.

Investigation of the specific nature of a group can also be carried out in the form of interviews or research work, using source materials that analyse both historical and contemporary customs. However, personal contact, observation and examination within activities based on participation and facilitating simultaneous teaching and learning cannot be overestimated.

④ Participatory forms of activity organisation

One of the most interesting methods and modes of work are forms experimenting with the division of tasks and responsibilities, as well as with the participation and inclusion of participants.

We especially recommend those in which emphasis is placed on the partial or total transfer of organizational and planning matters to the recipients, respecting the voluntary nature of participation and the ability to decide on the scale of their involvement at each stage. We encourage you to take measures aimed at supporting self-organization and

self-activation resulting from the grassroots initiatives of residents, neighbours, groups, and community members.

Cultural education can be organised and implemented in a way that departs from the traditional division into sender and receiver, instructor and participant, organizer and user. We encourage you to include activity participating in the production and organizational stage. Sometimes this may mean that participants prepare the space themselves, set the tables and chairs. Another time it may mean involving them in the project's promotion, its development, seeking funds, obtaining formal permits or partnerships. It is also possible to conduct projects, in which the primary goal is to prepare the participants for activism, educational or artistic activities for the benefit of others (so-called project incubation). In such cases, the main objective of the people conducting the project, the main educational method would be to accompany the participants in the process of incubation and learning to design these events.

With a view of the well-being of all those involved in a specific project, we encourage you to use tools such as supervision and team interventions. In cultural education, in which we work not only with cultural heritage, art or history, but above all with living people, this type of support and the opportunity to share doubts are necessary and can lead to a project that is smarter, more attentive and healthier for all. We propose regular meetings to share knowledge and discuss tools used in organizations. We encourage evaluating and summarising projects, not only in terms of visible effects, but also considering invisible work – its dimensions and conditions. It is also worth using all kinds of methods related to mentoring, tutoring or incubation of ideas and also offering them to the implementers of activities in the field of cultural education. This will certainly allow you to develop ideas, complement practice with reflection and make it possible to catch a breath in the fast pace of everyday work.

Implementing the assumptions of cultural education

The entities responsible for implementing the recommendations are the Office of Culture and the Office of Education, as well as other offices of City Council and the Districts the City of Warsaw concerned with the field of cultural education activities. The topics and work methods proposed in this document will become the basis for designing tasks, i.a., in grant competitions programmed by the City Council's offices and Districts, pilot programs and projects, development programs strengthening implementers of cultural education. We want to see them reflected in the work of kindergartens, schools and out-of-school education, in all the areas where cultural education can become a tool for working with participants of different ages. We hope that this document will become an inspiration and a guide for cultural institutions, non-government organizations, and creators in building educational programs, creating projects and undertakings in the field of cultural education.

Cultural education offers methods, tools and knowledge. By mobilising creativity and sensitivity, developing competences of the future, drawing on cultural heritage and appreciating the multitude of forms of cultural participation, we can jointly design such activities that will not only be an intellectual or aesthetic adventure, but also a search for practical solutions for the city, district, neighbourhood – for the entire urban community.
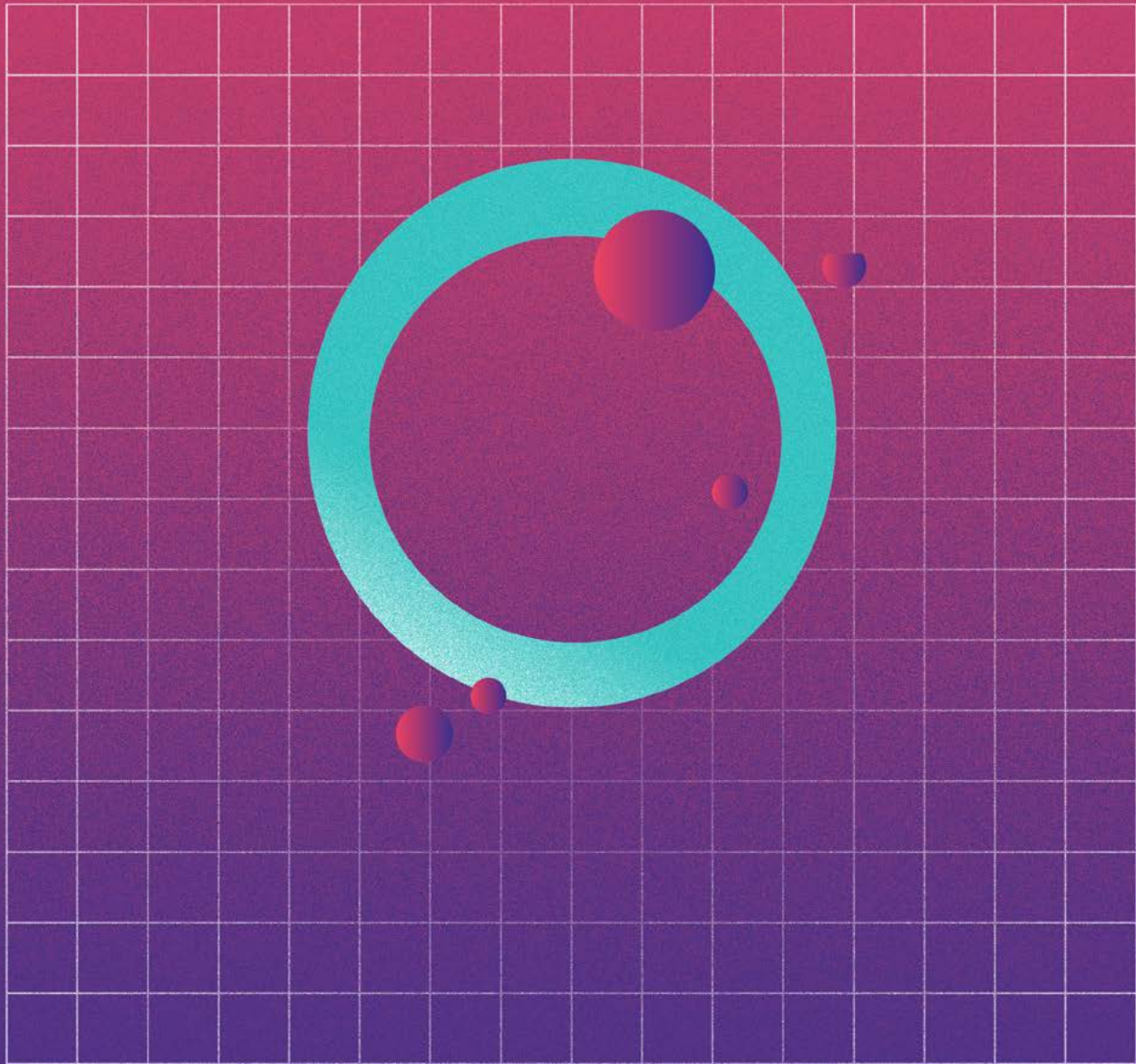
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