



THE EFFECTS OF MATERA 2019 ON THE  
LOCAL SKILLS SYSTEM

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation study analyses **the effects of Matera 2019 on the local skills system** and highlights its significant contribution to the capacity building of operators and of all staff involved in the implementation of the cultural programme. The study was carried out from April to July 2020, through the combination of quantitative (questionnaire addressed to 82 operators involved in different areas of cultural production) and qualitative (focus groups with Project Leaders) methodologies. Although the collection of data and testimonies was carried out following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore in contextual conditions that in some way limited the start of development and growth paths for people involved in the cultural and creative sector, the study shows that Matera 2019 represented an opportunity to upgrade in terms of three main profiles: reinforcement of professional skills, increase in transversal skills and expansion of job opportunities.

This upgrade was detected for all levels of "seniority" and concerns the whole **broad "spectrum of professions" that helped to make Matera 2019 a reality**, from technical and administrative support to communication with and engagement of the public. Since it is based on a classification of the variety of professional profiles, roles and tasks implemented within the cultural programme, this study also restores **complexity and richness to the new professions activated as well as traditional professions enhanced through the original productions of Matera 2019** and that characterise, more generally, the cultural and creative sector as a whole. The **breadth of the spectrum** of the **professions** involved in Matera 2019 is also confirmed by the research into the effects on the supply chains, which highlights how the **craftsmanship** and the **care** of the Foundation, in the management of **original productions**, has been able to activate a **spillover effect** in all economic and professional sectors.

From the point of view of Matera 2019's contribution to strengthening **professional skills**, networking skills and all the skills that relate to production stand out, from management and organisation to setting up and safety of the location. Matera 2019 has been described as an opportunity to open up to the foreign horizon with real international co-productions but also as a testing ground for unconventional installations in unusual spaces. Skills for mediation with artists, communication, and promotion and engagement of citizens and the public, linked to the ability to activate and manage inclusive processes of co-creation and cultural citizenship, were also greatly strengthened. With regard to **transversal skills**, the operators reported decisive effects in terms of problem solving, interpersonal communication, conflict management, teamwork and intercultural competences. The upgrade in terms of professional and transversal skills is explained by referring to a broader **idea of the "extraordinary"** linked to the experience of Matera 2019. The choice to rotate a large part of the cultural programme around the **original productions** and to give space, in this context, to the **protagonism of the local cultural and creative scene** has contributed to strengthening the repercussions on the territory in terms of capacity building, ensuring that the uniqueness and innovative scope of the "European Capital of Culture" event were opportunities of enrichment for local professionals, who recognised the "extraordinary" compared to other past experiences.

The survey showed that Matera 2019 has also fuelled **new job opportunities**, both for individuals and for the organisations to which they belong. The effects in terms of creating networks of relationships functional to job growth and identifying new paths of professional development were decisive. Thanks to Matera 2019, individual professionals and organisations have better structured their activities, reducing multi-tasking, acquired international recognition and created lasting relationships with national and international subjects. As part of the study, a strong **need also emerged to continue to nourish and consolidate what has been learned thanks to Matera 2019**, in order to i) strengthen digital and fundraising skills, in which there is still a strong need for training, ii) disseminate "innovative" skills on issues such as cultural welfare and local tourism, which appear to be crucial for responding to the challenges generated by the pandemic crisis and, iii) in general, to make Matera 2019 a valid culturally-based development model for all of Southern Italy. To this end, the idea of making **the Matera-Basilicata 2019 Foundation also a hub for the development of skills in support of the cultural and creative scene of the South is supported**, promoted in close collaboration with the territory and its actors.