

Visual art education in new times: Connecting Art with REal life issues

CARE is a transnational project that seeks to strengthen common attributes and objectives between local/national policies for visual arts education and European common goals for visual literacy as described within the key competence Cultural awareness and expression. Through the project, we seek to improve the competences of teachers, to promote visual competences, enhance their classes with real life situations, and promote transversal competences and inter-cultural values to their pupils. Simultaneously these activities will have an important impact on all participating and collaborating organizations, developing their way of teaching and research.

CARE is a European funded project by Erasmus+ (Key Action 2: Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices)

<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/2019-1-CY01-KA203-058258>

At the center of recent education policy debate at both national and EU level are issues related to ways of better adapting European education and training systems to the needs of modern society. The focus has been on promoting competence-based education that will lead to the development of teachers and students' key competences which are vital for personal fulfilment, employability, active citizenship, social cohesion and further learning. The rationale for the CARE project is situated within the growing demands of supporting the development of key competences. It will offer useful guidance into the ways European education systems can improve in order to provide young Europeans with the skills required in our future societies.

Project CARE is about enhancing visual arts education (VAE) with education for sustainable development elements that will promote creative thinking, critical and systemic thinking, reflection and development of skills, attitudes and values. The project aims to develop & deliver teacher training programmes that will empower schoolteachers in visual arts teaching within the framework of ESD and thus strengthen their teaching profile. Emphasis will be given to undervalued pillars of ESD such as culture and society (not only environment). We aim at high quality education by responding to the increasingly diverse needs for active citizenship, acceptance of diversity, multiculturalism, ICT learning, and sustainable development and overall connecting education with pupils' real-life needs.

The CARE project also seeks to establish links and collaborations with local agencies and organizations (such as governmental organisations, museums, artists and others) in order to empower the educational program and connect learning with real life context and experiences.

The objectives of the project are:

- to report on teachers' actual competences and needs in the identified marginalized aspects of Visual Arts Education (VAE).
- to meet these needs by developing and delivering training programs aligned to the principles of adult learning and enhanced by hybrid forms of e-learning (design & test teacher training programs)
- to bridge the gap between theory and practice by supporting participants to implement teaching units in schools.
- to create a culture of collaboration between educators by assisting the development of professional communities of learning.

The project aims to strengthen the profile of primary school teachers (pre-service and in-service) on how to teach visual arts education in a meaningful way within the school curriculum and by setting European standards for their professional development. Through teachers the project aims to reach pupils and enhance their visual competencies. In total the project aims to reach more than 2200 participants; an average of 60 teachers and their classes (1200 pupils) and other key stakeholders through the disseminating activities (1000).

All outputs will be freely available online to support teachers and other stakeholders (Higher Institutions, teacher educators, educational authorities, schools, art experts) to develop a more strategic approach in improving teachers' and pupils' competences (teaching context and materials, learning outcomes, etc.). The research will follow the methodological approach of an action research beginning with a needs assessment stage (O1) and proceeding with addressing the identified needs by designing targeted training programs/ curricula (O2), implementing teacher training/case studies (O3), providing further opportunities for teacher development through the implementation of visual arts units in schools/ case studies (O4), supporting the development of professional communities of learning (O5) and reaching practitioners and other key stakeholders (O6).

Project Actions

CARE project has six main actions (Intellectual Outputs) corresponding to the six main aims of the project

The aims of the CARE project

CARE aims to develop and deliver innovative teacher trainings that will empower teachers in Visual Arts Education within the framework of Education for Sustainable Development and help them address contemporary educational challenges. The

consortium aims for high quality education by responding to the increasingly diverse needs for active citizenship, multiculturalism, respect of diversity, ICT learning, & SD. We seek to:

1. **Identify the competencies** that teachers need to effectively address the marginalized aspects of VAE based on action research processes as an approach to teacher education (Ferreira et al 2007). (IO1)
2. **Design a guide** for policy makers and other relevant stakeholders, test its application and then design four localized training programs (IO2)
3. **Evaluate local teacher training programs**, based on innovative educational practices emerging by the joint objectives of ESD and Visual Arts Education. (IO3)
4. **Extend the training into schools** and bridge the gap between theory and practice by supporting the development and implementation of lesson units by the participants. (IO4)
5. **Create a culture of collaboration** to promote excellence between participants, through establishing professional communities of learning as a means of professional development. (IO5)
6. **Produce a handbook to support** teachers to develop and implement innovative art units in schools within the framework of SD. (IO6)

The actions of the CARE project

Intellectual Output 1: Needs assessment. The partners will report on the state of the art in the relevant area, then assess the perceptions and expectations of relevant stakeholders and of their target population in relation to visual arts education and their national/regional art education curriculum. Thus, the results will include a mapping of the current situation in partner countries, a report on needs assessment and research tools for investigating these issues.

Intellectual Output 2: Curricula for teacher training programs. IO2 includes a framework for developing teacher training programs (a guide for policy makers and other relevant stakeholders), a train-the-trainers activity (which will also test the guide) and the design of four teacher training program.

Intellectual Output 3: Teacher education delivery. The training programs will be implemented (case studies) and tested in order to promote evidence-based reforms to deliver quality in education, competencies transfer and effective training.

Intellectual Output 4: Case studies of visual arts units in schools. To bridge the theory and practice gap and utilize the innovative framework in the school context, the trained teachers will be required and supported to implement visual arts units in schools. IO4 includes the implementation, the monitoring and the reporting of the art units in schools. Children's views and learning achievement will be documented.

Intellectual Output 5: Professional learning communities. Effective educational progress into the educational system depends not only on individual teachers, but also

on their collective capacity. The training (as described in IO3 & IO4) will offer opportunities to develop PLCs. Different actions in O3&O4 will give us a better understanding of how to strengthen the teaching profile for long-term changes. IO5 reports the results on the effectiveness of the project to promote the culture of collaboration & to empower teachers to overcome barriers and focus on their pupils' learning.

Intellectual Output 6: Handbook for teachers. The Handbook will offer guidance and support to teachers on how to implement innovative art units based on the synergies of Visual Arts Education and Education for Sustainable Development. It will also include examples of best practices for strengthening the profile of the teacher profession.