

1 | Introduction

"It is important to adapt cultural activities to the daily reality of people with dementia, but people with dementia who still want and are able to do so must also be encouraged to take initiatives themselves. This not only concerns artistic activities with fellow people living with dementia, but also opportunities to remain active in regular cultural activities. In artistic and cultural activities, a good balance between stimulating capacities and understanding limitations of each person with dementia is vital to respect our autonomy and dignity."

Jan Van Gils, painter living with dementia and member of the 'Flemish working group of people with dementia'

Interest in the added value of cultural participation for people living with dementia has risen over the last decades. The arts and cultural heritage sector expanded its offer and also health and wellbeing organisations are more and more looking for cross-sectoral collaboration to meet the needs of people living with dementia and their loved ones. In this recommendation report we will focus on the opportunities of culture and art for people with dementia and on the 'Dementia in Cultural Mediation' project we have been working on for two years. We are proud to present a wide range of new perspectives, insights and tools that will inspire many cultural mediators and healthcare professionals that are working with people with dementia and (in)formal caregivers.

1.1 | The project mission

'Dementia in Cultural Mediation' (DCUM) is a transnational project driven by the increasing number of people living with dementia in Europe. The initiative is based on the great potential of cultural and artistic activities as an innovative and dynamic approach to achieve social inclusion of people with dementia in local communities and to improve their quality of life. Through learning from the rich body of knowledge and experiences in the field of arts, culture and dementia care that the involved partners from Belgium, Denmark, Spain and the Netherlands have, the project has a clear ambition: *reaching out to local and regional cultural institutions, health and social authorities and end-user groups that want to embrace dementia in a more holistic way through cultural activities in order to create more dementia-inclusive communities.*



Philosophical Dialogue (Denmark) with Anni Jensen, Brandts Klædefabrik, © Birgitte Vestergaard

To realise this ambition, the project tries to increase the competencies of cultural mediators working in cultural institutions such as libraries, museums and civil society organisations but also healthcare professionals and policy stakeholders through exchange of tools and learning of new ways to practice cultural mediation aimed at people with dementia. The lived experience and valuable knowledge from people with dementia and their caregivers offered the guidance and quality check throughout the whole project development process.

1.2 | The project output

The 'Dementia in Cultural Mediation' initiative will deliver **three main outputs**: an open-source **digital toolkit of good practices** shared through a customized website, audio-visual productions and social media, accompanying **didactic training material** and a set of recommendations in this **report** to contribute to future European efforts in the field of cultural mediation for people with dementia. The recommendations are based on the project experiences and results which are continuously reviewed by a European reference group consisting of highly experienced experts in the field of dementia, research and the arts and representatives of the end-user group (informal caregivers and people living with dementia). All the project deliverables, updates and opportunities to interact are also offered through the dedicated social media platform on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.



<https://www.facebook.com/DementiaInCulturalMediation>



<https://twitter.com/dcumproject>



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCIsCeNYAcuufXnXbPfutGw>

1.3 | Publication goals and target groups

With this publication, as a finalization of the ‘Dementia in Cultural Mediation’ collaboration initiative, the project partners have three clear targets:

- Offering a **set of reflections and recommendations** about organizing cultural activities for people with dementia and (in)formal caregivers.
- **Informing the broader audience** about the ‘Dementia in Cultural Mediation’ mission and lessons learned.
- Reaching out to important actors in the field by providing an inspirational guide for building a **sustainable offer on culture and dementia** within their organisation, city or country.

The **main actors** where the ‘Dementia in Cultural Mediation’-recommendations publication is designed for, are in the first place anyone who’s active in the field of arts or culture, but the audience is much broader than that. We also want to reach out to health care professionals and social-care organisations, dementia-friendly communities, the local government, national policy makers, international umbrella organisations, end-user groups, schools, ...