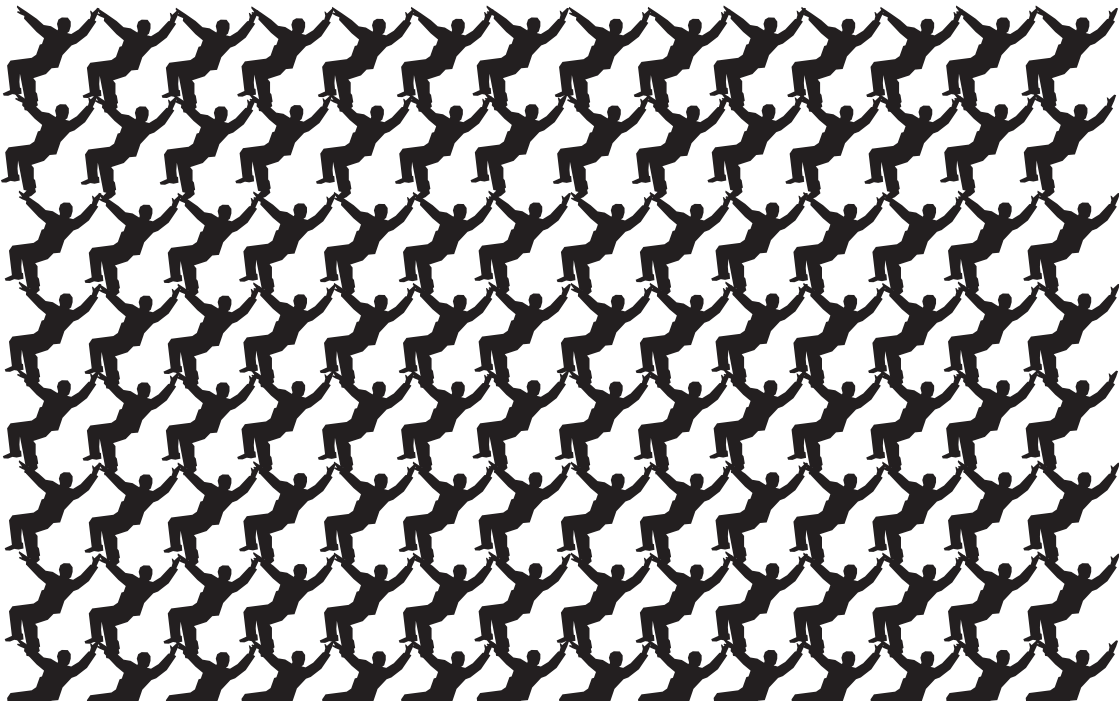


# **Creative partnerships**

**as a process of knowledge creation and cultural participation**

Work-in progress findings from Artesnet  
Strand 1 Creative Partnerships





# A little recap:

## ARTESNET – STRAND 1 - CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Artesnet.europe is a European thematic network under the European Life Long Learning Programme. Strand 1 Creative Partnerships maps existing and builds new creative partnerships between arts institutions and the creative industries/cultural sector.

### Working Package strand 1:

- Mapping, analysing & building creative partnerships
- Exchange of effective practices & development of evaluation criteria
- Support of development of sub network and feeding Teachers Academy 2009

### Approach:

We will work with a wide definition of creative partnerships and we will approach the phenomenon from 3 different perspectives, while at the same time keeping a focus on some central issues.

Small knowledge circles of max 8 partners will be formed, each of them investigating one of the 3 perspectives.

Knowledge circles bring together 7 partners and one expert (from the partner institutions or outside). Before and after their meetings they cooperate via the website. There is an overlap of one or two persons between the knowledge circles.

Each knowledge circle takes care of the dissemination of results in the form of a paper, dvd, website etc.

**To get to know more about Artesnet Strand 1, have a look at our website:**  
<http://creativepartnerships.ning.com>  
**or get in touch with Thera Jonker, Strand Leader:** [thera.jonker@theater.hku.nl](mailto:thera.jonker@theater.hku.nl)  
**or Annefloor Oostinjen, Strand Coordinator:** [annefloor.oostinjen@ke.hku.nl](mailto:annefloor.oostinjen@ke.hku.nl)

### Three perspectives:

1. the (inter)cultural/social perspective of creative partnerships: the impact on (groups in) the community/society
2. the industrial perspective: the innovative impact as a result of partnerships and their economical value
3. the educational perspective: the impact on school programmes, didactic models, learning & teaching styles in the art schools

### First results:

The Utrecht School of the Arts hosted the first Artesnet Strand 1 meeting in May 2008. Fifteen of our strand members came together to discuss critical issues of creative partnerships in an intercultural perspective. The discussions have led to the article presented in this document and three related Pecha Kucha presentations during the Gotenburg Biennale.

### Your input:

We will use the Gothenburg Biennale to start a knowledge circle on creative partnerships between higher arts education institutes and the industries: the industrial perspective.

We are now collecting critical examples from this perspective and are looking for experts to join our meeting in February 2009. We kindly ask you to fill in the form on the last page and return it to us, and/or go to our website, become member, and download your example. Thankyou!

Creative partnerships as a process of knowledge creation and cultural participation presents the first findings from Artesnet Strand 1 about creative partnerships. In the first 'knowledge circle' of Strand 1, a panel of experts and network representatives from across Europe worked together on the topic of intercultural perspectives. This article, mainly based on a meeting that took place in Utrecht on 17-18 May 2008, is a synthesis of their findings and of their 'collective knowledge' on creative partnerships.

The phrase 'creative partnership' is used here to refer to projects involving at least one Higher Education Institution for Arts Education and one external partner, with a particular focus on the arts, culture or creativity and with an impact on a wider community. Typical examples include community arts projects involving students, project cooperations with educational or cultural organizations such as schools, artists associations, festivals, social initiatives etc. Whilst a first inventory of Artesnet Strand 1 has shown that creative partnerships around Europe come in a range of forms and sizes, it is nonetheless possible to identify similarities and to draw conclusions and recommendations that may benefit both existing and new creative partnerships. This article has four purposes:

- To disseminate the on-going findings of Artesnet Strand 1
- To propose a theoretical model for the analysis of creative partnerships
- To provide a practical framework for the development of creative partnerships
- To raise issues about the educational dimension of creative partnerships

### Theoretical context

The study of creative partnerships lies at the interface of several bodies of knowledge, such as research on arts disciplines, arts education and arts management, and the social sciences especially sociology, cultural history and intercultural studies. The academic literature on the topic has traditionally focused on the partners i.e. the organizations that have entered into partnerships (including the Higher Education Institutions themselves) or on the participants who have enjoyed benefitting from these partnerships (including students, educators and the wider community). This paper complements that body of work by focusing not on partners and participants, but on creative partnerships as a process of knowledge creation and at their subsequent contribution to the wider agenda of cultural participation.

**Modelisation:** Devising a dynamic model to understand creative partnerships. This model is inspired by the logistics model of the supply chain and by organisational principles of knowledge transfer. The proposed model however is dynamic in its nature in order to stress the fact that knowledge sharing and knowledge generation are recursive processes rather than linear.

This model presents three features that are inherently typical of creative partnerships:

- Partner organizations and participants all contribute knowledge to the project – yet not only formal and explicit knowledge (such as scholarly expertise or professional competencies and skills such as how to make pottery) but also embodied and implicit knowledge (such as street skills, oral traditions and even emotional commitment).
- The creative partnership itself is conceptualized as a process whereby

existing knowledge is being shared and new knowledge is being created, through the meeting of groups of people who otherwise would not have interacted and worked together.

- In terms of cultural participation, the benefits relate not only to the partners and participants directly involved, who (start to) receive and produce arts and culture in a new context, and therefore get in touch with new knowledge, but also to outside members of a wider community who, on purpose or by



chance, have contact with the outcomes of the projects.

### Three case studies from across Europe

Three case studies, presented and analyzed in depth at the Artesnet Strand 1 meeting in Utrecht (17-18 May 2008), illustrate how this model helps analyze creative partnerships as a process of knowledge creation and cultural participation. These case studies from Rumania, Ireland and The Netherlands reflect the scope and remit of ELIA in its function as a network, both geographically and thematically.

#### Example 1

Project title: “Space – Water and Fire: The Archaeology of space as a source of modern art and eco-design”

Higher Education partner: National University of Art (UNA) from Bucharest (Romania)  
Other partner organizations include local authorities, professional associations of archaeologists, museums, academies of science etc

Participants include local artists and international artists, students, educators, researchers, archaeologists, villagers, shopkeepers etc

New knowledge created includes rediscovery and use of traditions in 21st century Europe, new frontier disciplines like ‘archaeology’ and ‘ethnodesign’

Cultural participation: the partners and participants, but also other villagers, tourists  
As part of a wide-ranging interdisciplinary venture, the small-scale case study of

regeneration of ceramic-making traditions in a Rumanian village illustrates how creative partnerships can successfully result in knowledge creation and cultural participation in a rural context. Old villagers still mastered and practiced the ancestral craft of pottery making, yet a limited repertoire of patterns. The traditional craft was “forgotten” – the project helped the resurrection of it in a village well-known for its prehistoric ceramics. By digging the ground to get clay to make their ovens and pottery, the villagers found artifacts that helped archaeologists (scholars, researchers and students) to discover and recreate ancient ceramic patterns. Those patterns have been adapted by international artists whose creations are touring across Europe; other artists have also used these patterns to devise land arts in the Rumanian countryside. Some local craftsmen have now adopted the patterns for some potteries that they now sell, which helps the regional economy as tourists are coming to see the land arts, the new museum and the patterns rediscovered from the past. The expertise of the archaeologists has indirectly helped the rural economic revival and has made local villagers not only discover long-forgotten artistic patterns, but also engage in new creative activities. The interdisciplinary nature of this project is noteworthy.

#### Example 2

Project title: “Arts pedagogy of empowerment for pre-vocational secondary education”  
Higher Education partner: Utrecht School of the Arts (Netherlands)

Other partner organizations include secondary schools/colleges, community groups, cultural organizations such as youth opera, city council department of art etc

Participants include pupils of ethnic origin,


junior art teachers, freelance artists, researchers, streetwise art educators without professional training

New knowledge created includes a pedagogy of empowerment, new cross-over art forms, new reflections on art forms, new reflections on art pedagogy

Cultural participation: the partners, their artists and educators, the participants, but also the friends and parents, a wider community

This case study of art projects by youngsters of ethnic origin in Utrecht illustrates how creative partnerships can successfully result in both knowledge creation and cultural participation in an urban context. All people involved bring different competencies to the projects: schoolteachers are trained





pedagogues but have limited arts education expertise; street artists can share their skills but do not have any formal teacher training; students and researchers from Utrecht School of Arts are specialists of didactics but do not often work with children of ethnic origin; the children bring their own cultural sensitivity and traditions. At the core of the creative partnership is the dynamic sharing of knowledge (for example with the street artists learning about pedagogy) and the generation of knowledge (for example with the children who now create forms of arts that they did not know about, such as opera). The project also reaches wider audiences. Besides the parents who attend their children's performances, the youngsters get a stage to share their views on life with a general public. The interdisciplinary nature of this project is inherent to the type of arts-knowledge being transferred. The project has been nominated for the Dutch award for innovation of education.

### Example 3

Project title: "Art and possibility"  
Higher Education partner: National College of Art and Design (NCAD) Dublin (Ireland)

Other partner organizations include the national Irish developmental agency CREATE and, indirectly, organisations such as drugs treatment centres and homes for disabled people.

Participants include students, teachers, artists, art critics, drug addicts, disabled people etc

New knowledge created includes a radical re-framing of art and its context, other life experience for the students, new notions of authorship, new art forms

Cultural participation: the partners and participants, a mixed audience of professionals and amateurs, relatives of participants, a wider community of visitors. This case study of participatory art with minority groups in Dublin illustrates how creative partnerships can successfully result in both knowledge creation and cultural participation with people who are sometimes excluded from artistic projects, such as drug-addicts and physically and mentally disabled people. The mediating agency CREATE enables students and tutors to get in contact with groups of possible organizations and participants. Everybody benefits from these projects, from the students who learn how to operate outside the safe environment of their campus and studios, to the participants who can then engage in new forms of art and creative practices.

### Synthesis

At the Artesnet-Strand 1 meeting in Utrecht (17-18 May 2008), participants and network representatives discussed many issues, from empowerment to professionalism and from social entrepreneurship to the role of the artist in society. With a double focus on knowledge creation and cultural participation, three themes emerged and are outlined below: impacts, risk and co-ownership.

Communication of creative partnerships. Artesnet Strand 1 has identified a wide range of impacts of creative partnerships, both direct impacts (on partners and participants themselves, for example the school children in Utrecht who learn about opera singing and stage their own performance) and indirect impacts (on outsiders who incidentally benefit from the project, for example the tourists in Rumania who visit a newly established folk museum of local ceramics). The impacts are

manifold, for instance one could distinguish between social impacts, cultural impacts, creative impacts or economical impacts, though they often overlap. One impact being observed more closely was the participation in culture as a result of creative partnerships. Evaluating and measuring those impacts is often part of the documentary process, as part of the initial fund-raising requirements. In all cases, there is a need for creative partnerships to keep taking the long term into account: for the benefits to be viable and to make a difference, they need to be sustainable. However, this leads to the question of how processes and products are being communicated to the different stakeholders involved? Which forms and media are being used for which audiences?

### Risks of creative partnerships

The creative partnership is a site of both knowledge sharing (for example Rumanian craftsmen and international artists learning from one another) and new knowledge creation (for example Dutch schoolchildren putting on a soundscape together) – but creative partnerships, no matter how well designed and conceived, may not succeed. Creative partnerships include several elements of risk: risks of failure with the delivery itself, risks of misunderstanding of the new knowledge generated, risks of not reaching a wider audience, risks in the quality of the product, risks with the educational dimension of the project, especially when students are assessed. It is not enough to suggest that risks must be accepted and managed: it is important to address the issue of risks right from the start and to include them in the overall design of the project.

Co-ownership of creative partnerships  
A successful creative partnership is one


where there is co-ownership – not only co-ownership of the knowledge generated, but also a genuine attitude of co-ownership of the project as a whole, beyond issues of funding and respective contributions. Different types of knowledge are shared (simply put: with a balanced give and take). It is not possible nor desirable to predict what will happen, for example when a street artist in a Utrecht school encourages young Muslim girls to make a soundscape, or when a sculpture student in Dublin starts molding clay with a mentally disabled man. With creative partnerships, new knowledge emerge, as a result of a synergetic process. The co-ownership of the project as a whole leads to the co-creation of knowledge which, in turns, promotes the accessibility of knowledge, and through this, culture.

Practical framework for the development of creative partnerships

Eight recommendations emerge from the work of Knowledge Circle 1 of the Artesnet Strand 1 in 2008, as eight "ingredients for success" for creative partnerships to ensure both optimal knowledge creation and maximal cultural participation.

### Four recommendations about knowledge creation

- Map the types of knowledge involved, both formally and informally, by all partners and participants.
- Chart the entire process of knowledge creation as a creative process with its ingredients and phases.
- Don't eschew risk: "without risk, magic can't happen".
- Have strategies in place to deal



with interdisciplinary approaches in knowledge creation.

#### Four recommendations about cultural participation

- Chart who benefits from the creative partnership in which ways, both directly (partners and participants) and indirectly (wider communities)
- Capitalise the differences of motivations of all partners and participants in terms of intended and unforeseen impacts.
- Develop a range of communication strategies according to the intended outcomes/products and according to the expectations of the different stakeholders.
- Think long term and sustainable: “you cannot do a project and run”.

#### Implications for higher arts education

From the perspective of higher arts education, the initial exploration of creative partnerships raises a number of issues related to the educational dimension of creative partnerships. These issues will be further explored in Knowledge Circle 3 of Artesnet Strand 1.

In order to optimally involve arts students in creative partnerships, the following points need to be addressed:

- Students should learn about creative partnerships as a process, so they can appreciate the complexity of the project as well as the three important issues of impacts, risks and co-ownership. Programmes and curriculums may need to be revisited to include these new elements.
- Each student should have a personal

toolkit to autonomously contribute to creative partnerships and to reflect upon their participation. Students need to be equipped to move in and out of different partnerships so as to further develop their practice and not to lose their artistic integrity in these creative partnerships themselves.

- Explicit strategies must be formulated so as to include risk and unforeseen outcomes in the learning experience and in the assessment.
- Creative partnerships cause a shift in the role of teacher, who is not the expert source/owner of knowledge any longer, but one participant amongst others. With creative partnerships, the role of the teacher increasingly becomes one of coaching and facilitating. Learners and teachers alike need to be aware of that shift and of its pedagogical consequences.
- Creative partnerships lead to reconsider the “university building” itself (the campus, the studio) which is not the main site of learning any longer: the sites of the creative partnerships (an archaeological dig, a secondary school, a hospital) become the new sites of experiential learning. Consequently, both learners and teachers become nomadic and need to be aware of that shift and its pedagogical consequences and the new function of their regular premises.

All references (inventory of creative partnerships, presentations of case studies, <http://del.icio.us/artesnet> weblibliography) can be found on the Artesnet Strand 1 website:

<http://creativepartnerships.ning.com>

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### Artesnet Strand 1 – Second inventory: the Industrial Perspective

Critical examples of art schools in creative partnership with the industries.  
This inventory serves as a means to collect ideas and good practices as a medium for discussion in the next Artesnet Strand 1 meeting, which will take place in February 2009.

1. Institution, department, course and level:

2. In creative partnership with:

3. Title of the project:

4. Summary of the project in 3 lines:

5. Mutual benefit:

6. Typical and differentiating for this creative partnership:

7. The project has/has not substantial consequences for the policy and activities of the cultural/industrial partner-organisation, because:

8. The project has/has not substantial consequences for the policy and activities of the cultural/industrial partner-organisation, because:

9. The project has/has not substantial consequences for competencies of students and staff, because:

10. The project challenges existing assessment criteria in the course, because:

11. The project involves a departure from existing teaching methodologies, because:

12. The project alters the way that I might structure future projects of a similar type:

13. The project generates income from:

14. Proposed items for discussion...

Download the digital version of the template at <http://creativepartnerships.ning.com> and return it to [annefloor.oostinjen@ke.hku.nl](mailto:annefloor.oostinjen@ke.hku.nl)



### Creative Partnerships

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