



Past - Present - Future

CONCEPT FOR COMPANIES AND THEIR WORK FORCE TO CREATE INDUSTRIAL CULTURE THEMSELVES

Thematic - Concept

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Project Context	3
2. Introduction	4
3. Objective	4
4. Applied Approach	5
5. Results	8
6. Evaluation/transnational added value	8
7. Outlook and sustainability	8

0. Abstract

Within InduCult2.0 project, one of the core aspects is to create awareness among the Industrial workers of the meaning and importance of Industrial Culture for the Region they are living and working...and for their life as well.

Partners City of Leoben and Padova Chamber of Commerce worked on a joint concept, to be tested in the Pilot Actions, to achieve this goal.

The proposed concept stresses the importance of social artistry, which can be a powerful mean to support awareness of local industrial cultures, and of the cultural aspect of industry in the industrial Regions.

In **Leoben and in the region of the Styrian Iron Route** it is planned to involve industrial workers in the industry-cultural festival, in **Padova and Veneto Region** in Arte Padova International Fair and in events to be realized in 2018, in cooperation with the companies. To get their commitment, the awareness of their responsibility has to be raised. The approach will consider all 3 dimensions – past/presence/future –of the Industrial Culture in the Region.

1. Project Context

[InduCult2.0 project](#), financed by the Interreg Central Europe cooperation programme, establishes the idea of Living an Industrial Culture in Central Europe and reveals, strengthens and utilizes the unique cultural spirit of industrial regions.

The underlying basic concept is innovative in itself: Living Industrial Culture goes far beyond heritage preservation and utilization. Instead, past, present and future cultural and creative assets related to industries are combined into one powerful package. This is achieved by cross-sectoral cooperation set up by the partners, bringing together their museums, companies, schools, and creative communities. In this way, Industrial Culture becomes a living and dynamic concept, mirroring the ongoing transformations of the industrial economy and shaping the cultural sphere of affected communities.

The Thematic Work Package T3 “Deploying Industrial Culture for securing labour force and strengthening the regional ties of companies”, moves from the verification that traditional industries have created a distinct work culture made up of certain skills, loyalties, habits, and attitudes. However, recent industrial and social transformations require their adaption. Also, partly because of historic connotations, today industrial work and environments are often perceived as unattractive: one of the reasons why industrial regions suffer from brain-drain, even though jobs are available. Industrial companies, on the other hand, often have not yet discovered the chances of binding /attracting work force by taking on regional responsibility.

Innovative culture-based approaches can help reinforcing regional commitment of both employers and employees.

The concept of Industrial Culture is tested in this WP in its contextual capability to secure labour force and bind companies: for example, focus is placed on raising interest of youth in industries by embedding cultural issues and work options in a regional story of industrial evolution. On the other hand, work force and companies are directly addressed. Throughout the WP, research partners support with input, reflection, and evaluation.

As main WP output, regions draft action plans for deploying Industrial Culture on labour issues and company commitment.

These drafts are based on inter-regional peer review and research input. They are finalized and supplemented to the regional strategy after results of practice tests are available and shared, a. o.:

- increasing capacities of schools as main multipliers towards the young generation with a focus on linking industrial work options with cultural aspects and based on interaction with museums and companies
- approaching companies to bind the work force through culture-related measures, boosting their corporate social responsibility;
- dismantling cultural prejudices on employers' and employees' sides as one of the main obstacles in matching job demands and offers.

Based on peering, action T. 3.4.3. foresees that Project Partners conceive a proposal for companies and their (young) workers to create an Industrial Culture.

2. Introduction

Within the InduCult2.0 project, **Industrial Culture** is understood as a **variety of both tangible and intangible heritage (buildings, traditions), as well as contemporary assets**, such as specific mind-sets, and skills, as well as referring to the reservoir of cultural meaning and practices actors construct in contemporary and active industrial production units. The focus groups organized in both Regions show that workers are not fully aware of the cultural importance of their work; in the same time many young people don't find so attractive the work in the industries, even if there are high wages, compared with other economical sectors.

Industrial companies have highlighted the difficulty to keep especially the educated youth, which prefer often to consider job offers in an urban environment and in other economical sectors.

3. Objective

In the framework of InduCult 2.0 thematic workpackage 3 the City of Leoben and Padova Chamber of Commerce aim at conceiving a joint concept for companies who want to involve

a particular stakeholders' target group, namely the employees, to raise their awareness of the value of the Industrial Culture and of the cultural value of their work.

The focus group have shown that in many cases there isn't a clear link among the concept of Industrial Work and Industrial Culture, and that especially young employees are not aware of the cultural value of their work in the Industry, and consider more "attractive" different job opportunities.

The companies are asking for ways to sensitize young workers about the relevance of the industrial sector, and new means to motivate particularly the young workers to feel the social value of their work in the industrial sector.

4. Applied Approach

4.1. General information

In the regions Padova and "Styrian Iron Route" focus groups on industrial culture were established in Autumn 2016. One of the topics they have been working on is how to promote Industrial Culture to the work force of regional industrial companies and how workers can create Industrial Culture by themselves. The input of the focus groups has been the base for the concept paper. The two partner regions have exchanged ideas via numerous telephone conferences and other forms of exchange and developed a conceptual approach, which is not only applicable in the stated regions, but is a general guideline for industrial regions of how to work on this topic.

4.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

Most definitions of corporate social responsibility describe it as a concept whereby **companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis.**

Three elements build the pillars of CSR:

- social concerns embedded in the company's strategy, beyond legal expectations
- environmental concerns embedded in the company's strategy, beyond legal expectations
- the relations with the stakeholders

A social responsible company is aware of this and consider its different partners as **stakeholders.**

As stated in the EU Green Paper *"Being socially responsible means therefore not only fulfilling legal expectations, but also going beyond compliance and investing "more" into human capital, the environment and the relations with stakeholders. Going beyond basic legal obligations in the social area, e.g. training, working conditions, management-employee relations, can also have a direct impact on productivity. It opens a way of managing change and of reconciling social development with improved competitiveness"*.

Consider social concerns towards the employees means that companies should draft and implement strategies aiming at avoiding discriminations, and improve the relation and the self-realization of employees in the company. This means giving attention to the training and career opportunities for employees, as well as welfare-promoting initiatives.

Beyond the definition of “corporate social responsibility” another focus should be set on the definition of “industrial culture”, which very often considers more or less heritage objects and cultural aspects of the past. However, many young industrial workers do not identify themselves with the industrial culture of the past. They have their own understanding of industrial culture which is also strongly impacted by future developments of industry 4.0. In the times of industrialisation, workers have been proud to be part of a new revolution. Nowadays, many employees fear for their jobs that could be replaced by robots and digitalised production processes. Therefore a new sense of industrial culture and also of corporate social responsibility has to be set, which should also be considered in the concept and evaluated by the academic partners working on the project.

4.3 Social Artistry as a way to “create Industrial Culture”

Social Artistry can be defined as *“the attempt to address or recognize a particular social issue using art and creativity”* (source <http://pyeglobal.org/social-artists/>).

Social artists are therefore people using their creative skills to work with people or organizations in their community and facilitate change.

Social artistry can incorporate several different art forms including theatre, poetry, music and visual art.

Social artistry can be a powerful mean to support awareness of local industrial cultures, and of the cultural aspect of industry in the industrial Regions.

Confindustria Veneto, with the project “alchimie culturali”, stressed the cultural aspect of industrial production, and help the companies to discover a new dimension of their industrial work.

Another interesting project, performed in Veneto Region, was “Copertine di studio”, realized in Padova in 2015-2016.

It’s a communication contest for visual works that unite artistic value to the scientific meaning, promoted by XEARTE Association, with the patronage of the University of Padua, Veneto Region, Padua Municipality, Confindustria Padova. Its goal is to stimulate, in science enthusiasts, the interpretation of research, lessons, studies and reflections from an unusual point of view, dictated by their own imagination. In this way the participants experience a new informal language to explain and show their own study and research experience.

Participants presented representative and communicative works through the most diverse techniques and modes of expression, sending a jpg. image accompanied by a text explaining how the work expresses a particular research or study path.

4.4. Possible intervention paths:

One **possible path** could be to replicate this experience, but in the industrial sector, asking workers and entrepreneurs to try and express the cultural value of their work in a “visual” way.

A social artists’ workshop could be organized, led by social art professionals, and leading to the production of art, explaining their work in an unusual way. The artists/workers would be invited to consider Industrial Culture and to express it in a artistic and innovative way. The art works could then be exposed to the public, easing the awareness of Industrial Culture features in the Region.

This path require a commitment of the involved companies. The possible steps are:

- defining the frame conditions: geographical covering, subjects, dedicated team, Industrial Culture related event or festival which the companies are participating in;
- define the leading artist(s);
- define the procedures and select the workers which will take part to the process;
- set up a specific workshop, highlighting the industrial culture related aspects and present them the trans-national experiences, particularly those referring to InduCult 2.0 partner regions;
- assist companies and workers in their participation
- get a feedback/evaluation

4.5. Interventions in the region Styrian Iron Route and in Padova province

In **Leoben and in the region of the Styrian Iron Route** it is planned to involve industrial workers in the industry-cultural festival. It is considered to gather their stories, which then will be used and performed in a cabaret and musical. They also will be involved in artistic workshops. The essence will be to create their own understanding of industrial culture by getting to know what they consider industrial culture and to get to know their stories, opinions, and needs. This will be the base for the identification work. On the other hand, the involvement and commitment of the employers to take on their corporate social responsibility has to be fostered.

To get their commitment, the awareness of their responsibility has to be raised. The approach will consider all 3 dimensions – past/presence/future – by collecting information of industrial culture of the past – how older employees or already retired employees identify industrial culture – how the current workforce identifies themselves with their work and which culture they live – and how they all see the future when it comes to industrial revolution of industry 4.0 and which consequences the new developments will have on industrial culture in the Region, industrial presence and future, and CSR related issues.

In **Padova province**, it is planned to follow a similar path.

The concept will be presented during a workshop to be held in Arte Padova, International Art Fair in November 2017 in Padova, involving a group of workers/social artists which will set up an innovative interpretation of Industrial Culture features. The Chamber will then publish

a specific notice to promote the action and sensitize companies. In the early 2018 workshop at the company/regional level, companies are expected to foster the commitment of the management and the involvement of the employees. The works produced in the artistic workshops will be then shown to the public during Industrial Culture events foreseen in 2018.

5. Results

The results of the combined actions foreseen in Styria and Veneto will be an increased awareness of the value of industrial culture, and of its meaning for the identity of the region, of the fact that companies and workers are “living expression” of the industrial culture, which is a core part of the cultural heritage of the Regions.

Another result will be an innovative way to link Cultural industries, Artists, Workers and Companies.

6. Evaluation/transnational added value

The cooperation of the partners gave valuable input and inspiration for their individual planned measures. In addition the experience of the regions led to a general conceptional approach which is easily applicable for similar Central European regions. The results will be presented, discussed and spread in the work group meeting in October in Opole/PL.

7. Outlook and sustainability

In the coming year, the conceptional approach will be tested in both regions. This will lead to a broader understanding of what works well and what is difficult to achieve in practice. The companies will be invited to organize a display of the “art works” in an internal event, as well in public industrial culture-related events.

The sustainability of the proposed action will be ensured by the companies and by the Cultural Associations which will be involved in the implementation phase. The proposed interventions don’t require huge investments, but willingness to keep following the path and proceed with the actions. If the companies notice an increased interest by the workers, it’s likely they will go on and consider the proposed action within their CSR strategy and as a way to highlight the personal involvement of the workers in the Industrial Culture Scene.