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| *Programme: Erasmus+* |
| *Key Action: Key Action 2- Cooperation Partnerships* |
| *Call: KA2220 Youth* |
| *Submission deadline: 23 March 2022 at 17:00:00 (Brussels time)* |
| *Project Title: E-Art for Neets* |
| *Project Acronym: eN-Art* |
| *Project total duration: 24 months* |
| *Estimated budget: 250.000* |

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| Background (Aims, objectives & needs.) | |
| Context of the project & Needs of the target groups addressed. | The changes of the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly affected the dynamics of the economy worldwide. The cultural and creative sector (CCS) is considered as one of the most affected sectors due to the pandemic, where the already high unemployment rate combined with a low tourism inflow due to the Covid-19 pandemic, has been more than evident in the last three years.  According to Eurostat, this market employed 8.7 million people in 2018, equivalent to 3.8 % of the total number of persons employed within the EU-28, while in 2017, there were 1.1 million cultural enterprises in the EU-27. According to the report of the European Parliament (2019), creative industries contribute significantly to EU GDP, while also contributing to social cohesion and playing an important role in the digital economy. They also supply a large number of high quality jobs to young people (8 million). Following a protracted period of recovery from the economic crisis (2007–2013), young people in the EU have proven to be particularly vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 pandemic limitations. According to the official data by Eurostat, the job vacancy rate in the sector of Arts, entertainment and recreation in the EU Member states in 2019 and 2020 have profoundly decreased.  “NEETs" is an acronym referring to the situation of mostly young people aged 15-29, who are not registered in any kind of formal or informal education or training and are not in employment. This group of youth, already vulnerable, has been significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and faces extra barriers in their integration into the labor market. NEETs are profoundly an important part of the related EU policies such as the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, with a goal of reducing the rate of NEETs from 12.6 percent in 2019 to 9 percent in 2030. The EU Youth Strategy 2021-2027 and the EU Youth Goals are also referring to the vulnerabilities of NEETs and outline the importance of inclusive societies and quality employment for all.  Since the cultural sector constitutes an important part of the economy and social life of the local communities, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was also equivalent harsh at a local level. While the pandemic is still evident in all EU member states, many cultural spots have not yet returned to their proper operational level, or they remain inactive due to the social distancing measures. The cultural and creative sector (CCS) is still in great danger also due to its nature and inability to physically reach its recipients, which is the main resource of income. The image though cannot be clear, as many of the creative activities have an informal nature. Also, statistics from Eurostat (2019) prove the problematics of this sector, in which the 32% of the workers and employees involved are self-employed, while this percentage reaches the 14% of the whole workforce.  On the other hand, the pandemic has reinforced the discussion around the digitalization of the cultural sector, which is a process that has already been a goal of the European cultural institutions. The 4th Council of Europe Platform Exchange on Culture and Digitization and the related policy orientation of the Council of Europe highlights the need of the promotion of multi-literal skills to foster the access, creation and management of the digital culture.  The digital space, although it does not entail the same advantages as a physical presence in a cultural space, is proven to be a great means of transferring culture and creativity and strengthening democratization and social inclusion. The digital space can provide an alternative income source by reordering the value chains and increase the employability rates through innovative ventures. Eurostat has proved that countries with higher income levels present also higher cultural participation rates (82,5%), while the opposite is noted on countries with lowest income levels (43,6%). Companies operating online in the sector, by distributing cultural “products” have seen an important growth during the pandemic (e.g. Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Spotify and news media websites etc.). These businesses survived although they do not have a physical store where they can meet and interact with their clients. The main element of their survival is that they operate in the virtual world, a world familiar to the young generation. The access to information and culture through social media platforms, applications and search engines can provide new employability opportunities to youth of the CCS and in parallel strengthen social cohesion and combat social exclusion through democratic dialogue and educational culture.  The eN-Art project aims to foster the employability of youth in the cultural and creative sector (CCS) through educational structures and innovative practices. Specifically, the project’s goal is to develop and transfer innovative educational material to strengthen the skills and competences, necessary for youth and young NEETs of the cultural and creative sector (CCS) and thus promote their employability opportunities within the sector and their inclusion in the contemporary labour market. Additionally, the project will identify the current needs of the target group and develop an extensive state of the art research and needs analysis. Focusing on the digital dimension of the CCS, the project also aims to empower youth by cultural means and foster democratic dialogue.  The direct target group are young people and NEETs (aged 15 to 29) who will have the opportunity to participate in e-learning courses and be provided with the necessary educational material, adapted to their needs. The indirect target group are the professionals of the CCS, who will participate as role models and instructors in the interactive e-learning courses. These two target groups will cooperate and organize a hybrid Digital Art Festival, where they will have the opportunity to test their skills developed through the e-learning courses and also engage the local community. |
| Objectives of the project / Project Results | The eN-Art project aims to foster the employability of youth in the cultural and creative sector (CCS) through educational structures and innovative practices, empower youth by cultural means and foster democratic dialogue. The project aims to produce the following tangible and intangible results.  **Tangible results**   * Provide updated information about the challenges of the cultural and creative sector (CCS) under the Covid-19 pandemic * Identify the needs of youth and young NEETs of the CCS through research * Development of educational material and online training based on the needs of the target group * Development of an e-learning platform as the means of transferring the produced educational material and an interactive space for online training * Enable collaboration among youth and professionals of the CCS   **Intangible results**   * Foster employability opportunities of young professionals and NEETs of the CCS * Enhance the acquittance of new skills through digital means and platforms * Promote social inclusion and integration of youth and young NEETs in the labour market * Raise awareness about the needs of NEETs in the Covid-19 era and the need for the existence of inclusive working environments * Strengthening youth empowerment through digital cultural means and innovative initiatives * Engage and support local professionals of the CCS * Educate them about the reality of art professions and the challenges of the cultural job market through digital means. |
| Project Activities | **WP1: Project Management and Implementation**  The general objective of the WP1 - Project Management and Implementation - is to ensure that the project meets its objectives within budget and within the scheduled timelines identified in individual work packages (and WP Leaders). The activities of this WP include monitoring project progress, coordination of the overall project's smooth implementation, external and internal communication, as well as evaluation and risk management provisions. The project management WP will also ensure that crucial horizontal principles will be respected along all the WPs, such as sustainable development, equal opportunity and non-discrimination, gender balance and incorporation of digital and green practices. High importance is given to risk and quality management.  **WP2: State-of-the-art research**  As a first step, a state of the art research, will be conducted to identify the skills shortage of youth and young NEETs, with their active participation and feedback. The methodology that will be used for the state of the art, will be the participatory action research (PAR) which is an approach to action research emphasizing participation and action by members of communities affected by that research. Youth participants will also be reached through the broad network of partner organisations. State-of-the-art research on their expectations and needs will be conducted. The research will be the basis for the creation of the proper lectures and subjects that will be approached. Youth organizations and professionals of the CCS sector will also contribute to the development of the needs analysis, as specialists in the needs of the CCS.    **WP3: Development of Educational Material and Joint Curriculum**  The educational material and the video lectures will be designed based on the previously conducted research. The material will focus on three categories:   1. Addressing fundamental concepts of culture and cultural organisations 2. Introducing basic concepts and forms of digital art 3. Development of digital skills needed for the cultural job sector   **WP4:** **Development of the E-learning Platform**  An e-learning platform will be developed, which will constitute the main means of the digital learning experience of the eN-Art project. The e-lectures will also have interactive elements and will promote open conversation and discussion between the professionals of the CCS and youth participants.  The platform will have a user-friendly design, while it will also integrate a forum, which will serve as tool for building a collaborative network for the creation and management of the cultural content and exchange of thoughts between artists.  **WP5: Digital Art Exhibition**  Young participants will have the opportunity to collaborate with the professionals of the cultural and creative sector (CCS) and organize a hybrid Digital Art Exhibition. This action will actively engage participants to test their skills developed through the e-learning courses of the eN-Art project, leverage digital form of art and serve as an open discussion space, which is of utmost importance for the personal and professional development of youth. |
| Possible applicants | The eN-Art project aims to engage the following stakeholders in its activities:   * Youth organisations * Organisations dealing with education of youth and youth empowerment. * Networks of artists and culture professionals |

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