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EUROPEAN INVENTORY
OF CULTURAL VALUES

POLICY BRIEF 2

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INVENT Policy Brief 2 - Culture's contribution to health and well-being

Contents

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1. Introduction

Over the preceding three years, the INVENT team has undertaken comprehensive fieldwork to delineate and assess the cultural values experienced by individuals spanning all societal strata across nine European countries.

We executed a large-scale survey within Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, targeting statistically representative cross-sections of the populations. This endeavour culminated in over 14,000 participants contributing their perspectives. Next to the survey, we examined European residents' and practitioners' cultural viewpoints, experiences, and practices through 36 focus group discussions, 27 case studies, 226 in-depth interviews, three successive rounds of social media content mining, and a pioneering smartphone-based study incorporating experimental stimuli. Additionally, our research framework involved extensive literature research and secondary data analysis.

This policy brief presents a selection of the significant revelations drawn from our analyses of this rich empirical dataset. We will highlight findings that underscore and refine the impact of culture on health and overall well-being. We respectively discuss the evidence on the myriad ways culture contributes to well-being generated by the INVENT project; we zoom in on the importance of culture for 'newcomers' such as migrants and refugees in attaining a sense of communal belonging; and we present a case study on the success of cultural interventions for acquiring and maintaining ˈpositive healthˈ (Huber et al., 2011). We conclude by listing some recent, noteworthy publications that can serve as valuable resources for shaping cultural policies aimed at harnessing the potential of the arts and culture to enhance well-being.

2. Culture's contribution to health and well-being: evidence from the INVENT project

In recent years, a growing number of studies have highlighted the significant impact of arts and culture on well-being (Daykin, 2019; Fancourt & Finn, 2019; Fancourt et al., 2023; Sheppard & Broughton, 2021; De Witte et al., 2021; Zbranca et al. 2023). Our research findings underscore a clear link between cultural engagement and enhanced levels of overall life satisfaction, well-being, and mental health.

Utilizing data from our large-scale, representative survey, a distinct and positive connection between life satisfaction and involvement in a broad range of arts-oriented cultural undertakings, spanning both active and receptive forms, is evident. Our investigation also reveals a favorable association with participation in additional leisure pursuits, including sports, exercise, and visits to recreational locales. Furthermore, the contentment individuals derive from the cultural opportunities within their immediate surroundings demonstrates a positive correlation with their overarching life satisfaction. Notably, these positive outcomes persist as statistically significant even after accounting for other pertinent variables that influence life satisfaction, such as education, income, and age.

Conversely, when examining the correlation between life satisfaction and overall engagement in digital activities—encompassing digital culture participation, internet usage, and social media engagement—a substantial link is absent. Intriguingly, we find a negative relationship specifically in relation to engagement in digital audiovisual entertainment, which calls for further research.

Various dimensions of well-being: societal, communal, personal

Our extensive interviews with 226 European residents provided significant additional insights (Holla et al., *forthcoming*). Primarily, participants in our interviews associate wellbeing with broader societal factors, including economic stability, safety, social security, sound infrastructure and amenities, and notably, good health and sufficient financial resources.

Reflecting on times of crisis, illness, grief, and ambiguity, many interviewees highlight the role of cultural activities and immersive cultural environments in staying mentally sane and alleviating pain and distress.

They also emphasize that well-being is intricately tied to social interactions and shared activities with friends, family, and like-minded individuals, as well as a sense of belonging to larger communities. This communal well-being is fostered through collective cultural experiences, amicable and considerate interactions, displays of social unity, and inclusiveness, all within the broader context of being part of a cultural tapestry. Conversely, a lack of social cohesion, limited participation opportunities, intolerance, discrimination, or exclusion can adversely affect community well-being.

Notably, migrants underscore the crucial role of belonging and feeling part of a culture when reflecting on their well-being. Rather than mentioning specific cultural activities, these respondents point to the value of a welcoming, inclusive, and not-too-formal social and cultural environment, as engaging in contact with others is essential to their sense of communal well-being.

A wide range of cultural activities and offerings

When specifically inquired about cultural activities that contribute to their sense of well-being interviewees enumerate a diverse range of cultural engagements, encompassing artistic pursuits, traditional festivities like carnivals and food festivals, as well as media entertainment, religious

practices, socializing, and notably, sports and exercise. Interviewees more frequently reference "receptive" activities (e.g., listening to music) rather than "creative" activities (e.g., making music), which often carry a higher threshold. They often mention activities that can be pursued individually, alongside cultural pursuits undertaken collectively. However, the social dimension of shared activities with others is deemed of utmost significance for their well-being.

Lastly, our respondents highlight the pronounced influence of environmental and infrastructural factors on their well-being. They underscore the positive effects of an aesthetically pleasing living environment, the presence of artworks and aesthetic elements in public spaces and buildings, the accessibility of green spaces and appealing communal areas for social interactions, and, crucially, a diverse array of cultural offerings within their residential locale.

Learnings from the COVID-19 crisis

The COVID-19 crisis underlined the critical role of arts and culture in sustaining well-being during challenging times. Amidst the pandemic's upheaval, our respondents indicated how cultural activities and offerings offered solace, meaning, feelings of belonging, entertainment, and relaxation, alleviating the lack of physical social contacts, travel opportunities, and cultural encounters (Janssen et al., 2021). The crisis also highlighted the importance of digital cultural participation in maintaining connection and reducing isolation. Policymakers should leverage these experiences to develop resilient cultural ecosystems that cater to societal well-being even in times of crisis.

The potential of digital culture

Transitioning to the digital realm, our study underscores the substantial potential of digital cultural involvement in enhancing overall well-being, yet primarily as a complement rather than a substitute for offline cultural engagement. Furthermore, it is crucial to address digital inequalities in this context (Janssen et al., 2023).

A myriad of digital cultural pursuits and platforms emerged as contributors to both individual and communal well-being. They facilitate heightened social connections and a sense of belonging within local and transnational communities. Simultaneously, they mitigate feelings of isolation and loneliness and accentuate empowerment, self-expression, and personal growth.

This effect is particularly pronounced for certain demographics: recent migrants and refugees, who utilize digital avenues to maintain ties with their home cultures and loved ones while fostering social inclusion and integration in host societies; similarly, individuals with limited mobility, such as the elderly and those with disabilities, can greatly benefit from digital cultural offerings.

However, our findings also emphasize that although digital cultural participation offers substantial value, it cannot replace the experience of offline cultural activities. Moreover, we have uncovered evidence of an ongoing digital divide, obstructing specific groups, such as the elderly and those with lower education, from engaging in digital cultural activities.

Our research thus highlights the potential of digital cultural participation in enhancing well-being, but also how the persistence of digital inequalities poses challenges to full inclusion. To bridge this gap, governments at the EU and national levels must invest in digital infrastructure, provide customized digital literacy programs, and foster collaborations to develop user-friendly platforms. Promoting diverse and inclusive digital content will ensure that all citizens benefit from digital cultural engagement's transformative power.

Tackling social inequalities in participation

In light of the evident positive impact of cultural participation on well-being, addressing and rectifying persistent social disparities in cultural engagement both within and across European countries becomes imperative.

Pronounced discrepancies emerge in citizens' involvement in diverse cultural undertakings, encompassing both offline and online spheres. We infer from our representative survey data that a significant population segment exhibits minimal participation in these activities.

A notable percentage, roughly 10 percent of our respondents, refrain from engaging in any offline or online cultural pursuits. This group is characterized by older age, lower education levels, unemployment, single marital status, religious affiliation, residence outside major urban centres, and lower incomes. Furthermore, for almost a quarter of respondents, participation in both offline and digital cultural activities is very limited, with only infrequent visits to markets, museums, historical sites, recreational spaces, restaurants, and cafes. These respondents are more likely to be males, possess lower levels of education, exhibit lower income levels, hold occupations, identify as non-religious, and have a partner.

Moreover, we identify substantial cross-national disparities in the proportions of citizens who do not engage in cultural activities or partake only to a minimum extent.

Promoting inclusive participation

INVENT's research revealed significant disparities, with certain groups having limited offline and online engagement in cultural pursuits. Policymakers should develop targeted initiatives to combat this, such as community-based outreach programs and cultural subsidies to encourage broader participation. Furthermore, cultural literacy programs are needed to enhance awareness and break down barriers that hinder participation among marginalized communities. Empowering cultural institutions to create inclusive environments that cater to diverse audiences will foster a sense of belonging and social cohesion.

Evidence-based policy and research

Our investigations illuminated significant positive correlations between cultural participation engagement and overall well-being. However, we need advanced research and methodologies to fully grasp the factors and mechanisms contributing to the health advantages of specific cultural practices, enabling deliberate interventions in the sphere of health and well-being enhancement (cf. Oman, 2021).

For this purpose we need studies that systematically evaluate and contrast the distinct well-being implications and outcomes of various categories of cultural practices, such as:
- Different forms of arts-related activities, such as active versus receptive engagement and involvement in visual versus performing arts.
- Comparisons between arts-related pursuits and other leisure activities like sports and physical exercise.
- Differentiating the effects of online versus offline participation in cultural activities.

Currently, such systematic comparative analyses are largely absent.

The acquisition of comprehensive, cross-national, and longitudinal survey data, encompassing thorough assessments of both health, well-being, and cultural participation alongside the customary socio-demographic data, is crucial. This approach allows for a more rigorous exploration of the connections between culture and health/well-being. It aids in precisely identifying intervening variables and disentangling the influence of individual-level factors from contextual aspects, such as environmental features and country-level factors.

The present EU-wide surveys, such as the Eurobarometer, sporadically incorporate cultural aspects. The last Eurobarometer with a significant focus on cultural participation and access dates back to 2013, without delving into the link between cultural involvement and health/well-being. It is recommended to allocate a dedicated Eurobarometer study to this topic in the near future. In addition, innovative methodologies that effectively capture the well-being impacts of individuals' cultural interactions are essential.

In short, leveraging arts and culture for improved well-being requires more and more rigorous research. Interdisciplinary collaboration among health, cultural, and social sciences is important for a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of cultural participation on well-being. This requires additional funding for European and national funding bodies.

Conclusion

The findings from the INVENT project and the broader scholarly debates emphasize the profound impact of arts, culture, and digital participation on well-being. By addressing social inequalities, promoting digital inclusion, and basing policies on robust research, governments can create cultural landscapes that positively influence their citizens' mental, emotional, and social well-being. Embracing this approach will lead to healthier, more vibrant European societies that thrive on the transformative power of arts, culture, and digital engagement.

Local governments must support cultural institutions and practitioners to fully capitalize on the potential of arts and culture in promoting well-being. Financial support, training programs, and impact assessment initiatives will enhance cultural institutions' ability to deliver wellbeing-oriented programs. Policymakers should encourage collaborations between cultural practitioners and health professionals to ensure that interventions align with public health goals.

Policy implications and recommendations

- Given the positive association between well-being and all kinds of cultural activities, it is imperative to stimulate cultural participation across all layers of the population by developing and implementing policies that promote engagement in a broad range of cultural practices, including active and receptive forms, as well as arts-related, popular, and everyday leisure activities.

- Investing in beautifying the living environment and improving the cultural infrastructure is equally important. This would require allocating resources to create visually appealing living spaces by incorporating artworks and cultural elements in public areas and buildings, promoting the accessibility of green spaces and communal areas that facilitate social interactions, and ensuring a diverse range of cultural offerings within residential areas.

- To combat social disparities in cultural engagement, it is essential to prioritize targeted initiatives focusing on marginalized groups and communities with lower education levels, unemployment, and incomes who often reside in disadvantaged and unattractive neighbourhoods with poor recreational and cultural activities facilities. These initiatives should encompass community-based outreach programs, safe spaces for leisure and culture, and cultural subsidies designed to address the unequal opportunities for cultural participation.

- Cultural institutions and practitioners should receive the means to develop and maintain wellbeing-oriented cultural programs and structural collaborations with representatives of marginalized groups and communities to co-create cultural offerings that cater to their interests and needs.

- Leverage arts and culture in crisis resilience: Arts and culture should be recognized for their vital role in sustaining well-being, as evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Strengthening cultural ecosystems and facilitating digital cultural participation is essential to maintain connections and reduce isolation during challenging times. Our findings also indicate that digital experiences complement rather than replace the value of offline cultural engagement, implying that digital initiatives should not go at the expense of offline cultural offerings.

- Ensuring equal opportunities for digital cultural participation for all demographics is vital and requires comprehensive strategies and funding, including investments in digital infrastructure, digital literacy programs, and collaborations to create user-friendly digital platforms that actively promote diverse and inclusive content. It is especially critical to encourage and allocate funding for digital cultural engagement initiatives targeting marginalized groups, notably recent migrants, refugees, older individuals, and people with disabilities.

- Rigorous, longitudinal, comparative research is needed to inform evidence-based policies. This research should systematically assess the impact of various cultural practices on health and well-being. This includes comparing the effects of different cultural activities, such as active versus receptive engagement, online versus offline participation, and arts-related versus leisure activities.

- Allocating a dedicated Eurobarometer study to delve into the connection between cultural participation and health and well-being could boost further cross-national studies in this area. Consistently incorporating cultural participation and other cultural aspects into EU-wide surveys is crucial to amassing comprehensive data for grounded policymaking.

- Interdisciplinary collaboration among health, cultural, and social sciences will facilitate a deeper understanding of how cultural participation impacts well-being. It can also advance research that identifies intervening variables and effectively separates individual-level factors from contextual elements. This disentanglement is vital for making informed, culturally competent policy decisions.

More insights from the INVENT project on well-being and culture can be found in our upcoming chapter on Culture and Well-being (Holla et al., forthcoming 2024), in INVENT's first policy brief (Janssen et al., 2021) our case study on cultural interventions and positive health outcomes, our entries on well-being in the online INVENTORY, and several forthcoming articles and book chapters. Stay tuned to INVENT's website and social media accounts to receive our publication alerts.

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3. The critical role of culture in advancing communal belonging and inclusion of 'newcomers'

INVENT's interview study points out the importance of *Community well-being* as an essential reason to be involved in culture and cultural activities (cf. Gorman, 2010). Foreign-born interviewees emphasize how a sense of belonging and closeness to others is crucial for their integration into their current country of residence. They underline how their well-being depends on social connections, interactions, and joint activities with friends, relatives, and like-minded others. However, a sense of connectedness with the broader communities they entered is also vital to them (Holla et al.*, forthcoming;* Rössel et al., *forthcoming)*).

Community well-being grows through shared cultural experiences, friendly and respectful interactions with others, experiences of social solidarity and inclusiveness, and the sense of being part of a broader culture. Migrated participants mention spending time with family and friends, feeling connected, being part of a community, and not being lonely as pivotal aspects of their well-being. Additionally, interviewees highlight the significance of experiencing cultural similarities, participating in cultural traditions, sharing meals, and helping others to reinforce social bonds and strengthen their sense of communal belonging.

The need for a sense of belonging is especially critical for overall well-being, but attaining the feeling of 'being at home' can be challenging, especially for migrated persons. In addition to positive experiences that enhance their sense of belonging, relocated persons also discuss negative experiences at the community level that adversely affect their well-being. These negative experiences include social fragmentation, discrimination, isolation, cultural disparities, exclusion, prejudice, and conflicts (cf. Atkinson et al., 2020).

The INVENT researchers found that migrated persons often pay less attention to narrowly defined forms of culture, such as art, music, or dance, and instead tend to focus on broader cultural conditions in their host countries. These conditions encompass interpersonal relationships, cultural values, attitudes, and habits that increase or decrease their sense of well-being (Giovanis, 2021). Furthermore, they compare these conditions to those in their country of origin, noting cultural differences and how these experiences shape their cultural understanding and overall well-being.

Consequently, the position of migrated persons, as relative or previous outsiders, gives them a particular sharp view of the culture of their current country. They can powerfully reflect on the cultural aspects that increase or decrease their sense of community well-being. Comparing their host culture to their culture of origin, they articulate how attitudes and behaviours such as openness, tolerance, flexibility, and helpfulness enhance their well-being while rigidity, inflexibility, formality, and discrimination detract from it.

Conclusion

Our research findings underscore that cultural activities foster a sense of connection and help maintain relations with family, friends, communities, or society (cf. Gorman, 2010; Philipp et al., 2015). Social relationships weaken when culture disappears out of sight or from daily life. Therefore, community well-being should be taken seriously as an element of well-being, in addition to the mental and physical health benefits gained by cultural engagement. Furthermore, policymakers are advised to pay due attention to the insightful and often spot-on perspectives on culture that newcomers can bring when formulating policies to render culture more inclusive and accessible to all members of society.

Policy implications and recommendations

- **Tailored cultural engagement programs** can foster integration and inclusivity by stimulating newcomers to participate in various cultural activities, from art and music to language training and culinary traditions. This diverse array of experiences aims to lower barriers and promote a sense of belonging and social integration.

- Secondly, it is vital to allocate resources to **community well-being initiatives** that prioritize the welfare of both newcomers and established residents. These initiatives should nurture friendly and respectful interactions, social solidarity, and community inclusiveness, paying particular attention to addressing the unique needs of newcomers.

- The implementation and enforcement of **anti-discrimination measures** are essential. These policies and actions should directly confront the negative experiences that migrants may face at the community level.

- **Cultural exchange and education programs** can contribute to mutual understanding between newcomers and host communities. By bridging cultural gaps, encouraging dialogue, and promoting values such as openness, tolerance, flexibility, and helpfulness, these programs contribute to a more harmonious society.

- **Incorporating newcomers' perspectives** into the policymaking process is strongly recommended, recognizing their unique position as relative outsiders who can provide valuable input. Involving newcomers in policy development can foster more effective, inclusive, and culturally sensitive approaches.

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4. Enhancing the success of cultural interventions for positive health outcomes

Introduction

Cultural interventions have generated high hopes amongst care and well-being professionals and policymakers regarding their positive effects on health and well-being. However, these interventions encompass a range of elements that can either foster or hinder their effectiveness. In one of its case studies, the INVENT team set out to decipher the factors contributing to cultural interventions' success or failure in the Dutch context (cf. Holla & Janssen, 2023). Drawing insights from Bushby et al.'s (2021) work and recent comprehensive studies in the Netherlands, including those by Van Dijk et al. (2019), Van Ditzhuijzen et al. (2018), and Van Campen et al. (2017), we highlight critical aspects that can shape the success of cultural interventions in achieving positive outcomes.

Enhancing well-being through culturally deliberated programs

Cultural interventions encompass thoughtfully curated activities centered around arts and culture, designed to exert a meaningful influence on participants. These interventions aim to bolster positive health outcomes, often focusing on improving quality of life and mental well-being and reducing feelings of isolation (Van Ditzhuijzen et al., 2018, p. 8). These interventions take varied forms tailoring to different target groups. They range from active participation in arts, such as creating art or making music, to receptive forms, like appreciating visual arts or music, especially for those with limited abilities (Van Campen et al., 2017, p. 14).

Usually, these interventions result from collaborations in the cultural domain with social and care institutions. Most cultural interventions are initiated by cultural organizations and executed by artists, professionals, and volunteers working for these cultural organizations. The implementation often occurs at involved care facilities, social centres, refugee shelters, and cultural venues.

Distinguished from art therapy, which addresses individual therapeutic needs, cultural interventions engage groups facing shared challenges. Skilled artists from diverse disciplines like music, dance, theatre, and literature are in the lead. This diverse approach yields many content and execution possibilities, fostering flexibility and adaptability instead of a rigid standardization. In essence, cultural interventions serve as tailored avenues for holistic well-being, tapping into the creative realms to enrich participants' lives.

General conditions for success

Successful cultural interventions meet several fundamental prerequisites outlined by Bushby et al. (2021). First, a clear purpose and a transparent methodology should underscore the intervention's design. Second, collaboration should transcend domains, encompassing cultural, healthcare, and social sectors, to ensure a comprehensive and harmonious approach. Third, direct involvement of the target group – whether elderly individuals, newcomers, or others – is paramount, aligning interventions with their unique needs. Fourth, establishing transparent agreements with funders, including subsidy duration, supports sustainable implementation and evaluation. An environment fostering innovation, artistic freedom, and customization is equally vital. Finally, inclusivity is essential, mandating a low threshold for participation to accommodate a diverse range of participants. This requires diversifying cultural content, encompassing popular and subcultural genres alongside high culture.

Specific success factors

Supplementing these general conditions, recent comprehensive studies (Van Dijk et al., 2019; Van Ditzhuijzen et al., 2018; Van Campen et al., 2017) highlight specific elements enhancing success within cultural interventions. It is worth noting that due to the diverse nature of interventions in the Netherlands, these elements are not uniformly present in each intervention.

Consideration of multiple perspectives of success

Recognizing that success is defined in various ways across all stakeholder groups is crucial. While participants may gauge success through inspiring, meaningful, or pleasurable experiences, researchers, policy officers, or financiers might measure it through quantifiable evidence of positive effects. Acknowledging these divergent perspectives is critical to a comprehensive assessment of intervention outcomes.

Key parties and policy elements

Beyond the core intervention, the roles of essential actors demand attention. The supervising artist, target group, and organizers significantly impact intervention success (Van Dijk et al., 2019; Van Ditzhuijzen et al., 2018; Heesbeen et al., 2017). Their coordination, competence, and alignment with intervention goals are influential factors. Furthermore, policy elements, including partnerships, play a pivotal role in shaping intervention success (Van Campen et al., 2018).

The intervention

Cultural interventions flourish when individuals, their qualities, and stories are central to the activity, resulting in creations participants take pride in (Van Dijk et al., 2019). Co-creation fosters success, leveraging art's connective power interactionally. Collaboration among parties and participants cultivates shared ownership, enhancing intervention impact. As interventions often target vulnerable groups, creating a secure environment is paramount. Strategies such as peer involvement or pairing can foster safety.

The artist

Successful intervention artists blend artistic prowess with social acumen, employing empathy for impactful artist-participant interactions. Cultural sensitivity and the ability to engage diverse individuals are pivotal. Recognizing participants' artistic potential and integrating personal narratives are integral. Artists should also challenge preconceptions and maintain intervention boundaries while cultivating participants' cultural expression.

The target group

Participants' active involvement is essential for intervention success. Adequate physical abilities and communication skills are prerequisites, with language proficiency being critical, especially in the Dutch context.

Organization

Organizational factors shape successful cultural interventions. Foremost is financial stability, which is crucial for continuity and sustainability. Currently, reliance on short-term, project-based funds hampers stability. Collaborations with partner organizations, governmental bodies, and researchers bolster resources and outreach. Policymakers play a critical role in this nexus, influencing sustainable embedding.

Policy considerations

Policy profoundly influences intervention success (Van Campen et al., 2017). Cultivating cultural interventions' integration within well-being frameworks requires proactive efforts. Demonstrating art's health benefits, though complex, aids policy adoption. Broadening definitions of evidence and effects is vital, incorporating qualitative methodologies for comprehensive evaluation. Financing continuity is essential, as short-lived projects hinder long-term impact. Collaboration across domains and disciplines facilitates policy cohesion.

In conclusion, nurturing the intricate ecosystem of cultural interventions necessitates a multifaceted approach. Understanding universal prerequisites, targeting specific success factors, recognizing diverse success perspectives, and fostering effective engagement of stakeholders and policy elements are essential. By aligning interventions with the diverse needs of participants and emphasizing interdisciplinary collaboration, policymakers can enhance the effectiveness of cultural interventions, bolstering individual well-being and societal progress.

Policy implications and recommendations

- Embracing a **comprehensive definition of 'positive health'** (Huber et al, 2011) enhances the transparency and credibility of cultural interventions. Through this, funding acquisition and evaluation processes are better facilitated.

- Both policy and practice stand to benefit from **establishing cross-domain policies and infrastructures that transcend traditional boundaries** to harness the potential of cultural interventions. Divergent policies, financial sources, funding criteria, and linguistic disparities often hinder synergistic collaborations across sectors. To surmount these challenges, fostering greater collaboration and decompartmentalization is imperative.

- Appointing **internal facilitators within organizations and intermediaries** possessing diverse domain knowledge capable of guiding and stimulating collaborative efforts is a promising approach to bridging sectoral gaps.

- **Making cultural interventions sustainable** is essential for their quality and impact. The occasional nature of cultural interventions and their unfamiliarity within specific sectors, such as care institutions, currently hinders initiating and implementing such initiatives. Cultivating broad support, shared expertise, and motivation among organizational staff at all levels is pivotal for moving beyond the current cycle of short-lived projects.

- The involvement of **motivated artists and personnel** is paramount for cultural interventions to thrive. Hence, a meticulous selection of artists and staff (including volunteers) and investing in their development is important.

- **Cultural interventions should be granted the space, flexibility, and freedom to unfold organically** and recognize that predicting outcomes in advance may be unrealistic.

- **Participant engagement, co-creation, and adequate resources for participant supervision** should be integrated into interventions as steady elements, as they are key facets for cultural interventions to 'work'. Such interventions align better with participants' preferences and requirements, enhancing engagement and overall benefits.

- Establishing a sense of **shared ownership** among participants and **equitable involvement** throughout the creative process ought to be ensured by intervention developers and practitioners, as these matters constitute fundamental ingredients for project success.

- Finally, **strategic investment in research methods tailored to cultural interventions and exploring their working components** is imperative. Conventional research approaches often need recalibration to capture cultural interventions' positive health impacts and active elements. Innovative applied research methodologies that align with the values and outcomes of these interventions are essential for a comprehensive understanding.

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Huber, M., Knottnerus, J. A., Green, L., Horst, H. v. d., Jadad, A. R., Kromhout, D., Smid, H. (2011). How should we define health? *British Medical Journal, 343*(2), d4163–d4163. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.d416

Janssen, M., Wildevuur S., van Zuthem, H. & Thomese, F. (2017). *Zorg voor ontwerp in de zorg. Ervaringen met cross-over onderzoek naar thuis wonen met dementie* [Care for design in healthcare: Experiences with cross-over research into living at home with dementia]. Amsterdam: Waag Society.

Maat, J.W., van der (2017). *Het Danspaleis tegen het licht. Evaluatieonderzoek aan de hand van de Theory of Change* [The Dance Palace against the light. Evaluation study based on the Theory of Change]. Utrecht: Movisie.

5. Recommended readings

Daykin, N. (2019). *Arts, health and well-being: A critical perspective on research, policy, and practice*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429356049

This publication delves into the intersection of arts and health, critically examining this connection. Utilizing perspectives from social sciences, the book advocates for arts and health as a burgeoning social movement. With an interdisciplinary approach, it proposes a fresh research agenda to guide future developments and sustainability in arts, health, and overall well-being.

The book starts with an overview of the existing evidence base and current research, policy, and practice challenges. Subsequent chapters delve into the global landscape of health and the arts, the transformation of arts and well-being into a social movement, and the importance of boundary work and objects within this field. The book also features sections summarizing research findings and evidence related to arts and health, along with examples from the author's research projects. These examples highlight widespread challenges across numerous contexts within arts, health, and well-being initiatives.

Fancourt, D., & Finn, S. (2019). *What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review.* World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe. https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/329834

This report presents a comprehensive analysis of global evidence concerning the arts' influence on enhancing health and well-being, focusing on the WHO European Region. Examining over 3000 studies highlights the significant role that the arts play in preventing illness, promoting health, and managing and treating health issues throughout a person's life.

The reviewed evidence encompasses various study designs, including uncontrolled pilot studies, case studies, small-scale cross-sectional surveys, nationally representative longitudinal cohort studies, community-wide ethnographies, and randomized controlled trials from diverse disciplines.

The report suggests several vital actions to maximize the positive impact of the arts on health and well-being: acknowledging and acting upon the growing evidence base, advocating for increased arts engagement at the individual, local, and national levels, and fostering cross-sectoral collaborations. These steps can collectively contribute to harnessing the potential of the arts to enhance people's well-being and improve their overall quality of life.

Fancourt D, Bone JK, Bu F, Mak HW, Bradbury A. (2023) *The Impact of arts and cultural engagement on population health: Findings from major cohort studies in the UK and USA 2017 – 2022.* https://sbbresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Arts-and-population-health-FINAL-March-2023.pdf

This report summarizes findings from a series of longitudinal studies conducted between 2017 and 2022 that examined the relationship between arts and cultural engagement and health and wellbeing outcomes using UK and US cohort studies. The summary report reveals new insights into how peoples' art activities are linked to longevity and health outcomes across different life stages, including more positive health and social behaviors in children and young people; better mental health in adulthood;

lower risks of depression and dementia in later life; lower levels of chronic pain and frailty, and even an extended lifespan.

The conclusions drawn in this report are derived from the analysis of data collected through cohort studies, which monitor the activities and health status of large numbers of people over their lifetimes. The analysis demonstrates that the positive association between engagement in artistic activities s and health persists even after accounting for factors like demographic characteristics, socio-economic status, and other preexisting health conditions.

The findings presented in this report are beneficial to policymakers, health professionals, and arts practitioners to understand more about the long-term impact of the arts, offering an opportunity to reimagine the role of the arts in supporting the prevention of health issues but also in the treatment and management of illness.

Oman, S. (2021). *Understanding well-being data: Improving social and cultural policy, practice and research*. London: Palgrave. https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-72937-0

This book delves into the importance of well-being data and its impact on shaping our understanding of well-being and influencing evidence-based decisions for societal improvement. It highlights the pivotal role well-being data plays in shaping life opportunities, livelihoods, and overall quality of life, gaining increasing value for profit-oriented companies, socially focused organizations, and governments addressing societal challenges, particularly evident during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The book traces the historical use of well-being data, showcasing its enduring relevance in monitoring society's health and wealth. Moreover, it challenges long-standing assumptions underpinning social science, statistics, and policy work for over two centuries.

Understanding Well-being Data furnishes real-life examples and offers rich insights into data collection, analysis, and application procedures. Acknowledging the significance of contextual factors in data and decision-making, it highlights their critical role in shaping policies, practices, and research for positive impacts and harm avoidance.

Although the book recognizes the unresolved limitations of well-being data, it emphasizes its potential positive contributions to society. Through a comprehensive survey and critical assessment, readers gain tools better to comprehend the potency and possibilities of well-being data while appreciating the boundaries of its application.

Sheppard, A., & Broughton, M. C. (2020). Promoting wellbeing and health through active participation in music and dance: a systematic review. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, *15*(1), 1732526. https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2020.1732526

This review explores the connection between music and dance participation and social determinants of health. It highlights their role as tools for population well-being, health promotion, and preventive measures, particularly for individuals without pre-existing health issues in diverse social groups.

The review employs a qualitative systematic literature review to address the following questions: 1) How do music and dance cultural practices relate to social determinants of health? 2) What gaps exist in the current research concerning how healthy individuals and populations maintain and promote

good health and well-being through music and dance participation? 3) What are the implications of the existing literature for healthcare, policy, and research?

The review underlines the connection between music and dance and social determinants of health. It also identifies several gaps in the literature, including the underrepresentation of middle-aged participants, men, and individuals from Indigenous, LGBTQIAP+, and migrant populations. In addition, the authors note inconsistencies in theoretical and methodological approaches and a need for more effective communication across arts and health audiences. Finally, the review highlights interdisciplinary collaboration opportunities to advance healthcare and arts policy.

De Witte, M., Orkibi, H., Zarate, R., Karkou, V., Sajnani, N., Malhotra, B., ... & Koch, S. C. (2021). From therapeutic factors to mechanisms of change in the creative arts therapies: A scoping review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2525. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.678397.

Empirical studies in the creative arts therapies (CATs), such as art therapy, dance/movement therapy, drama therapy, music therapy, psychodrama, and poetry/bibliotherapy, have shown significant growth in the past decade. These studies have documented positive effects on various psychological and physiological outcomes, including stress, trauma, depression, anxiety, and pain. However, the therapeutic factors and mechanisms contributing to these positive effects have yet to be fully understood.

To address this gap, the researchers conducted a scoping review of 67 studies to identify therapeutic factors unique to each CAT discipline, common factors shared by CATs, and generic factors present in all psychotherapy approaches. The researchers propose a framework consisting of 19 domains of therapeutic factors. Three of these domains solely comprised elements unique to CATs: "embodiment," which emphasizes the embodiment of emotions and experiences through creative expression; "concretization," which involves making abstract thoughts and feelings more tangible through art forms; and "symbolism and metaphors," which explores the use of symbols and metaphors in creative processes.

The review also clarifies the terminology used in change process research within CATs. Furthermore, the findings have implications for future research, clinical practice, and CATs education, as they shed light on the therapeutic elements contributing to the positive outcomes observed in CATs interventions.

Zbranca, R., Dâmaso, M., Blaga, O., Kiss, K., Dascăl, M. D., Yakobson, D., & Pop, O. (2022). *Culture's contribution to health and well-being. A report on evidence and policy recommendations for Europe.* CultureForHealth. Culture Action Europe.
https://cultureactioneurope.org/advocacy/cultureforhealth-report/

This scoping review addresses the growing awareness regarding the significant role of culture and the arts in improving health and well-being at both individual and collective levels. Policymakers are increasingly interested in utilizing cultural approaches to enhance well-being. However, implementing sustainable interventions that effectively change policies and strategies at the practitioner level presents challenges, which call for a comprehensive understanding of recent developments in methods and evidence across disciplines and an empirical understanding of the facilitators and barriers in implementing existing interventions.
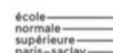
The review aims to bridge the gap between the rapidly expanding and interdisciplinary research on the positive impact of culture and arts on human health and well-being and the policies at the EU level. It seeks to synthesize evidence on the positive effects of cultural participation on health and well-being, exploring various research questions and concepts. Additionally, the review identifies knowledge gaps, provides policy recommendations, and highlights challenges, broadening the scope beyond proposed policy directions and specific measures. The scoping study is part of the CultureForHealth project and aligns with the Preparatory Action – Bottom-Up Policy Development for Culture & Well-being guidelines.

6. Project Identity

PROJECT NAME
European inventory of societal values of culture as a basis for inclusive cultural policies in the globalizing world (INVENT)

COORDINATOR
Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam, The Netherlands,

CONSORTIUM
Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), The Netherlands
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Spain
University of Haifa (UoH), Israel, conducting the research in the UK
University of Copenhagen (UCPH), Denmark
Tampere University (TAU), Finland
University of Zurich (UZH), Switzerland
Institute of social sciences "Ivo Pilar" (ISSIP), Croatia
Centre for Empirical Cultural Studies of South-East Europe (CECS), Serbia
Ecole normale supérieure Paris-Saclay (ENS), France.

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GRANT AGREEMENT ID
870691

DURATION
1 February 2020 – 31 July 2023 (42 months)

BUDGET
EU contribution: € 2 999 875

WEBSITE
https://inventculture.eu/

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