

“(...) for me it is also essential for the community to establish a certain understanding that art has to be part of the public sphere and that this is something great (...)”

Social Work, Cultural and Civil Society
Interviewee, Germany

“...many people in Hackney and Tower Hamlets are walking around photographing it and kind of tour groups are going around looking at, you know, different bits of graffiti. You [kind of] think, well, it's become a... something of like a real cultural value”

Enterprise Interviewee, United Kingdom

“There are certain aspects forming a population's identity. It's not easy to create a project under those standards. You need to explore and communicate with the residents in order to agree on a certain intervention”

Social Work, Cultural and Civil Society
Interviewee, Spain

“Number one, talk with young people; get them to understand the impact they might have on abusing other people's property etc.”

Police and Law Enforcement
Interviewee, United Kingdom



GRAFFOLUTION

Understand . Collaborate . Improve

POLICY BRIEF

for education and culture professionals and communities of practice

Debates and actions around graffiti and street art are important as they can help us all think through and influence what kinds of communities and environments we want to live in.

This document sets out to introduce you to some of the research, resources and recommendations that have emerged through the European Graffolution project, particularly those related to shaping strategies and actions among educational, social and cultural sectors, in relation to graffiti and street art.

What is Graffolution?

European city administrators, public transport services and law enforcement agencies spend enormous amounts of money attempting to tackle graffiti vandalism. This EU-funded project has sought to help mitigate problems associated with graffiti vandalism in public areas and transportation networks by focusing on awareness and positive solutions for all stakeholder groups affected and implicated.

Our consortium is formed by public and private sector partners from five European countries: SYNYO (Austria), the UIC (France), Sine-Institut (Germany), Universitat de Barcelona, Eticas Research & Consulting, Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya (Spain), University of the Arts London and London Borough of Islington (UK).

During the course of this two-year project, we have researched over 300 sources of literature on graffiti, undertaken 85 interviews across groups including, graffiti writers and artists; municipal authorities; police and law enforcement professionals;

transport operators; enterprises; social work, cultural and civil society groups in Austria, Germany, Spain and the UK and we have analysed 100 strategies and responses to graffiti, all with the aim of understanding the range of opinions and approaches to the graffiti phenomenon. Building on these insights, we have developed a platform aimed at connecting all different stakeholders and becoming a source of reliable information as well as a tool for enabling collaboration.

Note: Drawing upon the extensive research conducted, this document purposefully does not separate the activities of graffiti and street art at a generic level, since while in some cases they can be very different, in many cases they are part of a linear scale of activities related to painting, mark making and to creative practices in cities, both legal and illegal, commissioned and uncommissioned. We propose it is more productive to take a position of no-bias in favour of, or against these practices, so that diverse communities involved and affected can be seen best accommodated.

Recommendations for educational, cultural and social organisations

The Graffolution research findings have led us to four areas, which give the following recommendations aimed at educational, cultural and social organisations:

1. Promote more informed considerations and responses to graffiti

- Contributing to an informed, diverse and collective debate by raising awareness of all the dimensions of graffiti is extremely important. Negative effects of graffiti might be well-known among dutyholders and among some publics, but its (potential) cultural, communicative and creative value needs to be considered, too. With this in mind, it is important to explore opportunities to spread 'pro-social' success indicators as well as those already in place.
- Emphasise the role that graffiti has in modern society as part of popular cultures, the world of art, the hip hop scene etc. which makes it an embedded part of everyday life.

2. Involve champions and mediators to facilitate multiway dialogues and stimulate new routes forward

- Educators, social and community practitioners, as well as cultural groups, each play a key role in building the necessary bridges for dialogue to happen between graffiti writers, place managers and authorities (dutyholders). Their position as champions of good practice between both the pro-active and regulative approaches adopted by other stakeholder groups can be transformational in catalysing positive action from otherwise antagonistic situations or relations.
- Vicious circles and traditional 'cat and mouse' dynamics can be addressed by promoting collaboration through direct engagement and mutual understanding through enhanced communication.

- Effective mechanisms and participative processes and opportunities need to be designed in order to help each sides' message reach the other. This can be achieved through debates, conferences/cultural events, dialogue processes with citizens etc, these should engage both public authorities, graffiti writers and many other citizens.

3. Raise debate and awareness among diverse urban communities, including young people and residential groups, about graffiti vandalism and street art's multiple effect different environments and on publics, looking towards positive and innovative futures.

For the actions and interpretations of graffiti to shift from repressed vandalism towards more accepted creative activities with potential pro-social benefits, we need to see changes in both the perceptions and prejudices among some publics, as well as the approaches among some graffitiists.

- Most young graffitiists are still developing their ideas, actions and approaches, so it is valuable for organisations working with young people to help raise awareness and debate about graffiti's effects, implications and opportunities.
- Both, negative and positive effects should be discussed, in terms of who is served, who is affected and in what contexts. Denying all forms of expression through graffiti can be counterproductive and/or eliminate the potential development of talent and enterprising individuals.

- Damage on property caused by illegal graffiti and its financial cost to public administration (cleaning, maintenance and other expenditures) should be made transparent and comparable to asserted benefits of street art type interventions. Initiatives to help relate actions to the affected people (shop owners, neighbours, etc.) could be used to raise awareness.
 - The dangers associated to some kinds of graffiti, particularly around rail environments.
 - Parents and local community members can also be better informed about opportunities to explore legal and creative alternatives among their neighbourhood groups and local environments.
 - Graffiti needs to be realized from an artistic approach as well. It is worth promoting discussions on the value that art in public spaces has for the society, the conservation of such art pieces, etc.
- 4. Provide and facilitate innovative and inclusive possibilities for graffiti writing and street art in diverse, creative, playful and non-institutionalised formats.**
- Information about legal opportunities and alternatives should be promoted among young people, especially among those showing an interest in graffiti.
 - Initiatives like street art events, neighbourhood festivals, free wall initiatives, artists-in-residence, street artist mentors, and other pro-social applications of graffiti should be promoted to enhance the benefits and positively applied skill development of artists.

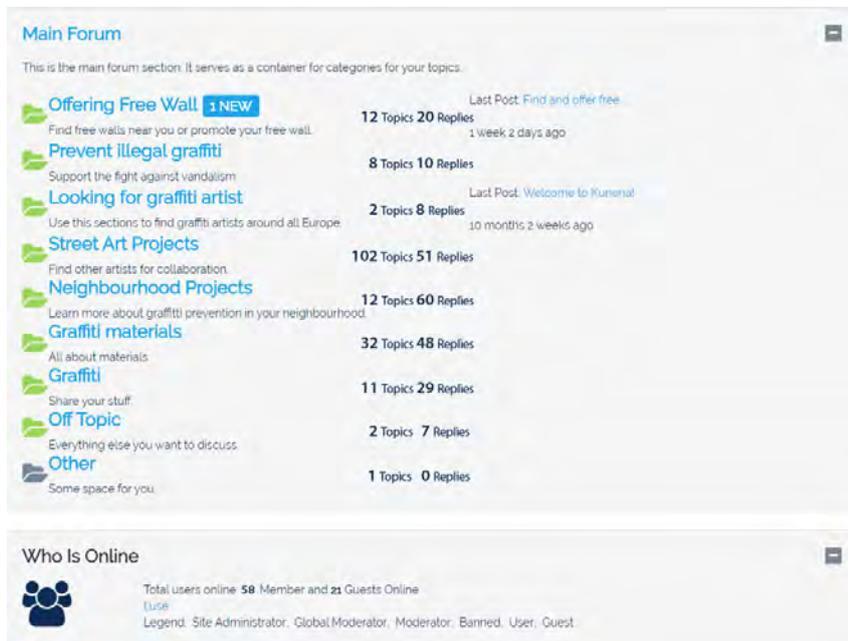
What is the Graffolution Platform and how might it help you?

The Graffolution Platform is a free and EU-focused resource for those wondering about, those wrestling with, as well as those making graffiti and street art. It has been designed with the collaboration of representatives from a wide range of stakeholder groups including cultural and civil society organisations, public administration and graffiti writers. Its content and structure are the result of combining these different groups' experiences, points of view, suggestions and feedback (gathered through interviews and an e-consultation) with the project partners' research findings and professional knowledge.

These are some of the features you might find interesting:

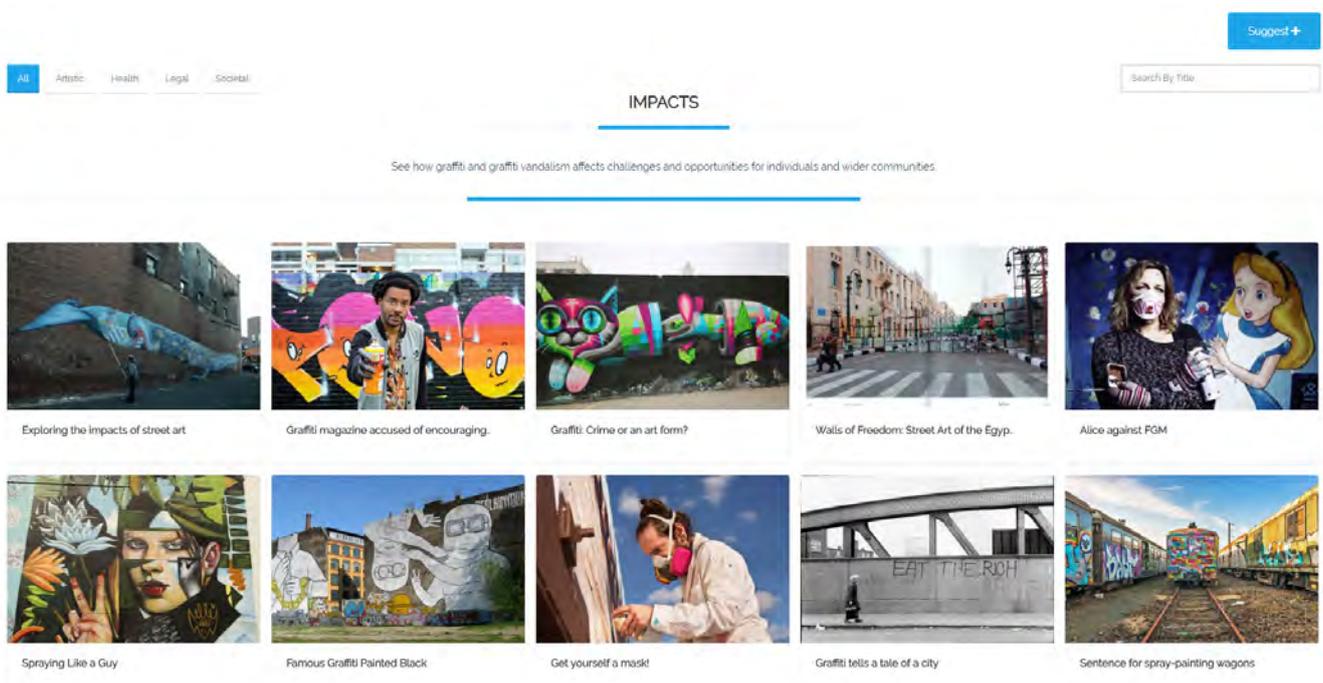
- **LAUNCH COLLABORATIVE GRAFFITI INITIATIVES**

Connect with graffiti artists, public administrations and other important stakeholders in order to design, launch and promote pro-social and artistic graffiti initiatives in a safe, permitted and innovative ways.



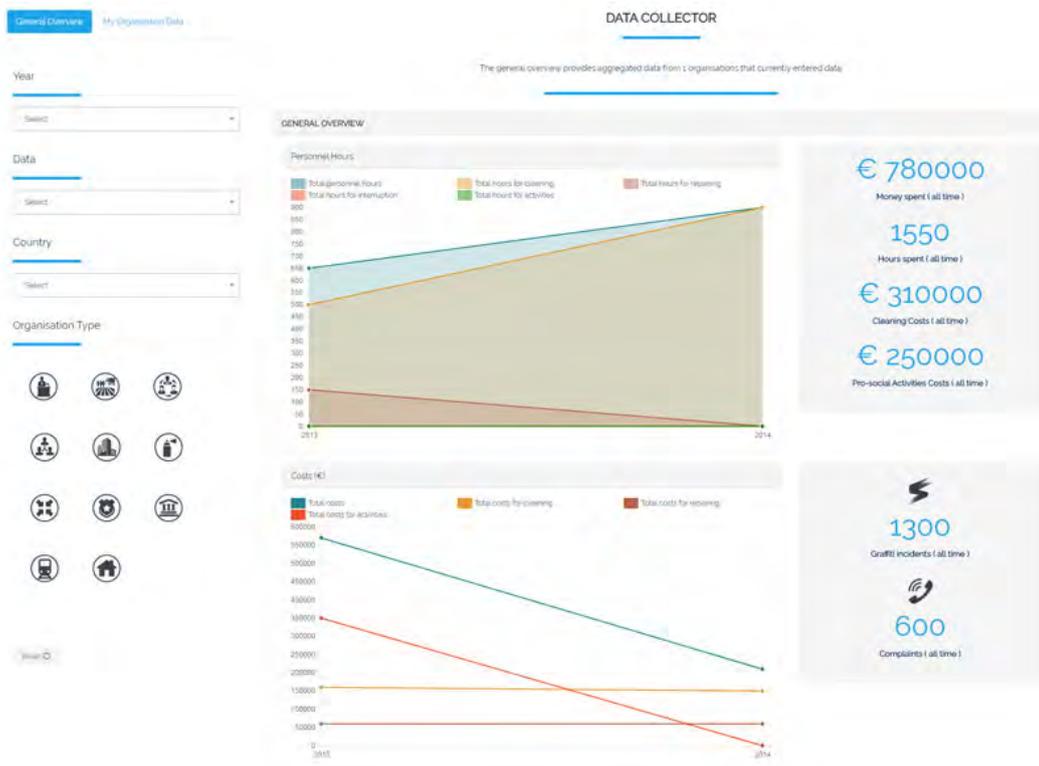
- **SHARE YOUR POINTS OF VIEW**

Share ideas, facts, examples, insights and the results of your activities through the different sections of the platform.



- **HELPTO EMPOWER YOUR COMMUNITY TO HAVE MORE SAY OVER THEIR ENVIRONMENTS BY OPENING DEBATES, SHARING ALTERNATIVES AND THINKING FORWARD, COLLECTIVELY!**

Stay informed and help us share legal opportunities, other organisations' initiatives, and related news/statistics in your city.



Strategy

Share on

CASE STUDIES

This area helps you to find case studies which make use of different kinds of response actions

This part of the platform helps you to develop a strategy and plan the whole cycle: from problem definition to evaluation and impact assessment. The following elements can be for one-time or long term interventions, single or complex actions, as well as for approaches departing from prevention, response or recovery nature. This section will help you to document a strategy specific for your aims to fully achieve them.

STEP 1: PLEASE DEFINE YOUR GOALS ACCORDING TO YOUR CHALLENGES (PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY)

- Awareness**
 - Draw a distinction between vandalism and street art
 - Explain the possibilities to create value through graffiti
 - Explain the problems and costs caused by illegal graffiti
 - Increase capacity for visual critique
 - Introduce graffiti prevention by design
 - Introduce legal alternatives
 - Raise awareness on graffiti as a part of the youth culture
 - Raise awareness on pro-social and anti-social aspects of graffiti
 - Understand the causes of graffiti
- Arts-Led Activities**
 - Offer an artistic alternative to graffiti vandalism
 - Provide activities through community art

Recently added:

Case Study	Type of Response	Target Groups	Rated by Organization Types	Details
Clean streets	Improving the Legal Response	Graffiti art	EUROPEAN UNION - Jugend ON	Navigation and Graffiti Forum
Vienna Central Railway Station Street Art Murals	Environment & Infrastructure Collaboration Culture Engagement - Activity - Support Education and Events	Graffiti writers Tourists Local community	Average Rating 4.5 Organizations that rated this rating 0 Detailed info	Details
URBAN AREA open spaces	Environment & Infrastructure Collaboration Culture	Graffiti writers Local community	Average Rating 4.5 Organizations that rated this rating 0 Detailed info	Details
OGARNA 2.0	Environment & Infrastructure Collaboration Culture	Tourists Local community Local business	Average Rating 4.5 Organizations that rated this rating 0 Detailed info	Details



Supporting Research

- Different actors and community groups were consulted and broadly formed six categories of stakeholder: 'Social Work, Cultural & Civil Society', 'Police & Law Enforcement', 'Public Administration', 'Transport Operators/Authorities', 'Enterprises' and 'Graffiti Writers'.
- Most established literature on graffiti vandalism and related responses revolves around anti-social and pro-social approaches. In more recent years there is an emergence of innovative, smart and contextually sensitive urban management and design models embracing both pro-social and anti-social perspectives. These contemporary practices are often more cost-effective than those which respond to graffiti solely as an anti-social activity, and can be more inclusive in accommodating multiple drivers and understanding 'what works'.
- Stakeholders who were interviewed expressed a lack of communication between different groups and the large majority of them emphasised the importance of pro-social and educational projects in the context of graffiti.
- Actions to facilitate greater engagement and awareness of the diverse debates, voices, concerns and values associated to graffiti, among all affected parties, are seen as important by all the stakeholder groups that were consulted.
- Graffiti satisfies the paradoxical needs for affiliation (with like-minded others) and differentiation (from society) among young people, but also other generations and communities. Practices invariably change over the span of an individual's 'graffiti career', whereby a person who starts out making uncommissioned graffiti interventions that are not liked, respected, or may be offensive to some groups, is likely to change their practice over time, some with negative impact and some with positive impact, or both.
- Projects in schools or organisations working with young people should always include the multiple sides of graffiti; the positive (artistic, creative expression, community building) as well as the negative ones (the consequences of illegal graffiti to the directly affected parties and broader society), and encourage people to be innovative in thinking through what they think would work best in their own contexts.



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