



Past - Present - Future

CONCEPT FOR COMPANIES PROMOTING INDUSTRIAL CULTURE TO THEIR WORK FORCE

Thematic - Concept

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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 concept envisages two possible paths:

- a) Help companies to raise awareness among workers of the Regional Industrial Culture.** This path requires a strict cooperation with Industrial Museums and Industrial Heritage actors, organizing a communication flow to get information and spread it to the workers, via their companies, or independent ways of communication (like a social network, or a dedicated newsletter).
- b) Help companies to raise awareness among workers of Cultural aspects of their work in the Industry and its ties to Industrial Culture.** This path requires a higher commitment of the involved companies, and could best be tied to the participation of the companies to Industrial Culture related events.

1. Project Context

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

The underlying basic concept is innovative by itself: Living Industrial Culture goes far beyond heritage preservation and utilization. Instead, past, present and future cultural and creative assets related to industry are combined into one powerful package. This is achieved by cross-sectoral cooperation set up by 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 an industrial economy and shaping the cultural sphere of the 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, industrial work and environment are today often

perceived as little attractive: 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 a work force by taking on regional responsibility. Innovative, culture-based approaches can help reinforce 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: On one hand, focus is placed on raising interest of youth in industry 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, 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, companies
- approaching companies to bind work force through culture-related measures, boosting their corporate social responsibility;
- dismantling cultural prejudices of employers' and employees' sides as one main obstacle in matching job demands and offers.

Based on peering, action T. 3.4.1. foresees that project partners help companies to conceive a framework to promote Industrial Culture to their workforce.

2. Introduction & objective

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.

Corporate social responsibility, as defined in the European Union's Green Paper "**Promoting a European framework for Corporate Social Responsibility** ([COM\(2001\) 366](#))", is essentially a concept whereby companies decide voluntarily to contribute to a better society and a cleaner environment. At a time when the European Union endeavours to identify its common values by adopting a Charter of Fundamental Rights, an increasing number of European companies recognise their social responsibility more and more clearly and consider it as part of their identity. This responsibility is expressed towards employees and more generally towards all the stakeholders affected by business and which in turn can influence its success.

In the framework of InduCult 2.0 thematic workpackage 3 the Padova Chamber of Commerce and the city of Leoben aims at working on a joint concept for companies who want to involve a particular stakeholder target group, namely the employees, to raise their

awareness of the value of the Industrial Culture, and how they are a living part of this specific culture which is crucial for the Industrial Region they are living in.

The major issue seems to be how to motivate and organise the companies to promote Industrial Culture awareness and features among their employees.

The focus groups in both regions have shown that in many cases there isn't a clear link among the concept of Industrial Work and Industrial Culture.

3. Applied Approach

3.1. General information

In the Regions "Padova province" 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 to 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 the ideas via numerous telephone conferences and other forms of exchange and developed a conceptional 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. The approach is based on the idea of corporate social responsibility.

3.2 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

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".*

Considering social concerns towards the employees means that companies should draft and implement strategies aiming to avoid discriminations, and improve the relation and the self-realization of employees in the company. This means an attention to the training and

career opportunities for employees, as well as welfare-promoting initiatives and identity-building (e.g. by means of culture).

3.3 CSR as a way to promote Industrial Culture to companies' work force

The food chain companies understood it first: they are not only selling a product, they are selling an emotion. The customer who buys a product doesn't buy only the tangible content, but also the intangible.

Being aware of this, and shifting the concept in the industrial sector, is a challenging issue, tackling also the concept of **regional responsibility**.

Producing in Central European regions means complying regulations that give the product not only a content of objective quality (production techniques-materials), but also a content of immaterial assets, like respecting workers' rights, without discriminations.

These "immaterial assets" are part of the values of the company, but also of the region and its industrial culture.

The research input paper *"INDUSTRIAL CULTURE, LABOUR FORCE AND COMPANIES - Academic recommendations for practical intervention on how to deploy Industrial Culture for securing labour force and strengthening the regional ties of companies"*, published within InduCult 2.0 states:

"In the context of corporate regional responsibility strategies, stakeholders develop close ties with each other in order to improve the local conditions for investments and production as well as to raise the general attractiveness of the region. This includes improved living, working and training conditions as well as soft measures to create positive images and internal as well as external perceptions and avoid or overcome stigmatisation. Such measures would in turn provide the ground for attracting people from outside the region as well as returnees to seek a future in local industry."

Innovative culture-based approaches can help reinforcing regional commitment of both employers and employees. Being a place-based concept - as tied to specific place-bound tangible and intangible remains and attributes of industrial production - it is a unique feature of industrial regions, often providing a link between different generations of people, linking past, present and future. Being a dynamic, socio-cultural concept, Industrial Culture is also capable of evolving along a transforming economic environment".

3.4. Possible intervention paths:

a) **Help companies to raise awareness among workers of the Regional Industrial Culture.** This path requires a strict cooperation with Industrial Museums and Industrial Heritage actors, organizing a communication flow to get information and spread it to the workers, via their companies, or independent ways of

communication (like a social network, or a dedicated newsletter). To do this the possible steps are:

- defining the frame conditions: geographical covering, subjects, platform, dedicated team, information node(s)/hub.
- define the procedures: How can the information about events related to industrial culture be collected? How is it processed?
- promote the offer to companies, and help companies to promote it to their workforce.
- get a feedback/evaluation

b) Help companies to raise awareness among workers of Cultural aspects of their work in the Industry and its ties to Industrial Culture. This path requires a higher commitment of the involved companies, and could best be tied to the participation of the companies to Industrial Culture related events. To achieve this, 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 procedures and select the workers which will present their company, or their department, to visitors;
- set up a specific training, highlighting the industrial culture related aspects and present them trans-national experiences, particularly those referring to InduCult 2.0 partner regions;
- assist companies and workers in their participation in the chosen event
- get feedback/evaluations

4. Results

4.1. Interventions for Padova

In Padova the project partner and the stakeholders agreed to focus on line (b), and to promote awareness of Industrial Culture working on the participation of CSR-oriented companies to Industrial Culture festivals, like “Open Factory”.

A specific cooperation agreement with the Open Factory network will be signed, and to all companies specific training seminars will be proposed focussed on workers and employees who never took part in communication events or in relations with visitors in their factory. The training will focus on Industrial Culture aspects, more than safety or security aspects. Tutors will then assist and monitor workers in their participation in the event, as “ambassadors of the regional Industrial Culture”.

Nevertheless the Chamber and its stakeholders agreed on the importance to work also on the line (a). This will be combined also with the touristical promotion towards tourists and visitors. The Destination Management Organization will release a specific newsletter

highlighting the events related to Industrial Culture in the Region, the employees of the Regional companies will be informed through their companies (when possible) and welfare related points.

4.2. Interventions in the region Styrian Iron Route

The Styrian Iron Route will alternatively focus on line (a) - help companies to raise awareness among workers of the Regional Industrial Culture (IC). The approach is mainly a promotional one. Following aspects arise.

1. Promotion/information transfer means in the first step to find the right channels to distribute information. In companies such as Voest-Alpine, Erzberg and Gösser brewery, the main actors are the CEOs and their communication departments, and in addition the workers' council (staff association) and the apprentices' instructors. They have to be convinced (e.g. through the argumentation paper – output T1.3.1) to become multipliers and distribute relevant information.
 2. Definition of Industrial Culture topics to be promoted. These will be mainly
 - IC – related events (e.g. industrial culture festival - output T2.4.3)
 - Offers of heritage institutions such as museums
 - Touristic offers dealing with IC (e.g. “Adventure tours at Erzberg”; “mining railway tours”, see also concept T2.5.3)
 - Offers of how workers can actively participate in IC (e.g. in heritage associations etc.)
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1. Definition of promotion channels
 - Use of internal company information system (e.g. internal mailing to all employees)
 - Use of other internal resources: Blackboard, company magazine, or newsletter etc.
 - Use of company events (e.g. regular employees meeting) for communication
 - Target group “youth”: The instructors of the apprentices can be important “mouth-to-mouth” communicators, and they could also organize the young work force within the apprentices' programme to actively participate in IC.

5. Evaluation/transnational added value

The cooperation of the partners gives valuable input and inspiration for their individually 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.

6. 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 sustainability of the proposed action will be ensured by the companies and the relevant actors. The proposed interventions don't require 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.