

The Cultural Welfare Ecosystem: Proximity, Collective Agency, and Social Cohesion in Bologna

Roberta Paltrinieri, University of Bologna

Orkide Izci, University of Bologna

ABSTRACT

This article examines the cultural welfare ecosystem of Bologna's Santo Stefano District as part of a national research project funded under the Projects of Relevant National Interest initiative. Drawing on a qualitative and participatory action research design, the study is based on semi-structured interviews with 18 local associations, from which four domains of the district's cultural ecosystem emerge: cultural citizenship and accessibility; education and training; inequalities and social inclusion; and culture-led urban regeneration for social cohesion. Within this ecosystem, cultural welfare operates as a relational infrastructure in which artistic, educational, and community practices foster proximity, belonging, and collective agency, strengthening social cohesion and counteracting fragility. The article conceptualizes it as a form of second-welfare social infrastructure generating collective well-being and agency through community-embedded cultural practices.

RÉSUMÉ :

Cet article examine l'écosystème du bien-être culturel du quartier de Santo Stefano à Bologne, dans le cadre d'un projet de recherche national financé au moyen de l'initiative « Projets d'intérêt national ». En suivant une approche de recherche-action participative et qualitative, cette étude repose sur des entretiens semi-structurés menés auprès de 18 associations locales, d'où émergent quatre domaines de l'écosystème culturel du quartier : la citoyenneté culturelle et l'accessibilité; l'éducation et la formation; les inégalités et l'inclusion sociale; et la régénération urbaine axée sur la culture au service de la cohésion sociale. Au sein de cet écosystème, le bien-être culturel fonctionne comme une infrastructure relationnelle dans laquelle les pratiques artistiques, éducatives et communautaires favorisent la proximité, le sentiment d'appartenance et le pouvoir d'agir collectif, renforçant ainsi la cohésion sociale et luttant contre la fragilité. Cet article conceptualise le bien-être culturel comme une forme d'infrastructure sociale de « second bien-être » générant une aisance et une capacité d'action collectives grâce à des pratiques culturelles ancrées dans la communauté.

Keywords / Mots clés : cultural welfare, community well-being, proximity and relational infrastructures / bien-être culturel, bien-être communautaire, infrastructure de proximité, infrastructure relationnelle

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary welfare systems are facing a profound structural transformation. The traditional model of state-based welfare, built around universal public services and redistributive mechanisms, is increasingly challenged by fiscal constraints, demographic pressures, and the growing complexity of social (Ferrera, 2007; Natili, Kyriazi, & Ronchi, 2025). In this context, second welfare arrangements, namely complementary interventions co-produced by local authorities, third-sector organizations, foundations, and private actors, have emerged as crucial spaces of social innovation, prevention, and capability-building (Maino, 2023). At the same time, processes of individualization (Bauman, 2000) and the growing social logic of singularities (Reckwitz, 2020), which increasingly valorize unique and particular experiences over shared ones, are eroding the relational and communal infrastructures that historically sustained collective well-being, particularly in urban neighbourhoods characterized by socio-demographic heterogeneity and concentrated vulnerability. Against this backdrop, cultural welfare has emerged as a distinctive field of practice and inquiry, one that brings together cultural institutions and community organizations through artistic practices, generating well-being, proximity, inclusion, and empowerment within locally rooted, multi-actor collaborations.

This article examines how the principles of cultural welfare emerge from the everyday practices of associations active in Bologna's Santo Stefano District. Located in one of Italy's most innovative cities for community welfare and civic participation, the Santo Stefano District offers a compelling case for understanding how cultural welfare operates as a relational and territorial infrastructure in everyday practice. By focusing on one of the most socio-demographically heterogeneous districts of Bologna, where students, long-term residents, migrant communities, and affluent households coexist, the analysis shows how cultural welfare is not a predefined program but a situated, community-embedded practice that emerges through proximity, participation, and inter-organizational collaboration.

Drawing on a qualitative, participatory research design based on 18 semi-structured interviews with local associations, this article makes two interconnected contributions. Empirically, it maps the cultural welfare ecosystem of the Santo Stefano District, identifying four interconnected domains through which cultural welfare practices emerge: cultural participation, education and training, health and well-being, social inclusion, and culturally led urban regeneration. Theoretically, it conceptualizes cultural welfare as a form of second-welfare infrastructure that can generate collective well-being, social cohesion, and civic agency through community-embedded cultural practices, enriching the debate on the relationship between cultural participation, proximity, and community resilience.

To situate this contribution theoretically, we begin by outlining the conceptual foundations of cultural welfare.

The definition of cultural welfare introduces a new integrated model to promote the well-being and health of individuals and communities through practices based on visual and performing arts and cultural heritage. Cultural welfare is based on the recognition, also sanctioned by the World Health Organization (WHO), of the effectiveness of specific cultural, artistic, and creative activities (Cicerchia, Rossi Ghiglione, & Seia, 2020). In particular, cultural welfare, as promoted by experiences developed in the Anglo-Saxon world and in Canada, adopts a biopsychosocial and health-generating perspective, at the centre of which are placed coping skills and the development of life skills.

Under the broader umbrella of cultural welfare are good practices that promote empowerment and subjective well-being, individual social capital, relating to relational aspects, combating inequalities in health and access to resources, accompanying active ageing, and combating psychophysical decline (Paltrinieri, 2025). The objective of cultural welfare, in this health-oriented view of the individual, is to increase cultural participation to improve the quality of life of physically and psychologically fragile people. We owe this approach to the medical sociologist Aaron Antonovsky, who in 1979 stated that, in terms of prevention, it is more important to focus on resources and people's ability to create health than on the classical focus on risks and illnesses.

In this article, we situate cultural welfare within the broader framework of "second welfare" (Maino, 2023, p. 55). First, state-based welfare is primarily organized around universal public services and public funding. Second, welfare refers to a complementary set of interventions that are not exclusively financed or managed by the public sector, but are co-produced by local authorities, third-sector organizations, foundations, and private actors. These arrangements are explicitly oriented toward social innovation, prevention, and the strengthening of people's capabilities, rather than the mere compensation of risks. Cultural welfare represents a specific expression of this second welfare: it mobilizes cultural institutions, community organizations, and artistic practices to generate well-being, inclusion, and empowerment through locally rooted, multi-actor collaborations.

According to the cultural welfare perspective, caring for the individual depends on a systematic collaborative relationship among professionals from different disciplines and, above all, on the integration of purposes among the institutional systems of health, social policy, and the arts and culture. On this basis, the Arts on Prescription (AoP) program was implemented in the United Kingdom in 1994. The program, which is based on the belief that participation in a creative activity can promote health and well-being, is part of the broader category of social prescriptions that health professionals and/or social workers can give to their patients. In this case, cultural experiences, such as dance, painting, and visits to heritage sites, are all contexts in which artists or curators can become mediators and initiate people within communities into paths of well-being (Bungay & Clift, 2010).

Art therapy, also of Anglo-Saxon origin, combines art therapy and dance-movement therapy with a psychoanalytic and psychodynamic approach, and can also be reread from a health-oriented perspective, pioneered by Judith Rubin (2016). In the 1980s, a partnership was formed between Italian Art Therapy and Goldsmiths, University of London, to recognize the Art Psychotherapist certificate. The arts on prescriptions approach and art therapy, which have a common matrix in Anglo-Saxon culture, move from the assumption that health support, through artistic language, can promote people's mental well-being and, for this reason, have a positive impact on welfare. In fact, if engaging in creative activities can reduce anxiety, stress, and the effects of mood disorders, then these same activities can become an excellent tool for reducing welfare costs while producing an improvement in the quality of life.

The again, a more purely collective and community-oriented perspective, concerns the innovative form of welfare and the broader processes of social and cultural innovation (Andersen & Pors, 2016). Importantly, the relationship between social innovation and cultural processes runs on two tracks.

On the one hand, cultural values and processes are the fuel for social innovation; on the other hand, social innovation can be defined as the ability to achieve certain common goals through creative means (Manzini, 2019).

At the centre of cultural welfare, from a more collective perspective, lies the theme of agency and the theme of the cultural capacitation of communities, that is, the capacity to generate alternative landscapes, following Appadurai's (1996) theory of imagination, in order to promote culturally oriented and therefore transformative social action. This vision implies a way of thinking and acting, individually and collectively, that is creative, collaborative, responsible, and capable of virtuously impacting the forms of life, living, producing, consuming, and organizing, from the perspective of the communities of practice proposed by Etienne Wenger (1998). As Wenger reiterates, it is precisely in situated practices and spheres that a generative process emerges, and nurturing processes connected to practices of reflexive action allow one to learn from experience in a transformative manner.

Thus, culture feeds the infrastructure that supports the connective tissue of local ecosystems by fostering trust and collaboration. Capacitating people, collectives, and organizations means redistributing information and knowledge that enable the definition of shared rules of conduct and the development of joint initiatives, thus facilitating the transition processes so important in contemporary reality.

The acts of planning, producing, distributing, redistributing, and consuming culture form a value chain that has a profound social impact. However, if culture is a place where cultural capacities are developed, they are not equally distributed. In fact, their proliferation is shaped by inequalities in material, cognitive, and social resources, which in turn affect the ability to navigate among a complex set of rules, from which to reappropriate a way of representing the future. This is why it is suitable to talk about the production of collective cultural capital, which is both the prerequisite and the product of transformative action by third-sector actors.

As a consequence, cultural welfare (Manzoli & Paltrinieri, 2021) must be reinterpreted by synergistically promoting cultural practices and their networking. This means promoting the co-planning of circular subsidiarity, at the centre of which there must be the production of cultural capacities. In this way, redistribution processes aim to increase awareness of which model of society one wants to belong to.

If one accepts the assumptions of this different approach to culture, cultural welfare must therefore aim at a process of growth in cultural participation, where the ultimate goal of its activation is the promotion of cultural citizenship (Klaus & Lünenborg, 2012). Here, obviously, we do not mean to speak of the legal dimension of citizenship and the process of its recognition, but rather of cultural citizenship as access to knowledge, communication, and, above all, to the social responsibility that derives from it, with a view to the construction of imaginaries and communities. From this theoretical standpoint, our understanding of cultural welfare points to a model that is neither reparative nor standardized, but rather capable of producing flexible, customized, and multidimensional responses aimed at promoting collective cultural capital and, at the same time, prefiguring future and possible scenarios. Such a model, however, does not exist in the abstract: it emerges from specific places, communities, and social configurations, as the case of the Santo Stefano District illustrates. The

socio-demographic profile of this district is therefore not merely a backdrop but a constitutive element of its cultural welfare ecosystem.

Demographic context of the Santo Stefano District

Santo Stefano is one of Bologna's most socio-demographically diverse districts, spanning the eastern historic centre, the university area, several suburban zones, and the hillside neighbourhoods, which are characterized by a markedly higher socio-economic profile among residents than the rest of the district. Following the 2016 reform of Bologna's decentralization regulation, the district has been subdivided into four territorial areas: Irnerio, extending between Via Indipendenza, Porta San Donato, and Porta San Vitale, and including the university zone up to Piazza Aldrovandi; Galvani, stretching from Piazza Aldrovandi to the southern city walls, incorporating the courthouse area and reaching Viale Gozzadini/Panzacchi; Murri, located outside the historic centre, extending eastward from Porta Santo Stefano to the borders of the Savena District; and Colli, positioned south of the historic core, extending from Porta San Mamolo across the hillside areas situated between the Savena and Porto-Saragozza districts.

The district has 64,619 residents (34,607 women and 30,012 men) and is marked by an aging population (15,656 residents are over 65) alongside a substantial community of off-site students. The number of foreign residents (7,425) is comparatively lower than in other Bologna districts such as Navile or San Donato–San Vitale. The Murri area is the most multicultural, while Irnerio emerges as the most socially fragile.

According to the *Programmi Obiettivo* for 2025–2027,¹ issued by the Municipality of Bologna, as well as the qualitative evidence collected for this study, Irnerio's fragility manifests on both the demand side due to the high concentration of residents with social and economic needs and vulnerabilities, and the supply side, given the limited presence of institutional proximity services connected to district-level governance. Given these indications of socio-territorial fragility, Irnerio was identified as a priority area for the mapping and qualitative phases of the study, allowing the research to concentrate on the district's most complex configurations of need and cultural welfare potential.

Many of the associations interviewed operate primarily in this area, developing place-based and proximity-oriented initiatives that respond directly to specific needs and local forms of fragility. Understanding these demographic patterns and the related social dynamics is therefore essential for designing cultural welfare strategies that are responsive to the district's composition, socio-economic dynamics and evolving needs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research conducted in the Santo Stefano District employed a qualitative and participatory methodology, engaging the district's components, particularly the *President of the District* and the *Ufficio Reti* (Networking Office), as central collaborators throughout all phases of the study.

Research design and data collection

The project was conceived and implemented as a participatory action research initiative, grounded in the principles of co-design and collaborative governance, to map the cultural ecosystem of the

Santo Stefano District in relation to cultural welfare practices. It was jointly developed by the Achille Ardigò School of the Municipality of Bologna, the Santo Stefano District (an administrative unit within the city's decentralized governance system) and the Department of Arts at the University of Bologna.

The first phase of the project centred on joint planning and included establishing a steering committee, implementing an outreach process, and co-designing research instruments. Within this collaborative framework, the Achille Ardigò School, the Santo Stefano District, and the university research team worked collectively to define the salient contextual features of the district and to identify a qualitative sample of third-sector associations active in the area. The selection was informed by criteria developed together with the *Ufficio Reti* of the Santo Stefano District (Networking Office), the municipal unit responsible for promoting community networks, participatory planning, and coordination among local actors.

This co-design phase laid the foundation for the subsequent stage of fieldwork and data collection, ensuring that the research tools and sampling strategy were not only methodologically robust but also deeply responsive to the district's social dynamics and to the participatory ethos underpinning Bologna's community welfare model (Manzoli & Paltrinieri, 2021).

In total, 18 associations were selected for inclusion in the study. These associations operate primarily in the Irnerio area, identified as one of the most socio-economically fragile parts of the district. Each organization participated in an in-depth, semi-structured interview designed to explore its history, activities, and the perceived role of culture and the arts in fostering community well-being and cultural welfare. The semi-structured interviews explored several key dimensions: the general history and mission of each association; the activities and projects implemented within the Santo Stefano District; the perceived role of culture and the arts in promoting community well-being and, more broadly, in shaping the concept of cultural welfare; the existence and functioning of local networks and collaborations, along with the main challenges encountered; the tools and methods employed for impact evaluation; and finally, the ongoing and potential partnerships among local actors that could support the future development of cultural welfare initiatives within the district. Collectively, these dimensions were designed to map the constellation of the district's cultural welfare ecosystem, highlighting how third-sector organizations, through community welfare processes, actively promote cultural participation, inclusion, and well-being as interconnected components of the same relational fabric.

Between October 2024 and February 2025, the research team conducted semi-structured interviews with the selected associations, committees, and *Case di Quartiere* (Community Houses). Whenever possible, the interviews were conducted on-site, within the association's physical spaces, allowing the researchers to observe the environments and ongoing activities directly. In a limited number of cases, particularly when logistical or space constraints made in-person meetings unfeasible, interviews were conducted online. The participants typically included the president or a representative of each organization, although in several cases, additional members or collaborators were present, enriching the collective perspective. The interviews lasted between 50 and 75 minutes and often extended beyond the formal question framework, as many participants invited the research team to explore their spaces, observe their initiatives, and engage in informal exchanges. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed ver-

batim. The transcriptions were then coded thematically using a qualitative content analysis approach to identify recurring patterns and categories related to cultural welfare practices, meanings, and organizational dynamics. In presenting the empirical excerpts throughout this article, all identifying information, such as the names of associations, projects, or specific organizational references, has been deliberately omitted. This choice responds both to ethical considerations regarding the privacy of participants and to explicit requests made by several organizations and institutional actors to avoid public exposure or potential misinterpretation of their statements. This analytical process enabled the tracing of interconnections among actors, spaces, and activities, revealing how cultural initiatives, networks, and collaborations help shape a shared ecosystem of welfare at the district level. In this sense, the qualitative data not only captured the narratives and experiences of single associations but also illuminated the relational dimension of the cultural welfare ecosystem, its nodes, synergies, and tensions, enabling the research team to conceptualize the Santo Stefano District as a constellation of cultural, social, and institutional relations that collectively sustain community well-being.

Data analysis and results

Based on the interviews conducted, it was possible to synthesize, within a conceptual map, four macro-categories that emerged from the data, defining the cultural welfare ecosystem of the Santo Stefano District. These categories encompass the primary domains through which local associations contribute to community well-being, ranging from cultural participation and education to social inclusion and urban regeneration, and together illustrate the interconnected nature of welfare practices within the district's socio-cultural fabric. A summary of these four domains is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of the four macro-categories that define the cultural welfare ecosystem of the Santo Stefano District, as identified through the qualitative analysis of interviews with local associations

Domain	Activities	Objectives	Beneficiaries
3.1 Cultural Welfare: Promotion of cultural citizenship and accessibility	Organization of cultural events such as concerts, theatre performances, open-air cinema, reading clubs, book presentations, choirs, social and role-playing games, as well as courses and workshops in artistic and cultural fields	To strengthen the social fabric through culture and participation	The general public and a heterogeneous audience of all ages
3.2 Education and Training	Educational laboratories, workshops, artistic residencies, courses, seminars, and activities promoting historical memory, storytelling, and autobiography as practices of education and awareness	To foster awareness and the development of critical thinking skills, and to build communities of critical and reflective thought	Children, students, women, and citizens interested in cultural and social issues
3.3 Cultural Welfare for Reducing Inequalities and Promoting Social Inclusion	Artistic seminars and workshops aimed at reducing inequality, reintegration activities in prisons, and support for victims of violence	To promote social inclusion, empower disadvantaged individuals, and raise awareness of rights and advocacy	Former detainees and people, especially women and children, facing social marginalization or disadvantage

Table 1 (continued)

Domain	Activities	Objectives	Beneficiaries
3.4 Cultural-led urban regeneration for social cohesion	Redevelopment and maintenance of public spaces, creation of community spaces, and participatory management of common goods	To counter urban decay, promote socialization and well-being, and strengthen the sense of community	Citizens of all ages, district residents, with special attention to children and vulnerable groups

These four domains should not be understood as isolated or mutually exclusive categories, but rather as interconnected and overlapping dimensions of a dynamic cultural welfare ecosystem. Many organizations operate across multiple areas simultaneously, reflecting the hybrid and cross-sectoral nature of their practices. The conceptual map, therefore, captures the relational complexity of the district's ecosystem, where cultural, social, and educational activities converge to promote civic and cultural participation, well-being, and inclusion. This multidimensional configuration underscores how cultural welfare functions not as a discrete policy field but as an integrated system of community-based practices that intertwine artistic expression, social innovation, social cohesion and local development.

For each category, the conceptual map outlines the primary activities undertaken, the objectives pursued, and the key beneficiary groups within the respective domain. The interconnections among these categories highlight how shared goals and multi-sectoral engagement generate an integrated system of socio-cultural intervention. Multiple initiatives were found to span different categories, as many organizations operate simultaneously within overlapping and interconnected areas of social and cultural action. This hybrid and cross-cutting nature makes it difficult to delineate rigid boundaries between categories. Consequently, the conceptual map should be understood as a representational framework that reflects the complexity of an ecosystem in which macro-categories serve as interpretive guides, without exhausting the richness of the intersections among practices, domains, and aims. To protect the privacy of participants and organizations involved, the names of the associations have not been included in this conceptual map.

Cultural welfare: Promotion of cultural citizenship and accessibility

This dimension of cultural welfare is characterized by a wide range of activities, including the organization of cultural events, such as concerts, theatre performances, open-air cinema, choirs, and musical initiatives, as well as social gatherings like board games and role-playing games. These initiatives engage participants in imaginative practices that foster reflection and meaning-making within a collective and creative framework.

The social value of culture takes on greater depth when considered alongside contemporary debates on the symbolic centrality of cultural heritage, which offer a useful theoretical lens for interpreting the fieldwork findings. Cultural heritage is not limited to monuments: it can be tangible or intangible, movable or immovable, intact or ruined, human-made or natural, sacred or secular, artistic or vernacular (Polglase, 2024). Conventionally understood as something to be protected for future generations (Bevan, 2016), it also includes the living practices, knowledge systems, and

forms of behaviour through which communities recognize and activate their cultural environments, dimensions that are often undervalued or ignored. As Bevan (2016) shows, heritage functions as a repository of collective identity and social cohesion, and its degradation represents a rupture in the social fabric. Similarly, Gamboni (1997) demonstrates how acts of iconoclasm target heritage precisely because it embodies shared meanings and public visibility. These perspectives underscore that cultural heritage is inseparable from the relational and symbolic infrastructures of everyday life, reinforcing how cultural welfare initiatives not only promote artistic participation but also sustain, reinterpret, and re-signify the cultural meanings that ground community life.

The primary objective of this domain is to strengthen the social fabric through culture and community participation. The target audience is the general population, an inclusive and heterogeneous public spanning all age groups. This category encompasses a broad and inclusive range of practices, widely implemented by most associations active in the district's cultural landscape. Nearly all associations contribute, in various forms, to promoting culture and social interaction, each reflecting its own values, principles, objectives, and the demographic characteristics of the area in which it operates. The interview findings highlight the central relevance of this dimension, as it offers a basis for reconceptualizing cultural citizenship in terms of participation, inclusion, belonging, and the recognition of culture as a universal right. Within the framework of cultural welfare, understood as the enhancement of culture's role in community welfare processes, cultural accessibility emerges as an essential condition for equity and inclusion that must be safeguarded for all citizens, particularly those who are economically or socially vulnerable.

Data collected through interviews further revealed a shared awareness among organizations on culture's intrinsic value, culture for culture's sake, and that it should not be reduced to a purely instrumental function. Instead, it is a social and aesthetic resource that must remain accessible to all, precisely because cultural practices are inherently democratic (Allegrini, 2025; Holden, 2004, 2006; Matarasso, 2019). In this perspective, the aesthetic dimension becomes essential to both individual and collective well-being, and its democratization is a necessary condition for avoiding cultural privilege and ensuring major accessibility.

The specific attention given to "fragile" social groups such as adolescents, older adults experiencing isolation, and migrants demonstrates the associations' growing sensitivity not only to the artistic and social value of cultural production but also to the relational, psychological, and social needs of the communities they serve. This reveals a concrete challenge: making cultural spaces and opportunities accessible while overcoming economic, linguistic, and symbolic barriers that prevent the participation of individuals and groups with limited social, cultural, or economic capital.

The interviews revealed a strong consensus among associations on the need for cultural welfare to reach individuals and groups at risk of social isolation. As one interviewee noted, "art, in all its forms, can have a positive impact on people, offering new perspectives and fostering meaningful relationships," extending to mothers experiencing isolation, migrant families facing language barriers, and young people navigating fragility and identity construction. From this standpoint, culture should not be reserved for privileged spaces. As the same participant put it, "art is a universal language," and its democratization is a necessary condition for equity and inclusion.

This perspective connects with a broader political dimension. As one participant observed, “culture is a right for everyone” and “talking about well-being inevitably means talking about inequality.” Cultural support, in this view, is not secondary to economic or health-related assistance but equally fundamental. Cultural experience here emerges as a relational practice that nurtures sociability, belonging, and participation. As another association representative reflected, “participants are not there with the expectation of becoming great actors; they come for the joy of being together and taking part.”

A particularly emblematic example of this approach is the re-establishment of a community choir, which illustrates how cultural welfare can manifest through simple yet profoundly transformative collective practices. The decision to create an “open to all” choir, without selection criteria based on talent or technical skill, embodies the idea of a democratic and accessible culture. As one practitioner recounted: “We recreated a choir that meets once a week to sing and have fun. Everyone enjoys it. We wanted to give everyone the opportunity to sing because singing in a choir is beneficial, it lifts your mood. People come together, find harmony, and develop a sense of shared care for the space they inhabit and the community around them.”

Singing together becomes much more than a musical activity: it exemplifies how artistic and cultural practices generate social proximity and relational closeness within a community. Through shared rhythms, spaces, and interactions, such practices nurture belonging and collective well-being, reinforcing the emotional and relational bonds that sustain everyday social life. These forms of participation can be understood as expressions of cultural welfare, in which culture becomes a means for coexistence, mutual respect, and the construction of an inclusive and caring collective identity. Crucially, this does not reduce culture to a tool for social utility. As one interviewee emphasized, it is “everyone’s right to experience art however they wish, not necessarily as a means to feel better, but simply to enjoy it and to be happy while doing so.” Culture, in this sense, carries an intrinsic value, a shared human experience that enriches both individual and collective life, and it is precisely this non-instrumental dimension that makes cultural welfare distinctive.

Education and training

One of the most significant dimensions that emerged from the research in the Santo Stefano District concerns the connection between cultural welfare and educational/training processes. The associations active in the district organize a wide range of initiatives that can be understood as educational and formative experiences, including thematic workshops, artistic residencies, creative laboratories, and courses and seminars dedicated to exploring cultural, social, and philosophical topics.

A particularly strong commitment is evident in activities that preserve and promote local historical memory, create spaces for discussion of the cultural and social questions that shape community life, and raise awareness of women’s rights and gender equality. This is especially relevant given the longstanding presence of two historically significant women’s and feminist organizations in the district, whose work continues to shape local cultural and educational practices.

The objectives guiding these educational and training initiatives within the district extend far beyond the transmission of knowledge. They aim to cultivate reflective and informed communities capable of engaging critically with the present through shared practices of dialogue and critical thinking.

The beneficiaries of these initiatives are diverse and cross-cutting: children, students, women, and citizens interested in deepening their understanding of cultural, philosophical, psychological, and social topics. Each activity is designed to adapt to different audiences, stimulating active participation and inclusion across generations and social backgrounds. These educational and training processes go beyond the mere transmission of knowledge, connecting with what Appadurai (2004, p. 67) defines as the “capacity to aspire,” understood as the collective ability to imagine possible futures and to orient oneself toward them with the community that co-develops these aspirations. This perspective resonates with broader debates on cultural and social imaginaries (Anderson, 1983; Castoriadis, 1987), which emphasize how communities construct shared systems of meaning, interpret their social worlds, and envision possible futures. From this standpoint, educational and cultural practices not only transmit skills or content but also contribute to the formation of collective narratives and the symbolic frameworks through which communities are built.

In this sense, the interviews revealed that access to culture and educational opportunities becomes an element of social justice, capable of supporting pathways of personal and collective growth while activating empowerment and agency at both the individual and community levels. Cultural education, particularly when oriented toward active participation and collaborative practices, strengthens relational networks, generates trust, and contributes to the construction of shared social capital, making communities more resilient and better equipped to face contemporary challenges. As one interviewee described, their association works through philosophical dialogue, in which “each participant brings their own perspective” and “the practice focuses on the relational aspects of the group”: turn-taking, active listening, and expressing one’s ideas clearly become forms of relational learning. As the same practitioner noted, they draw on “artistic languages to accompany and deepen cognitive and relational processes.” This approach is illustrated in the following account:

We engage in philosophical dialogue, meaning that all our activities share this common approach. We work with groups led by a facilitator, who introduces various topics for collective exploration through discussion and shared reflection. The group becomes a community that investigates one or more philosophical questions We use a variety of stimuli: narratives, literary excerpts, films, picture books, artworks, theatre experiences, or even practices inspired by yoga and meditation. The practice focuses on the relational aspects of the group and, indirectly, on the rules of the group itself: turn-taking, active listening, learning to wait one’s turn, and expressing one’s ideas clearly.

The combination of artistic, narrative, and embodied practices, ranging from literature, film, and visual arts to theatre, yoga, and meditation, creates conditions for reflection and dialogue by engaging participants through diverse expressive forms. This approach highlights how cultural and artistic practices can activate aesthetic, cognitive, and emotional dimensions of learning. As described in the interview, this method aims to develop a form of thinking that is not only critical and creative but also relational and experiential, fostering a multidimensional understanding of human experience. These activities, therefore, do not act solely on the level of content, but also influence the very rules of coexistence within groups and communities: learning to listen, taking turns, and expressing one’s ideas clearly become forms of relational learning that help build trust, promote inclusion, and strengthen collective agency.

Taken together with these reflections, the following excerpt shows how cultural welfare can also emerge in practice without a full “theoretical” awareness on the part of cultural practitioners, taking shape instead as an everyday practice rooted in different needs that are connected and translated into a shared sense of well-being. As one practitioner observed, “sometimes art is the goal, sometimes it is the means,” and cultural activities often arise organically from community needs:

I don't think we have ever consciously reasoned in terms of cultural welfare, nor have we asked ourselves why we do it; we do it because we want to, because it makes sense. It makes us feel good, and it feels good to know it also benefits others. We do it through educational activities, seeing how they can change people's way of thinking, even if we cannot fully measure the long-term effects. Among children and adolescents, there is always enthusiasm when they engage with our projects. During the pandemic, the Academy asked us to host workshops in our space because they could not organize practical classes with their students, and that was another moment when we saw the strength of hands-on, manual activities such as drawing and printing, which, in that specific context, were also fundamental for people's psychological and physical well-being.

From an analytical perspective, these reflections point to an important aspect of cultural welfare that emerges implicitly through practice rather than through explicit theoretical awareness. The emphasis on manual and embodied activities, such as drawing, printing, crafting, or working with one's hands, reveals the capacity of artistic practice to foster well-being rooted in sensory experience, material engagement, and bodily presence. Such practices foster attention, concentration, and immersion, creating a pause from everyday pressures and offering participants a restorative space in which to explore, experiment, and reconnect with themselves and their community. Even when not framed as cultural welfare by practitioners, these activities mobilize potentials increasingly recognized in scholarly discussions of cultural participation, including the ability to reduce stress, enhance individual and collective agency, and promote well-being. The interviewee's narrative illustrates how, in moments of crisis such as the pandemic, the simple act of “making,” drawing, printing, and handling materials can become a vital resource for sustaining individuals and communities, demonstrating that cultural welfare often takes shape through practice, intuition, and relational sensitivity long before it is articulated as a theoretical model.

The experience during the COVID-19 pandemic further reinforces this connection. When the Bologna Academy of Fine Arts asked the association to support workshop activities that could no longer be conducted in the classroom, what emerged was not simply the aesthetic value of art, which the academy already cultivates, but also the social value of the arts, understood as the capacity of artistic practices to generate relationships, expand individual and collective capabilities, create shared meanings, and sustain community well-being. This form of value is collective and relational, emerging where artistic practices intersect with everyday life, education, care, and active citizenship. Unlike institutional art education, often centred on technical or aesthetic aspects, the association offered a proximate, inclusive space grounded in shared making and collective care that proved crucial during a period marked by isolation and uncertainty. In that moment, art and, more broadly, cultural practices, served as a concrete instrument of community support while also providing an educational environment in which skills, competencies, and creative capacities could be cultivated collectively.

Cultural welfare to reduce inequalities and promote social inclusion

One of the most significant areas in which the transformative potential of cultural welfare is expressed is social inclusion and the reduction of inequalities. Cultural production, distribution, and participation generate a chain of social value, yet the resources that enable people to access and benefit from cultural life (material, cognitive, and social) remain unevenly distributed. These disparities shape who can participate in cultural practices and who is excluded, influencing individuals' capacity to navigate social norms and to imagine and construct possible futures. Several organizations active in the Santo Stefano District promote initiatives that use art and culture as vehicles for empowering people in disadvantaged conditions, while always recognizing the intrinsic social value of cultural participation beyond its instrumental effects. Through seminars, theatre and arts courses, and experiential workshops, these organizations work to counter marginalization, to promote rights, and to support processes of individual and collective emancipation. Particularly meaningful are initiatives aimed at women, former detainees, and people who have experienced violence. Artistic languages and cultural participation become opportunities to rediscover oneself, to build awareness of one's rights, and to craft new personal narratives, not because art is reducible to a therapeutic or social function, but because its relational and expressive dimensions carry an inherent capacity to open new spaces of meaning, agency, and belonging. Activities such as laboratories in women's prisons, training programs on gender equality, and role-playing workshops are concrete examples of how culture can foster safe and inclusive spaces that open new possibilities for relationships and growth. These practices reveal how cultural participation enables individuals to reflect and discuss shared problems, learn together, and develop new forms of belonging and collective identity based on these collective moments of reflection. These dynamics find a useful theoretical grounding in Wenger's (1998) notion of communities of practice, which illuminates the generative and reflective learning processes through which participants co-construct meaning, develop capabilities, and transform their sense of identity and belonging.

The following excerpts illustrate how cultural welfare can serve as a mechanism for social inclusion, recognition, and active participation. In the first account below, the biographical narration of women is described as a tool for cultural and social inclusion. Telling the history of women and their role in building society becomes a cultural practice that promotes gender equality and combats discrimination and stereotypes. Biographical narration here is not limited to the transmission of content; it becomes a process of collective awareness, fundamental for deconstructing still-rooted patriarchal structures and for activating civic participation and protagonism. Culture, in this case, allows the present to be read in the light of the past, offering younger generations interpretive tools and the possibility of imagining fairer models. It helps to deconstruct existing imaginaries in order to create alternative ones.

We are an association that, on the one hand, works on violence, supporting and accompanying women in their pathways out of violence and toward social reintegration. On the other, we work on equality. Even when we speak about violence in schools, we begin with the story of women's history, of the role women played in the reconstruction of the country and, specifically, of the city of Bologna. It is important that this often silenced role be made visible and told to young people ... The issue of equality and of sexual violence, which we fought by overturning nineteenth-century laws such as family law, remains current and

still needs to be defended. These things must be known. Starting from them is necessary in order to build real welfare, otherwise it is hard to understand delays and the traditional, patriarchal modes that we still carry with us.

Other accounts highlight how culturally situated participatory practices, whether expressed through theatre laboratories, live role-playing, or other creative formats, become relational infrastructures that make encounters possible. One association has been running a regional project on equal opportunities for four years, working on gender stereotypes through “a methodology that brings together theatre laboratories and creative facilitation, live role-playing, the arts, and participatory theatre.”

As one practitioner noted, these initiatives circulate across multiple institutional contexts, from universities to academies of fine arts and private companies, creating a multi-contextual presence that challenges rigid social norms and fosters forms of dialogue that would otherwise remain inaccessible. Regional funding enables this wide dissemination, allowing the project to sustain its presence across diverse settings.

From a cultural welfare perspective, what is particularly significant, as emerges from this account, is not only the integration of different artistic methodologies, such as theatre laboratories, creative facilitation, and live role-playing, but also the way these methods bring diverse actors and institutional settings into dialogue. These practices circulate across schools, universities, artistic academies, and private companies, creating a multi-contextual presence supported by regional funding that enables wide dissemination and sustained collaboration. This hybrid infrastructure embodies what Fulco (2022) identifies as one of the core innovations of cultural welfare: the ability to generate systemic forms of cooperation among cultural practitioners, educators, social policy actors, and health-related institutions, aligning artistic interventions with broader frameworks of care and social support. Beyond methodological hybridity, however, cultural welfare also demonstrates a distinctive capacity to adapt to different and socially crucial issues, such as gender equality in the case of this association, using cultural participation as a lens to address inequalities, challenge norms, and activate collective forms of learning and empowerment. In this sense, cultural welfare functions as a flexible and context-responsive field of social innovation, in which creative practices serve as tools for community-building, civic engagement, and social cohesion across multiple domains.

Culturally led urban regeneration for tackling urban decay and fostering social cohesion

Associations active in the Santo Stefano District play a fundamental role in caring for, valorizing, and regenerating public spaces, contributing to both the fight against urban decay and the promotion of a more participatory vision of the city. Through cultural and social initiatives that intersect with requalification, cleaning, and maintenance of streets, walls, and green areas, these actors restore value to shared places and transform them into lively, welcoming spaces for the whole community. The creation of common areas designed for encounters and the strengthening of the sense of belonging are priority objectives, pursued through the active involvement of residents in managing common goods.

These practices reflect the social value of proximity: the well-being generated when people share space, interact, and inhabit places together, which may also transform into spaces of resistance

(Boschma, 2005; Pink, 2012; Manzini, 2021). In this sense, the physical and relational presence of cultural associations in the urban fabric generates forms of collective care that extend beyond individual initiatives, fostering shared responsibility for common spaces. Through these mechanisms, cultural welfare symbolically and concretely counters the broken windows effect, fostering collective responsibility and neighbourly ties. The beneficiaries are residents of all ages, with particular attention to children, older adults living alone, and other vulnerable groups, for whom access to cared-for and animated spaces has central value.

The interviews show how the constant presence of cultural and associative actors in an urban area perceived as unsafe has helped transform how that place is viewed. As one interviewee noted, “when a street is deserted, people tend to use it in problematic ways,” whereas “a steady presence in the area discourages its use as a space of decay.” Regeneration here does not occur only through structural interventions; it also takes shape through a continuous cultural and social presence. As the same practitioner observed, residents in the district “are no longer afraid to go out or return home at certain hours,” and “the street has improved considerably, not only in relation to problematic behaviours but also in terms of cleanliness.” From this perspective, cultural welfare can be understood as an instrument of urban regeneration, capable of countering both material and social decay through shared care of spaces, active citizen participation, and the construction of relationships of trust.

Another interview confirms that cultural events, exhibitions, street festivals, and convivial moments can generate encounters among different generations and social groups. In this case, urban regeneration is not only material but profoundly relational and symbolic. Public space becomes a site of cohesion and belonging, where boundaries between social worlds that normally remain separate, such as young and older residents, long-term inhabitants and newcomers, committees with differing visions, are temporarily suspended in favour of shared participation and exchange. This creates fertile ground for dialogue, trust, and the emergence of new networks and collaborations.

A particularly significant account comes from an association that explicitly resists a narrow definition of cultural welfare. As one president noted, “the first goal remains building relationships” and “sociality is well-being,” but the space “cannot be rigidly contained within a strict model of cultural welfare” because it combines cultural tools with a broader ecology of social policies. In the words of the same interviewee, “the cultural component has been decisive and important, but not the only one.”

The garden evolved through intervention perspectives that cannot be rigidly contained within a strict model of cultural welfare, because we adapted our modes, means, and initiatives to each situation ... We experimented a lot, always paying attention to what was happening around us. We never worked with our doors closed.

This reflection should not be interpreted as contradicting the cultural welfare framework. Rather, it demonstrates its very innovative potential: culture is not an isolated domain but one that interacts with other dimensions of community life (education, care, social support, civic engagement). This case shows that cultural participation operates alongside other practices to generate proximity, trust, and shared responsibility, while retaining the intrinsic value of the arts (Paltrinieri & Allegrini, 2020; Allegrini, 2022).

From an analytical perspective, the community garden exemplifies a model of culturally led urban regeneration that builds social ties through a multi-pronged approach. Cultural initiatives, civic education, manual activities, and practical workshops are combined in response to emerging needs, transforming the space into a living laboratory of coexistence and dialogue. Security, here, is not imposed but co-produced through relationships, participation, and everyday practices of care, including those directed toward people previously marginalized within the garden.

These cases show that urban regeneration promoted through cultural welfare in the Santo Stefano District extends far beyond aesthetics, public order, or maintenance. It acts on deeper social dynamics, countering marginalization, promoting mutual trust, and enabling processes of collective reappropriation of urban spaces. By cultivating proximity both physical and relational cultural welfare helps create the conditions for safer, more cohesive, and more inclusive neighbourhoods.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study illustrate how cultural welfare operates as an integrated ecosystem of cultural realities, with practices that traverse education, well-being, social inclusion, and urban regeneration. Rather than functioning as a set of separate interventions, the empirical material shows that cultural welfare takes shape as a relational infrastructure, a dense web of cultural, social, and institutional interactions, through which communities imagine and construct the future, creating collective well-being. In this respect, the Santo Stefano District offers an exemplary case of how cultural participation, when grounded in proximity, everyday encounters, and shared practices, can generate capabilities, strengthen social cohesion, and foster inclusive forms of citizenship.

First, the research demonstrates how cultural and educational practices contribute to expanding what Appadurai (2004, p. 67) terms “the capacity to aspire,” understood here as a socially distributed and culturally mediated orientation toward possible futures. Through workshops, artistic residencies, dialogic practices, and activities that encourage critical thinking, associations in the district create spaces where imagination becomes a shared social power rather than an individual privilege. These practices do not merely co-produce and transmit knowledge; they form reflective communities capable of interpreting their present conditions, negotiating meanings collectively, and imagining alternative horizons of possibility. The emphasis on philosophical dialogue, memory work, and embodied artistic practices, as placed by the associations operating in the district, shows how cultural welfare mobilizes culturally situated forms of agency that strengthen the cognitive, relational, and expressive dimensions of community life.

Second, cultural welfare in the Santo Stefano district shows a distinctive potential for fostering inclusion and addressing inequalities. Associations working with women, former detainees, migrants, caregivers, and socially marginalized groups demonstrate how cultural activities become catalysts for empowerment, rights awareness, and the reconstruction of personal and collective narratives. These practices reveal how cultural participation enables individuals to reflect and discuss shared problems, learn together and develop new forms of belonging and collective identity based on these collective moments of reflection. As Sennett (2012) argues, cooperation is not a spontaneous disposition but a craft, a capacity that must be learned, practiced, and deepened through sustained interaction with others, particularly with those who differ from us. Cultural welfare initiatives create

precisely the conditions in which this craft can be exercised, cultivating the relational skills and mutual responsiveness that make collective life possible across social differences. In fact, the research shows that participation does not require adherence to formalized cultural norms; rather, it emerges from convivial spaces, informal encounters, and creative experimentation where people can “be together, think together, and create together” beyond the constraints of institutional roles or social stigmas.

Third, the findings reveal the close connection between cultural welfare and processes of urban regeneration. Cultural presence, whether through events, community gardens, shared workshops, or the ordinary life of associative spaces, acts as an infrastructure of proximity that transforms public space. These dynamics acquire particular significance when read against the backdrop of growing individualization (Bauman, 2000; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) and the “pluralization of life-worlds” (Berger, Berger, & Kellman, 1974, pp. 64–65), which have progressively eroded the forms of physical closeness and shared inhabiting that once sustained community life. The study shows that cultural actors, through artistic practices and cultural participation, engage in maintenance, mediation, and community building, actively generating the very conditions of sociality, trust, and mutual recognition that make shared spaces meaningful. This resonates with McFarlane and Silver’s (2017) understanding of social infrastructure as constituted by the intricate social practices that people put together to sustain collective life. Cultural welfare, in this sense, is precisely this kind of relational labour through which communities activate, maintain, and give meaning to the physical spaces they inhabit. Klinenberg (2018) has demonstrated that access to safe and functioning public and quasi-public spaces is essential to developing vital and inclusive urban neighbourhoods. However, as Latham and Layton (2022) note, these spaces are also vulnerable to underfunding and neglect. What makes them vital is not their physical provision alone, but the qualities of encounter, belonging, and reciprocity that emerge within them, and it is precisely these qualities that cultural welfare cultivates. The findings of this study extend this scholarship by revealing that physical spaces, however well-provisioned, require activation: it is through artistic practices and cultural participation that communities develop the sense of belonging, responsibility, and collective imagination that transforms physical spaces into vital, inclusive social infrastructures. When public spaces are animated by cultural practices, collective care, and shared inhabiting, they tend to become safer, more inclusive, and less vulnerable to deterioration (Dovey, 2016; Low, 2023), making cultural welfare not an alternative to physical infrastructure but its necessary complement.

Taken together, these findings indicate that cultural welfare functions as a multidimensional field of practice in which cultural participation, social inclusion, community development, and urban regeneration intersect. Rather than single outcomes, the observed effects, such as enhanced well-being, strengthened social ties, increased feelings of safety, expanded capabilities, and greater civic engagement, are mutually reinforcing. They emerge from the capacity of cultural practices to produce proximity, to enable encounters, and to support shared meaning-making across different layers of social life. This suggests that cultural welfare should be understood not merely as a policy sector but as a transformative community practice capable of generating forms of collective agency and relational well-being that extend beyond traditional welfare models.

CONCLUSIONS

This study, conducted as part of a broader national research project on cultural welfare ecosystems, examined the configuration of cultural welfare practices in the Santo Stefano District of Bologna. It reveals how cultural participation, community engagement, and intersectoral collaboration contribute to the district's well-being, social inclusion, and urban regeneration. Through a qualitative, community-engaged approach, the research traced how cultural actors activate relational, educational, and spatial processes that collectively support the district's social fabric. The findings indicate that cultural welfare should not be understood merely as a sectoral cultural policy or a set of isolated cultural interventions, but rather as a multidimensional and community-embedded infrastructure that shapes how people relate, learn, care for one another, and inhabit shared spaces.

A key insight emerging from the study is that cultural welfare generates forms of proximity (physical, relational, and symbolic) that aim to contrast tendencies toward individualization and fragmentation in contemporary urban life. In fact, the study shows that the transformative potential of cultural welfare lies in its ability to create communities of practice where learning, reflection, and experimentation occur through shared activity and participation.

Methodologically, the research demonstrates the value of qualitative analysis for capturing the situated, relational, and everyday dimensions of cultural welfare. Semi-structured interviews and the mapping of local associations enabled the identification of forms of agency, collaboration, and innovation that characterize the cultural ecosystem of the Santo Stefano District. However, this study is not without limitations. First, the qualitative and situated nature of the research, focused on a single urban district, means that the findings cannot be generalized to other territorial contexts. Each cultural welfare ecosystem is shaped by specific historical, institutional, and socio-cultural conditions, and the dynamics observed in the Santo Stefano District may not be directly transferable to other neighbourhoods or cities. Second, the study relies exclusively on semi-structured interviews with representatives of local associations, without including the perspectives of direct beneficiaries. Third, the cross-sectional nature of the research captures a specific moment in the life of the associations rather than a longitudinal trajectory, limiting the capacity to assess the long-term social impact of cultural welfare practices.

Building on this, future research would benefit from a broader and more sustained engagement with participants themselves, that is, the wider constellation of individuals who regularly take part in these initiatives and actively co-create community life. Incorporating the lived experiences of these participants across the various territorial contexts involved in the wider research project would enable a deeper understanding of how cultural welfare is enacted, negotiated, and sustained in everyday life. Such participatory and cross-contextual perspectives would shed light on the relational and collective dynamics that underlie cultural welfare, offering valuable insights into its capacity to adapt to diverse socio-cultural environments and to generate well-being through proximity, collaboration, and shared cultural practices. Furthermore, developing a long-term social impact assessment that captures effects at both the individual and collective levels would be particularly valuable. Such an approach would avoid individualistic framings and instead strengthen the affirmation that well-being, empowerment, and social cohesion are co-produced through interaction, reciprocity, and participation in community-based cultural activities. Conducting this type of eval-

uation, however, requires substantial resources, extended timelines, and ongoing relationships with participants. Creative and participatory evaluation methods such as collaborative storytelling, visual or performative techniques, longitudinal qualitative interviews, or co-designed assessment tools could offer promising avenues for capturing the complex, relational, and processual nature of cultural impact.

At the same time, the study prompts critical reflection on the difficulties that cultural welfare projects face in sustaining continuity, particularly due to limited financial and human resources. Many initiatives depend on fragmented, short-term funding schemes that privilege quick, visible outputs over long-term relational processes grounded in reciprocal care. These temporal and financial constraints limit the possibility of sustained engagement, which is essential for cultural practices to generate meaningful social change. This difficulty reflects a broader tension between the slow, community-rooted temporality required by cultural welfare and the neoliberal logic of projectification that shapes much contemporary public funding. As Reckwitz (2020, pp. 1–2) notes, cultural production in late modernity is increasingly embedded in what he calls “cultural capitalism,” a system oriented toward the rapid creation of singular, marketable cultural experiences. Within this framework, funders often value measurable deliverables and final products, while the relational, processual, and care-based dimensions of cultural welfare tend to remain under-recognized. This mismatch risks undermining the very conditions that make cultural welfare effective, reducing initiatives to isolated events rather than enabling them to evolve into stable and continuous forms of social infrastructure. Addressing this mismatch requires a fundamental rethinking of how cultural welfare initiatives are funded and evaluated. Public and private funders should move beyond project-based, output-oriented criteria and develop funding models that recognize the processual and relational nature of cultural welfare. This means investing in multi-year programmes rather than single events, valuing qualitative indicators of community change alongside quantitative metrics, and recognizing cultural associations as stable components of local welfare ecosystems rather than temporary service providers. Local authorities, in particular, have a crucial role to play in supporting the infrastructural continuity of cultural welfare, not only through direct funding but also by fostering bottom-up participation and decentralized governance. Tools such as participatory planning forums, neighbourhood-level decision-making processes, and co-design practices can activate community agency and valorize the processual dimensions of cultural welfare, ensuring that cultural initiatives are not imposed from above but emerge from and respond to the needs, desires, and imaginaries of local communities. In this way, the governance of cultural welfare itself becomes a practice of proximity and collective agency, reinforcing rather than undermining the very conditions that make it effective.

In conclusion, the Santo Stefano District case demonstrates that cultural welfare is not a supplementary component of local welfare systems but a foundational social infrastructure. Cultural welfare does not replace traditional welfare; it is a second-welfare device that connects culture and care, public institutions and civic actors, to generate new, territorially grounded forms of well-being by fostering proximity, enabling agency, strengthening communal ties, and contributing to the collective governance of public space. In times marked by social fragmentation and uncertainty, the practices documented here illustrate how culture, when embedded in everyday life and rooted in community collaboration, can sustain shared well-being and inclusion, and expand the possibilities of democratic life accessible to all.

NOTE

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Roberta Paltrinieri is Professor of Sociology of Cultural and Communicative Processes at the Department of the Arts, University of Bologna. Email: roberta.paltrinieri@unibo.it

Orkide Izci is Research Fellow at the Department of the Arts, University of Bologna. Email: orkide.izci@unibo.it

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