

Creative social entrepreneurship for cohesion and development

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Through this article Teresa Bean draws on examples of good practice and data from the ALF/IPSOS Survey and aims to illustrate how creative social enterprises can provide an arena for intercultural dialogue. The author outlines how creative social enterprises can provide innovative solutions to social issues and concludes by making a series of recommendations to encourage the development of creative social enterprise in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The paper seeks to provide an overview of social enterprise in the Euro-Mediterranean region with a focus on social enterprise in the creative sector. This brief aims to illustrate how creative social enterprise can provide an arena for intercultural dialogue. Drawing on examples of good practice and data from the ALF/Ipsos Survey on Intercultural Trends in the Euro-Mediterranean region, the paper will review the current landscape. The paper will conclude by making recommendations for supporting the creative social enterprise ecosystem in the Euro-Mediterranean region. In doing so this paper hopes to provoke reflection and debate on the potential of creative social enterprise as a pathway for intercultural dialogue, collaborative action and youth participation in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

What is social enterprise? And creative social enterprise?

Social enterprises encompass a number of business entities operating across sectors, accorded diverse legal status and presenting with diverse organizational structures. There are a number of definitions utilised in Europe, the US and beyond. Therefore, for the purposes of simplification social enterprise will be defined in this paper as an entity that is primarily driven by the pursuit of social innovation and social change in various sectors. However, it is important to stress that social enterprises engage in trading and commercial activities to generate revenue to realise these social objectives.

The European Commission applies the term 'social enterprise' to cover the following types of businesses: those for whom the social or societal objective of the common good is the reason for the commercial activity, often in the form of a high level of social innovation; those where profits are mainly reinvested with a view to achieving this social objective; those where the method of organisation or ownership system reflects the enterprise's mission, using democratic or participatory

principles or focusing on social justice (European Commission, Social Enterprise, 2017). Therefore social enterprise is an umbrella term to describe entities that are driven by a social mission. Thus, co-operatives, fair trade organizations and community enterprises are examples of social enterprises.

Whilst social enterprises operate across all economic sectors, this paper is focused on social enterprises in the creative and cultural sectors. Creative social enterprises are entities whose activities are situated in the creative industries and whose mission is to provide innovative solutions to social issues. Whilst there are several definitions of what constitutes the 'creative industries' (sometimes referred to as the cultural industries), there is broad agreement that the sector encompasses a wide range of creative disciplines. These include, but are not limited to fashion, music, theatre, film, literature, design, media, digital sectors, architecture, radio and television.

Approaches and results

Creative expression is a natural arena to facilitate dialogue and debate as it enables people to communicate ideas, express emotions or share experiences in a safe space or in a way that may not be possible with words. It can also provoke reflection on how people think, act and internalise their reality and understand the reality of others (Helguera, 2011, Kester, 2004, Kester, 2011, Kester, 2012, Koh, 2015 and Thompson, 2012). As UNESCO's 2015 report on cultural policy states, 'creative arts are a powerful mechanism to facilitate sustainable development at a societal level. In particular, creative art can promote integration, break down social barriers and facilitate intercultural dialogue among diverse groups' (UNESCO, 2015, 157).

A social enterprise as an entity is primarily driven by the achievement of social or environmental objectives. Thus, combining creativity with a desire to drive social

innovation through enterprise provide a suitable model for intercultural dialogue in the region. Creative social enterprises can serve as an effective pathway to promote intercultural dialogue, shared values and cultural awareness. It is important to stress the value of creative arts beyond the economic and consider creativity as a vehicle for cultural and social development.

A number of creative social enterprises in the Euro-Mediterranean region serve as a representative case in point. They highlight the value of creative social enterprise in promoting intercultural dialogue, social cohesion and civic participation.

Creative Space Beirut is a fashion design school in Lebanon that promotes economic participation for the most marginalised sectors of society. The school provides a free three-year programme to students who are not able to gain an education due to their financial circumstances. In providing free education, Creative Space Beirut seeks to break the cycles of poverty for its students by providing them with the necessary skills to make a living from fashion for themselves and their families. In this way, the school hopes that the education the students receive will positively impact not only on themselves, but also their families and the wider communities. The school seeks to break down economic and social barriers by facilitating the integration of marginalised groups through their education programmes. Several of the school's alumni have gained employment in the fashion industry, set up their own businesses or pursued Masters programmes in the Middle East and Europe.

Drop Earrings Not Bombs is a creative social enterprise that promotes the integration of Syrian refugees living in Turkey. The refugees produce handmade earrings which are sold online and the profits go back into supporting refugee communities in Istanbul. The project not only provides refugee families with an income but also provides training and employment opportunities to enable refugees to rebuild their lives in Turkey.

In Place Of War is a social enterprise based at the University of Manchester, UK. The organisation supports creative communities in sites of conflict, post conflict and marginalised communities through training, networking, collaborative projects and mobilization opportunities.

Voices, an international music project that brings together artists from Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Asia, perform and take part in panel discussions in the UK. These performances and public discussions promote intercultural dialogue and cultural awareness for both the artists involved and the general public. Feedback from artists involved in the project in 2016 stated that the project had enabled them to learn about different cultures and gain a greater understanding of issues facing communities in other parts of the world. The importance of mobility and collaboration of artists is also supported by UNESCO's report on cultural policy which considers artist mobility to be 'crucial to maintaining a heterogeneous world of ideas, values and world views' (UNESCO, 2015, 14).

Multi-cultural events as the way forward for social cohesion

Citizens in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean also share the assertion that entrepreneurship and cultural expression can provide a pathway to promote diversity and multi-culturalism, as the results of a recent survey demonstrate. The Anna Lindh/Ipsos Survey was conducted in eight European countries (Austria, Croatia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands Poland and Portugal) and five SEM (Sothern and Eastern Mediterranean) countries (Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Palestine and Tunisia). The Survey involved a thousand participants per country who were invited to undertake a survey via telephone (except in Israel and Palestine whereby face-to-face interviews were conducted). From the data, it is apparent that citizens over 15 years old are in broad agreement that cultural and religious diversity is important for the prosperity of society. Amongst the

Chart 16.1 Living better together in multicultural environments: enabling cultural expression in public spaces and organising multicultural events

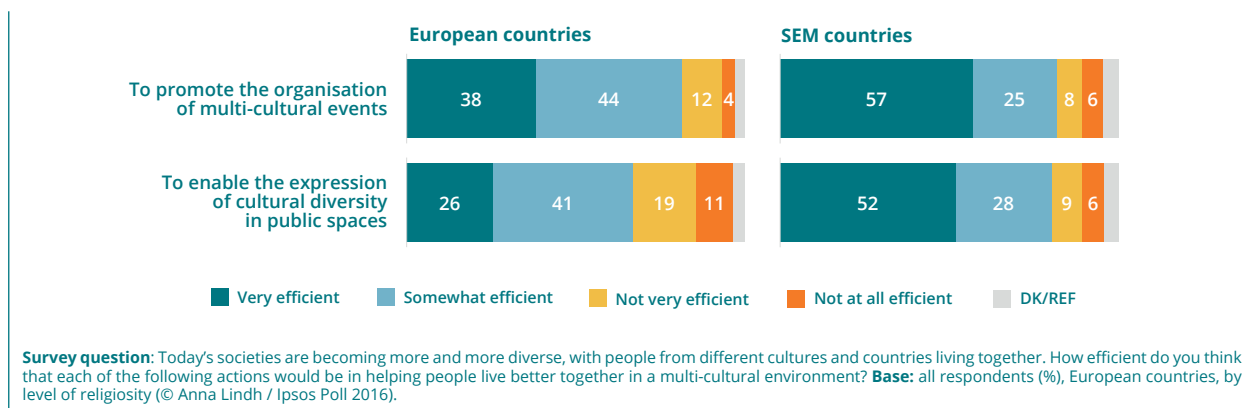
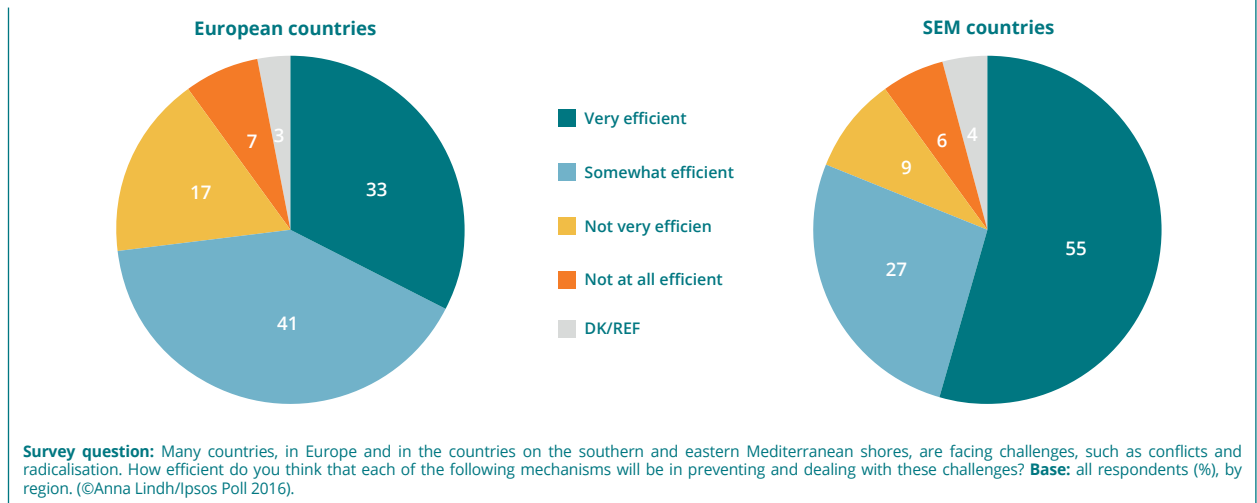


Chart 16.2

Efficiency of mechanisms to prevent and deal with conflicts and radicalisation: cultural and artistic initiatives



European respondents, 71% and 72% of participants from the Southern Mediterranean strongly agreed with this statement.

In terms of promoting diversity and multi-cultural societies, a majority of participants from both Europe (82%) and Southern Mediterranean (82%) countries considered that the promotion of multi-cultural events is an efficient way of facilitating social cohesion. Equally, the promotion of cultural diversity in public spaces was regarded as an effective tool in fomenting multi-culturalism, with respondents in Europe (67%) and Southern Mediterranean (80%) in agreement (Chart 16.1). Given these results, it is apparent that the creative arts as a vehicle for the promotion of intercultural awareness align with citizens' attitudes towards multi-culturalism and social cohesion.

In the same vein, on the question of tackling radicalisation, the Survey results also support the case for the promotion of creative social entrepreneurship in the region. 82% of respondents from the Southern Mediterranean and 74% of participants from Europe agreed that cultural and artistic initiatives were effective in dealing with radicalisation. Equally, over 80% of respondents considered that education and youth programmes were efficient in fostering youth-led dialogue (Chart 16.2 and 16.3). The Survey data clearly illustrates the public's support for creative arts initiatives and training for youth as tool for intercultural dialogue. Thus, it could be assumed that the general public would broadly support the development of youth-led creative social enterprise.

Concrete steps for development in the field

Drawing on the Survey data, examples of good practice and current literature, it is apparent that

creative social enterprise could play a pivotal role in promoting intercultural dialogue and tackling shared social and environmental challenges faced across the Euro-Mediterranean region. Whilst there are some key indicators of an enabling environment for the development of creative social enterprises (such as public support evidenced by the Survey data and institutional buy-in illustrated by the policies and strategies, including EU Creative Europe, the social businesses initiatives and UNESCO Cultural Policy), significant challenges remain. Given this, the paper will conclude by making a series of recommendations to encourage the development of creative social enterprise in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

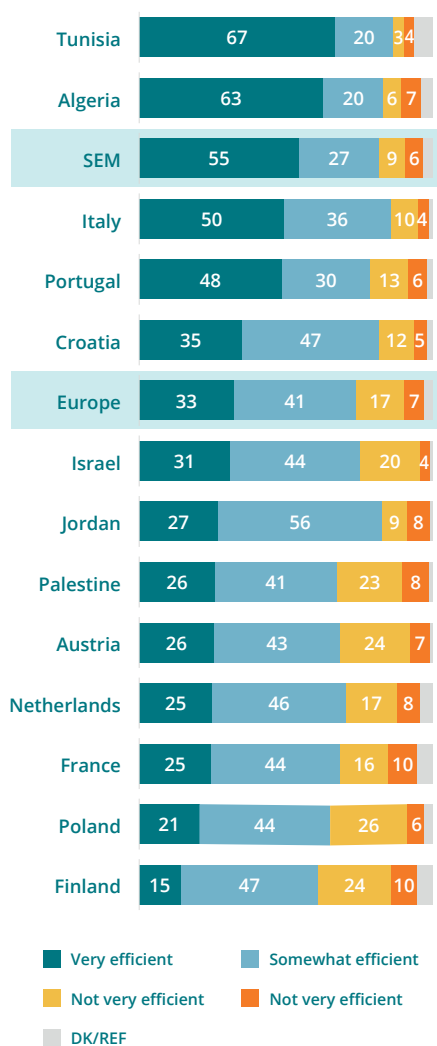
Drafting a working definition of creative social enterprise. Firstly, it is apparent the term 'creative social enterprise' is not well understood given the diverse definitions and interpretations of the terms 'social enterprise' and 'creative or cultural industries'. This lack of clarity has contributed to a limiting environment in some countries that has hindered the development of creative social enterprises.

It is therefore necessary to draft a working definition that is accessible in a range of languages and for diverse stakeholders (governments, intergovernmental institutions, civic society organizations, the general public, young people and artists). Coining a universally understood term will facilitate the development of creative social enterprise and promote visibility.

Improving access to finance for creative social enterprises. Co-operation with private sectors, government stakeholders and intergovernmental entities is required to improve new forms of finance that respond to the needs of creative social enterprises, such as long term social investment or start-up funding.

Chart 16.3

Preventing and dealing with conflicts and radicalisation via cultural and artistic initiatives, by country



Survey question: Many countries, in Europe and in the countries on the southern and eastern Mediterranean shores, are facing challenges, such as conflicts and radicalisation. How efficient do you think that each of the following mechanisms will be in preventing and dealing with these challenges?
Base: all respondents (%), by country. (©Anna Lindh/Ipsos Poll 2016).

Increasing awareness of creative social enterprises as a tool for intercultural dialogue to secure stakeholder buy-in. In order to attract private and public investment and improved legal conditions for creative social enterprises, greater visibility and awareness is required. Equally, an ability to effectively communicate, not only the economic but also the benefits of creative social enterprise to promote intercultural dialogue and cultural awareness, is paramount in encouraging creative social entrepreneurship in the region.

Enhancing local capacity and IT infrastructure. Collaborating with educational institutions and civic organizations to embed a culture of creative social enterprise and develop entrepreneurial skills is key to

supporting the development of social enterprise amongst youth. Courses such as In Place of War’s Creative and Social Entrepreneur Programme provide a suitable introduction to creative social enterprise. Equally, engagement with the private sector is also essential in providing support, access to markets, knowledge and mentoring for creative social enterprises. Furthermore, ensuring youth have access to the appropriate digital tools is paramount to developing creative social enterprises.

Improved financial, legal and regulatory environments. Advocacy strategies are required to tackle the constraints of regulation. This is particularly pressing in the Southern Mediterranean where creative social enterprises do not enjoy special legal status and business start-up is often complex, time consuming and costly.

Development of diverse networks. Establishing cross sector regional networks is crucial to the development of creative social enterprises. These networks can provide a space for intercultural dialogue between youth in the Southern Mediterranean and their counterparts in Europe. Furthermore, engagement with the private sector is also vital in facilitating support, access to markets, knowledge and mentoring for creative social enterprises.

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