

Building cultural intelligence and raising awareness of diversity through artistic disciplines (ACT IT OUT) **Partners:** Italy, Ireland, Croatia, Romania, France, Germany, Cyprus

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What is culture? According to the Oxford Dictionary, culture encompasses „the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively”. Our culture therefore includes our values, our ideologies, our belief systems, and things that we regard to be true, based on our lived experiences and the experiences of others in our culture.

What else does our culture mean for us? To begin with, it is in the way we act, it is reflected in the words we use, the food we eat and the clothes we wear. It also exists in invisible values and beliefs that decree the accepted and recommended behaviours specific to each culture or societal group. We may be able to see obvious manifestations of a culture: customs, traditions, habits that differ to our own - but fail to understand the components that are invisible to the human eye: beliefs, knowledge, ideas. This is why cultural intelligence is so important, it helps us to see, acknowledge and appreciate those unseen, intangible aspects of what makes our cultures unique.

Cultural intelligence as a skill is increasingly valued in today’s globalised society. Investing in cultural intelligence allows us to understand the impact that culture can have on societies and on social behaviour. Being able to comprehend and accept differing cultures and their diversity, is one of the keys to success in all areas of our lives. It allows for societal inclusion which is a fundamental component for a just and equitable society.

Being culturally tolerant means not discriminating against people from other cultures. However, in reality, not all people practice cultural tolerance. Some people are culturally intolerant; they view the world through the lens of their own culture, without appreciating the different views and standpoints of other cultural perspectives. These individuals can discriminate against people from other cultures, creating barriers to communication and promoting animosity. Cultural intolerance is the root cause of xenophobia, racism and unilateralism, and therefore often leads to regional and global tensions and conflicts.

The three components that identify cultural intelligence are cognitive, emotional and physical. The cognitive (mind), is when a person with a high level of cultural intelligence is able to establish learning strategies allowing them to identify means of a shared understanding. The emotional component (the heart) is simply a matter of trust and motivation. A person with a high CQ is completely confident that they will be able to overcome difficulties and is highly motivated to do so. The physical (the body) component is made up of cultural gestures that you tend to do. For example, the way you greet others differs across cultures - some people shake hands, others kiss and even hug when others do not touch or look into each other's

eyes. To build the cultural intelligence of adult learners across Europe, the ACT-IT-OUT project proposes an innovative approach to using creativity in cultural education. By mapping these three components to the proposed 3Ps Programme – Photographs, Poems and Performances.

In the proposed 3Ps Programme, ACT-IT-OUT partners will use the medium of Photography to support adult learners to develop their cognitive awareness of culture – to capture photographs that represent understandings of different cultures, and the support adult learners to develop their own understanding of their own culture and how this impacts their own perspective of the world, and of other cultures. To address the emotional component, based on the photographs that adult learners take, project partners will support learners to plan and script short poems, that will aim to capture their feelings and motivations related to cultural issues. Penning these poems will also support adult learners to evaluate their emotional responses to certain aspects of culture, and to self-assess their motivation for developing their cultural intelligence. Lastly, to address the physical component, adult learners will be supported to develop their skills as performers. In the performance resources developed as part of this programme, learners will be encouraged to develop their skills to perform the poems that they have written, but also to include actions, gestures and movements that are synonymous with their own culture, and with other cultures.

The ACT-IT-OUT partners believe that this is a truly unique format for educating adult learners to develop their cultural intelligence.

ACT-IT-OUT aims to support adult learners across Europe to use these artistic disciplines to develop their own cultural intelligence and to promote an appreciation of cultural diversity throughout European society. To achieve this aim, we will develop three core intellectual outputs and we will work with our associate partners to develop a project that is relevant and fit-for-purpose.