

# Artivisti

**Name of the organisation**

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ

**Website of the organisation**

[Aġenzija Zghazagh](#)

**Location of the organisation**

St Joseph High Road, SVR1013 Santa Venera, Malta

**E-mail address of the organisation**

[agenzija.zghazagh@gov.mt](mailto:agenzija.zghazagh@gov.mt)

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**Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work**

- Arts and culture
- Active citizenship/activism
- Non-formal education/-learning

**Good practice category**

A practice of processes and methods

**Good practice aim & purpose**

Artivisti is a programme which encourages young artists to focus on bringing change and to leave an impact on the wider society through art. It supports young artists to develop their artistic practice through interdisciplinary collaborations as well as develop their creative capacity as artists. The programme ropes in young people in creative practice between 18 and 25 years. They participate in an 18-month long interdisciplinary residency programme, receive artistic mentorship and a grant of 4000 euro towards the implementation of their own activist (artist-activist) project. The programme encourages young people to find their voice as artists in society, gives them the support of peers who are in the same journey as them, and links them in a supportive network with youth workers and artists with more experience in the field. During the journey young people learn how to manage their artist-activist project, manage challenges along the way, reflect and develop their artistic practice, step-up as active citizens. Aġenzija Zghazagh employs a number of youth workers in the process, who work with representatives from Arts Council Malta to give more value and sustainability to the support which the young people access through this programme.

## **Good practice description**

Artivisti is a youth work programme which engages with young creatives aged between 18 and 25, embarking with them on a journey to discover and develop their voice as artists in society. The programme has three main dimensions, which are going on concurrently: the interdisciplinary residency programme involving sessions with youth workers, artistic mentorship with experienced artists and the set up and implementation of a small artivisti project.

Over the course of 18 months, young creatives meet together and with youth workers in a programme designed to explore activism, understand how they can connect with the community of creatives in Malta and abroad and with wider society. Through these connections, with peers and other creatives they acquire a network of support and encouragement that lasts beyond the timeline of the programme. Furthermore, young people explore their position as part of civil society and their role in a democratic society, in particular by understanding the structures within society. The role of the youth worker in this process is crucial because it serves to broker contacts and connections, broker knowledge and information, refine skills (such as communication skills and project management skills), discern bias on certain issues that may be holding them back. With the youth worker the young people also meet to discuss and understand strategies of activism and how they may work with diverse allies in the community to get their message across.

The strength of the programme is the collaboration across social worlds, supporting young people to build ties with the artist community. Not only do young people meet regularly with youth workers, but they also acquire intensive artistic mentorship that guides the artistic development of the project they embark on. The process also gives them insight on the practice of social-engaged art, which emphasises the process rather than the emerging product of the journey. The programme dedicates a budget of 4000 euro to each of the enrolled Artivisti so that they may manage a small artist project through which they can experiment on how they can best reach out to society through their own creative practice. Young people learn how to maximise budgets to create an impact in the local community.

The Artivisti programme has a lasting impact in the lives of young creatives because it encourages them to be critical of the way in which they engage with the local community, and how they can best use their skills to encourage peers and other members in the community to be actively engaged as citizens, to care about making localities and the island a better place to live in. Through this programme they get in touch with their power to foster social change.

## **Good practice result & concrete effects**

- Young people:
  - are empowered to step up as active citizens and find their voice as artists-activists in society by implementing their own activist project.
  - Learn-by-doing project management
  - discover artistic practice as a social process, wherein they connect and involve citizens in their artistic process, thereby giving a voice to a wider community
  - Keep their artistic practice alive long-term through a newly-found community of peers, and supportive connections with artists and civil society, often approaching us when they embark on other projects.
  - Past generations of Artivisti have each generated their own project, actively participating in civil society by creating projects on social issues, including over-development, the stigma of loneliness, gentrification in the city, as protest art, or creative community initiatives, exhibiting in art galleries and community spaces, using a variety of creative media including visual installations, literature, film writing, theatre
  - Keit Bonnici's response to the use of public land for commercial purposes was a performance art piece 'Perch', a protest art installation at one of Valletta's most controversial outdoor dining spaces. Sheldon Saliba's 'Tiles of Occupation' directly tackled the construction industry and its impact on the environment.
  - Artivisti has become a meaningful mechanism of local youth participation.

## **Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work**

Core principles of youth work