

## *MuseumEdu 8*

### **Educational Commons and Inclusion**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

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The current edition of the *MuseumEdu* Journal is dedicated to the International Conference of the SMOOTH project (<https://smooth-ecs.eu/>), hosted at the University of Thessaly from 26 to 28 of May 2023 in Volos, Greece. This event, supported by the European Union through Horizon 2020 funding (grant agreement 101004491), aimed to bring together a diverse audience, including researchers, academics, practitioners, educators, curators, civil society organizations, activists, journalists, and policy-makers. The conference focused on exploring the challenges and opportunities of commons-oriented education to address inequalities, showcase successful practices from ongoing smooth case studies and other projects, and contribute to political decision-making processes about education.

The SMOOTH project critically examines the implications of commons-based approaches in reshaping education and fostering broader social change grounded in principles of equality, sharing, participation, togetherness, caring, and freedom. The project proposes an innovative action research program to: reverse inequalities; strengthen intercultural and intergenerational dialogue and social inclusion; develop vital social and personal skills for the children and adults; create smooth spaces of democratic citizenship and experimentation with new ways of thinking and doing on the basis of equality, collaboration, collective creativity, sharing and caring; and, build and foster community through differences. Specifically, from 2021 onwards, in the context of the SMOOTH project, research is being carried out in several European countries to study whether and how educational commons can reverse inequalities. In particular, around fifty case studies are being implemented in formal and non-formal education settings in eight different countries: Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

The conference delved into the concept of ‘educational commons’, emphasizing learning communities where decisions about the educational process are collectively made by teachers, learners, and their guardians, ensuring equal participation. Education, learning and teaching, in this context, were viewed as a ‘common good or resource,’ collectively shaped and managed by the educational community with a commitment to equality, freedom, and participation.

The overarching goal of the conference was to advance the field of educational commons by exploring theoretical and empirical perspectives on key research questions, including the potential of educational commons to act as catalysts for reversing inequalities and promoting inclusion strategies for children and youth at risk in Europe. The conference addressed active social inclusion through various methodologies such as action research, pedagogical documentation, active listening, ethnography, and discourse analysis. Furthermore, it focused on proposing enhancements to educational policies and the development of recognition tools for evaluating the outcomes of commons-oriented learning practices.

Following the successful completion of the conference, presenters were provided with the opportunity to feature their contributions in the current issue of the *MuseumEdu* Journal. This issue pieced together a pedagogical, political, and intellectual agenda for commoning the realm of education that privatization has wrecked, for introducing a democratic participatory form of governance and learning, for liberating children, pupils and students, teachers and educators from the drudgery of predefined curricula and outcomes. The articles of this issue depict how commoning of education could emancipate our lives, and communities. The issue aspires to be a rigor and timely addition to the body of Educational Commons' work.

This issue comprises a collection of papers in English, focusing on specific themes:

1. **Commoning Public School**
2. **Alternative Pedagogies and Solidarity Schools**
3. **Inclusive Educational Paths**
4. **Art, Architecture, and Creativity as Commons**
5. **Challenges of Educational Commons**

The initial thematic topic, **Commoning Public School**, delves into articles exploring the practical implementation of the educational commons theory within formal public education structures. All case studies are meticulously designed based on fundamental commons' values such as cooperation, sharing, care, equal freedom, solidarity, social engagement, and self-acting. In the paper titled a. *Implementing the Theory of Educational Commons in Alternative Prevention Approaches for Addiction*, authored by Evi Adamopoulou, Alexandros Kiouпкиolis, and Yannis Pechtelidis, the focus is on innovative inclusive strategies in a public vocational school within the educational commons' framework. Similarly, b. *'We Win When We Are Together': Sharing, Caring, and Cooperation Among Preschool Children - Two Case Studies from the Horizon Project 2020 SMOOTH*, authored by Angeliki BotonakiChrysa Gatzelaki, Elena Viseri, and Yannis Pechtelidis, highlights research outcomes from the SMOOTH Project. It illustrates the active involvement of both adults and children in co-shaping their community, collaboratively addressing

challenges. The Following two papers, c. *Applying Pedagogical Practices of the Commons for an Entire School Year: Feasible or Despairing?* by Stelios Pantazidis; d. and 'Common education in schools Gauging potentials for democratic transformation. A case study from Greece' by Alexandros Kioupkiolis, explore how educational commons contribute to co-managing common goods like knowledge, transforming conventional education into democratic communities fostering solidarity identities through social engagement in formal and non-formal educational settings respectively.

Moving to the second thematic topic, **Alternative Pedagogies and Solidarity Schools** the focus shifts to progressive education forms like Freinet Pedagogy or the Reggio Emilia approach, developed within formal and non-formal education structures. The contributions within this theme, such as a. *Working with children inside and outside school: Skasiarchio's Social Pedagogy Group in action*, authored by Anastasia Karagianni and Charalampos Baltas; b. *You have a right. The right to be happy. How to achieve this with Freinet's Methodology* by Kalliopi Mathioudaki, and Vasiliki Spita; c. *Alternative pedagogies, heterotopias or real utopias in education: advancing freedom and equality: A Realistic Utopia for a Libertarian School of Commons* by Yannis Pechtelidis, Silia Raditsa, Sofia Sarakenidou, and Sasa Dimitriadou; and d. *Co-operation and Co- construction of knowledge through free expression within the context of Freinet's Pedagogy* by Fotini Dimopoulou, Marilena Georganta, highlight that the educational tools derived from these approaches empower participants to explore the world, foster self-development, and cultivate skills such as critical thinking, cooperation, and free experimentation.

Moreover, the case study e. *Intercultural Learning in Nature during Early Childhood: Insights from a Pedagogical Community* written by Aikaterini Varella demonstrates how self-organized and libertarian learning communities not only challenge cultural and gender stereotypes but also mitigate conflicts by instilling values such as autonomy, sharing, and solidarity. Finally, the case study f. *Community-based pedagogy and solidarity practices in teacher education: A case study* by Anastasios Siatras and Alexandros Mokias explores the way solidarity identities are built through university students' participation in social justice activities.

The third thematic topic, **Inclusive Educational Paths**, explores innovative approaches to inclusive education within both formal and non-formal educational settings. The papers presented in this section focus on creating a just educational environment by incorporating the concept of educational commons. The overarching goal of the research within this theme, exemplified in works such as a. *Theoretical Perspectives and Teaching Approaches on Integrating Modern Greek History in Kindergarten for Refugee Awareness* by Bantiou Marina; b. *Self-organization of migrant & refugee students through pedagogical practices of the commons* by Sophia Moisiadou and Stelios Pantazidis; c. *Free the imprisoned knowledge! - Inclusive*

*educational paths in prisons* by Chiara Dell'Oca and Arianna Zottarel; and d. *Transnational Gangs as Agents of Educational Commons: The Experience of an Exhibition* by Carles Feixa and Montserrat Iniesta, is to design pedagogical interventions and interdisciplinary approaches. These approaches aim to foster inclusive strategies not only for students but also for diverse groups such as refugees, migrants, Roma, and youth gangs.

Furthermore, e. Ingrid Otepka's work on *Four Approaches Promoting Social Learning, Conflict Resolution, Resilience, and Engagement* contributes to the development of pedagogical methods that strive to promote inclusivity across various participant groups. The focus extends beyond traditional student populations, encompassing refugees, migrants, Roma communities, and youth gangs. In parallel, f. Olga Imellou's research, titled *Designing a Just/Equitable Education for Persons with Disability/Special Educational Needs: An Enhanced Interdisciplinary Educational Commons Perspective Focused on Policy and Practice as Technology*, highlights the potential of educational methods grounded in commons' principles. The study suggests inclusive learning pathways that have the capacity to advance freedom and equality in educational contexts, particularly for individuals with disabilities or special educational needs.

The fourth thematic topic, **Art, Architecture, and Creativity as Commons** includes a collection of articles delving into the concept of Educational Commons across diverse research domains, with a specific focus on Art and Architecture. These articles explore pedagogical processes implemented in various projects, resulting in the development of participant-centered approaches to Museum Education and Architecture. The case studies a. by Elina Moraitopolou, Elena Viseri, Panagiotis Kanellopoulos, and Niki Nikonanou: *It takes a lot of energy to do[ing] nothing: refusals and idleness*; b. by Maria Kechagioglou, Christina Papaioakeim, EviPapavergou, and Katerina Paraskeva: *Reforming the Educational Approach of Museum Education: Lessons Learnt from Participation in the SMOOTH Project*; and c. by Christina Mavini, Villy Polyzouli, and Effie Skylitsi: *"Hear, we go again" of MOMus Museum of Contemporary Art: Challenges and Reflections*, reveal that implementing educational practices based on the philosophy of the commons, empower participants, encourage active learning but also foster a deeper understanding of both their experiences and prior knowledge. Furthermore, the case studies presented in this section highlight openings and resistances in practicing educational commons in museums.

Similarly, open projects such as d. *Digital Design and Construction Commons and Their Role in Architectural Technology Education* organized by Dimitris Psychogyios; and e. *From Personal to Public Claim: How Architectural Education Can Be Important for the Rest of the Campus?* by Elisavet Kiourtsoglou serve as inspirational catalysts. These initiatives become sources of inspiration and triggers for commoning

procedures, facilitating co-decision and co-creation among participants. In these environments, where the concepts of ‘space’, ‘time’, ‘museum’, and ‘knowledge’ are regarded as common goods, the community is empowered to govern them with the values of commons.

Finally, the thematic topic **Challenges of Educational Commons** delves into the multifaceted issues surrounding the theoretical framework of educational commons, offering diverse perspectives on the subject. The following papers contribute valuable insights to this field: a. *Constructing educational commons: Feminist methodological process from research to praxis* authored by Lucía del Moral-Espín, Beatriz Gallego Noche, Cristina Serván Melero; b. *The Educational Commons and Democratic Education: a possible synergy* by Charlie Moreno-Romero; c. *Participatory reuse of materials as an educational process of sharing knowledge and creating communities* by Maria Dimitriou-Tsaknaki; and d. *The building of pedagogical material, an alternative way to educate using educational commons* by Antoine Henry, Alain Mille, and Jérémie Virgo. These papers collectively present educational commons not merely as a theoretical concept but as a framework capable of scaffolding educational practices.

Furthermore, the case studies presented by e. Camilla Löf *Chaos as a Common Good? On Circus Pedagogy for Children and Youth on the Move*; and f. Sonia Páez de la Torre, Belén Beltrán-Beltrán, and Santiago Guerrero-Benalcázar on *Youth Participation: Results, Limits, and Challenges of Applying Educational Commons* illustrate how the integration of different methodologies with educational commons can foster community practices, stimulate creativity, and enhance participation and motivation. These case studies highlight the practical implications of educational commons, showcasing its potential to shape diverse educational landscapes.

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