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valutazione

LEARNING DEPARTMENT,
EVALUATION

Study

Cultural participation across generations



Study Coordinates



EVALUATING BODY/BODIES
AND/OR SCIENTIFIC COORDINATION

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION



Fondazione
Compagnia
di San Paolo

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN



ideazione.

MeltingPro

ADMINISTRATION



EVALUATION PERIOD

May 2026 - June 2026

OBJECTIVE



Informed Design (Foresight)



Ongoing Improvement (Improvement)



Performance Evaluation (improvement)



Transparency (accountability)



Experimentation and innovation (learning)



Knowledge and scientific research (advocacy)

METHODOLOGY



Quantitative needs assessment



Gap analysis



Ex-ante impact estimate



Scenario planning and foresight



Qualitative needs assessment



Context study



Feasibility analysis/economic evaluation



Preliminary study

Other: (specify)

SAMPLE
AND DATA
COLLECTION

Representative sample (CAWI) on Ipsos' proprietary panel, for the under-34 and over-65 population - 1,000 cases in Piedmont and Liguria

Probabilistic sample (CATI) - 200 cases in Piedmont of people with a migrant background (under 34 and over 65) resident in Italy for at least 5 years

COGNITIVE

1

How is cultural participation experienced and understood in Piedmont and Liguria, and how do practices and modes of engagement change across generations?

2

What motivations and barriers foster or hinder cultural participation, and how do they vary across different population groups?

3

What implications emerge for making cultural offerings more accessible, relevant, and able to engage diverse audiences?



Key findings of the research



- 1. Access to culture depends on multiple barriers**
Distance and transport weigh most heavily (47%), but so do price (35%) and difficulties finding/understanding information.
- 2. Lack of company holds back young people most**
It is reported by 36% of 19–24 year-olds, versus 19% of 65–80 year-olds. The relational dimension emerges as a significant factor in access to cultural experiences.
- 3. Participation varies across areas, while motivations are similar**
In smaller municipalities the share of non-participants is higher, although **interest and curiosity remain high everywhere**.
- 4. Young people combine digital and live activities**
They attend more cinema and concerts, while museum attendance is similar across generations.
- 5. Participation in social and informal activities is limited**
61% did not take part in any of the activities considered in the last three months, a share that rises to **75%** among older people. Alongside widespread individual cultural consumption, there is less involvement in collective and social practices.
- 6. Cultural plurality is reflected in meanings and needs**
For people with a migrant background, needs emerge related to traditions and belonging, together with demand for intercultural exchange and activities for families.

More than a generic demand for “more culture”, what emerges is the need for an offer differentiated by language, modes of participation, and age group.



Key findings / The meaning of culture



Starting from open-ended answers to the question “What does culture mean to you”, a semantic analysis was carried out using AI (LLM model GPT 6).

Three main dimensions emerge:

1. Knowledge

Understanding, intelligence, study.

2. Enjoyment

Art, books, museums.

3. Value attribution

Interesting, important, beautiful, useful.

Culture has a **strongly positive connotation**: negative or critical associations are rare.

FREQUENCY OF THE WORDS MOST USED IN RESPONSES

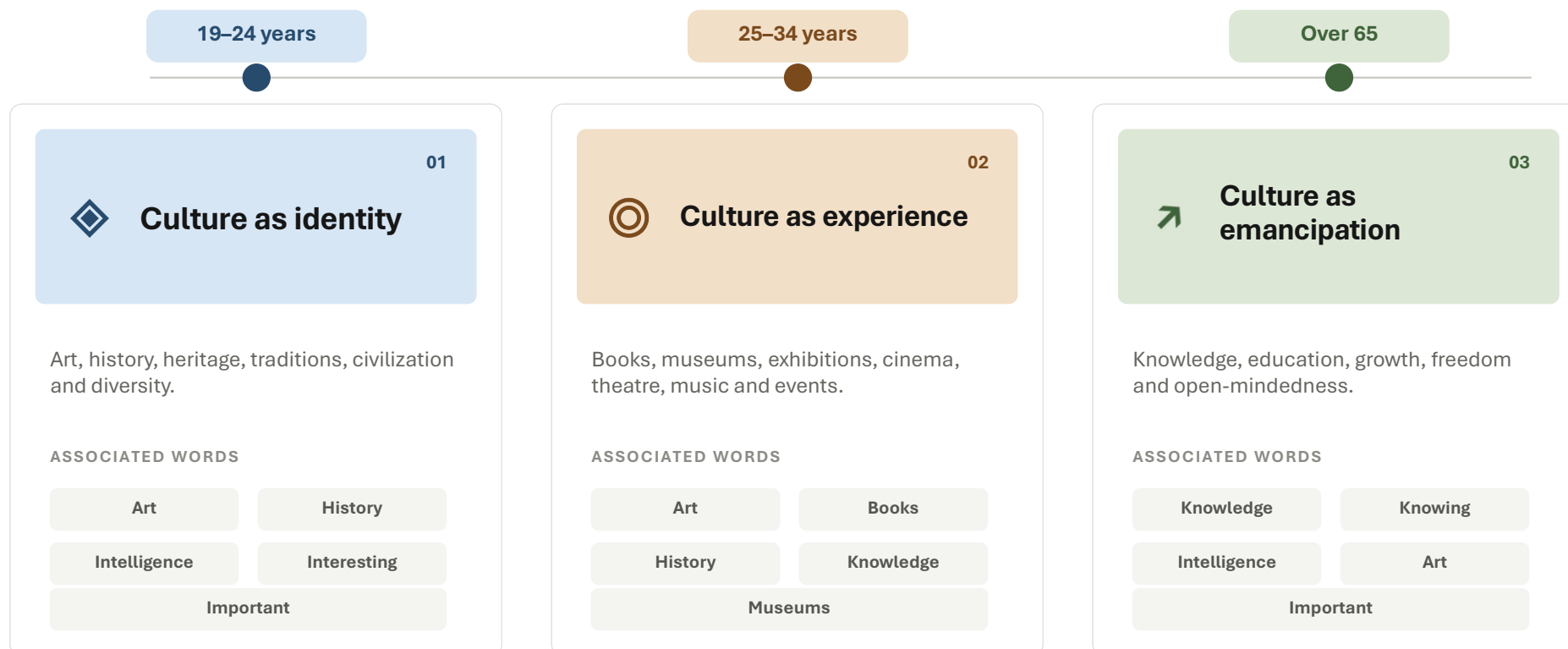
Word	% of respondents
Art	10%
Knowledge	10%
Understanding	8%
Intelligence	8%
History	8%
Interesting	7%
Books	7%
Important	6%
Museums	6%
Study	5%



Key findings / Culture across age groups



The meaning attributed to «culture» changes across generations. Analysis of open-ended responses using LLM (GPT 6)

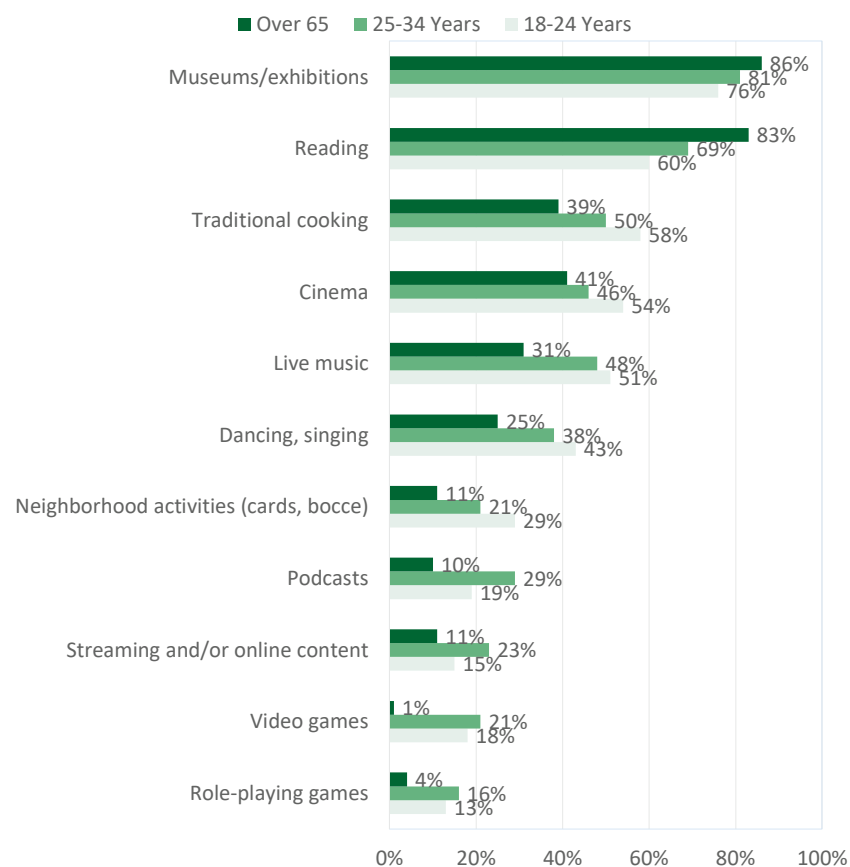


**SAME WORD, THREE DIFFERENT FRAMES:
BELONGING → ENJOYMENT → PERSONAL GROWTH**

What is considered a «cultural activity»?



% OF PEOPLE WHO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES «CULTURAL» (BY AGE GROUP)



Note: Frequency distribution of a selection of cultural activities; see the full report for the complete list.

Culture emerges as a concept still centred on heritage, reading and cultural institutions, more than on contemporary and digital practices:

- The idea of cultural activity is associated above all with the more traditional and institutional forms: museums and exhibitions (83%), reading and visits to historical/cultural sites (75%) and theatre (66%)
- Expressions linked to popular culture and local heritage enjoy significant consensus: popular traditions (58%) and cuisine (46%).
- Digital, playful and entertainment activities (streaming, video games, role-playing games and podcasts), on the other hand, are less often associated with culture.
- A generational gap emerges: with age, references to reading and traditional forms increase; younger people instead express a broader and more hybrid conception of culture, including more live music, cinema, podcasts, streaming and video games.
- Among younger people there is a higher incidence of those who also consider neighborhood activities, traditional cooking, dancing and singing to be cultural.

Who has a broader definition of culture?



Multivariable linear model, survey-weighted (svy)

Index: number of cultural activities considered (0–15)



Key message

The definition of culture is broader among young people and especially among those with a higher level of education; municipality size has little impact.

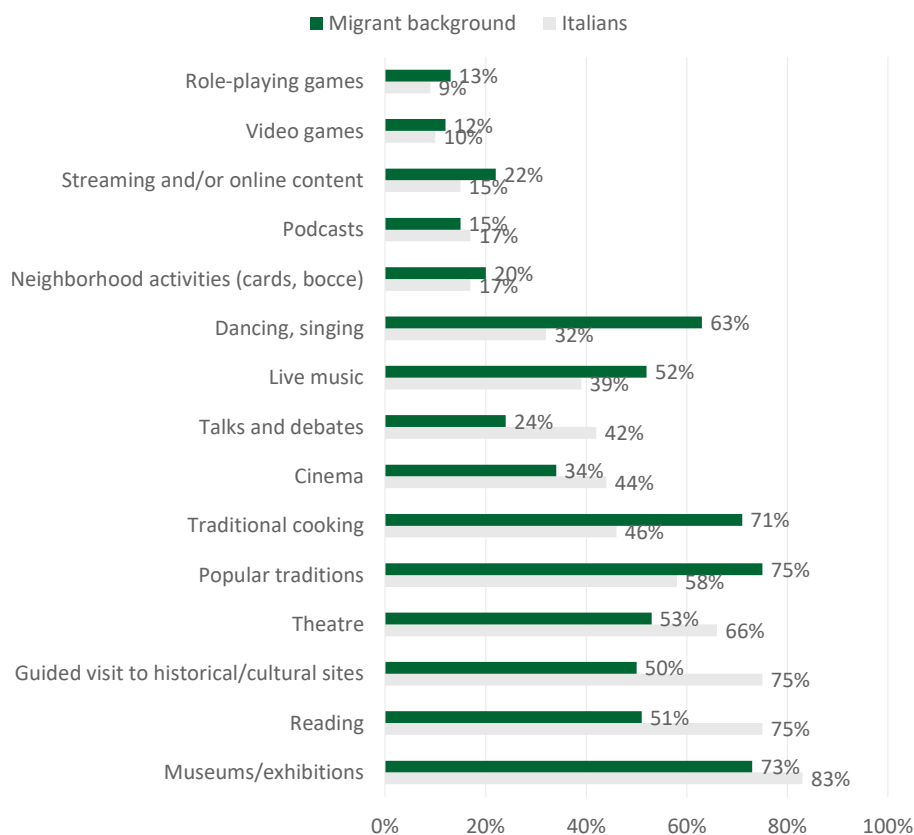
Multivariable linear model, survey-weighted (svy). $F(6,994) = 7.71$; $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.040$.



Two ideas of cultural activity: Italians and people with a migrant background



% OF PEOPLE WHO CONSIDER «CULTURAL» THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES (BY ORIGIN)



TWO IDEAS OF «CULTURAL ACTIVITY»: MORE INSTITUTIONAL FOR THE OVERALL POPULATION, MORE EXPERIENTIAL FOR PEOPLE WITH A MIGRANT BACKGROUND

- Italians more frequently recognize established cultural forms: guided visits (75% vs 50%), reading (75% vs 51%), theatre (66% vs 53%) and talks and debates (42% vs 24%).
- Among people with a migrant background, practices linked to tradition and collective expression take on greater centrality: dancing and singing (63% vs 32%), traditional cooking (71% vs 46%) and popular traditions (75% vs 58%).
- Live music is considered more cultural by people with a migrant background (52% vs 39%), while cinema and museums are more recognized by Italians.
- Video games, role-playing games and digital content remain marginal in both groups, although slightly more recognized by people with a migrant background.

Experience of cultural activities in the last 3 months



1		Watch TV channels	67%
2		Listen to music and the radio	64%
3		Watch content via streaming or online	58%
4		Read a book	58%
5		Read a newspaper	43%
6		Visit churches, historic buildings, natural parks or archaeological sites	42%
7		Visit museums or exhibitions	37%
8		Play video games, including online	34%
9		Go to the movies	34%
10		Take guided tours in historic or cultural places	30%
11		Listen to podcasts	23%
12		Attend live music concerts or events	22%
13		Watch theater, dance or other performing arts shows	22%
14		Take part in neighborhood activities, festivals, fairs, or local games, etc.	14%
15		Take part in role-playing games, escape rooms, card games, etc.	13%
16		Take part in meetings and discussions, conferences, talks or book presentations	13%
17		Go to a nightclub or karaoke evening	11%
18		Take part in cooking classes	4%
19		Take part in crafts or handicrafts classes	3%
20		Other	1%
21		None of the above activities	1%

- Individual and home-based cultural consumption prevails
- Active and collective participation is decidedly less frequent.

- TV (67%) and music/radio (64%) remain the most widespread cultural activities.
- Digital consumption is also strong: streaming and online content reach 58%, on the same level as reading books.
- “Out-of-home” cultural activities involve smaller shares: historical/cultural sites 42%, museums 37%, cinema 34%.
- Participation in live activities is more selective but still significant: concerts 22% and theatre/dance 22%.
- The most participatory or workshop-based forms remain niche: neighborhood activities 14%, role-playing games 13%, talks/debates 13%, cooking and craft courses under 5%.



The three factors of cultural activity



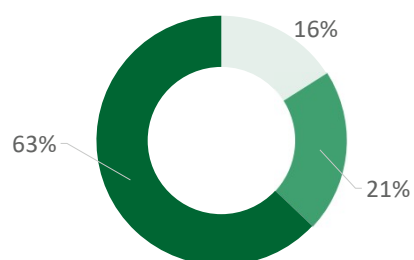
Based on the cultural activities participated in, a factor analysis (FCA) was carried out to identify the main underlying dimensions. The values shown (factor loadings) indicate the strength of association of each activity with the identified dimension.

Factor	Proposed label	Main activities	Loading
1 	Traditional culture and heritage visits	Museums and exhibitions	0.65
		Historic, religious, archaeological and natural sites	0.58
		Guided tours	0.57
		Theater, dance and other performing arts (live)	0.42
		Meetings and discussions	0.40
		Reading books	0.38
		Reading newspapers	0.34
2 	Mass media and digital consumption	Music and radio	0.53
		Streaming and online content	0.47
		Television	0.42
		Video games	0.38
3 	Entertainment and informal socializing	Nightclubs and karaoke	0.46
		Board games, card games and escape rooms	0.40
		Live music concerts	0.35
		Neighborhood activities	0.32

The three latent factors and the activities

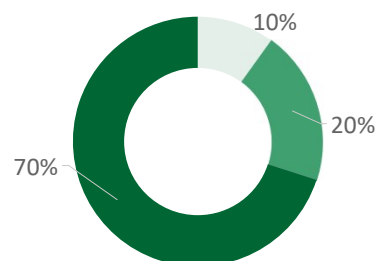


TRADITIONAL CULTURE



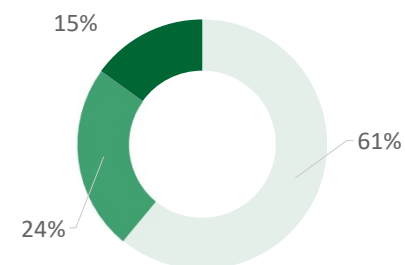
No experience
 One experience
 Two or more experiences

MASS MEDIA & DIGITAL CONSUMPTION



No experience
 One experience
 Two or more experiences

PARTICIPATION AND INFORMAL SOCIALIZING



No experience
 One experience
 Two or more experiences

CULTURAL PARTICIPATION IS MORE INTENSE IN TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL FORMS, BUT CONSIDERABLY WEAKER IN SOCIAL AND INFORMAL ONES.

In traditional culture and in traditional/digital media consumption, about 2 in 3 people report having 2 or more experiences.

In participatory and informal social activities, on the other hand, **61% had no experience at all.**



Motivation for participating in cultural activities / Age groups



REASONS FOR ENJOYING CULTURAL ACTIVITIES BY AGE GROUP (PERCENTAGE VALUES)

Motivation	19-24 years	25-34 years	65-80 years	Total
Personal interest*	54%	57%	71%	64%
Curiosity	45%	47%	48%	47%
Invitations from friends, family or acquaintances	24%	24%	26%	25%
Low price or free of charge	26%	27%	20%	23%
Feeling comfortable in the setting	15%	20%	21%	20%
Proximity to home*	15%	15%	21%	18%
Seeking sociability	17%	16%	18%	17%
Convenient timing	18%	14%	13%	14%
Possibility of doing activities in the same place/context	13%	16%	11%	13%
Improving language knowledge*	11%	16%	8%	11%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%

Note: The values shown correspond to the sum of the response categories «often» and «always». * Statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$).

CURIOSITY IS COMMON ACROSS GENERATIONS; PERSONAL INTEREST WEIGHS MORE AMONG OLDER PEOPLE.

- The **65-80 year-olds** attach greater importance to **personal interest** (71% vs 54-57%) and to **proximity to home** (21% vs 15%).
- The **25-34 year-olds** more often cite **improving language knowledge** (16%).
- The **19-24 year-olds** seem slightly more inclined toward convenient timing (but the difference is not statistically significant!)

4 types of motivations for cultural participation



TYPOLOGY OF MOTIVATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Type of motivation	Variables included	In the literature	Reference authors	%
Intrinsic motivation	Personal interest; curiosity	Intrinsic motivations linked to curiosity, exploration, aesthetic pleasure and interest in the cultural experience itself.	Janssen; Manolika & Baltzis; Ostrower	79%
Relational motivation	Seeking sociability; invitations from friends or family; feeling comfortable	The role of socialization, family, social networks and familiarity with the setting as factors that foster cultural participation.	Bourdieu; Janssen; Ostrower	52%
Accessibility and constraints	Low price or free of charge; proximity to home; convenient timing	Several studies show that cost, distance, transport and organizational convenience act as barriers or facilitators of participation.	Literature on participation barriers and museum accessibility	44%
Learning and opportunity	Improving language; level of language knowledge; possibility of doing more activities in the same place	Participation can also be motivated by learning, skill acquisition, cultural enrichment and the quality of opportunities offered by the institution or event.	Janssen; Ostrower; studies on cultural participation motives	24%



Analysis of motivations by activity – pct. point difference



CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND MOTIVATIONS – P.P. DISTANCE FROM THE TOTAL % (ONLY STAT. SIGNIFICANT VALUES)

Activity	Intrinsic	Relational	Accessibility	Learning
Theatre / performances		↑ +6.5		
Concerts		↑ +7.9		
Museums / exhibitions	↑ +7.2			
Heritage / sites	↑ +9.8			
Reading a book	↑ +7.9			
Reading the newspaper	↑ +5.5			
Role-playing / card games				↑ +9.5
Neighborhood activities / festivals		↑ +13.3		↑ +8.9
Cooking courses			↑ +5.6	
Craft courses	↓ -8.3		↑ +7.8	↑ +14.9
Guided visits	↑ +6.1			
Clubbing / karaoke	↑ +5.5	↑ +10.0		
Video games	↑ +5.6			
Music / radio	↑ +5.9			

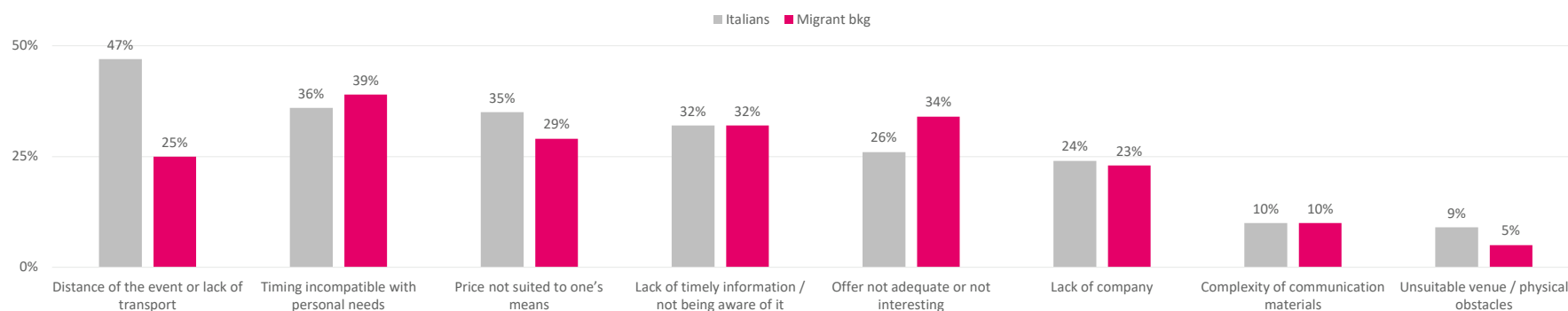
- **Intrinsic motivations** characterize above all the more traditional cultural practices: museums, heritage, reading, guided visits, but also video games and music/radio.
- **The relational component** emerges above all in collective and social activities: neighborhood activities and festivals, clubbing and karaoke, concerts and performances.
- **Learning** distinguishes in particular role-playing games, neighborhood activities and, above all, craft courses.
- **Accessibility** emerges as a distinctive element especially in craft and cooking courses.
- The **craft courses** show the most distinctive profile: fewer intrinsic motivations, but greater weight on accessibility and learning.



Factors that hinder participation



PERCEPTION OF FACTORS HINDERING PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, BY ORIGIN



Note: the comparison is purely exploratory, since the surveys use different response formats: rating each item in the CAWI, and selecting up to three reasons in the CATI.

REACHING EVENTS IS THE MOST WIDESPREAD OBSTACLE FOR ITALIANS: PARTICIPATION IS HINDERED BY DISTANCE, TIMING AND COSTS. FOR PEOPLE WITH A MIGRANT BACKGROUND, THE MAIN BARRIERS ARE MOSTLY LINKED TO TIMING, OFFER AND INFORMATION.

- Distance and lack of transport represent the most widespread obstacle (**47%**) for the Italian sample.
- **Timing and costs limit around a third of the audience:** inconvenient timing and prices perceived as unsuitable.
- The information problem is also significant: **32%** report late communications or limited awareness of opportunities.
- Inadequate offer and lack of company affect around 1 in 4 people.
- More marginal are difficulties linked to the complexity of communication materials and to the venue.



Four barriers to participation



TYPOLOGY OF BARRIERS THAT HINDER PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Type	Variables included	What the literature says	%
Economic and logistical	Price not suited; distance or lack of transport; incompatible timing	The literature on barriers to cultural participation highlights obstacles related to cost, distance, transport, time and the practical organization of access.	78%
Attractiveness or adequacy of the offer	Offer not interesting; venue not suited to one's needs	Studies point to cultural, attitudinal and perceptual barriers, including a mismatch between offer and interests/needs, symbolic distance and low perceived attractiveness.	34%
Relational	Lack of company	Cultural participation is socially situated; the absence of company or support networks can reduce the propensity to participate and reinforce exclusion.	25%
Informational and communicative	Complex communication materials; late information or lack of awareness of the event	The literature includes among the barriers poor information, low comprehensibility of messages, and difficulty navigating the cultural offer.	39%



Barriers to participation / Age groups



PERCEPTION OF FACTORS HINDERING PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, BY AGE GROUP

Hindering factor	19-24 years	25-34 years	Over 65 years
Distance of the event or lack of transport*	37%	43%	52%
Incompatible timing*	28%	39%	37%
Price not suited to one's means	36%	36%	33%
Lack of timely information / not being aware of it	30%	35%	32%
Offer not adequate or not interesting*	23%	22%	30%
Lack of company*	36%	28%	19%
Complexity of communication materials	8%	12%	9%
Unsuitable venue / physical obstacles*	14%	10%	7%

Note: * statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$)

AMONG YOUNGER PEOPLE, RELATIONAL AND SPACE-RELATED OBSTACLES PREVAIL; WITH AGE, ACCESSIBILITY, TRANSPORT AND ADEQUACY OF THE OFFER BECOME MORE IMPORTANT.

THERE ARE, HOWEVER, NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BY GENDER OR BY THE SIZE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF RESIDENCE.

- Among the **over 65s**, distance and transport weigh most heavily (**52%**) along with inadequacy of the offer (**30%**).
- For the **25–34 year-olds** the main obstacle concerns timing (**39%**).
- Among the **19–24 year-olds**, lack of company (**36%**) and the characteristics of the venue (**14%**) weigh more heavily.
- Price and information show no significant differences by age.



Policy implications



Reduce accessibility barriers



Distance, transport, timing and costs represent cross-cutting obstacles for the various forms of participation. To broaden audiences, action is needed on the proximity of the offer, mobility, timing and economic accessibility, integrating these elements already at the design stage of cultural initiatives.

Tailor the offering to different generations and practices



Participation does not simply decrease with age, but changes shape: young people show more diversified, social and creative repertoires, while with age more established and local practices gain greater weight. Differentiated formats, languages and modes of enjoyment need to be supported, avoiding a single model of audience.

Activate the potential audience



Non-participation does not necessarily imply a lack of interest: alongside those who are “indifferent”, there are people who are interested but not yet engaged. Audience development policies should identify these segments and experiment with practical ways to engage them – invitations, trial opportunities, facilitation, proximity and support – focusing resources where latent demand exists.

Leverage social interaction to drive participation



Relationships matter: relational motivations concern over half of respondents, and lack of company is a barrier especially for younger people. Cultural offer can therefore also be designed as an opportunity for encounter, belonging and relationship-building, favoring group, community and participatory formats.

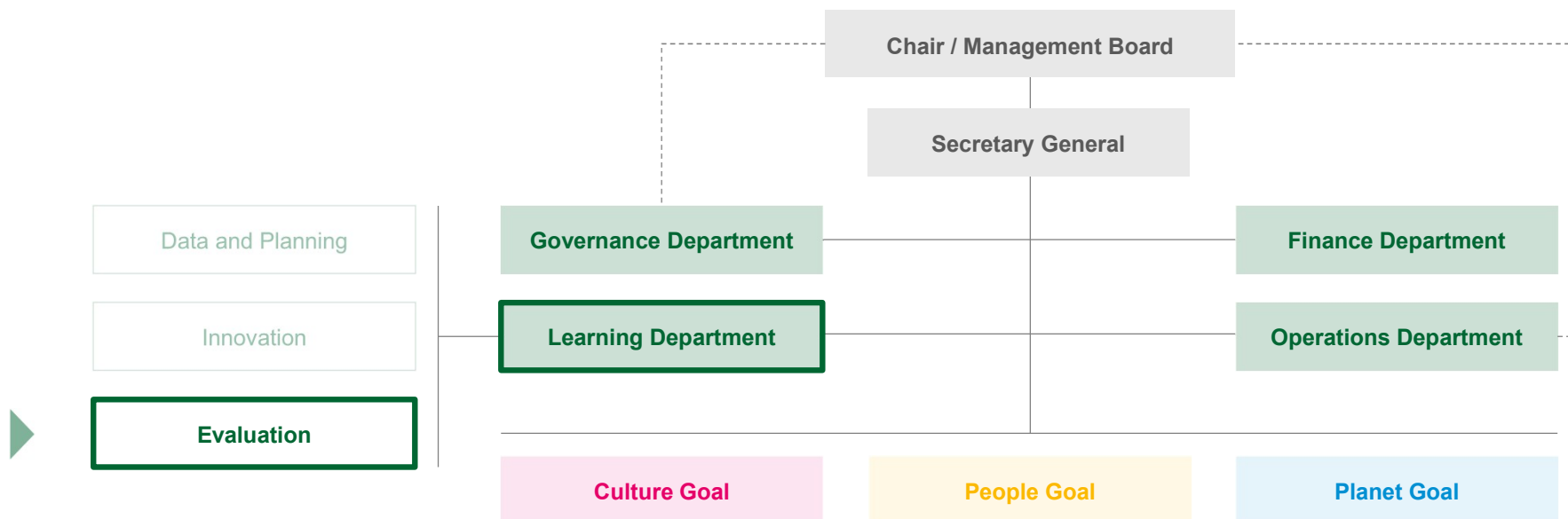
Broaden the boundaries of cultural participation



Cultural repertoires are plural and not limited to traditional forms alone. Among people with a migrant background, informal sociability, traditions, family networks and local practices take on particular importance. This plurality needs to be recognized and supported, favoring proposals capable of connecting different languages, communities and cultural references.



STRUCTURE



LEARNING DEPARTMENT EVALUATION

Evaluation manages the **ex-post** evaluation of FCSP's main projects, to gain an understanding of the relevant processes, effects and impacts, in such a way as to support the re-design of initiatives, rectify any shortcomings and emphasise success stories.

It also conducts **ex-ante** evaluations and needs assessments to support the design of new projects, particularly those with high-impact, promoting the use of rigorous and innovative methodologies.



Evaluation Criteria, Evaluation Phases, and Knowledge Needs



EVALUATION CRITERIA



PHASES OF THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Needs

Context indicators

Design

Objectives and targets

Resources

Expenditure indicators

Activities

Process and implementation indicators

Results/Impacts

Short- and long-term Outcome and Impact Indicators

EVALUATION PHASES

PHASE 1

Context

Analysis

PHASE 2

Ex ante

Evaluation

PHASE 3

Implementation and Monitoring

PHASE 2

Ex post

Evaluation

KNOWLEDGE NEED

What are the **needs** of the territory / / target groups?

What **objectives** does the intervention aim to achieve?

Which **implementation strategies** should be adopted?

Is there **consistency** between the objectives and the means to achieve them?

Is the theory of change **working** as expected?

Can **the processes** be improved?

How many **subjects** have been **involved** in the initiative? What types of stakeholders are they?

Was the intervention effective? What **impact** did it have?

What **policy implications** can be drawn for future similar interventions?

Evaluation for the benefit of the community



Data and evaluation findings are valuable when they are made available to the community.

Full reports and datasets may be shared with researchers and institutions, subject to case-by-case assessment based on the specific context and intended purpose, to ensure their informed and responsible use.

To access the full reports

Write to valutazione@compagniadisanpaolo.it





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