

# AND OUT INSIDE INSIDE AND OUT

**METHODS AND PRACTICES  
OF ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION  
FOR PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE**

# INSIDE AND OUT INSIDE

**EDITED BY ANTONIJA LETINIĆ**

# INSIDE AND OUT

## Methods and Practices of Organisational Transformation for Participation in Culture

INTRODUCTION		6			
I.	ON AUDIENCE AND EVERYTHING ABOUT IT	8	I.1.	Audience Development Contradiction – Goran Tomka	10
			I.2.	Barriers to Cultural Participation – Maria Vlachou	16
			I.3.	In Search of the Audience – Antonija Letinić	22
			I.4.	Audience Development, the Stone Guest – Cristina da Milano	36
II.	ACED METHODOLOGY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE	40	II.1.	The ADESTE Approach to Audience Development: A short introduction to a long journey – Alessandra Gariboldi	42
					46
			II.2.	ACED METHODOLOGY	
			II.3.	EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE IN THE APPLICATION OF THE ACED METHODOLOGY	76
			II.3.1.	Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation	78
			II.3.2.	CNT Ivan pl. Zajc Rijeka	84
			II.3.3.	Mercury Theatre	88
			II.3.4.	Nørrebro Theatre	92
			II.3.5.	Stabile Theatre	98
			II.3.6.	Zaragoza Cultural – Harinera	106
			II.4.	ITERATIONS OF ACED METHODOLOGY	110
III.	EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES OF PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE	116	III.1.	Bunker	118
			III.2.	Gallery Prozori	122
			III.3.	Glej Theatre	130
			III.4.	Remont	134
			III.5.	Replika	140
			III.6.	Trafó	146
IV.	IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION	152	IV.1.	Meeting the Challenges – A Paradigm Shift in Audience Relations – Darko Lukić	154
	IMPRESSUM	158			

# INTRODUCTION

ANTONIJA LETINIĆ

In the last decade, many programmes, policies, and measures (including those of the European Union) have focused on citizen participation in cultural and artistic production. Participation is one of the biggest challenges in the sector today, and audience development has become an important trope in cultural policy. The issue of cultural participation is not one of economic sustainability but cultural relevance in general. Communication strategies, the opening of the sector to citizens, encouraging creativity, strengthening dialogue, and generating points of encounter are imperatives if culture is to be sustainable and if democratic societies are to be developed. Hence, the question is not whether, but how and for whom.

This publication, dedicated to participation in culture, gives an overview of the development and relations between cultural policies and participation. It considers disagreements and misunderstandings regarding audience as key challenges of the cultural sector in terms of participation, and presents different practices that integrate participation in the overall operating of the organisation. The publication is produced in the framework of the European project ADESTE+ (Audience DEvelopment STRategies for cultural organisations in Europe) dedicated to developing methodology which would support organisations in culture when implementing transition towards a stronger audience centred approach. Thus, it is also a document of the experiences, knowledge, and insights from various meetings and the project itself. It was conceived as a manual to be used by anyone interested in delving into the issue of audience development and citizen participation in cultural production. The publication has three sections. The first comprises a series of texts giving an insight into the development of the concept of audience development through history, different interpretations of the concept depending on the contexts in which it is applied, approaches to it and policies as well as contradictions related to it. The section gathers articles by Goran Tomka on the contradictions of audience development, Maria Vlachou on access to culture, Antonija Letinić on the conception, development, and transformation of the concept of audience development and Cristina da Milano on audience development in the EU context.

The second section provides insights into the methodology underpinning the project, and offers possible iterations to reflect the diverse needs of different organisations. The presentation of the methodology is followed by the examples of practices as a certain inspiration for thinking and working with audience. Introductory article by Alessandra Gariboldi describes the evolution of the ADESTE+ partnership, explains how the need to develop the ACED methodology was identified, and presents the methodology itself. After the introduction, the second section presents the methodology step-by-step

6

INSIDE AND OUT

and the examples of its application. The examples of practices are the ones by the partners in the ADESTE+ project who tested the methodology. Thus, they present possible reflections on the process that artistic partners, Theatre Stabile, Zaragoza Cultural, Foundation Calouste Gulbenkian, Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc, Mercury and Nørrebro – went through.

The third part of the publication is dedicated to the examples of practices of organisations in South-East Europe. The organisations presented their work with audiences during the Waterfall workshops organised for the local organisations by Kultura Nova Foundation and CNT Ivan pl. Zajc. The aim of these examples is to give insight into how small and mid-organisations in culture are trying to strengthen their work with audiences. Here are gathered the examples of Budapest cultural centre Trafo; educational theatre Replika from Bucharest; cultural centre Bunker and Glej Theatre from Ljubljana; Remont organisation from Belgrade; and Gallery Prozori from Zagreb.

Finally, the publication brings a comment by Darko Lukić on the designed ACED methodology. Lukić, as a collaborator of Kultura Nova Foundation, participated in the ADESTE+ project as an expert working on the testing of the ACED methodology as well as in its iterations for small and mid-organisations. He also participated in the educational programme working on the transfer of knowledge to the actors participating in the Waterfall workshops in Croatia.

Kultura Nova Foundation's main intention with this publication is to collect the diverse material – from gathering knowledge, experience and practices gained through the development of the ACED methodology and implementation of the ADESTE+ project to historical overview and theoretical considerations on the relationship of culture and audience – and to make it available to all those who might be interested in getting an insight in the practices of participation in culture or developing further their work in the field of audience participation and engagement.

7

INTRODUCTION

I.

ON AUDIENCE  
AND  
EVERYTHING  
ABOUT IT

# I.1. AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT CONTRADICTION

GORAN TOMKA

For several centuries now, integral bits of culture have been continuously distanced from communities and populations at large. Traditional, everyday cultural expressions, rituals, songs, stories and activities have been systematically extracted from their original surroundings, turned into "high" cultural products and made exclusive and distinctive. This is what cultural sociologists like DiMaggio (1982) and Levine (1990) called "sacralisation of culture", positing that during the course of the nineteenth century, wealthy arts patrons began to erect new spatial and functional barriers between "high" and "popular" culture in order to form a cultural hierarchy which would then justify and legitimise social and economic hierarchies. Classical examples include "elevating" Shakespeare's theatre from popular entertainment to the joy of the elites or appropriating popular songs for high street opera venues.

This social engineering and repositioning of cultural entities has often entailed numerous forms of expulsion, segregation, censoring and policing. Just like shabby but authentic parts of towns have been gentrified over and over again (low-income inhabitants pushed out and replaced by wealthy ones), so has the culture of various underprivileged and marginalised communities and classes. The most common form of sacralisation of culture happened through commercialisation and commodification. What used to be a community-based, cheap or even free cultural event has become a gated, priced and institutionalised highbrow cultural practice. Architecture and technology have also played a part, with every new major transformation bringing new forms of exclusion and estrangement — seating in cinemas and theatres introduced new forms of hierarchies, electrification of theatres and museums pushed audiences into the darkness and gramophones and cassettes further privatised and enclosed cultural experiences (Conner, 2007).

These transformations have not gone unprotested. Workers, women, poor, rural and indigenous communities have been protesting to retain their culture. As an example, after London theatres adopted exclusive pricing strategies to exclude working classes people from entering newly refurbished venues in central locations, Old Price riots stormed the city, with workers trying to defend their right to culture (Butsch, 2010).

In the process of cultural exclusion, an important and well-documented role was played by wealthy "patrons"—new capitalist classes that looked for ways to legitimise their wealth in relation to the aristocracy—as well as the capitalist state that was never shy of sending police to enforce and

10

INSIDE AND OUT

defend barriers to cultural participation. However, we cannot (and should not) fail to notice that this process was not possible without the active contribution of new cultural professions, such as artists, curators, playwrights, actors, composers, choreographers, designers and arts managers. What used to be an occasional, voluntary community membership role became a profession—a highly ritualised, organised, institutionalised set of rules, practices and methods available to an exclusive, autonomous group who belongs to it. These new professions as cultural producers matched the capitalist class as consumers; it was the flip side of the shiny new coin that culture had become.

As a consequence of sacralisation and professionalisation, completely new art and cultural forms have been born, such as classical music, ballet, opera, visual arts, art collections and museums. In the case of opera, once popular tunes and shows like *The Barber of Seville* and *Don Giovanni*, which used to be enjoyed and sang on the street, became a thing of distinction by introducing specialised buildings, ticketing and dress codes and by favouring original Italian versions rather than the popular translations (Storey, 2002). In the case of music, Raynor (1972) finely expressed it by claiming that: "music ceased to be an intimate social necessity and became "a remote, esoteric delight thundered out by vast orchestras or dispensed by virtuoso players and singers; it became increasingly the pleasure of a cultured elite rather than an immediate communication between men and women".

Many other art forms have similar histories. However, it is important to note that these processes are not just historical. Classification and commodification have never truly died in the field of culture. Cultural exclusion is an ongoing process. Heteronormative, patriarchal white culture is reproduced through movies, novels, theatre plays and museum exhibitions. Working class culture is in the tight grip of the global and national cultural industries be it nationalistic television or mesmerising social media. Vast rural and suburban areas are devoid of places where gathering and togetherness can happen, which is a prerequisite for any culture. Alternatives are pushed to the margins and become precarious, silent and under constant attack from conservative tabloids. No wonder that today when one says the word "culture", most people cannot think beyond its petrified, middle-class, institutionalised forms like theatres and museums.

This history of distinction through separation and classification is clearly visible within the cultural institutions of Europe. While doing field research, I regularly meet scenarios in which cultural producers, artists and their friends form a coherent and vibrant community, while audiences coming from different backgrounds are seen as a resource to manage. One producer complained to me that there were sadly not enough audiences for all the events they would like to produce (Tomka, 2021). Audiences are not part of the governing structures and institutions do not represent, support, safeguard or promote

11

I. ON AUDIENCE AND EVERYTHING ABOUT IT

their culture but rather professional, institutional and excellent forms of it. Finally, this protest against participatory transformation is also visible in professional hierarchies within cultural institutions. Those closest to the audience are always lower in the rank than those who create pieces away from the audience: actors vs. directors, dancers vs. choreographers, museum educators/pedagogues vs. curators and so on.

In the global South, the situation is even worse, and Europe has a role to play as well. "Cultural extractivism" is sucking the blood of local, ancestral cultures which are under constant attack through natural extractivism, forced migration and trafficking, land-grabbing, planned impoverishment, urbanisation and "development" coupled with white, European aesthetic imagination. Living cultures are becoming heritage to be preserved in some urban museum or cultural centre at the margin of a random metropolis where local communities have been forced to migrate.

However, this is not to say that the whole cultural system is somehow inherently and openly against poor, Blacks or minorities. The game is much more nuanced. In fact, coming in waves, cultural professionals as well as patrons (either in the American form of wealthy families or the European form of foundations and cultural ministries) have tried to "include" those previously excluded in these new aestheticized, institutionalised cultures. But the way that inclusion works is troubling because it always functions to preserve a social hierarchy. Yes, you are welcome to be subordinated. During the 1968, leading theatre directors in France gathered to respond to the exclusivity of France's contemporary culture. What they did, however, was to devise one more arranging tool. They invented the "non-publics" (non-audiences), and while recognising their exclusion, proposed to include them through their privileged institutional frameworks (Loyer, 2011). Four or five decades later, audience development as it is dominantly understood in Europe today is just one more wave of such institutional inclusivity. With an underlying marketing logic of market segmentation, dissemination, communication and public relations, audience development is again a colonising expedition in the territory of the non-audience in the quest for inclusion and imposition of cultural taste. In this way, cultural infrastructure continuously fabricates a discourse of participation and barriers, inclusion and exclusion, in order to remain a central and pivotal spot for all things cultural (Stevenson et al., 2015).

This is the reason I view audience development as a contradiction, although it is not really a contradiction but rather an attempt to maintain a sociocultural status quo while pretending to contribute to the ongoing project of cultural emancipation. However, both empirical cultural participation measurements and sound logic tell us that cultural participation and democracy cannot be achieved through such programmes. One cannot heal a cut with a knife.

No number of new and yet the same cultural centres, museums and galleries can encourage authentic, alternative cultural expressions. No number of grand, commercialised cultural spectacles and festivals can bring rich culture back to the everyday lives and settings. No number of centralised, hyper-urbanised and financialised cultural capitals and creative cities can encourage culture in rural areas, suburbs and urban undergrounds. Those who rightfully feel distanced from culture cannot regain their cultural agency and shape cultural structure according to their liking by being navigated, schooled and curated by the same system of exclusion. And that is what cultural emancipation is about—not taking, developing or bringing anyone into anything but enabling a nutritious environment for many cultures to thrive on their own as well as to be able to exchange and mutually morph. Current systems of cultural production are simply ill-suited for any such emancipatory programme if they wish to maintain their privileges, buildings, budgets and access to decision-making and public communication.

It is these privileges and resources that need to be truly shared. How can they be shared? There are no recipes for revolution; every situation requires undoing and reconnecting what was broken. However, let me share a list of possible ingredients to get the conversation started.

- Music, literature, visual arts and dance have to be taught in radically different ways – drumming instead of Mozart, cooking instead of Goethe!
- Art classes should not be aimed at selecting art professionals and other creatives, but at empowering creative expression.
- Professional hierarchies within the field have to be dismantled, and everyone has to be responsible for sharing and exchanging with audiences and not only with "community managers", "audience developers" and the like.
- Amateurism has to be much more supported, represented and cherished.
- Audiences have to become an integral part of cultural institutional programming.
- Cultural policymaking has to be decentralised so that it can be decoupled from grand national interests and narratives which leave no room for queerness, femininity, nomadism, cosmopolitanism and so on.
- Multiplicity and multivocality of cultural narratives big and small have to be recognised as a key prerequisite for vibrant culturescape.
- National ministries have to end hostility towards independent, young, dissenting cultural initiatives.



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INSIDE AND OUT



## I.2. BARRIERS TO CULTURAL PARTICIPATION

MARIA VLACHOU

Early in 2020, the Arts Council England (ACE) presented its strategy for the decade, entitled *Let's Create*. In order to prepare this new document, ACE consulted with more than 5.000 people, who were not just cultural professionals but also members of the public, including children and young people. Through this process, they identified issues which might sound familiar to professionals and people in other countries, for instance:

- " *[In England] Many people are uncomfortable with the label "the arts" and associate it only with either the visual arts or "high art", such as ballet or opera. At the same time, most people in this country have active cultural lives and value opportunities to be creative.*
- " *There are widespread socio-economic and geographic variances in levels of engagement with publicly funded culture.*
- " *The opportunities for children and young people to experience creativity and culture inside and outside school are not equal across the country.*
- " *There remains a persistent and widespread lack of diversity across the creative industries and in publicly funded cultural organisations, although awareness of the issue is greater than it used to be.<sup>1</sup>*

Thus, the aim of ACE's new strategy is to:

- (...) value the creative potential in each of us, provide communities in every corner of the country with more opportunities to enjoy culture, and celebrate greatness of every kind.

Although the issues sound familiar, cultural policies in different countries do not seem to actually acknowledge them or tackle them. The notion of what culture is, how it is made and supported and by whom is rather limited, and the vision embraced by both governments and cultural professionals is short-sighted.

Let's look, for example, at reactions to Eurobarometer's results on cultural participation in Europe (2013). Headlines in Portuguese newspapers would state, "Why do we continue to not consume culture? Lack of education

16

INSIDE AND OUT

and money" or "The Portuguese among EU citizens with less cultural activity". Cultural professionals would also lament at the population's lack of interest and love for football. Due to the pandemic, one could more recently read in the media that, "40% of the Portuguese were consuming less culture". But what kind of cultural participation is being measured? Participation that involves people who go to certain places and attend cultural events, such as museums, theatres and libraries or who visit monuments and sites? It certainly does not consider people who, for example, read books, watched films and concerts and all sorts of performances on TV, played an instrument, danced and sang during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is also a form of cultural participation, but it is not considered as such by politicians, cultural professionals and the people themselves.

All too often, governments prefer to take the easy way and assume that people's low cultural participation (understood as attending formal cultural venues) is due to a lack of money. We've seen initiatives in Brazil, France or Italy<sup>2</sup> were that aimed at giving an allowance (especially to young people) in order to "consume". They haven't managed to tackle the real issue, however, which is a lack of connection due to all sorts of physical, social and intellectual barriers as well as psychological barriers. Our understanding of what culture is, where it "happens" and who participates – as well as the way we communicate it – is actually limiting people's effective engagement and makes them feel ignored or ignorant.

In his essay "Culture and Class", John Holden (2010) identifies three types of guardians among cultural professionals:

- Cultural snobs: professionals and audiences who wish to keep access to certain art forms exclusive, open to the initiated and "well-behaved";
- Neo-mandarins: professionals who wish to help create access to a culture they define as "worthy";
- Neo-cosmopolitans: professionals who are able to listen and reflect other people's views, needs and concerns.

The definitions of cultural snobs and neo-mandarins appear to indicate different attitudes towards cultural participation. A few years ago, in the midst of a heat wave, La Scala in Milan did not allow ticket holders wearing shorts to attend the performance; Musikverein in Vienna informs patrons of its dress code (free "ma non troppo"); the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon instructs people not to cough during concerts. At the same time, acknowledging people's discomfort with written and unwritten rules, the California Symphony presents a guide for newcomers to actually put people at ease; Classical Revolution plays in bars and cafés and The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment has a Night Shift in pubs on Friday nights. These are, actually, different ways of enjoying culture. Nevertheless, cultural snobs and neo-mandarins

17

I. ON AUDIENCE AND EVERYTHING ABOUT IT

might have something in common: the wish to control the process and to define to which culture access is worthy.

Museum professional Elaine Heumann Gurian (2006) took a different approach. In her book entitled *Civilizing the Museum*, she wrote:

" We are no longer preachers to the great unwashed; we are united as partners with our publics and their families. We must help our audience, which touchingly believes and trusts us, to become more sceptical and demanding. (2006, p.78)

According to John Holden's (2010) definition of cultural professionals, this reflects a neo-cosmopolitan attitude. These are cultural professionals with a deep knowledge of their subject matter but who are open to other views, eager to listen and to turn formal cultural venues into the centre of community discussions. This is what led Brooklyn Museum Director Anne Pasternak to put artwork from the museum's critics on display, when the museum found itself in the middle of a controversy for renting a room for a real estate conference when the borough suffers from gentrification. Pasternak said at the time<sup>3</sup>:

" I'm actively thinking about what might be out there to support affordable housing, live-work spaces for artists and contribute to a kind of community vibrancy. This is not normally a thing that I think most museum directors actively engage in or think about, but because of the conversations I have had with these artists, it is actively on my mind.

What is the role of a cultural organisation in society? In what ways can it connect to citizens? How can it become relevant to them? In a 2015 interview, the then artistic director of Steppenwolf Theater in Chicago, Martha Lavey<sup>4</sup>, talked about the way she understood her role:

" I think it's the responsibility of an artistic director, or let's say, the collective, which is the artistic institution, to say here's the pull that I'm feeling in our community. But, after all, isn't it our responsibility to have a sort of eloquence or articulation around that, that maybe the community itself feels but does not deliver as a particular statement of need? So, I think being sensitive to that, to me, is leadership, saying here's what we feel is in the air and what we think is worthy of giving voice to. (2015)

The Brexit vote or the election of Donald Trump as President of the

United States got some cultural professionals thinking. It was easy for many to label certain voters as "stupid", "xenophobic", "racist" or "misogynous", but Rufus Norris<sup>5</sup>, artistic director of The National Theatre, stated:

" We've got to try to do what little we can to address the complete vote of no confidence in our system that that was. (...) I don't believe 17.5 million people are racists or idiots. I categorically don't. I think we've got to listen. (2016)

The report *Towards Cultural Democracy: Promoting Cultural Capabilities for Everyone*, published by King's College in 2017, acknowledged the need to give urgent attention to many of the United Kingdom's political processes, including cultural policies: questions about how culture is made and by whom and which creative activity get recognised and supported. The report also acknowledged a need that is reflected by ACE's 2020 – 2030 policy. It claimed that all people must have:

" Opportunities to see and hear things; new things, old things, strange things, beautiful things, fun things and ferocious things; things that mobilise, confuse and move; things that comfort, and things that inspire. (Wilson, Gross i Bull, 2017: 3)

And yet, not all people do. Physical, social and intellectual barriers prevent them from getting involved and participating. One's educational level, social and geographic isolation, unemployment, marital status, physical and cognitive capacities, refugee status, etc. are often factors of exclusion. People themselves are not to blame for not showing up. Professionals in the cultural sector must be aware of these barriers and work in order to overcome them. The language used, the places and timetables in which initiatives and events take place, the written and unwritten codes of behaviour and the ethics of "participation" are factors that need to be seen with a fresh perspective. In the Portuguese context, *Opera na Prisão* (Opera in the Prison)<sup>6</sup> or *Lavrar o Mar*<sup>7</sup> (Ploughing the Sea) are only two among the many projects that aim at re-considering cultural participation.

Truly trail blazing projects that may become a reference for others often lack evaluation. We don't really understand how they were developed, what worked, or what went wrong. The English project *Creative People and Places*<sup>8</sup> is an exception and, thus, has got more to offer. Some findings can actually guide the development of other initiatives. *Creative People and Places* is about "more people choosing, creating and taking part in brilliant art experiences in the places where they live". The majority of the people who have become involved in the project (91%) belong to categories of "low" or "medium" engagement. What have they learnt?

- There needs to be a broader definition of art;
- It is important to listen and value local knowledge;
- People must be treated as partners and co-creators;
- Initiatives must be programmed in familiar places.

### Perhaps Creative People and Places is right:

" *If art pays attention to more people, more people will pay attention to art*

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- 1 Available at <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/strategy-2020-2030/case-change> (Accessed: 12/4/2022).
- 2 These were subsidies for people with a low income (Brazil) or young people (France and Italy). A certain amount of money was given to these groups in order to spend it on culture. It was considered that the main reason for their lack of attendance was financial. These subsidies were not successful, however, as one of the main reasons for people not attending is that they didn't see the relevance or didn't feel that "culture" is for them.
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- 6 A project financed by the Gulbenkian Foundation which invited young prisoners to participate in an opera performance as singers/members of the chorus.
- 7 A cultural project developed in a rural area in the south of Portugal by two established artists who moved permanently to that region. The programming is very much related to the lives of people living in that area, such as the environment and the landscape.
- 8 A cultural project financed by Arts Council England which aims at giving people opportunities to participate in creative projects no matter where they leave and to choose the culture they value and wish to support.



# I.3. IN SEARCH OF THE AUDIENCE – DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

ANTONIJA LETINIĆ

"

*There is no meaning if meaning is not shared, and not because there would be an ultimate or first signification that all beings have in common, but because meaning is itself the sharing of Being.* — Jean-Luc Nancy (2000: 2)

The concept of audience development has been penetrating cultural policies gradually in the last few decades opening numerous contradictions, misunderstandings, questions, dilemmas, comprehensions and conceptions. The term itself and the meanings it encompasses have become the subject of numerous sociological and philosophical discussions. As stated by Goran Tomka in his book *Producers and Their Audiences*, "the term audience is at the same time equally determining and determined that it opens numerous unresolvable dilemmas and as such it should be completely abandoned" (Tomka, 2021: 18). Despite this and other calls to abandon this term, it has become a commonplace in wider use and the theme in focus of different disciplines and studies approaching it from their own respective perspective. The most common one among them comes from the need to create more concrete consolidation of democracy and a cultural sphere. Enabling access to cultural content and active participation in culture is a productive way of democratizing publicly funded culture and is important for confirming the social relevance of culture. Approaches to involving and engaging citizens in cultural life are attempts to find the answer to multiple crises that the cultural sector is confronted by in the face of empty halls of cultural institutions, problems of exclusion of many social groups, the growing gap between traditional and elite culture versus popular culture, and contents offered by new technologies. Nevertheless, that exclusion and that gap are not only problems of the cultural sector, but also of society in general, which is losing the substantial contribution that culture offers to a wide variety of processes – from mediation and dialogue to sensitization of differences to building critical capacities and the production of innovations. Society needs culture in order to build understanding of others and otherness, acknowledge differences, recognize problems with which the contemporary world is confronted and consider answers to those challenges. Only through synergy can society and culture achieve their full potential. Thus, we are approaching the concept of audience development as a transversal phenomenon that is based on cultural rights, including access to culture and the accessibility of cultural contents, recreating ideals of cultural democracy as a new relational model between cultural actors and communities.

22

INSIDE AND OUT

RESEARCHES AND DATA ON CULTURAL PARTICIPATION

23

The UN's widely referred to *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, adopted in 1948, in Article 27 states: "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits."<sup>1</sup> Those rights are confirmed by the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* from 1966, according to which all the signing parties acknowledge the right of every individual to participate in cultural life (Article 15). In addition, the *Covenant* goes further than the *Declaration* in defining obligations of the signing parties, highlighting their duty to undertake necessary steps towards the preservation, development and distribution of science and culture and to enable the freedoms necessary for creative expression. The access and engagement of people in cultural and artistic life are often put in an antagonistic position<sup>2</sup> and the imperative of participation is seen as an impediment to creative freedom, while audiences are mostly seen as passive recipients (Vestheim, 2009).

Researches on participation in culture are various and numerous and demonstrate different understandings of what culture means, showing how citizens understand culture and what they associate the term with. On the one hand, these researches approach culture from a perspective of traditional artistic disciplines, while on the other, there are those that treat culture from the perspective of leisure and thus create a spectrum that includes attending cultural events, watching television, playing games and spending time with friends in bars. Bearing in mind these different approaches, methodologies and samples, the data and insights vary as well as the understanding of the extent of what culture is and the number of citizens to which it is accessible. Here, we will take a look at those researches that offer a wider systemic insight and analysis, which present the starting point for framing and directing cultural policies on the level of both the European Union and national cultural policies.

According to the data in the latest Eurostat analysis "Culture statistics", published in 2016, on the level of the European Union in 2015 about 62.6% of citizens aged over 16 said that in that particular year they had participated in at least one cultural event, whether it was going to the cinema, attending a live performance (theatre, concert, organized cultural event in the open, etc.) or visiting a cultural site (museum, historic museum, art gallery, archaeological site, etc.). The greatest percentage of participation is noted in Nordic countries – Denmark (85.3%), Finland (83.7%) – and the Netherlands (83.7%). Countries in which lower participation in cultural content is noted include Greece and Italy (both with 46.9%), Croatia (36.6%), Bulgaria (28.6%) and Romania (27.4%).

Researches point to a very clear and important relation between the economic status of citizens and participation in culture. In 2015, among

I. ON AUDIENCE AND EVERYTHING ABOUT IT

citizens of the EU aged over 16, 80.3% of those with the highest income consumed cultural contents, while among those with the lowest income only 40.1% participated in cultural activities. This scenario is repeated in certain countries, and in Croatia and Romania citizens from the highest income group consumed cultural contents three times more than those from the lowest. The biggest gap is in Bulgaria, where citizens with the highest income consumed culture 7.7 times more than those with the lowest. More citizens with low incomes consume culture in richer countries, so, for example, in Denmark about 76.4% and in the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden about 70% participated in cultural contents.

Where creative expression is concerned, on the level of the EU, only a third of citizens, 34.4% to be precise, practised this type of activity. The highest percentage of citizens who stated that they practised creative expression at least once a month is in Finland (60.8%), followed by Germany (56.1%), Austria (47%) and Denmark (42.2%), while the percentage of active practitioners on a monthly basis is the lowest in Romania (6.4%), followed by France, Croatia and Portugal (15% on average). Data from the Eurostat report show that more than a third of the citizens of the EU do not consume cultural contents, with a very low level of participation in certain countries, while only a third of citizens take an active role in artistic creation.

Various researches and studies as well as policy documents and public discussions outline the importance of culture in the development both of individuals and the society – from personal skills development to individuals' career achievements and the impact on health, to overall social prosperity and cohesion. For example, research conducted by Mark Taylor from the Sociology Department of Oxford University in the UK shows that reading books (reading for pleasure) proved to be the only extracurricular activity of 16-year-old citizens that positively affected the jobs and careers of individuals. Those young people who read were more likely to acquire executive and expert jobs than those who engaged in any other extracurricular activity, regardless of the social status and economic environment from which they came.<sup>3</sup> The publication *Making Culture Accessible* by the Council of Europe points out the importance of culture in social cohesion, stating that "[c]ulture has a strong impact on the construction of social cohesion and how people relate to each other in a society or in a community" (Laaksonen, 2010: 20). New researches connecting the impact of cultural consumption on the overall health and mental and social well-being of the individual demonstrate positive and significant impacts, as shown by the research of Pier Luigi Sacco and his collaborators (2010). Next to individual and social impacts, culture also has an important role in political life. Thus, among the conclusions of the conference *European Audience: 2020 and Beyond*, referring to the work of Dragan Klaić, it is pointed out that "there is a direct connection between active audiences and active citizenship, with research indicating that cultural participation increases the likelihood of broader civic engagement, including voting in political elections" (EC, 2012: 4).

It is clear from the above that despite the fact that there are a number of international documents that oblige signatories to create a supportive environment for citizens' participation in culture, the number of those who passively or actively participate in culture varies from country to country, while the percentage of active participation for the whole EU is less than half. Data showing the small percentage of those who participate in culture are even more worrying when all the positive aspects culture has both for individuals and for the society in general are taken into consideration. A cultural policy recognizing the importance of engaging an audience also plays an important role in this, but the approaches and measures that should encourage and help the cultural sector to build a more immediate relation with the community are not yet sufficiently defined and refined. How to bring citizens back to culture and how to bring back culture to citizens represents one of the biggest challenges of cultural policy in the twenty-first century, especially given the primacy of the digital technologies that drive trends and dynamics in the communication, reception and distribution of content. Additional impetus toward that direction of development was given by the recent pandemic crisis during which numerous contents moved to virtual space, while audiences started developing new habits and approaches to both work and the consumption of contents.

## ACCESS TO CULTURE

One unavoidable aspect in the theme of audience development is the question of access to culture for citizens. The term was described in 1976 by UNESCO in the framework of the recommendation on participation of citizens in cultural life, as a process that provides everyone with the socio-economic conditions necessary for gaining information, knowledge and understanding of cultural values and enjoying cultural goods (Pasikowska-Schnass, 2017).

With regard to participation, Geir Vestheim (2015) connects the necessity of the right of everyone to enjoy culture as a social good with the fact that citizens have this right based on the fact that they are taxpayers, and thus access to culture should be guaranteed. Therefore, in democracies, culture and access to culture are important democratic issues. Given that participation as a concept includes access to cultural values and goods, the accessibility of cultural content, products and services, as well as artistic expression, and therefore passive and active participation in culture, it covers the issue of inclusion and ways of including audiences in cultural life. Although it seems like a simple imperative, the problem of access to, and the accessibility of, culture is extremely complex and involves a number of obstacles that need to be removed in order to create the preconditions for meeting this requirement.

The concept of access is focused on creating possibilities and providing access to new, non-traditional audiences to consume cultural offerings, whether they are heritage or contemporary cultural productions, that are not



accessible to them because of different barriers (*Access to Culture – Policy Analysis*, Final Report, 2015). Serious inequalities among different social groups represent one of the fundamental obstacles in accessing culture. Precisely for this reason, numerous documents understand access to culture as removing these barriers, including physical, social, economic, educational, geographic, linguistic and psychological barriers, with the aim of creating chances and improving access to cultural institutions, localities and contents (Primorac, Obuljen Koržinek and Uzelac, 2017).

A special edition of Eurobarometer (2013) dedicated to access and participation in culture recognizes a number of reasons why access to, and then participation in culture is difficult. These include a lack of interest, a lack of time and information, and the high prices of cultural services, which have increased since the global economic crisis in 2008 and prompted EU member states to reduce investments in culture. According to data from the Council of Europe from 2014 (Pasikowska-Schnass, 2017), from 2009 to 2013 Croatia reduced investments in culture from EUR77 to 68 per capita, while Italy, from 2009 to 2012 reduced them from EUR134 to 100 per capita and Spain reduced them from EUR153 to 102. The reduction of investments in culture inevitably provokes an increase in prices for services through which cultural actors are trying to compensate for budgetary cuts. Next to this, interest in culture is related to educational status. In that context, geographic aspects are important, so the highest percentage of those who have spent longer in the educational system is concentrated in urban areas, in contrast to those from rural areas. In correlation with these components – interest, education and economic factors – an interesting insight is that educational inequality has a smaller impact on cultural consumption in richer countries with high social mobility than in poorer countries or those with lower social mobility (Hek and Kraaykamp, 2013).

In understanding the complexity of the question of access to culture and the accessibility of cultural content, an important aspect is the problem of cultural codes. Unlike other outlined obstacles, cultural codes are the least tangible and are not easily measurable, although they address social and psychological aspects. Each culture comes with its own social code, which is often inaccessible to those who are not acquainted with it and do not belong to the respective circle. That is primarily obvious in relation to highbrow culture and members of society who are not traditional cultural consumers of this type of offer. Referring to the OMC report<sup>4</sup> on the role of public arts and cultural institutions in promoting cultural diversity and cultural dialogue, Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass points out that "highbrow culture is closely linked to traditional cultural institutions and their particular linguistic styles and is intimidating for novices, strengthening linguistic barriers" (2017: 19). But that problem is not characteristic only for highbrow culture in contrast to popular culture because popular culture also creates its own social codes and idioms and presents barriers to new audiences. Each culture creates and produces its

own codes, which do not necessarily have to be exclusive or discriminative. In some cases, these barriers can be deliberate with the aim of preserving specific identities and differences (Pasikowska-Schnass, 2017), a reaction to external pressures or a reaction to the impenetrability of some other cultural circles.

An extremely comprehensive, but also crucial question on the theme of participation, access and accessibility includes a systemic and structural approach in order to be addressed appropriately and respond to as many difficulties they may manifest – from social and economic, geographical and physical to linguistic and cultural. In all these niches and their overlapping, endless possibilities of exclusion appear and thus it is necessary to address them interdisciplinarily and cross-sectorally and thus provide the engagement of actors from different fields of expertise to create the comprehensive cultural policies of quality necessary for audience development.

## CULTURAL POLICIES AND AUDIENCES

Key in defining directions in which the cultural sector will develop, including participation in culture, are cultural policies that define a framework for the development of the sector, values that they promote and mechanisms for participation in culture. The legitimacy of cultural policy in democracy, according to Geir Vestheim (2015), lies in finding a balance between two opposite poles – one that refers to cultural and aesthetic aspects and the other including political and economic ones. Given the task to frame policies, politicians are obliged to respond to the needs of the citizens. The aim of what is meant to be achieved with these policies "varies in scope from personal development and well-being, aesthetic experience and education, social justice, democratic participation, economic development, social integration – and a lot more possible aims" (Vestheim, 2015: 44). Thus, in contemporary times different political paradigms of cultural policy develop, and Lluís Bonet and Emmanuel Negrier (2018) divide them into four coexisting ones evolving consecutively from the end of World War II. Those paradigms are cultural excellence, democratization of culture, cultural democracy and creative economy. In each of them participation is intertwined with the crucial difference for the two paradigms that have participation as a starting point – democratization of culture and cultural democracy. Cultural excellence is the first paradigm whose goal is to provide artistic autonomy and prevent direct political pressures. In the framework of this paradigm, the role of the audience is completely subordinate to the quality. The paradigm of democratization of culture appeared as an answer to the criticisms that cultural excellence had results in autoreferentiality and subjectivity. So, the democratization of culture was aimed at directing culture toward providing access to high-quality cultural contents, goods and services for the largest possible number of citizens who without state support wouldn't be able to access it. Criticism of this paradigm, from the perspective of participation, refers in the first place to the separateness of production and content from the needs of

the users because the audience is only passively consuming and participating in artistic and cultural creation without any kind of impact on what is going to be produced. Thus, in the 1970s, as a response to the aforementioned criticisms, but also to the need to preserve cultural diversity and ensure cultural rights, the paradigm of cultural democracy was developed, offering responses to the need to overcome hierarchization and homogenization resulting from democratization of culture and globalization of cultural economy. Cultural democracy directs its attention to the lack of public interest, empowering citizens as active actors and shareholders in public policies. The fourth paradigm, appearing during the 1970s first as an academic concept, and afterwards in cultural policies through the term of cultural industries, is the paradigm of cultural economy. It is an excuse for public support for cultural practices framed through the perspective of economic metrics. According to this paradigm, audiences have a role of consumers or users who legitimize cultural production both directly and indirectly. But, despite criticisms of all the above-mentioned paradigms, none of them disappeared; rather, they coexist, adjust their frameworks and reflect hybridization of contemporary strategies.

Here, we are focusing on two key, in many ways complementary, cultural paradigms – democratization of culture and cultural democracy – which focus on the role of citizens in culture, whether as recipients or actors, and the accessibility of culture to all social strata. Steven Hadley defines cultural democracy as a process "where the "official culture, typically represented by large and well-funded institutions, is made accessible to non-participating communities, often in the belief that it will do them good" (Hadley, 2021: 31).

Democratization of culture aims to provide access to cultural and artistic excellence to everyone and tries to attract not only big, but also diverse groups of audiences, primarily through educational and marketing campaigns or accessible ticket prices and sold-out events. Active participation, on the other hand, is the most important aspect of cultural democracy because it "arises when communities produce and communicate their own forms of critical culture" (Hadley, 2021: 31). Thus, this paradigm is focused on providing equal access to all cultural resources for different social groups that have the right to participate freely and according to their individual interests in cultural creativity, production, distribution, education or any other form of cultural life. Put simply, democratization of culture is linked to high culture and includes static and monolithic understanding of culture; it is a "top-down" cultural policy, unlike cultural democracy, which can be defined as a "bottom-up" policy providing cultural diversity based on cultural rights.

Changes in culture and arts policies since the late 1970s are often seen in relation to the decrease in public spending on culture and the introduction of entrepreneurial culture, and this shift is followed by the advancement of technologies in managing art and cultural organizations (Kawashima, 2004).

Audience development is thus considered the first initiative that represents interests of the demand and "was the first proactive attempt to democratise the arts which considered the audience rather than the art" (Hadley, 2021: 8). The source of this shift lies in the thesis that culture is chosen and defined by cultural elite for audiences with the necessary cultural, social and economic capital, and for that reason it is necessary to redirect cultural policy towards providing more open access to culture for all – since everyone participates in its funding.

The dominant operating model for numerous cultural policies of European countries was, and still is, the democratization of culture, a state-governed approach that works on the basis of accepted ideas on the definition of cultural values. A key contradiction in the framework of democratization of culture is that through its processes and practices it attempts to democratize culture on the one hand, making it accessible to the wide population, while at the same time trying to maintain a hierarchical structure. In other words, elite groups of experts are the ones telling others what culture is and this is uncovering its undemocratic nature (Hadley, 2021).

The deficits in, and failures of, all the enumerated policies in democratizing culture have contributed to affirmation of the concept of cultural democracy in the past 20 years. In contrast to the democratization of culture, cultural democracy accentuates the development of individual capacities in creating one's own art rather than teaching individuals to appreciate the art of others. In the 1970s, the cultural democracy approach affirmed and promoted cultural diversity and sought to remove the boundaries between high and popular culture. In such an environment, governments have the duty to ensure a balance between, on the one hand, the numerical majority and, on the other hand, the power of the "chosen" minority. Reaching a balance between these two poles, according to Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard, creates the space for coexistence of the greatest possible diversity in which both artistic autonomy and the preferences of individuals can survive (Hadley, 2021). In that sense, cultural democracy includes commitment to cultural diversity, which encompasses access to local, regional, national, European and international cultures. It also encompasses migrant populations, which have the right to practise and present their own cultural traditions and practices, but also have open access to the cultures of their hosts. The second commitment responds to the need for equal opportunities to benefit from diverse offerings. All of them have to be included in cultural policies in order to promote participation, ensure autonomy of cultural and artistic fields, and both recognize and eliminate barriers.

In the context of participation in culture, cultural policy is confronted with significant structural and reform challenges, while a participatory approach in the development of cultural policies and governance in culture implies the highest level of participation because it is "based on the idea of de-etatization and decentralization of power structures, i.e., on establishing



higher democratized models based on sharing responsibility and common decision-making" (Vidović, 2018: 21). Participation in framing cultural policies also contributes to their better implementation because the decisions take into account grass-roots needs (Pasikowska-Schnass, 2017).

### DIVERSE DEFINITIONS OF AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Considering the fact that cultural democracy can be regarded as a concept aimed at including and engaging citizens actively in cultural life, audience development is in a certain sense a tool for realizing conditions and opening space for democratization of the cultural system. According to Hadley, audience development "embodies the aspiration of cultural policy to deliver a different (more 'democratic') material reality in the consumption of the publicly funded arts" (Hadley, 2021: 5), and this imperative is woven into any system of public support for culture that aims to meet public needs in modern, liberal democracies and is achieved by expanding access to culture and the arts.

The term "audience development" has become ingrained as a concept in the cultural sector and as such is widely understood and accepted, despite numerous objections as to whether the construction of development really fits its goals. In contrast to numerous other terms (animation, mediation, education, marketing, etc.) that have their own limitations, the concept of audience development has a wider scope. Over time, other concepts have developed, among them "cultural education", accentuating the educational dimension and relating to schools, "arts marketing" and "cultural inclusion", which are considered one-dimensional because they are centred around economic or social aspects and not around the right to culture, which should be the starting point in culture (EC, 2012). Thus, through history the concept of audience development, encompassing several meanings and including cultural, economic and social dimensions, has imposed itself as the broadest and outlines the directions of agency of cultural actors.

Macarena Cuenca-Amigo and Amaia Makua (2017), in the article "Audience development: a cross-national comparison", bring an overview of discussions on the content and extent of the concept. Stating that already in initial discussions, authors like Rogers (1998) consider audience development as a consequence of cooperation between programming, educational and marketing experts, while Colomer (2013, ref. Cuenca-Amigo and Makua, 2017) considers it in relation to the idea of connecting different fields and underlines the multidisciplinary of the process converging with various disciplines such as marketing, sociology, economy and pedagogy, among others. Hadley (2021), however, claims that audience development should be regarded as an ideological project situated in the wider discourse of democratization politics, and as an instrument with which policies direct, in different processes, the behaviour of citizens.

In the context of cultural policies, there are also different understandings of the extent of audience development. The European Commission in its definition (2012) puts the emphasis on the social aspect, outlining that audience development is a strategic, dynamic and interactive process of ensuring wide accessibility of the arts. It is focused on engaging individuals and communities in experiencing, enjoying, participating in and evaluating arts through different means available to cultural operators from digital tools to volunteering, from co-creation to partnerships. According to the definition of Arts Council England (2017), "the term audience development describes activity which is undertaken specifically to meet the needs of existing and potential audiences, visitors and participants and to help arts organisations to develop ongoing relationships with audiences".<sup>5</sup> It can include aspects of marketing, acquisition, programming, engagement with decision-making, education, customer care and distribution, and "one of the main characteristics of audience development is that it influences not only certain departments but the whole organisation".<sup>6</sup> According to the definition of The Audience Agency, a British charity dedicated to developing practices of cultural organizations in working with and engaging audiences, supported by Arts Council England, audience development is "a planned, organisation-wide approach to extending the range and nature of relationships with the public, it helps a cultural organisation to achieve its mission, balancing social purpose, financial sustainability and creative ambitions".<sup>7</sup> The definition of The Audience Agency adds a new dimension to the previous definition by placing emphasis on organizational operating, i.e., regarding audience development from the perspective of organizational behaviour and implying transformation of the working processes of the organization in order to create and embrace an extensive approach in working on the development of strategies for, and approaches to, the engagement and participation of audiences.

As shown here, audience development can be defined in many ways, and the concept itself has a wide spectrum of meanings that are continuously evolving. It includes democratizing tendencies, reflects the spirit of participation (Simon, 2010) and, as pointed out by Ben Walmsley, in its recent iterations encompasses terms such as "engagement", "enrichment" and "empowering" (2019, ref. Hadley, 2021). All of these definitions complement one another and show different aspects of understanding and extents of the concept among which three key aspects dominate, namely marketing, receptive and social. In addition, it should be borne in mind that the domination of different emphases depends on the socio-political environment in which the concept is evolving. Thus, in certain interpretations and contexts the emphasis will be put on the receptive or marketing capacity of the concept, while in other cultural traditions it will lean more strongly on the social one. The domination of some of these aspects or combinations of them will be dependent on the directions of cultural policies of a particular country since the cultural policy in the framework of the European Union is not centralized but left to the sovereignty

of member states to be framed and directed independently, while the European Union only provides priorities and recommendations.

## CONTRADICTIONS OF AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

In addition to professional and cultural-policy definitions, the important dimension is social understanding of the concept of audience development, and the dominant perception is often related to primarily consumeristic needs. Thus, the concept is often mistreated. As Goran Tomka (2021) shows in his research in the book *Producers and Their Audiences*, it is often put in relation to marketing and business discourse, while audiences are called "consumers" or "users". According to McGuigan (1996), this influence leans on a "marketization" and "instrumentalization" of arts, which then bring in the aforementioned antagonism between artistic autonomy and adjustments to the market demands. Since the 1980s, marketing has penetrated more and more into the cultural and artistic field (Lee, 2005; ref. Tomka, 2021), due to gradual decrease of investments in culture. In that process, organisations and institutions have been progressively directed towards the market, placing audience development in the spectrum of strategies which should empower and enable actors to adjust to the new conditions because audience development is considered an approach which puts product and users' satisfaction with it in the centre of the attention (Tomka, 2021). On the other hand, audience development is gaining more and more relevance in the framework of cultural policies and the role it plays in the diversity of practices as well as the extent of the concept. Numerous projects supported through the programme Creative Europe, directed towards researches on the practices of participation and engagement of audiences, are also contributing to this.<sup>8</sup> In light of all these aspects and ingrained prejudices, it is necessary to work on sensitizing cultural actors to audience development as a concept of a much broader scope that offers them tools not only for financial sustainability, but also for gaining recognition of their work, a need that more and more cultural actors are confronted with. Approaches to the development and engagement of audiences are not only strategies for increasing the number of users, but comprehensive methods for understanding the needs, interests, movements and dynamics of citizens and their lives, of which culture and artistic practices are also part, and to which they have to get through some channels. Resisting the engagement and work of audience development often results in the stigmatization of cultural organizations as undemocratic, closed and self-sufficient. Placing a strong emphasis on the value of the cultural product itself, thus putting the importance of the audience in the background (Arts Council England 2018), is a common reason why cultural actors are considered insufficiently democratic.

We are living in a time moving steadily towards a multidimensional and interactive world, thanks mostly to the development of technology, which is changing the ways in which we are creating and producing, distributing and

accessing as well as monetizing cultural contents. These new tools, as well as new circumstances we have become painfully aware of during the current pandemic, offer possibilities for transforming audiences from passive receivers to creators and active users of cultural content without the need to find a mediator.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, the pandemic has caused sudden changes in audience habits, and digitalization has gained additional momentum and become increasingly important in cultural mediation. In all these changes, working with the public is becoming more important and demanding for the cultural sector, which needs support not only in terms of funding but also in building organizational capacity.

## INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

Audience development is about how cultural actors have to act outside of their own walls – physical and virtual – in communities, in public spaces and in non-conventional spaces, creating new, innovative experiences and partnerships with other sectors, such as schools, hospitals, municipalities, supermarkets, etc. (EC, 2012). As shown throughout this essay, "audience development" has become an almost omnipresent term that brings with it a series of challenges – from understanding, definition and scope to the capacity of the cultural sector to embrace it, adapt it and implement it. For the system of cultural policies, despite declarative recognition and acknowledgment of the value and importance of the topic, appropriate measures still need to be found to encourage and strengthen the cultural sector to implement the necessary changes in order to adapt to modern challenges. Of course, in all of this it is important to continuously search for a balance between providing artistic autonomy and ensuring the right conditions for citizens to exercise their right to culture, while at the same time making sure that none of the parties is instrumentalized. The affirmation of audience development is not necessarily in contrast to artistic freedom, i.e., it doesn't stand in its way, but it can be a powerful tool in finding its own audience. As the quote from the beginning of the text states, "[t]here is no meaning if meaning is not shared, and not because there would be an ultimate or first signification that all beings have in common, but because meaning is itself the sharing of Being". As sharing is the meaning of existence, the meaning of art is in sharing. So, if they want to escape imprisonment in more and more narrow elite circles of participants who are able to understand and share cultural codes, or even risk perishing in irrelevance and unrecognizability, culture and arts have to deal with democratization strategies. Audience development offers itself as one of the possible solutions.



- 1 Available at <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights> (Accessed: 12/4/2022).
- 2 The question of the autonomy of art can also be relevant in the relation between producers/distributors and audience/consumers because in market conditions, audience can be a force which is opposing cultural producers and mediators through their preferences and thus condition the adjustments of cultural production to market framework and tastes of the audience (Vestheim, 2009).
- 3 *Čitajmo da ne ostanemo bez riječi! – the National Strategy to Encourage Reading 2017–2022* is a strategic document that is produced in cooperation between the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Croatia, adopted in 2016 with the aim of encouraging the development of reading habits among citizens in Croatia. The document also presents researches and insights that point to the relevance of reading for the development of individuals as well as the well-being of the society in general.
- 4 *Open Method of Coordination* (OMC) is a form of cooperation among EU member states directed at the exchange of practices, framing of policies and funding mechanisms. The OMC is a structured approach that members use for cooperation on a European level in different fields, including culture, and provides a common understanding of themes and helps in building consensus on solutions and their practical implementation. Through this specifically designed method, common goals of social policies of the member

- states, national action plans and common indicators are defined. In the frame of the OMC, experts from the ministries of culture and national institutions meet between five and six times within 18 months in order to produce policy manuals and tools, which are then distributed across Europe. The European Commission is in charge of organizing OMC meetings and provides support to the members of the group with researches and studies. More information can be found on the official website: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/cultural-policy-cooperation-at-the-eu-level> (Accessed: 12/4/2022).
- 5 Arts Council England: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/> (Accessed: 12/4/2022).
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Available at <https://www.culturehive.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Guide-to-Audience-Development-Planning-FINAL.pdf> (Accessed: 12/4/2022).
- 8 In addition to ADESTE+, of which this publication is a part, the Be SpectACTIVE! project has been putting long-term efforts into researching and experimenting with different participatory practices and approaches to audience development and involving audiences in artistic activities. Insights into the outcomes of these endeavours are collected in the publication *Breaking the Fourth Wall: Proactive Audiences in the Performing Arts*.
- 9 European Audiences: 2020 and beyond, Conference conclusions; European Commission, 16–17 October 2012; pp. 4.

## INSIDE AND OUT

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## I.4. AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT, THE STONE GUEST

CRISTINA DA MILANO

### PLACING AUDIENCE AT THE CENTER OF AN ORGANISATION – EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S STUDY ON AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

In 2017, the Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission published a "Study on Audience Development. How to place audiences at the centre of cultural organizations", written by Bollo et al., which provided insight into a better understanding of the concept of audience development from a theoretical point of view and to analyse some case studies from all over Europe.

Starting from the European Commission definition of audience development (AD) as a strategic and dynamic process enabling cultural organisations to place audiences at the centre of their actions, the study focused on a conceptual framework based on the categories of access (physical, geographical, cultural and economic access to culture); participation in the activities and the decision-making processes; and representations of all differences. These three categories which generate exclusion and provide barriers to cultural engagement, active participation and legitimization of audiences have merged into the wider concept of AD.

Responding to this conceptual distinction, the study renamed the three main audience categories using non-academic, intuitive, easy-to-understand and hopefully inspiring categories: Audience by Habit, Audience by Choice and Audience by Surprise. This categorisation aimed to:

- shift the perspective from the type of use that people make of cultural contents to the complex factors that determine their decisions to participate.
- underline that every citizen can become part of the "audience" in different ways.
- stress that for cultural organisations, developing different audiences means developing different kinds of relationships.

According to this interpretation, widening, deepening and diversifying are reinterpreted and are slightly overlapping:

- *Widening* refers both to the current audience, Audience

36

INSIDE AND OUT

by Habit (increasing the audience with the same kind of people as those who are attending today), and that part of those in Audience by Choice have a different or lapsed cultural consumption (attracting audience);

- *Deepening* refers to strategies addressed to current audiences; that is, those who by habit already value cultural practice but who can be more engaged in the perspective of taste cultivation (deepening and diversifying their cultural consumption);
- *Diversifying* refers both to strategies addressed to Audience by Surprise and to those Audiences by Choice that have no or little chance to participate in the arts.

There are many strategies and tools to pursue different audience goals, and they can be classified in different ways. Far from being rigid categories, these instruments are the prevailing action assets (in practice as in rhetoric terms) for the development of audiences, although with huge crossover characteristics:

- *Place* refers to those projects and cultural organisation strategies that strongly rely on the "place factor", creating links and building relationships that are based on a physical site (e.g., interventions on space design and brand identity) and which aim to foster ownership towards a cultural and physical space.
- *Digital* refers to those projects and cultural organisation strategies that strongly rely on the "digital factor" as a key aspect to reach audiences and foster engagement.
- *Capacity building* refers to those projects and cultural organisation strategies that strongly rely on the "people factor": the empowerment of the staff and the development of their skills, competences and leadership are a key factor for creating different experiences and recognising the need for change inside the organisation in order to alter audience behaviour.
- *Active participation/co-creation* refers to those projects and cultural organisation strategies that strongly rely on the "participatory factor". These are also particularly interesting in terms of their impacts on the organisation.

These categories have been integrated with some key action fields, such as programming (offer innovation in terms of format, programming, language, theme, place), organisational change and implications, use of data, collaboration and partnership.

37

I. ON AUDIENCE AND EVERYTHING ABOUT IT

Although in the study, no hierarchy was defined among these domains, after some years of practical experience in the field, it became obvious that organisational change is the main result at which we should aim when discussing AD: no strategic and deep change can happen without a profound change in the organisation, its structure and its mission (which in most cases is perfectly in line with AD principles but is not followed up in practice).

### TOWARDS ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Data show that cultural participation is still very much restricted to the "usual suspects", meaning people with very solid cultural, economic and social backgrounds. And this is where things short circuit: wonderful principles, a policy model putting people at the centre of the relationship of cultural organisations and activities along with the fact that cultural participation is still limited to narrow segments of the population (this happens not only on the basis of fully acceptable and respectable individual choices, but also due to economic, physical, social and cultural barriers). Why should we worry about that? There is a crucial ethical argument to be made: cultural heritage and its related activities in Europe are largely funded by taxpayer money, and consequently, they should be accessible (not only physically or economically but also culturally and emotionally) to everybody. That's why we need audience development.

In Europe today, engagement and participation in the arts is mostly about power and resources, urbanisation, social political tendencies in society, cultural policies, audience and diversity, digitisation, competence and innovation. Culture and the arts need to find resonance in a wider part of society to be perceived as relevant and contemporary. As a result, co-creation, cooperation and collaboration have become the new language of the cultural sector. Institutions are becoming more porous – operating inside and outside their walls, missions and traditions. Meaningful exchange with audiences combined with a holistic understanding of culture's place in the community is fundamentally changing the discourse of culture and cultural subsidy.

Therefore, in the last years, many projects have included capacity building activities addressed to cultural professionals from different sectors. Many of these activities have been interesting, challenging and stimulating journeys towards a change in perspective, which has only been partially achieved. More and more people and the organisations with which they are involved now consider audience development not only as a tool to increase numbers through marketing and communication but as a strategic vision which should lead them to become more audience-centred and, in turn, to fully respect their mission and values. This shift in perception represents a very good result, considering the initial scepticism that many have always found when starting the process; now AD is part of their narrative and their lexicon.

Notwithstanding this, the majority of actors are still quite far from a real implementation of a strategic vision based on AD. This is proven by the difficulty in acknowledging the importance of organisational change for a real audience-centred strategy. The reasons are scepticism, lack of time and resources, and lack of active participation of many directors in AD activities and the consequent difficulty in implementing strategic choices. Continuity is the key issue: it is important to ensure that these people/organisations have the time to go a step further in their journey into AD by working harder on knowing their audiences (and their needs and motivations) and by implementing internal changes. It would be important for them to have the opportunity to answer the following questions: Whom do the organisation serve? What types of audiences do they want to attract and what are the audience's needs/motivations/constraints? What can the organisation do for their audience group? These are quite long and time-consuming processes and should be the focus of continuous activities aimed at accompanying cultural organisations through the shift to becoming more socially oriented.

1 In January 2017 European Commission published the "Study on Audience Development – How to place audience at the centre of the organisation" which aimed at presenting successful approaches and methods in the field of audience development to the European Commission and offer to cultural leader support in implementing transition towards stronger centredness on audience. The study was made by Alessandro Bollo, Cristina Da Milano, Alessandra Gariboldi and Chris Torch in cooperation with Luisella Carnelli, Goran Lars Karlsson, Carla Schiavone and Natalie Georgadze. The Study is accessible on: <http://engageaudiences.eu/files/2017/04/Final-report-NC-01-16-644-EN-N.pdf> (Accessed: 12/4/2022).



# II.

ACED  
METHODOLOGY  
IN THEORY  
AND PRACTICE

## 2.1. THE ADESTE APPROACH TO AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT: A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO A LONG JOURNEY

ALESSANDRA GARIBOLDI,  
Fondazione Fitzcarraldo

Audience development (AD) is a controversial matter. It raises a wide and complex range of issues and challenges: from ensuring cultural rights to questioning *who* holds the power to define culture; from culture's role in society to the representation of a diverse set of values for different groups of people; from the technicalities to engage audiences to the rebuttal of some "audience" definitions. AD also leads to a claim for a fairer and more democratic society made up of empowered citizens through cultural participation.

In such a wide arena, it's worth introducing the ADESTE consortia and the vision that it developed over time and framed thanks to three different European Union-funded cooperation projects that allowed us to discuss, test and research several perspectives. As a long-standing consortium, ADESTE was initiated in 2013 by a group of European entities that were independently researching and discussing the aforementioned issues a long time before they became a "labelled" topic and a European Commission priority. At a time when AD was mostly understood as a fashionable and culturally acceptable definition of arts marketing, the consortium of researchers, project designers and academics needed to agree on a shared understanding of the concept.

At that time, there were different understandings and interpretations of the *"failure of participation"* in arts and culture despite the partners having a relatively homogeneous background in cultural management because we were all strongly influenced by our cultural, institutional and organisational contexts. In countries where cultural management and marketing were still largely lacking, we believed that creating a healthier "data culture" could be a solution. In countries where management and marketing were already largely established, we believed it was a matter of good planning and *intentionality*. It was felt that something was missing: amazing initiatives were taken in several contexts, but they were systematically marginal, and they were too small-scale or isolated to affect participation rates and patterns in the long term.

That said, it took a while to build common ground, and we started finding it thanks to a thoughtful question from – not surprisingly – a non-European partner, who asked us *why* we believed that widening, deepening and diversifying cultural audiences was *so* important. It was an eye-opening question.

42

INSIDE AND OUT

*Why does it matter to us?* Our shared belief was that AD is what cultural organisations must do in order to improve cultural participation, which is itself a matter of democracy: about making it possible, making it fairer and making it more equitable. We soon understood that we were not alone; many researchers and practitioners shared the same concern, which also explains the success of the consortium over time. Every time we shared our vision with artists, managers, curators, researchers and professionals at all levels, we found interesting and new passionate perspectives, which were also pushed forward by other consortia across Europe and beyond. Many were contributing to the same end – for example, by raising academic debate, exploring policy frames, testing co-creation practices or investigating the role of arts in public spaces. This puts ADESTE in the wider context of those single or aggregated players in the cultural ecosystem who believe in the transformative power of culture and who are trying to transform its practices to this end. We all strongly agreed on a very basic principle: if people don't participate in culture, it's *our* responsibility. According to this principle, *what should be "developed" is the cultural sector, not the audiences.*

Thus, we adopted the point of view of organisations, the main players on the ground that must take responsibility for the wider challenge of cultural citizenship and, ultimately, of democracy. We acknowledged the role of policy (and politics), but our attempt to explore practical approaches to change was focused on the organisational level as we felt that our competencies could make a difference.

The first ADESTE project (2014–2016) trained more than sixty professionals who worked in just as many cultural organisations across five countries and was aimed at equipping them with the tools and competencies to design consistent audience development plans for their organisations. The original intention was that they should become "audience developers", change makers from inside their organisations who were equipped with the required competencies to make a difference.

The initial research carried out in the project revealed the importance of fostering "soft" and "transversal" skills as well as emphasising the importance of practical methodologies. Therefore, it was necessary to address the importance of applying diverse methodologies that could enable the development of leadership, relational and negotiation skills, and strategic planning. This requires permanent peer-to-peer learning programmes and the mentoring of professionals: "Fostering cross-sectoral capabilities and personal attributes such as curiosity, empathy and enthusiasm is a great help." (Cuenca and Makua, 2018)

The training approach recognised the importance of "hard" and "soft skills" and aimed to encourage participants to learn in an experiential way,

43

II. ACED METHODOLOGY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE



drawing on their own experiences and those of their fellows. The intersection between the techniques which were chosen to promote hard and soft skills was a critical element in the success of the programme. In particular, we adopted the Action Learning methodology, a group coaching and learning method developed by Reginald Revans with the underlining principle of *"Swap your difficulties, not your cleverness"*, thereby encouraging participants to show their vulnerability and to be entitled not to have an answer to a question but to ask others for help, as the new leadership theories assert.

This holistic approach was a success. All participants were enthusiastic: according to them, the project was a defining moment in their professional careers. But in spite of this satisfaction, participants also reported difficulties and frustration since most of them weren't able – at least in the short term – to markedly change the attitudes and practices of their organisations. Some even changed their jobs one or two years after the project, moving to organisations where they found it easier to adopt an audience-centred approach.

We learnt a great deal. First, that "hard" competencies weren't enough; second, that if we wanted "audience thinking" to become organisational practice, one change maker in an organisation was not enough; and third, that audience planning was not sufficient as such to bring colleagues on board and make the case with senior management. An organisational culture change was needed.

With our second project, CONNECT (2016–2019), we extended the partnership and improved the training model by introducing some more elements. First of all, professionals were not trained alone but in pairs with students and were required to create and test a real project in their organisations. The training was extended so that some parts were reinforced and some design thinking tools were introduced. Moreover, prototyping became a central piece, entrepreneurial skills were developed some organisational analysis and change management tools were introduced. Again, the project was a success – tested in five countries with more than 100 participants (half professionals, half students) – and again we learnt a great deal. First, that design thinking was a promising approach to enable diverse people to work together and to introduce a "fail-fast, fail-better" attitude; second, that testing a concrete project was more effective than designing resource-demanding plans; third, that two people are better than one but yet that is not enough: organisations still resisted change and the leadership level was only superficially involved. Any change is risky, resource-intensive and not always sustainable, and so we realised we needed something different to maximise our impact.

With our third and last ADESTE+ project (ADESTE+ Audience Development Strategies in Europe 2018–2022), we took stock of our previous learning and experimented together to develop a process to support

organisations to design audience-centred cultural experiences, and at the same time, develop new forms of internal collaboration so that change could be brought in small, manageable steps.

In order to do this, we changed the partnership composition: not only academics and researchers with a management background but also cultural organisations and policymaking entities were asked to join. The commitment of organisations with different competencies, their knowledge and diversity were crucial for the relevance and adaptability of the project results.

ADESTE+ was more explicit in its organisational change ambition, involving cross-sectoral teams within organisations and further developing the Design Thinking approach by adapting it to the specific context of the cultural sector. It also included the application of an Action Learning approach which took place against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic. This approach proved to be particularly valuable in triggering some key elements of the process of change: as a relational and reflective approach, it enabled a different mindset among participants and helped to challenge assumptions and facilitate the introduction of creative and collaborative ways of working.

We prototyped and tested this approach in an iterative way with more than 50 organisations from different cultural sectors in order to get to the essence of a process that could apply to all cultural contexts, regardless of their size, artistic field or background. The main outcome of this work is the ADESTE+ Blueprint, the Audience-Centred Experience Design or ACED: a model of intervention to support cultural organisations in improving their capacity to establish meaningful relationships with their audiences and communities.

Going through the blueprint process will be a different journey for each organisation, according to its priorities, needs, context and motivations. But we designed it to support all organisations in becoming more porous, as "relational devices" that facilitate the ability to take risks, to listen to their communities and to creatively respond to their needs. Beyond the projects' results, the ADESTE journey has over time actively engaged hundreds of cultural professionals across the world (through training, conferences, workshops and summer schools). They represent a critical mass of change makers who are equipped to sustain the transformation of the cultural sector into a committed and effective agent for cultural citizenship.

1 ADESTE – Audience Developer: Skills and Training in Europe (2014–2016) consortium was made by Fondazione Fitzcarraldo, Center for Arts and Interculture, ENCATC, Goldsmith University, The Audience Agency, University of Deusto, Melting Pro, Los Angeles County Museum of Art and The India Foundation for the Arts. CONNECT – Knowledge alliance for Audience Development (2016–2019) consortium was made by University of Deusto, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Asimétrica, Center for Arts and Interculture, City of Warsaw,

ENCATC, Fondazione Fitzcarraldo, Goldsmith University, Melting Pro and The Audience Agency. ADESTE+ (2018–2022) consortium was made by Fondazione Fitzcarraldo, Center for Arts and Interculture, City of Warsaw, Kultura Nova Foundation, Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc, Fondazione Teatro Stabile di Torino, Mapa das Ideias, Mercury Theatre, Melting Pro, Nørrebro Theatre, The Audience Agency, the University of Deusto and Zaragoza Cultural.

# II.2.

## A BLUEPRINT FOR AUDIENCE-CENTRED EXPERIENCE DESIGN

### CONTENTS

48	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> Why ACED? Whom is ACED for? The background Methodological basis The ACED process
53	<b>ACED STEP BY STEP</b>
56	<b>PHASE 1: GET READY</b> <b>STEP 1</b> Prepare <b>STEP 2</b> Unfreeze
59	<b>PHASE 2: EXPERIMENT</b> <b>STEP 3</b> Empathize <b>STEP 4</b> Define <b>STEP 5</b> Ideate <b>STEP 6</b> Prototype
68	<b>PHASE 3: KEEP GOING</b> <b>STEP 7</b> Commit <b>STEP 8</b> Embed
72	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>

### ADESTE+

This ACED Blueprint represents the common effort of the ADESTE partnership after years of cooperation. Before entering and seeing what's in it for you, we'd like you to know why it was developed. It aims to confront the "failure of participation" in arts and culture, by helping cultural organisations to improve their work in this field.

We worked collectively to design this tool because we believe that cultural participation is at the heart of any democratic society. It is not "just" a matter of ensuring fundamental cultural rights, but of enabling citizens to express themselves in the frame of a more equitable and sustainable society. This vision implies a radical shift in thinking: from audience to people.

What can cultural actors do to contribute to this goal? In our view, by questioning and equipping themselves to make cultural participation happen, which is itself a matter of democracy: about making it possible, fairer and more equitable. We thus encourage you to consider this tool in the wider context of those initiatives in the cultural ecosystem that promote the transformative power of culture, and which are trying to transform its practices to this end: if people don't participate in culture, it's our responsibility. According to this principle, what should be "developed" is the cultural sector, not the audiences.

ADESTE+ is a strong and diverse international partnership, and moreover, it has become a community that aims to support professionals and organisations thriving for the social change we need. The ADESTE journey has actively engaged (through training, conferences, workshops and summer schools) hundreds of cultural professionals across the world. They represent a critical mass of change makers, willing to sustain the transformation of the cultural sector into a committed and effective agent for cultural citizenship. This model is by and for them and for all those who share this ambition.

- " We've long known that cultural organizations that want to become more inclusive need to work differently. We also know how. But making change is risky, resource-intensive and not always sustainable and so we wanted to create a blueprint for confident, people-centred change.  
— Alessandra Gariboldi, Fondazione Fitzcarraldo

## WHY ACED?

**ACED is designed to enable cultural organizations to:**

- Find new ways to get closer to their audiences and communities;
- Help them make the most of their team's creativity and ideas;
- Make the organizational change they need to orientate themselves around a public-facing mission.

**The Audience Centred Experience Design (ACED) blueprint has been devised by the ADESTE+ partnership as part of a large-scale Creative Europe project. The ACED website ([aced.ADESTEplus.eu](http://aced.ADESTEplus.eu)) includes more details, templates, exercises resources, case studies and further references which can be used in this process. It is also the place to go to give your own feedback, find a facilitator and join the burgeoning ADESTE+ community.**

**ACED helps cultural organisations create experiences with and for their audiences, visitors or participants using a staged process that can help them make long term change. It follows the principles of human-centred design and is adapted to the way cultural organizations work, having been co-designed, tried and tested with organizations from around the world. It recognizes that to be effective we need to be prepared to change ourselves and our organizations.**

**ACED is also a response to our observation that real, positive change in the diversity of audiences and in their loyalty, trust and support is much more common when we work with them, listening attentively to their needs and interests and taking inspiration from what we learn.**

**This change occurs when a whole organization works together, using the ideas and creativity of a wide range of people. It can underpin our success as creatives, as agents of social change or as social entrepreneurs. And since many of us in the cultural sector aspire to be all three, it can help us resolve the tensions between these roles.**

## WHOM IS ACED FOR?

- Cultural organisations willing to strengthen their relationship with their communities.
- Cultural leaders and changemaker exploring new approaches.
- Trainers, consultants and researchers looking for new tools and insights.
- Policy makers supporting cultural democracy.

**ACED is for cultural organizations as the deliverers and intermediaries in a connection between the audience and the producers of cultural activity. It works for large or small institutions in a range of artistic and cultural forms and different types of organization. It can be adapted to different contexts and missions and become as diverse in practice as are the organizations that decide to take it on.**

**ACED needs leadership and proper facilitation either by someone assigned internally or an external facilitator. It will require at least one person to take responsibility as "change-maker" and a "task force" team of people drawn from all parts of the organization to drive the process. ACED is based on the needs of cultural organizations but is relevant and useful in different ways for a range of purposes and roles:**

- For the teams of cultural institutions, it offers creative ways to use their talents to orient an offering around the needs of the public.
- For cultural leaders it can provide the basis for change that is transformative, delivers the mission and enables teams.
- For trainers, consultants or facilitators it provides a new but tried and tested way of helping an organization to move forward.

- For policymakers it provides the inspiration and basis for the wider change the cultural sector needs.

**ACED has been created to deliver fundamental and long-term change. It requires a positive, optimistic perspective that gives proper attention to the experience of the audience, participant or user.**

## THE BACKGROUND

The ACED process was developed by the ADESTE+ partnership taking stock of our learning from previous projects such as Connecting Audiences and the first original ADESTE. It became clear that a more substantial change required proper consideration of leadership and organisational change and that's why ADESTE+ was more explicit in its organisational change ambition, involving cross-sectoral teams within organisations and further developing the Design Thinking approach by adapting it to the specific context of the cultural sector.

ACED is a process to support organisations to design audience centred cultural experiences and, at the same time, develop new forms of internal collaboration, bringing change in small, manageable steps. During the ADESTE+ project the original methodology was tested and refined in collaboration with "artistic partners" in the "waterfall" programme and in conferences and summer schools. This means it has been produced to work with a variety of different types and scales of cultural organisation and is appropriate for all artforms. As a process, going through the blueprint is a different journey for each organisation, according to its priorities, needs, context and motivations. But we designed it to support all organisations in becoming more porous, as "relational devices" facilitating their ability to take risks, listen to their communities and creatively respond to their needs.

## METHODO- LOGICAL BASIS

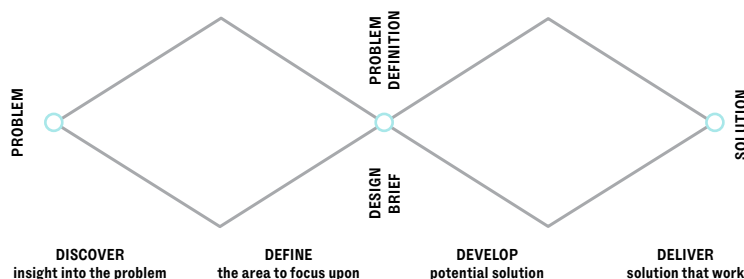
### INSPIRATIONAL MODELS

Audience-Centred Experience Design is inspired by several well-known and respected models.

**LEWIN'S CHANGE MODEL:** On the one hand – it takes in ideas of organisational change, such as Lewin's Change Model or Kotter's Eight Step Plan. These focus on the ways we can elicit change in the organisation, establishing and setting up the conditions for progress, creating the change that is needed and then embedding or refreezing the resulting results in the organisation.



**DESIGN THINKING:** Human Centred Design Thinking enables us to focus on audience needs. It enables this through a particular double-diamond programme that takes a team through stages of divergent and convergent thinking. This includes vital concepts of empathising, ideating, defining and prototyping a solution to the problem so that we can design better experiences for our audiences, participants or users.



Audience-Centred Experience Design therefore focuses both on what we need to do to meet audience needs and on facilitating change in the organization to make this happen. It requires empathy, creativity, a real hands-on approach and a commitment to test, validate and adapt as necessary.

### GET READY – the preparation and starting points

- **Prepare** – deciding if you are ready and what you want to do
- **Unfreeze** – unlocking the organisation and setting up the process

### EXPERIMENT – the phase of thinking, considering and testing

- **Empathize** – identify and understand your audience of interest
- **Define** – clarify what you want to achieve
- **Ideate** – create, imagine, think of what you might do to achieve this
- **Prototype** – decide on the best solutions and test them out

### KEEP GOING – the point of adoption into the organisation’s ongoing work.

- **Commit** – evaluate what worked, refine, retry or adopt and amplify
- **Embed** – embed the solution(s) and the new working practices in your work.

### WHAT IS NEEDED

ACED is a powerful and inspirational process and to do it well it needs certain ingredients. First of all, it needs leadership and commitment. In practice the process can be devolved and led to a task force and the larger the organisation, the more important will be the role and composition of this group. Also recommended is the appointment of a change maker(s)

who can be a central point of contact for the project and will help to drive the process forward. Some parts have more of an emphasis on the audience and some on the organisation itself, but as the diagram shows, this is always an interweaving shape.

As described, this blueprint outlines a series of steps work best if these are centred on workshops (group activity), preferably with an external facilitator. In practice, these steps may be shortened or elongated, depending on circumstances and with the need occasionally to dwell on a certain point or return to an earlier stage or alternatively to leap forward with the momentum achieved. The experimentation stage is based on the design thinking double diamond models of divergent and convergent thinking which are explained further in this blueprint. This means at some points it is important to be expansive and open up, and then at others to filter and decide on the best ones for use. In this way it can draw on the different types of roles, mind-sets and styles within the team.

## ACED – STEP BY STEP

### WHAT DO YOU NEED FOR THE PROCESS?

**LEADERSHIP** and whole organization involvement. However your organization is set up, you will need those who are responsible at a senior level to be driving the process forward. If senior management is not on the task force, then a process of liaison between the task force and the team must be arranged.

**FACILITATOR(S)** to enable the process. This person will be responsible for enabling the overall ACED process, which means leading the workshops, supporting the change-maker and liaising with the rest of the organization. This is best undertaken by someone "external" and familiar with the process, but there may be other ways of doing it internally. It is important that they are able to facilitate rather than needing to participate.

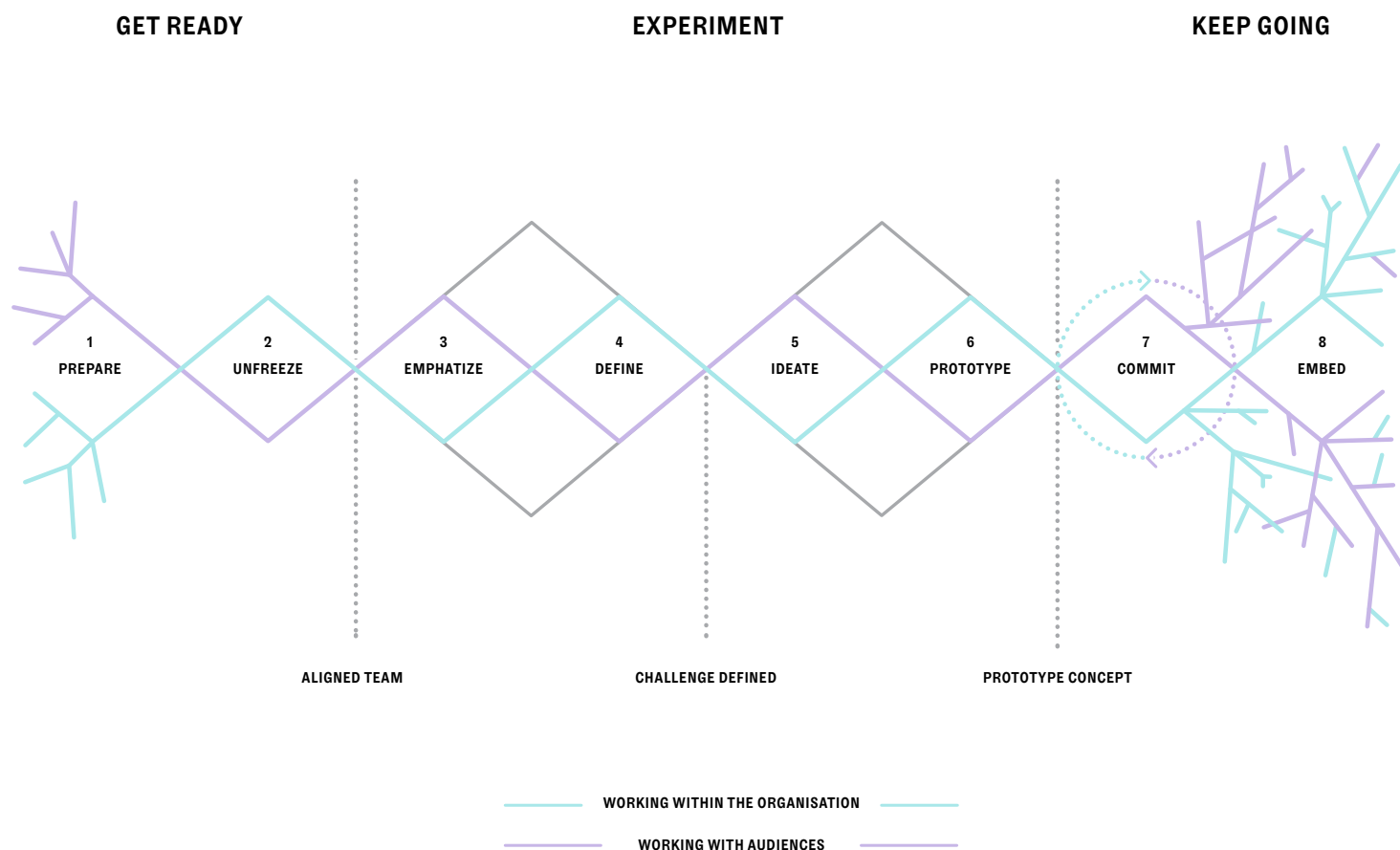
**CHANGE-MAKER(S)** to coordinate the work of the task force and represent them across the organization and to the leadership. Preferably the change-maker should be someone

different from, and working with, the facilitator, but if the circumstances and person are right, they could be an internal facilitator following the process outlined in the toolkit. It is important always to be clear where responsibility lies.

**TASK FORCE** of 6–12 people who will be the central creative force for the whole process. In smaller organizations they may be the whole staff team, while in larger organizations they could be representatives from across the organization with diverse roles within it. It could also include volunteers or regular participants and collaborators of the organization. It is essential that they have the time and resources needed to deliver the programme.

**RESOURCES AND A TIME FRAME** need to be considered properly in advance. It may be possible to carry out the programme without much need for resourcing, but more ambitious plans will need a dedicated budget. It is also important for all those involved to recognize and commit to the time frame. This will vary according to the organization or ambition, but in the ADESTE+ programme it worked best over two to six months.

**AN AGREED INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN** will be needed to ensure everyone is aware of what is happening and how they might be involved.





# PHASE 1: GET READY

## STEP 1: PREPARE

### ACED TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- **ARE YOU READY? QUESTIONNAIRE:** Use this to assess your organisation's readiness before "diving in" to the process and start reflecting on your goals.
- **TASK FORCES AND CHANGEMAKERS RULES:** Use this to set and share roles and "rules of the game" with the people involved.

### PURPOSE

**In the process of developing ACED, we came to recognize that some aspects of our practice were important to the success of the programme. ACED is a programme of experimentation encouraging new approaches to innovation and involvement. It seeks to help an organization to see its work through different eyes and to be able to change and adapt in the light of new perspectives. These preparatory steps are accordingly geared towards collaboration and change. In this toolkit, the instructions are elaborated as if for the facilitator but can be adapted according to the way you are enabling the process.**

### ACTIONS

**First of all, ask if ACED is right for the organization – see the Are You Ready? questionnaire on the website. Then,**

- Agree a brief with senior leadership: what change would they like ACED to help them to achieve? What resources can they make available? How will they monitor progress and manage proposals and suggestions from the change-maker and task force? How will they review ACED and how will it affect strategy?
- Brief all staff – depending on the size and type of organization this could take different forms – but it is crucial that the whole organization knows what is happening and feels part of the process.
- Appoint the task force of people from across the organization. Make sure they have the

time and resources needed to deliver the ACED programme.

- Appoint the change-maker(s) to coordinate the work of the task force and represent them across the organization and to the leadership.
- Brief the task force and change-maker: what resources, including time, do they have? What is the decision-making and reporting process? Use these resources to introduce the concepts and techniques behind ACED.
- Work with/ask the change-maker to produce an outline project schedule reflecting the ACED process – include internal communications and check-ins with the leadership. It is probably best to think of it as one workshop per stage and develop this over time.

**You might also want to explore some of the background to the ACED programme – in the WHY ACED? section of the website.**

### BY THE END...

**You will be ready to start the ACED programme!**

# PHASE 1: GET READY

## STEP 2: UNFREEZE

### ACED TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- **UNFREEZE QUESTIONS:** Use this to ask about your organisations, its plans and the place of your community and audiences.
- **THE CULTURAL-CREATIVE VISION EXERCISE:** Use this to ask about your organisations, its plans and the place of your community and audiences.
- **AUDIENCE JOURNEY MAPPING CANVAS:** Use this to plot a "map" of the audience experience – what's good and bad about it, for all audiences or specific target groups. It could be a useful analysis tool.
- **AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT MATRIX (ANSOFF ADAPTED):** Use this to help you decide what to use ACED for.



**Before embarking on the ACED programme, it is important to ask: who is our public, who could it be? Take a moment to step back and "unfreeze" your thinking, ensuring there is consensus about what you are trying to do.**

## ACTIONS

**Work with the whole (or as much as possible of the) organization at this stage. Try to include those who might not obviously have "public-facing" roles. Capture and write up your ideas. Review your organizational purpose and the place of the public in it; there are lots of tools you can use. What are your social, financial and creative/learning objectives? What does this mean for audiences and participants? As part of this process:**

- Describe your current audiences and participants. Bring together any research you have as well as the ideas of people across your organization. Ask: who engages with our organization, and how?
- Describe the community you serve. Use any research you have, including background information, as well as intelligence from your team and stakeholders. Ask: who do we exist to serve? Who do we WANT to engage, how and why? Who COULD we engage?
- Describe what needs to change. Ask: what, if any, is the change we want to see? Can you frame this as some clear "aims", specific to participants, audiences or members of your community/ies? Do you need to review any other strategies?

## ORGANIZATION LEARNING

**This stage can help your organization to:**

- Review its strategy, mission and purpose in an audience-centred way.
- Build a common vision for audiences across the organization.

## AUDIENCE AND COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

**At this point, it is useful to review existing research and invite the whole organization to discuss questions such as:**

- Who engages with our organization, how, when and why? What are they like?
- Who does not?
- Are there distinctive and different groupings in our audience? How could we describe them?
- What don't we know about our audiences that it will be important to discover?

## BY THE END OF THIS PHASE...

**Ask yourselves: how would you like ACED to help you?**

**By the end of this stage, you should know:**

- What benefits ACED should bring to your organization.
- What success might look like.
- What you already know and what you need to find out.
- What you would like to learn.
- How you would like to work together.

**And you will have reached the first of the three milestones described in the visualization of the process.**

# PHASE 2: EXPERIMENT STEP 3: EMPHATISE

## ACED TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- PERSONA BUILDING EXERCISE: Use this to create a believable, "flesh and blood" person to represent your target audience.
- NEWCOMER EMPATHY EXERCISES: Use this to help a team build empathy with first-time visitors.
- USING RELATIONAL AND EXTREME LENSES: Use this to consider how different people are.
- AUDIENCE JOURNEY MAPPING CANVAS: Use this to plot a "map" of the audience experience – what's good and bad about it, for all audiences or specific target groups

## PURPOSE

**This is the first step in the "design phase" of ACED in which you undertake an experiment with and for a particular audience group. It is about understanding the perspective of this group from their point of view – hence the idea of "empathizing". Who are they? Where do they live? What do they do? Do you have something to offer them? Are they real and reachable? Why do they need you?**

**If you can, bring in any already undertaken research here, so that you are working from what you know or don't know. And consider which groups of people are important to you – perhaps those you don't normally engage with much. It is tempting to work with stereotypical ideas of who those people are, but recognize that they are your assumptions and they need to be tested. This is about understanding them as real people. How do they feel? How do they think? What would make their lives more fulfilled? How are they different from other groups?**

**Good design – and good audience development – is based on an authentic and empathetic understanding of people's needs and interests. This is particularly important if you want to attract a new or different audience or community. The aim here is to use all the information available to bring your group of interest alive as credible people whom everyone in your**

**organization can know and love. Importantly, you will therefore need to talk directly to people about their needs and interests, what they think of your organization and what you may have to offer that matters to them.**

## ACTIONS

- Review and summarize existing audience data.
- Create a flesh-and-blood "persona/s" who represents your group/s of interest using the persona canvas tool.
- Look at your organization through their lens – what do they see when they look at you?
- Have conversations with real people about your organization and their interests – and how they match.
- Plot a "user journey" to understand your group's experience and if they are different from other groups.
- Validate – or test your assumptions about – your persona through further research: use the "Get to Know" tool.

## ORGANIZATION LEARNING

**This is a "divergent thinking" stage. It is the task force's first opportunity to learn how to manage the process of generating many ideas and deciding what is most important. This stage can help to improve collaborative working, facilitating divergent and convergent thinking, and consolidate and share research skills.**

## AUDIENCE AND COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

**This is an opportunity to learn more about your audience and to understand their relationship with you. It means considering what they care about and what needs/interests the organization could serve and the barriers that stop them from participating.**

**BY THE END ...**

- Identified which group/s of interest you will be designing for.
- Created a persona(s) for your target group(s).
- Identified your persona's "problem" – what needs/barriers need to be addressed?
- Tested the validity of the persona – with real people.

## PHASE 2: EXPERIMENT

### STEP 4: DEFINE

#### ACED TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- HOW MIGHT WE? CANVAS: Use this to provide a focus for defining the key challenges for the audience group.
- NEEDS STATEMENT: Use this to focus on the needs your experience design should respond to.
- REFINING THE NEEDS STATEMENT MATRIX: Use this to criticise and change the needs statement to make it as good as possible ready for the next stage.

#### PURPOSE

**Having developed a deeper understanding of your group of interest, it is necessary to decide what really matters and where you will focus your enquiry and resources. Importantly, you will need to describe the key "problem" this group has in engaging with your organization or outline the opportunity there might be for them. With the information collected, you can articulate what you need to address in the next stages to build meaningful new experiences and lasting relationships. Elements could relate to a whole audience journey or part of it – like the creative experience, communication, ambience or environment. The clearer you can be, the more meaningful your experimentation will be. This is a phase of "convergent thinking" – focusing in on what matters to your audiences and your organization.**

#### ACTIONS

**In the workshop, the task force should take following actions:**

- Decide which persona you will concentrate on. What are the important criteria? Choose one that is really important to your organization, that is distinct with needs and interests you have understood, whom you can reach, and for whom you could create a meaningful experience.
- Review the persona representing this group. Add in new details. Think about presenting them in an interesting way so that everyone in your organization can get to know them.
- Decide which factors are critical for your persona. Where possible, involve people of that type in this conversation.
- Capture this thinking in a User Needs Statement (see tools and resources) that defines what is important for your persona.
- Thinking about these factors, you could form some "How Might We?" questions, which can act as the trigger for your design ideas (see tools and resources).
- Refine your User Needs Statement so that it is clear what you need to achieve for your persona, in preparation for the ideate stage.

#### ORGANIZATION LEARNING

**This is a convergent thinking stage in which you narrow down what is most important for the future of your organization and why. It is a process of crystallizing what you want to achieve and will especially appeal to people who are good at filtering elements to decide on the key issue.**

#### AUDIENCE AND COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

**You will have a long list of issues important to this group – you may not be able to address them now but they can be documented for the future.**

**You will have reached the second milestone in the process having agreed a User Needs Statement and/or a How Might We? questions, which forms an inspirational and motivating brief for the design of new experiences**

## PHASE 2: EXPERIMENT STEP 5: IDEATE

### ACED TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- BRAINSTORMING GOLDEN RULES: Use this to get useful tips and hints on ideation workshops.
- SCAMPER: Use this to help you come up with more and different ideas, either as part of Ideation or in adapting your prototype.
- BRAIN WRITING EXERCISE: Use this to build on and develop ideas with your team.
- SELECTING SOLUTION (PUGH MATRIX): Use this to select good design candidates for the next step. It's good for all "convergent thinking" stages.

### PURPOSE

**The previous stage focused on identifying the needs of a specific group of people as represented by a realistic and well-researched persona, turning this into a design brief. Now comes the point to be creative and think of all the ways that the brief can be met.**

**It is a stage in which to apply your imagination as a group to think of a variety of ways in which you can answer the needs of your identified persona, considering all the different parts of the organization. New experiences could open the doors to lasting relationships, and it can also be the moment when a whole new strand, programme or way of working is developed.**

### ACTIONS

**Working together, aim to generate the widest possible range of ideas from which you can select the best to take forward. The more people involved, the more ideas you will generate – and this is the key to success. It is a good stage to involve your new audiences/community to engage the creativity and goodwill you have developed. It is a creative, playful stage in which the group works together to think of ways in which they can meet the needs of the persona/group of interest.**

- Plan and set up ideation sessions. You might choose to carry out one of several "ideation sessions", perhaps with different stakeholders or about different aspects of the user journey.
- There are many tools and techniques to choose from. Working in a group setting really helps open up creativity. It is worth putting in the time and effort to get the environment right – comfortable, non-hierarchical, playful. You are looking for interesting and genuinely new approaches with which you can experiment. Be sure to capture the full range of ideas suggested.
- Going back to the brief, select the best ideas with which to experiment. It is important to select ideas that get to the heart of the issues of your target group, are deliverable and from which you can learn.

### ORGANIZATION LEARNING

#### You will learn:

- That everybody in the organization could add value to the creative process.
- How to generate new ideas for new experience involving a wide range of stakeholders.
- Some essentials of co-creative practice.
- How to engage staff teams in creative thinking in an equitable way.

**You will generate a "long list" of potential ideas that could be enacted or tested by the task force in the future.**

#### BY THE END ...

##### You will have:

- Selected a shortlist of ideas to develop into a "prototype" with which you can experiment and it can then be scaled up into sustainable and lasting solutions.
- Further developed relationships with your group of interest / persona.

## PHASE 2: EXPERIMENT STEP 6: PROTOTYPE

#### ACED TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- SCAMPER: Use this to help you come up with more and different ideas, either as part of Ideation or in adapting your prototype.
- THE DECISION MATRIX: Use this to explore an alternative way of deciding on the best ideas.
- PROTOTYPE STATEMENT: Use this to define what you want to test and learn and may be useful when doing a "pitch" to colleagues or senior management.
- LOVE IT LEAVE IT: Use this to decide what you should keep, change or discard.

#### PURPOSE

**Prototyping is a powerful and practical way of turning ideas into action. It is about producing "a minimum viable experience" so that you can try out the essence of your best idea(s) practically, evaluate how well it works and then adapt it so you either try it out again or scale it up to a full version. It enables you to try something that reduces the overall risk whilst actually testing its key components. This stage will probably overlap with the next stage as it**

**is about producing a prototype that can be tested and evaluated and refined. Depending on its type, this may be a one-off or a sequence of tests before you get to the one you commit to.**

#### ACTIONS

**The main idea is to learn as much as possible from a provisional version – a "minimum viable experience" about which you will collect feedback from your team and from the group of interest. You can (continue to) experiment, learn and adapt in this way with live, launched activities, which don't have to be discrete, "test-only". In this way, you can continue to improve experiences.**

- Develop a prototype, that is, an early sample, model or try-out of the experience. It could be anything from a mock-up to a full "scratch" event – and you might want to build up from very simple prototypes to more involved ones.
- Write a "Prototype Statement" (see resources), which will help you to be clear about what you are trying to do.
- Plan how you will collect data for feedback (such as a survey, analytics), making sure you talk directly with your group of interest. If your work is participatory and co-creative, make sure participants are involved with developing the prototype and testing it themselves with others.
- Develop a test plan or "pitch" that sets out what the prototype/s is, and how you will test it, and gather and review feedback. Include your Statement and explain what you are trying to learn, who will be involved, what resources you require and the timescale.
- Pitch your plan to relevant senior managers and/or colleagues to get their support, involvement and any permission or resources required. Keep everyone in the learning loop.
- Run the prototype session – and remember, it's the feedback that matters.
- Working in your task force and with participants, review the prototype using the "Love it Leave it" tool.
- Ask: is your experience ready for roll-out or do you need to adapt and test another version?

**You will learn: Prototype** – the agile process of experience development, which can be used whenever the organization would like to try out something new whilst minimizing risk.

#### AUDIENCE AND COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

**You will get first-hand feedback about new ideas and directions and the extent to which your process had found the right problems and scenarios.**

**Action research-based evaluation will give you real insight into how people really, rather than theoretically, engage with you.**

#### BY THE END ...

##### You will have:

- Reached the third milestone in the process.
- Developed a prototype or "minimum viable experience", which can be tested and evaluated.
- A new experience for launching or further or ongoing iterative development.

## PHASE 3: KEEP GOING STEP 7: COMMIT

#### ACED TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- LOVE IT LEAVE IT: Use this to decide what you should keep, change or discard.
- JOURNEY MAPPING CANVAS: Use this to plot the "map" of the experience you want to offer and/or develop.
- AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT CYCLE: Use this to embed your experiments in your strategic planning.

- AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT MATRIX (ANSOFF ADAPTED): Use this to help you form an audience development plan – and to help you decide where and when to use ACED in future.
- KANBAN BOARD: Use this to track your tasks and progress.

#### PURPOSE

**This stage is all about deciding what to do in the light of the prototyping you have done. What do you keep and "scale up", and what needs refining? What have you learnt and how are you going to continue this work? Once you have developed an experience that works for your group of interest it will be time to consider how you will continue to develop the relationship with this group and the implications for your continuing strategies. How will you use the ACED process on an ongoing basis?**

#### ACTION

**Once you have done some prototyping you will be in a position to decide what to adopt and commit to for your group of interest. Using the feedback you have collected from your group of interest and the learning of your team you can repeat or scale up the prototype, or on the other hand refine it or even try something else if it isn't doing what you want it to do. Then you can turn your attention to your plans for the future.**

- In the task force, carry out a review looking at what worked: the design process, prototype/s, what you learnt about the group of interest, how the task force worked.
- Consider what ideas and ways of working the organization should take forward. It might be helpful to develop an audience plan and recommendations covering these areas:
- How can the organization adopt the new experience you have developed? Who needs to be involved? What resources are required? How will you evaluate and adapt it?
- Develop your persona: what have you learnt about their interests and concerns?

- What should be the relationship with the group of interest in one year or five? Describe the short – and long-term aims.
- Nominate a champion for the group of interest who could lead the delivery of the audience plan. They will champion your group's interests, build relationships, carry out research and co-design new experiences. It could be one person, or a new or the same task force.
- What activities will be included in the plan and what resources will be needed?
- Once there is a draft plan this can be shared with the rest of the organization and signed off appropriately.

## ORGANIZATION LEARNING

**During this step, organizational learning focuses on what your organization has learnt through this process and what it needs to do in future to connect with this group of interest. It's also an opportunity to share your insights and outputs with colleagues and involve them in further stages thinking about the implications for new ideas and directions having been through the process.**

## AUDIENCE AND COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

**As well as knowing your original group of interest you will also have gained insight into related parts of the audience and understood who they are and what they think of you, generating ideas for further possibilities.**

## BY THE END ...

### You will have:

- Worked up your prototype into a fuller version of what you want to do, perhaps incorporating it into your ongoing programme.
- Agreed a commitment to a long-term strategy for your group of interest.

# PHASE 3: EXPERIMENT STEP 8: EMBED

## ACED TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- WHEEL OF CONSIDERATION: Use this to adopt what you have learnt for further use
- LOVE IT LEAVE IT: Use this to decide what you should keep, change or discard
- AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT CYCLE: Use this to embed your experiments in your strategic planning
- AUDIENCE CANVAS: Use this to ensure that the organisation's development stays audience centred
- DOUBLE LOOP LEARNING: Use this to help you look at what the process has taught you about the original ideas and aims – and how they should be adapted

## PURPOSE

**This last step is about reflecting on the ACED experience from an organizational perspective. What did you learn? What needs to change? What aspects of the approach worked well and what should become part of everyday practice? To feel the full benefits of the ACED process it is vital that the organization considers its implications for future work, potentially repeating the process for other organizational audience aims.**

## ACTIONS

**As in the previous stage, you might find it useful to hold a learning workshop/s with the task force and other members of the team. At this stage it is important to capture ideas and develop them into a plan, set of intentions or manifesto for your ongoing work. The senior team should also now ask: how can these ideas be taken forward? It might be helpful to develop an audience plan and recommendations covering these areas:**

- Ask the task force to evaluate their experience.
- What learning would they like to share and how?



- What recommendations would they make for the wider organisation – both about the audience and ACED?
- Can you involve audiences or stakeholders in this process?
- Ask the senior team to evaluate the experience from their perspective and add their own recommendations and then agree:
  - What practices and approaches could you take forward as an organisation?
  - What would you hope to gain and how will you know its working? What will change?
  - Who will need to be involved? Who will lead/facilitate/champion any changes or new practices?
- What (if any) dedicated resources will be required?
- These ideas can then be used as a trial – or prototype – reviewing and adapting them on an ongoing basis.
- Using a tool like the Audience Canvas or Wheel of Consideration you could apply ACED to new strategies or programming.
- Review the ongoing success of using ACED – or some of its elements – as part of your regular review cycles.

## ORGANISATION LEARNING

**If the process has worked well, the organization learning will be very rich. You will know a lot about the organization and the team's capabilities and opportunities. As well as adopting new ways of doing things as part of "everyday" practice you will also have a (new) audience development strategy.**

## AUDIENCE AND COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

**With new knowledge of your current and potential audiences you will be able to produce work and develop approaches suitable for their needs and decide how to progress your audience strategies in the next stages.**

**As in the previous stage, you might find it useful to hold a learning workshop/s with the task force and other members of the team. At this stage it is important to capture ideas and develop them into a plan, a set of intentions or a manifesto for your ongoing work. The senior team should also now ask: how can these ideas be taken forward? It might be helpful to develop an audience plan and recommendations covering these areas:**

- Ask the task force to evaluate their experience.
- What learning would they like to share and how?
- What recommendations would they make for the wider organization – both about the audience and ACED?
- Can you involve audiences or stakeholders in this process?
- Ask the senior team to evaluate the experience from their perspective and add their own recommendations and then agree on the following:
  - What practices and approaches could you take forward as an organization?
  - What would you hope to gain and how will you know it's working? What will change?
  - Who will need to be involved? Who will lead/facilitate/champion any changes or new practices?
- What (if any) dedicated resources will be required?
- These ideas can then be used as a trial – or prototype – reviewing and adapting them on an ongoing basis.
- Using a tool like the Audience Canvas or Wheel of Consideration you could apply ACED to new strategies or programming.
- Review the ongoing success of using ACED – or some of its elements – as part of your regular review cycles.

You will have: Captured key learning from ACED, identified the ways it could help your organization on an ongoing basis and agreed some ideas to try out. Learning will be integrated into regular practices and everyone will have benefited from the learning.

## CONCLUSION

### ACED CONCLUDED – THE IMPLICATIONS?

The Audience-Centred Experience Design (ACED) blueprint is an approach that can be adopted by all sorts of organizations in a range of contexts within the cultural sector. It has been developed to address the issue of enabling wider and deeper participation and involvement of the public with cultural institutions. Especially important is the way it works with the whole organization, moving beyond an idea of audience development being about very particular tools or elements. ACED is also devised to work with different sorts of "mission" or orientations within strategies whether they be business, artistic or social in emphasis. It is for anyone who cares about recognizing that the importance of the audience experience lies in what they do.

### CHANGING, DEVELOPING, ADAPTING

ACED has been developed during the ADESTE+ project, but is based on several years of development and testing by the ADESTE partners and a wider network of organizations, academics, practitioners, researchers and trainers from around the world. It is not a magic solution. Its strength comes from recognizing that it needs a holistic approach for these issues to be successful – one that recognizes that good audience engagement happens when we all take responsibility for public engagement, regardless of our "job title".

The ACED methodology is the latest iteration and a summation of much work and research that has been done before. It is based on action research, testing and evaluation and will

continue to be improved as it is used more widely. For this reason, we encourage you to tell us about your experience of using ACED. On the ACED website ([aced.ADESTEplus.eu](http://aced.ADESTEplus.eu)) you can feed back about your own experience of using ACED. What has worked for you? What could be adapted? What could be added? With your help, ACED can become a continually evolving, improving methodology available for use by all.

# II.3.

## EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE IN THE APPLICATION OF THE ACED METHODOLOGY

In the framework of the ADESTE+ project, fifteen partners from seven EU countries worked together on developing the methodology and testing it. Partnerships were organized in three groups – research partners, artistic partners and policy partners. Research partners in cooperation with artistic partners worked on developing methodology which was then tested and adjusted according to the experiences gained through application process, while policy partners gave support through framing recommendations for encouraging and supporting organisational transformation. Following texts give a look back on the process and diverse experiences partners gained through working with the ACED methodology.

## II.3.1. CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION: IMAGINING A FUTURE

ANDREIA DIAS, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation  
ILÍDIO LOURO, Mapa das Ideias  
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IVO OOSTERBEEK, Mapa das Ideias  
SUSANA GOMES DA SILVA, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

### INTRODUCTION

We live in a moment of considerable uncertainty in all dimensions of our personal and collective lives. Yet it is a moment that also offers us an opportunity to slow down. Can this slowing down be an accelerator of transformation, allowing us to think about a more certain future? And what does this future mean? One thing is certain: if we resort to the same old paradigms and methodologies, we will have the same less than fitting results.

In the final meeting of the ADESTE+ journey in Copenhagen, we visited the Diane Arbus exhibition at the Louisiana Museum. We were touched by a particular quote which described Arbus' excitement about her MOMA's 1967 New Documents exhibition. In a postcard to a friend, she wrote:

" *Now there is a show... 30 of my photographs at the modern museum. I long for you to see it. It is so beautiful, all in a splendid room and people stare into them, hundreds of strangers as if they were reading. I stand there for hours watching people watch the pictures and listening to what they say.*

Think about what new models the museum can propose. How can we imagine together a museum for these new and uncertain times?

We know that as cultural organisations, we are failing. Culture is not accessible enough, and cultural participation is a significant challenge for Europe. People withdraw from the public dimensions of collective lives, and this has a considerable toll on democracy and citizenship.

The ACED methodology – Audience-Centred Experience Design – that we developed, adapted and implemented during this project is intended to place the audience's experience at the centre of the work developed in cultural institutions and their programmes by enabling the creation of pilot projects for

78

INSIDE AND OUT

specific audiences and encouraging change on an institutional level. It is based on visual thinking principles. It values the collective intelligence of each organisation by fostering empathy and internal dialogue while creating a common ground on which to address audience-related challenges. Built upon co-creation and participation, it enables an open-ended process through a series of workshops that involve different hierarchies, sectors and people from different sections of the cultural organisation.

Creating a safe space for a whole-hearted discussion about what the organisation is and could be sets up risk taking and the valuing of experimentation and, therefore, the possibility of failing and trying again – as part of institutional life. It gives resilience and agility we never could have imagined in 2019 when we undertook the ACED pilot with Mapa das Ideias and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, working together in the Portuguese hub.

The audience prototype focussed on an initiative of participatory cultural programming and curatorship for and with the young. Based on an open-call selection, the Gulbenkian 15–25 Imagina group joined 21 young participants from diverse backgrounds between 18 and 25 years old. It involved weekly meetings between January and March 2020 in which the idea of cultural programming was questioned by thinking critically on the role of a cultural programmer in the present time, reflecting on the civic role of cultural institutions and contemporary challenges, meeting cultural professionals and developing the basis for the creation of a collaborative cultural programme of their own making for their peers. This project represented a learning opportunity and an experience with cultural programming that can be used in the future to build new spaces to engage a younger audience and assure their participation as well as new strategic guidelines for a participatory programme. As we all know, the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March, changing all the conditions. Yet this audience-based project thrived.

### THE PROCESS OF THE PROJECT

#### THINKING, CREATING AND DIALOGUING

After an open-call selection, the Gulbenkian 15–25 Imagina group joined 21 young participants that participated in cultural events and workshops about cultural programming, investigation, production, stage direction, communication and marketing. This learning space was also a place for discussion and debate across all fields with internal and external guest speakers invited by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation for a complete cultural programming experience.

It was a safe place. But it was also a challenging experience as the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation staff was also confronted with other

79

II. ACED METHODOLOGY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

perspectives and values. Interesting insights arose when we asked the participants what to expect from cultural programmers:

- " *It is important and relevant to hear new voices and new approaches to cultural programming;*
- " *Joining different audiences may lead to adopting new perspectives;*
- " *Creating new ecosystems, new approaches and multiplicities;*
- " *Generating common ground, but also friction to ensure movement, dialogue, to enter the world of another person, or to enter another world with another person.*

After drawing a conceptual map for programming, it was necessary to decide what to programme and why. For this, it was essential to discover common ground, simultaneously ensuring cohesion and diversity. The decision about what to programme only came next. This stage was supposed to happen between March and April, but it had to be adapted to the Covid-19 pandemic. So, all of the ideas that were already drawn or being negotiated had to be reframed and adapted.

According to the initial challenge, the group decided to keep developing their curatorship and programming plans. They had to adjust to the new circumstances and create an entirely digital programme. The next step was to select artistic projects, people, experiences and collectives to integrate into their programme.

## IMPLEMENTING A PROGRAMME

### PRODUCTION

The three main ideas of the plan initially conceived by the group for their programme were "inhabiting", "common household", and "ecosystem". The pandemic also forced them to consider the notions of "body", "public space", "visibility/invisibility" and "art and resistance". The group reformulated its guidelines and began to try to convey the global discomfort and uncertainty by creating a cycle of debates with the title "Imagine – thinking about the future today!".

### THE CYCLE "IMAGINE – THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE TODAY"

For this cycle, artists, researchers, performers, activists and several professionals from the field of culture were invited and organised into three online talks moderated by the youngsters.

80

INSIDE AND OUT

- 1st talk: Can Spaces determine the Bodies that inhabit them? Can Bodies define the Spaces they inhabit?
- 2nd talk: Invisibilities: the streets and the digital world as spaces for protesting and democratic expression
- 3rd talk: Art, technology and surveillance. If art is an act of resistance, what is it resisting against?

## REFLECTING ABOUT THE PROCESS AND PRODUCING RECORDS/MEMORY

The months of June and July of 2020 were devoted to thinking about the process by organising and producing records and memories of everything learned during the sessions. A video and a website were some of the sharing platforms, which were again created by a collaborative process with the youngsters and the changemakers involved. These inputs were considered to be recommendations for the development of the programme for the young at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, which we hope will become a new line of regular programming and is currently being launched as a second edition in 2022.

The work reinforced cooperation among different departments of the foundation, namely the museum, music, garden, communication and marketing departments, all of which had members who were a key part of the programme since the original design of Imagina. A lot of the work surrounded reflection. It started as a reflection on the role the Foundation can play in the lives of new audiences and was continued by the reflections entailed by the youth.

- " *Imagina 15–25 truly enabled us to do that, listening to us and understanding what our concerns and our priorities were. – Maria*
- " *We, as a group, decided to use this time to take a break and to deepen a series of reflections. – Rita*

As can be seen in the testimonial video for the programme<sup>1</sup>, it is clear how the programme evolved to fit the needs of participants.

- " *We just focused on what was happening in the world, which themes we considered to be pertinent, and we started mapping out our programming according to that. – João*
- " *It was interesting to have people from completely different backgrounds and see all the things we have in common. – Sandra*

It is also clear how difficulties shared by the organisations were felt in a similar way by the engaged audience.

81

II. ACED METHODOLOGY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

*I thought, oh, we're young, that's why we're lost, but they'll help us. But actually, we were all in the same boat.*

— Lârcia

Interestingly, many recommendations made by the youth echoed desires that the Foundation already had and which are present in its Mission, Values and Relation with Society as well as in the objectives of its 2018–2022 Strategy. These include more responsiveness to social needs, better auscultation, transparency and social responsibility or reinforcing the civic dimension of its cultural programmes.

## CONCLUSIONS

Co-creation and participation had to be the conduit for organisational change either internally (among different departments and professionals within the Gulbenkian Foundation) or externally (by consulting and collaborating with different audiences and communities). This fact was vital for the development of the ADESTE+ project. It stemmed from the results of other co-operation projects and from the urgency of trying something different with open-ended outcomes. The project was launched in mid-2018 along with never-predicted full-scale challenges in our society. It did not foresee that half the project would work on audience development during a global pandemic. It did not plan to foster principles of cultural democracy and cooperation for the cultural sector with a war looming on the Union's frontier.

How can we conceive of and enact these new risks and possibilities in the context of artistic practices and museums? How can this uncertain present change the museum, and how can the artistic practices themselves be transformed or become agents of transformation in the museum?

Cultural organisations must become more sustainable, relevant and inclusive, building meaningful relations with citizens and communities. This process starts from within. It is an impossible design without organisational change (from minor tweaks to a full restructuration).

The path to get here has been a combination of work, experience and reflection from all actors involved in the process and in the community, which is made up of a mix of research partners, artistic partners and policymakers. In order to give free access and disseminate the knowledge built through the action research process, the ADESTE+ communication team has created a repository to assure open access to the legacy of the project.



After an open-call selection, the Gulbenkian 15–25 Imagina group, made up of 21 youngsters, began thinking and creating together. They gathered between the months of January and March 2020. The result of this process was the creation of a cultural programme based on their vision. ©Márcia Lessa

<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://vimeo.com/507872377> (Accessed: 12/4/2022).



## II.3.2. CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE IVAN PL. ZAJC: THEATRE VIA PERSONAL HISTORIES

KATARINA MAŽURAN JUREŠIĆ,  
Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc  
ANTONIJA LETINIĆ,  
Kultura Nova Foundation

### INTRODUCTION

"Change within change" is the title of the second European Conference and Summer School organized as part of the ADESTE+ project in 2020. The title refers to two changes that crossed paths unexpectedly and that were the central concerns of the events. The main objective of the project was to stimulate organizational transformation, encourage and strengthen organizations to put a stronger focus on the audience, and undertake necessary steps to achieve this objective. The process, which began with workshops in 2019, proved to be challenging, while the complex systems of cultural institutions proved to be demanding in the context of initiating such complex processes. At the time when artistic partners were to begin implementing their experimental projects, the world was hit by the pandemic and almost overnight everyone found themselves in a situation of radical change – a change in working processes, communication and socialization in a completely new environment. In the context of this project, these two transformations intertwined and opened diverse trajectories of action. On the one hand, we turned out to be much more flexible and able to adjust than we could imagine, but on the other, notwithstanding this experience, it transpired that the changes in the existing patterns and taking new directions required a lot of attention, dedication and care to take root, come to life and generate profound shifts. An example of this type of approach is the experience of the Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc, the artistic partner in the ADESTE+ project, which worked with the Kultura Nova Foundation on testing and developing the ACED methodology.

### OPPORTUNITIES AND ADVERSITIES DURING THE PROCESS

The Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc, the second-largest national theatre in Croatia, is a potent place for examining the capacity for organizational transformation of an institutional operation in the direction of a stronger focus on audience, users, interaction and new practices of participation. Therefore, the Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc joined the ADESTE+ project by upgrading the existing practices of inclusive performing projects and socially engaged theatre programmes in an attempt to keep on opening perspectives and possibilities for developing a relation with new audiences and

84

INSIDE AND OUT

connecting more firmly with its existing communities. The context in which the Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc entered this process was the preparation period for the European Capital of Culture – Rijeka 2020, which placed culture at the very centre of the city's attention, activated numerous spaces, animated many actors, initiated many discussions, and certainly caused controversies and disagreements. All this is a part of cultural dynamics, and it gave new energy to the cultural life of the city, but also connected citizens to culture.

However, the year in which Rijeka was to be the European Capital of Culture was suddenly interrupted by the state of emergency caused by the pandemic, and the culmination for which the city had been preparing for almost four years became an anticlimax far too soon. Despite this, the foundations built during the preparations stimulated, among others, the actors themselves to engage more vigorously in programmes focused on the issues of developing, engaging and including audiences. In this respect, the Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc powerfully opened itself to examining the possibilities of new working processes, the application of new approaches, the adoption of new knowledge and the development of new strategies in order to create foundations that would help it in the future to sail on the waves of the revived significance of culture for citizens. The participation in the ADESTE+ project was a part of this too.

### WORKSHOP CHALLENGES

In the programme of workshops, during which the first version of the ADESTE+ methodology was tested, participated the theatre staff primarily from the marketing department, sales and promotion department, as well as from the departments of production and collaboration projects. In the workshops they had an opportunity to re-establish the dialogue with other segments of the theatre system and identify their own needs with respect to improving the existing working processes and becoming more familiar with the meeting points as well as obstacles encountered by employees from other departments of this complex theatre machine. The workshops also created an opportunity to jointly reflect on their own roles when working and interacting with the audience, and to establish a new understanding of the audience. The workshops also provided a space for creative expression and activation of the creative capacities of the employees, and thus contributed to the quality of the dialogue among them, both in and between sectors, which led to the opening of new potentials for synergy. The instability of the context, the extraordinary circumstances and limited capacities prevented the conceived plan from being tested. Therefore, it was important to find new approaches that would enable utilization of the activated potential, continuation of the work and laying of foundations for continuous organizational development toward a stronger audience participation, but also the active participation of the employees themselves in this topic.

85

II. ACED METHODOLOGY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE



One of the challenges in the workshops' preparation and implementation phases and in the further work on the implementation of the transformation was to find approaches to motivate employees. It was important, at this stage, to identify and adequately evaluate their previous work, effort and engagement. It was also important to encourage them to open up for new horizons and work opportunities and to apply the existing knowledge and experiences in new directions of creative development, and to participate in upgrading and designing new formats and activities. With respect to the specificities of detailed and tactical work on activating the team, the most pliable project for experimenting with formatting and introducing new practices proved to be the Time Capsule project, which brings awareness of historical layers of the theatre mechanism through collecting memories, knowledge, sediments of time, experience and diverse recollections both of individuals and the urban tissue itself.

### MEMORIES AS SPACES OF ENCOUNTER

The Time Capsule project is an open-ended project inspired by a metal tube that was buried in a stair in the theatre atrium before its opening in 1885 and which contains documents such as the charter and the building decree, a list of people taking part in the build, architectural plans, and memorabilia such as coins and the like. It was buried in order to preserve for the future a testimony of the time the theatre opened, thus becoming a time capsule. Drawing on this time machine, the new time capsule attempts to collect new memories, recollections and imaginaries of the theatre for some future times, using a new language and the tools of our contemporary age. These are images that describe the significance of the theatre for many people and the impressions that it left on their lives – how they remember it, what it means to them and its surroundings. In this way, an image is created of the theatre as a social phenomenon and a place of work, of personal affirmations, and of creative and interpersonal encounters. The Time Capsule 2.0 is made up of interviews documented in various formats – audio documentation, records – as well as archival material and memorabilia shared by the project participants with the newly established theatre Gallery Zajc. The permanent exhibition comprises a historical overview of theatre life in Rijeka, the aforementioned materials from the theatre archive, as well as an insight into everyday theatre life, i.e., processes "behind the scenes". The highlighted elements are stage design and costume design segments of the exhibition that invite visitors to interact, as well as the "Zajčić" hall where visitors can practically learn about the way in which stage lighting works. The Viewpoint Klimt dedicated to Gustav Klimt is particularly attractive. The gallery, conceived as a permanent interactive exhibition, brings to life thus far inactive theatre spaces and opens them to the public, giving them a new purpose and life. It is valuable in itself because it informs, engages, educates and entertains visitors, and on the other hand, it builds a theatre audience so that everyone who visits the gallery gains an insight into a different world of theatre and therefore potentially changes their own perception

and understanding of the theatre programme.

Besides collecting materials for the time capsule, which included former and present theatre employees and visitors, an equally valuable part of the process was the work with the present employees on gradually motivating and including them in the project. A large part of the theatre operation consists of small crafts – carpenters, tailors, wigmakers, painters, sculptors, moulders, sound and light technicians, prop masters, wardrobe supervisors, stage managers and stagehands – all those people from the backstage who perceive their contribution to the entire magical operation in technical terms. Therefore, a special significance was given to the dialogue with them and the affirmation of the value and significance of their work, and the experience and specific knowledge that they possess, with many of them being under threat of disappearing in the context of modern production processes and technological development. These dialogues yielded artefacts from past times, alternative images of reality hidden at the back of the lit stage, which should be preserved.

The Time Capsule project developed gradually over two years, during which time it was initiated as a series of documenting activities that were progressively deposited in online format, presented during COVID restrictions in the virtual space, and finally collected in the permanent exhibition in Gallery Zajc that opened in November 2021. The gallery in the theatre building, just like its virtual counterpart, was conceived as a space for collecting new materials and content permanently open for new capillary activities that would establish communication with new audiences and programmes – plays, discussions, guided tours – and thus connect diverse aspects of theatre operations, but also new and old audiences.



Guided Tour during the Opening Ceremony of the Theatre Gallery "Zajc", November 2021.  
© Drazen Sokčević

## II.3.3. THE MERCURY THEATRE: "MOVING HOUSE"

JONATHAN GOODACRE, The Audience Agency

### INTRODUCTION

The Mercury Theatre is situated in Colchester in Essex in the UK. It is a mid-scale producing and receiving theatre presenting a range of performing arts work in a main auditorium and studio. It also undertakes substantial community education work in the local area and is involved in a range of special initiatives.

The theatre opened in 1972 and over nearly 50 years has been very successful at attracting large audiences to its own theatre, in the community and nationally with touring productions. Although relatively modern, it was decided that changes were needed in the theatre building in order to improve the facilities for staff and the experiences of the audience. The theatre was therefore closed in 2019 for refurbishment, with a view to being reopened in 2020, although the pandemic meant the closure was longer than originally envisaged, eventually reopening in 2021.

This closure period coincided with the Mercury Theatre's participation in ADESTE+ and provided an ideal opportunity to re-examine several elements of the way that it engaged with its audience.

### THE NEED

Colchester is an expanding and evolving town with a young population, a university and many new arrivals in the area. Whilst the Mercury had a large, regular and appreciative audience, it was aware that this did not necessarily "match" the population of the area. Its audience was older and not as diverse as it could be. Given the closure and redevelopment of the building, it was an ideal time to re-examine how it related to the population of Colchester, especially focusing on those who were "missing" from the Mercury Theatre's audience.

During the "closure" period, a temporary marquee venue was also set up in a park in the middle of Colchester. One of the main parts of the programme in this temporary venue was to be the "pantomime" – a popular British traditional Christmas production that is an important, financially rewarding part of many UK theatre programmes. Being in a separate and different sort of space from the Mercury Theatre building, it also represented something of a blank canvas that might be a place for some "experimentation".

88

INSIDE AND OUT

## AUDIENCE-CENTRED EXPERIENCE DESIGN

89

During capacity-building workshops in 2019 and 2020, the Mercury Theatre examined these needs with the help of the Audience Agency and developed solutions to meet them, as part of a process that came to be "Audience-Centred Experience Design" (ACED). This process was set off and supported by the leadership of the theatre, who saw it as a chance to look in much greater depth at the intersection between the programme, operations, communications and education with its actual and potential audience.

"The idea to be part of the ACED process came from the top and fed down, from the real beginning, even before the initial workshop. (Dilek Latif, Producer)

This support of the leadership was crucial later on in the process as it meant that the ideas that the task force developed could be implemented with resources behind it.

### THE PROCESS

The workshops followed the stages of the ACED process – preparation, empathize, define, ideate, prototype, commit and embed. They began with a whole-staff day workshop in which everyone who was available took part. This was important as it enabled everyone to understand what was taking place, to contribute their thoughts and to define the main areas to be investigated.

At this early stage, the whole team worked on "User Journey Mapping" – understanding the route that audience members took when interacting with the organization. This worked well in helping the staff to recognize the role that everyone has in this process. This workshop also examined how well the Mercury Theatre attracted different types of people in Colchester, focusing on those that were at the fringes and not much engaged.

"It was good to have everyone from different departments: we had the BlueSky thinkers, the ones thinking outside the box who would be questioned by the technical departments, who would give you logistical knowledge. (Dilek Latif, Producer)

Despite the scepticism of some, the Mercury team enjoyed and appreciated the workshop, and as a result it was easy to recruit a "task force" of volunteers to carry the project forward.

A variety of "personas" of interest were defined. These were outlined as "typical representatives" of groups of people of interest to the Mercury Theatre. Originally, six personas were created, which in subsequent workshops were narrowed down to two of special interest.

- Emma – woman in late 20s/early 30s based at the army barracks in Colchester with children and a spouse / partner often away on duty
- Ayesha – woman in early 30s/professional of colour/busy but usually goes to London for arts and entertainment

They were important because they did not typically attend the Mercury Theatre but could do so if their needs were met. Identifying what their needs were was a vital part of the process, meaning that the theatre could be better equipped to make it work for Emma and Ayesha.

The ideas and prototypes derived directly from these personas. For Emma, her needs were perceived to be associated with bringing children to the theatre as well as being out of the information loop in her community. For Ayesha, it was more to do with a feeling that the Mercury was "not for her" and that it did not have events that were at a time/location that were convenient for her. Crucially, the task force was able to find and talk to people who were similar enough to Emma and Ayesha so that these personas could be made more accurate and given greater depth. Emma was not typically a "housewife", for example, and Ayesha was fond of going out in Colchester – but didn't find the Mercury to be a particularly inspiring place to consider attending. This gave the next sessions on ideation much more power, with the task force developing many creative and exciting ideas.

It turned out that the ideas for Emma could be much more quickly and easily implemented, using the temporary marquee venue (and the pantomime) to try out several ideas relating to operational variations and additions. This included having a "military matinee" in which families based at the army barracks could come to their own event and a special in-house package for them that included: a pre-show workshop for children with an opportunity for parents to connect through tea/coffee whilst children took part, in-house support during the show with, for example, delivery of interval orders to seats and assistance for families using the toilets, then after-show innovations such as enabling pictures to be taken of families with dressing-up hats and members of the cast. Whilst this all sounds relatively straightforward, there was considerable debate between the task force and senior management about the ideas, with the task force having to repitch their ideas after initial scepticism about their value and viability. This "internal pitching" between staff turned

out to be an important part of the learning and has been carried through into the ACED blueprint.

## ONWARDS FROM AYESHA

The prototypes developed for Ayesha took longer to develop, mainly due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, but ultimately leading to a whole new strand in the programme. This included identification and sourcing of local artists and performers who could take part in a new cabaret strand that took place during the late evenings. It helped in the development of the bar and the style of events, and now "Mercury Lates" has become a big success.

## CONCLUSIONS

The ACED process has become a regular way of working at the Mercury Theatre, with staff frequently using terminology such as "prototyping", and ways of working such as the use of task forces becoming embedded. It has meant that the organization has become more comfortable with experimentation and risk taking and does not feel a fear of failure. During one of the final workshops someone commented:

" *This should be part of everyone's job description.*

It remains to be seen how this will affect audiences at the Mercury Theatre in the longer term, but at the moment, the development of these new ideas as part of "moving house" to the new theatre building has resulted in a re-energized connection between the cultural organization and its local community.



"Cocktail Cabaret" where Drag Queens meet the audience. © Mercury Theatre

## II.3.4. NØRREBRO THEATRE: A SHORT STORY OF CHANGE

NIELS RIGHOLT, Center for Kunst & Interkultur

Since the very first moment, when we from the Centre for Art & Interculture (CKI) sent an email to Nørrebro Teater to hear if they would be an artistic partner in the ADESTE+ project, the theatre's manager Mette Wolf has given it as one of the main reasons in their participation. ADESTE+ landed well and hit right down into an ongoing process in the theatre of formulating some values and goals for the work with their audience – a process carried by the ambition to be a theatre that can, and dares to, reach wide, which has a broader anchoring both locally in the district where it is located and in relation to the rest of the citizens in metropolitan Copenhagen.

Nørrebro Teater went into capacity-building workshops with a concrete desire to widen their existing audience and reach out to their local community and target groups not represented at the theatre. Internally the theatre wanted a process that would allow their audience-focused work to function across the whole organization and not just for communication and marketing.

The theatre quickly appointed a project manager, Charlotte Kjær, to lead their participation in ADESTE+ and together we started exchanging ideas and thoughts on how to work with learning internally. A task group was set up internally at the theatre, whose aim was to help us link the planned capacity workshops together and anchor them internally in the organization.

Nørrebro Teater's task group and director had several planning meetings with CKI's process consultants and teachers and we agreed that the process at Nørrebro Teater should follow the research partners' outlined recommendation for a double-diamond process with five workshops, which should have made it possible to conduct all workshops in the period between March and October 2019.

### PLANNING AND OBSTRUCTIONS

However, as we took a closer look at the real possibilities of doing so, aiming at an organization-wide participation in the process, we realized that rehearsals in the theatre, the production of scenography, costumes and lighting design, daily operations, etc. would become a difficult barrier for the ADESTE+ capacity programme over time. It was also clear that it would not make sense to create an isolated ADESTE+ test project, from which the learning would then have to be transferred into daily practice. Instead, with the director's help and participation, it was decided that all parts of the ADESTE+

92

INSIDE AND OUT

process should be tested in relation to the actual programme at the theatre, including the large shows, performances, smaller recurring formats and stand-alone events. All tests should be for real, so to speak. It would later turn out to be both a brave and a wise decision.

Due to the start of the theatre season in Copenhagen being at the beginning of September and the preceding summer holidays, the process would lose momentum in the period between 25th June and the first week of September. So even though the outline for the process actually suggested longer time intervals between the workshops, we ended up conducting four full-day workshops with Nørrebro Teater between 25th March and 14th May 2019. The fifth and final workshop on embedding was not completed until the end of October.

### THE FIRST WORKSHOP

The first workshop focused on the background to the process and on empathy internally and towards potential audiences, and it opened by reflecting on where the audience work is heading in Denmark, its significance for support and ticket sales, the connection between the audience and artistic development, and finally how new thoughts about the audience reflect trends in time in terms of coherence, de-hierarchization and a democratic approach to culture. The workshop was designed with a high degree of interaction and participation from the theatre's staff and alternating between general preconditions at the macro level (national and international politics, research and societal factors) and the theatre's own local reality at the micro level.

Approximately 50 per cent of the theatre's staff attended the workshop and all departments and work functions were represented. This gave the conversations a diversity of perspectives from different parts of the house, something that the employees were subsequently quite happy about. But at the same time, it was a great challenge to have to embrace a new audience methodology for employees who do not usually think that their tasks on a daily basis have any direct relation to the audience work of the institution. There was a surprisingly large amount of "translation work" to do along the way, and for some staff the experience became quite abstract.

### A CREATIVE FLOW

We took that experience with us in the development of the following workshop, which was aimed at trying to define a direction for the theatre's work with their audience and setting some clear goals in relation to a few shows and performances. This workshop was attended by approximately 20 per cent of the organization, by staff with direct responsibility for content production, programming and curation, communication and audience contact.

93

II. ACED METHODOLOGY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE



The workshop was based on the previous workshops' more open process and was designed to identify some specific scope for action and tasks through a number of targeted measures and exercises. It was clear that this smaller group was professionally more homogeneous, and they were already having a dialogue about their audience work. The tools used around segmentation, identification of personas, programming and curation, strategic development, etc. reasoned well with the participants' professional identities and areas of responsibility. It was a workshop that in a dynamic and quite creative flow defined some clear audience goals and linked them to the upcoming performances and events.

### IDEA GENERATION AND SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY

The bridge building between the second and the third workshop was a qualification of the personas and segments that the theatre would work on in between the workshops to sharpen the actual development of formats and initiatives that should be able to function in relation to the various groups. It created a playful and very stable starting point for the third workshop's focus on idea generation and idea development. The participants in this third workshop were the same as in the previous one, so we could easily revisit the results of the previous workshop in developing new ideas.

To get a good start with the development of ideas, we sent the participants out into the city, out into the local neighbourhood to experience, talk and ask about how Copenhageners look at and experience the theatre. They could film, photograph, record sounds, taste, sniff, smell and talk. It was important for the process that they themselves opened up to experience, sense, move between and talk to people who could become their future audience. That journey formed the inspiration for a subsequent "play" with formats that made it possible to challenge the modus operandi in relation to the theatre's existing practice. All the ideas had to be kept open and could only be narrowed down during the next workshop.

### PROTOTYPING AND CHALLENGES IN THE PROCESS

The fourth workshop was the one that in this first capacity programme was to gather the threads and make it possible to develop new actions and methods in relation to the selected target groups. The work was structured into some quick prototyping exercises that had to be pitched and eventually gathered in a clear plan for which formats were to be tested in real-life settings in relation to both performances and events. We succeeded to a certain extent in doing that, but the workshop was challenged by the fact that we again had the large group with us. This was to ensure that the decisions were anchored as organization-wide as possible. However, those participants who had not attended the two previous workshops felt that they lacked the necessary

intermediate understanding, and that they were left outside the processes on which they were now forced to take a position. It created quite some debate and frustration along the way. And even though the theatre managed to land several new formats and not least develop the audience canvas they now use in their daily planning work, the fourth workshop closed with the feeling that something important was missing.

After the workshop, the theatre's task force joined forces with the director and CKI's process supervisors to review the process and think about how we should go about it, maintain and further develop the chosen formats and goals and at the same time create a process that ensured that the entire theatre is part of the journey in relation to the decisions taken along the way.

### COMMON LANGUAGE

The theatre decided to implement a practice in their internal meetings to address the issues and set aside time to talk them through and find a way to articulate differences and understandings. Meanwhile they started to test formats on real productions running in May and June and again from September 2019 to February 2020. It turned out that it was anything but rocket science. It was mostly a matter of wording.

The task group became aware of how they talk about audience development in the organization, and they realized that that caused some misunderstandings and also provoked conflicts, which might not happen if the issue was addressed differently. While still testing and adapting the tools and methods to their productions, the theatre slowly found another way of talking about audiences and their relationship with them. They created and obtained a mutual language, which most of the staff could accept and see themselves as part of.

Having a common language to talk about the audience-focused work engaging the whole staff has taught the theatre some interesting things about the importance of time and space to rethink during the process. It also proved to be helpful to use the audience's focus as a reflector for both organizational issues as well as artistic and strategic purposes. Today, three years later, everybody understands that their work is also part of an audience-focused approach.

### THE CANVAS

This process in a way also helped refine and narrow the use of the audience canvas developed during the fourth workshop. Then it seemed like a good idea but difficult to implement. But through conversations across the theatre, the canvas became a visualization of how the different parts of the organization play a role in the audience-focused work.



The canvas now serves as a "framer", a tool that ensures an organization-wide approach to audiences both before each programme is set and when each production begins. And it's revisited a couple of times during the time of production to ensure that the perspective is maintained throughout. This iterative way of working has been refined by the staff and is now a very unproblematic way of working.

It is interesting to see that the learning from Nørrebro Teater is widely perceived as a source of inspiration in Denmark and Sweden, where, among others, the Folkteatern Gävleborg is now implementing the canvas in a similar way as a common point of audience reference for their productions.

Though the capacity process and the change that followed have had their difficult moments at Nørrebro Teater, an ongoing and iterative internal process has started that has brought the theatre together, reflecting on who and what they are as a theatre, pulling in the same direction through close collaboration between different departments. They have changed their in-house procedures, their programme planning and their communication, testing new formats and new platforms. In that sense, the theatre has undergone a significant transition over these last three years.

### THREE MAIN POINTS LEARNED

For CKI the main thing they learned was to trust the process and incorporate time as a factor. The capacity programme at Nørrebro Teater showed how important the inclusion of management is to a successful experience of working with an audience focus. Power over content has to be included throughout the process, to underpin both the importance of strengthening the institution's knowledge of their audiences and their orientation towards them – but also to embed change in the programmes and profiles within the organization. With the directors' and/or artistic participation in the programme, it becomes easier to address issues of hierarchy and privilege.

Another important thing we learned during our capacity work with the theatre was how clever a decision it was when they decided to test everything in a real setting, on actual shows and performances. That gave an edge to the testing of the different tools and formats, which we might not have been able to get in a normal "project testbed".

But the most significant thing we learned was about the partnership and close collaboration between us as the research partner and Nørrebro Teater as the artistic partner. The better that collaboration is and the more profound it can become prior to the workshops, the better the design of them will be. Based on trust and mutual respect, it is possible to foster and frame change and a new mode of conduct.



The Danish National Hub is working on its prototype to welcome audiences to the Nørrebro Theater. © Nørrebro Theater

## II.3.5. TEATRO STABILE: THE ACED METHODOLOGY IN PRACTICE: LESSONS FROM THE ITALIAN TESTING

98

ANTONIA SILVAGGI, MeltingPro  
SIMONA MARTINI, Fondazione Fitzcarraldo

### INTRODUCTION

" *I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.* – Maya Angelou

Through various programmes and initiatives, the Italian partners Fondazione Fitzcarraldo, Melting Pro, Teatro Stabile di Torino and Compagnia San Paolo have started to grow a community of cultural professionals in Italy who recognise the value of audience-centred approaches in providing the means and methodology, in particular to cultural institutions, to do the organisational transformation effectively.

In 2017, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 20.2% of the population living in Italy did not join in official cultural activities (Cicerchia, 2019); on top of that, evidence showed a general lack of representative audiences attending cultural activities. Despite this, many cultural organisations do not feel the need to change or go beyond "the audience development initiative": sold-out seats, guaranteed employment, positions established by public funds were taken for granted.

This conflicts with what we now know for certain – that digital and social innovations or disruptions affect cultural organisations both internally and externally in many ways and have an impact on their management structures, core activities and relationships with audiences and stakeholders.

The former ADESTE+ and CONNECT projects ended with an important set of conclusions and questions which became the inspiration for ADESTE+. ADESTE+ stated that single initiatives and training programmes can only take you so far and that to achieve more fundamental and long-lasting change requires something holistic and on a larger scale. In particular, the importance of addressing the issue from an organisational perspective was identified (Torreggiani and Goodacre, 2016).

" *Developing audiences depends on the ability of a cultural organisation to place them at the centre of its philosophy*

INSIDE AND OUT

*and practice, with real commitment and leadership. [...] Real audience development, the kind that lasts and becomes a working procedure, can only be reached if the entire working group is involved.* – ADESTE trainee 2015, Evaluation

" *This was one of the most important learning outcomes of ADESTE as trainees frequently expressed frustration that they could see where change needed to be made, but that the organisation as a whole was preventing this development from happening.* – ADESTE Report, P41<sup>2</sup>

These insights inspired the Italian partners to continue to support cultural organisations to change their perspectives and acknowledge that sustainable work in building audience relationships requires long-term support within the organisation itself. This starts by meeting the audience's needs and desires.

Given these premises, this article illustrates the lessons we learnt by working with the ADESTE+ ACED methodology with eight cultural organisations in three rounds of testing in Italy from May 2019 till June 2021. We involved approximately 38 cultural professionals, including directors, communication managers, heads of ticketing, heads of education, programming, conservation, staff coordinators and press officers from different cultural organisations.

We applied the method by following these steps: (1) Getting Started, (2) Unfreeze, (3) Empathise, (4) Define, (5) Ideate, (6) Prototype and Test, (7) Embed and (8) Adopt. We tested different formats, not only online or offline but also dedicated building capacity paths aimed at only one organisation or involving different organisations.<sup>3</sup>

The relevance of what ADESTE+ can provide for cultural professionals and organisations in terms of the learning curve, approach and vision is well represented by some feedback that we are gathering through our follow up conversations with some of the participants. We are still trying to understand the impact of a new and experimental programme that embraces a big challenge – that of pushing a change in perspective to place people at the centre.

### LESSONS LEARNED

#### LESSON 1: OPEN UP TO CREATIVITY AND THE IDEA OF (SMALL) FAILURE

One of the main lessons we learned experimenting with the ACED

99

II. ACED METHODOLOGY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

process is the importance of challenging the assumptions that shape our work – even when we don't perceive them. We realised that most organisations are constrained by their daily routine and public persona. People too often forget or don't feel the need to question themselves about some important and somehow existential issues connected to their work, and as a result, they limit their capability to think differently, to innovate and to develop new ideas.

For instance, creativity is often thought to be reserved for artists, and we forget how important it is for everyone in the organisation to explore their creative side and rise to propose new ideas. Generally speaking, failure is also a huge taboo, especially for big institutions with a lot of history. Innovation means taking risks, but that's easier said than done. With the ACED methodology, we proposed to the professionals involved that they "trust the process" and, starting from a shared challenge, we tried to find solutions to the challenge in small and manageable steps. Participants showed great appreciation towards the approach of working on small incremental changes that could have a long-term impact on the organisation; at the same time, there were often fears and an awareness of the existence of institutional and organisational barriers. It has been a great exercise for the professionals involved to let their fears go and embrace a new perspective. As was pointed out at the end of the capacity building process: "The idea of failure and circularity, moving back to rethink your steps, putting in place small actions, it forces you to go beyond automated actions" and "We give ourselves too many limits of what we could be or do."

## LESSON 2: LAY THE RIGHT CONDITIONS AND TAKE CARE OF THE GROUPS

What we learnt is also to make sure that the right conditions of trust, safety and creativity are established and curated from the beginning. It was important that the team be cohesive and also be supported both personally and professionally.

The "unfreeze" step was always very important in order to set the basis for the process to work properly, even though it took different shapes with different organisations. We opened up a debate with the team about the meaning of audience development and what it means for each organisation to establish new relationships with their audiences. We also shared a challenge to work on collaboratively and supported the team in assessing their current situations in terms of strengths and weaknesses in dealing with their audiences. At the same time, it was crucial for us to enable an open and safe space for all of the people involved so that everyone felt free to provide input despite the presence of different hierarchical levels. During the process, we understood how important it was to nurture this kind of environment, to enable trust among the team and to amplify the creative and playful side of the process.

Starting the ADESTE+ project, our initial assumption was that new relationships with audiences could only be developed by innovating the organisations, the ways in which they work and how they perceive their roles within society. It was important to us to embrace an organisational dimension and that was the reason that we involved several staff members from each organisation in every phase of the testing, creating interdisciplinary and inter-departmental teams to produce ideas on a collective basis. In this way, everybody feels responsible in the end for the overall solution (Lewrick et al, 2018). This was a key factor as evidenced by the evaluation at the end of the process, and it went beyond the usual established norms of working together. People working in different departments were not used to sharing their jobs and, sometimes, did not fully understand how their jobs connected to those of others and how deeply everyone can affect the relationship with the audience. To put it simply, they gained a different perspective. Moreover, a mixed group allowed the teams to get different perspectives on every step of the process. Here are some quotes:

- " *How is important to sit around a table and think together without the feeling that one needs to perform.*  
– Italian participant, 2021
- " *I enjoyed working with colleagues from other areas, discovering points of view and needs that I was not always aware of. It was useful to have a method that had phases of openness and reality check.* – Italian participant, 2020

## LESSON 4: ALTERNATING DIVERGENT AND CONVERGENT MOMENTS

Another lesson relates to the importance of having different and structured phases of divergence and convergence which provide a chance to ideate. People tend to judge ideas too soon, and a structured approach – mutated by the design thinking – helps to not rule out ideas too soon, without even doing a prototype.

In one phase of the testing which involved several organisations at the same time, we organised the divergent and convergent parts differently. In the first part of the process, we created mixed groups with people from different organisations and backgrounds to maximise the divergent thinking and exploration of new perspectives. The members helped each other, gave ideas and, as a matter of fact, came up with some experiments; for example, the Bologna Library prototype – the guided tour of the library – emerged from brainstorming with other colleagues. In the convergent part of the process, the team members from each organisation went back to working with each other

to assess which ideas were the most fitting and feasible.

It was interesting to see how organisations from different cultural sectors perceived the added value in sharing challenges, which was similar for some but different for others. In addition, it was useful to alternate coffee conversation moments, that is, more relaxed times which were more focused on the process and one-to-one support.

## LESSON 5: PROTOTYPING AND LEARNING BY DOING

The cultural sector is not familiar with the concept of prototyping and our proposal to create small prototypes to evaluate the project ideas was welcomed with some suspicion at the beginning. By the end of the three different phases of testing that we did in Italy, it was clear that this is a crucial step. First of all, to overcome the fear of failure and because the ACED methodology is based on the learning by doing approach, we asked the professionals involved to trust the process. However, it is important for them to see the final results and to experience first-hand what it means to work collaboratively and to engage audiences in different ways. Unfortunately, for some of the organisations, the pandemic kicked in right in the middle of the process, such as in the case of Teatro Stabile di Torino. They had to put a stop to the prototype they had designed to engage with the new citizens and start over with a new target after the first lockdown, taking into account all of the restrictions at the time. The prototyping phase was crucial for others, such as in the case of Opera Santa Croce, a well-known religious building and museum in Florence. By empathising with the target audience, the team understood the backlash the pandemic had on them. From the insights of the interviews, it emerged that they wished for some stimulating experiences to share with their families and friends after the toll taken by the restrictions. Based on this, the staff prototyped a more engaging and more emotional visit with a final socialising experience at the end. Making something small and tangible enabled the team to think that it was possible to do something different, and at the same time, they had a lot of fun!

## LESSON 6: THE WOW MOMENTS – THE SURPRISE AND THE UNEXPECTED

In every process, there are one or more WOW moments in which everything that seems to be messy and blurred finally becomes clear and powerful. One of the crucial steps of the ACED methodology is developing "empathy" towards our audiences. Many cultural institutions claim to know their audiences, thanks to their ticket office statistics or online analytics, but too often, they know too little about their audiences' perceptions, needs and the reasons for attending – or not attending – the activities the institutions offer. That's where an empathic approach kicks in. And empathy goes beyond simply listening. It is about understanding the deep reasons for behaviour; it is about connecting

and embracing another point of view. Once again, that is not at all easy. We encouraged the professionals involved to use several exercises to put themselves in their audiences' shoes, from the personas to an empathy map, but the real WOW moment was going out of the building and talking to real people, asking them open questions, observing, engaging with them with a sincere curiosity to understand their points of view. This seemed to be even more powerful when our professionals went out of their comfort zone, exploring their audiences' environments and significant places or moments in life. This is the case with Teatro Stabile di Torino which chose to engage with a target they knew little about: new citizens coming from different countries. As reported by Lorenzo Barello: "Our WOW moment was when we got to experience the formal ceremony during which people coming from different countries swear as Italian citizens and it was important for all the staff involved in the ADESTE+ process to get to experience that moment, to understand how touching it was and to understand on which kind of emotion we had to work for and, overall, not to betray. We took turns and we each went to the ceremony and we gradually found ourselves with a bundle of new meanings that changed a lot our perspective, not only toward our prototype but also in our daily work."

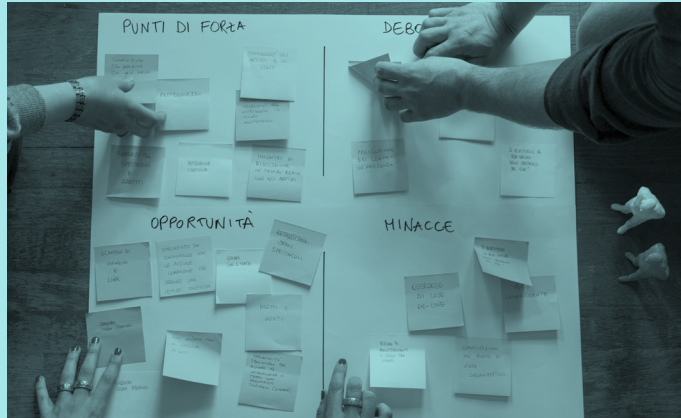
Getting in touch with the audience was a key factor: interviewing people in the street was pretty shocking and then attending the ceremony triggered their motivation unleashing true empathy.

## LESSON 7: MOVING FORWARD

The ACED process is an iterative one, and in this sense, it never really ends since it pushes the organisation to keep on experimenting and embedding new learning into their work practices. The final evaluation we had with the organisations involved took place some months after the capacity-building programme ended and showed us the legacy of the process. The process certainly affected the way they perceive their relationships with the audiences and audience needs; it created a new understanding and also "camaraderie" among the professionals involved, and they all declared they would like to explore further the potential impact on the organisational level. They strongly felt not only the time constraints in their daily routines but also the need to innovate in order to respond to the newest challenge that they were facing. They declared that they now feel a new sense of ownership and the need to move forward, embedding empathy, creativity, vulnerability, transparency and collaboration as never before. These feelings were untouched by the pandemic, and even if it twisted the usual working environment and many procedures, the lessons they learned were still considered to be a useful method to build (or renew) a new kind of relationship with their audiences. Here are some final quotes:



- " We are living in difficult times, despite this, the process opened up new perspectives. This is going to stay with us, they might be small, maybe not planned properly, but they are there, they will help us to see what kind of relationships to build. – Italian participant, 2021
- " Questioning the assumptions I had about our audiences. – Italian participant, 2021
- " Designing a service by starting from the needs of real people, without judging or stereotyping people. – Italian participant, 2021



INSIDE AND OUT

In "Breaking the silos" a group of workers from Teatro Stabile di Torino share their thoughts and ideas brainstorming on a prototype action for their audiences.  
© Lorenzo Romoli

- 1 Cicerchia, A. (2019) 'La partecipazione culturale in Italia: dati per le politiche', in: Castelli, G. et al (ed) *Cultura come diritto: Radici Costituzionali, politiche e servizi*. Rim: AA. VV, Civita Associazione A&A Studio Legale, pp. 30–35.
- 2 Fiaccarini, G., Gariboldi, A. and Righolt, N. (eds) (2016) *Steps towards a good audience practice following the learnings of the ADESTE project*. Available at: [https://www.ADESTEproject.eu/sites/default/files/ADESTE\\_Step\\_Towards\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.ADESTEproject.eu/sites/default/files/ADESTE_Step_Towards_FINAL.pdf) (Accessed: 12/4/2022).
- 3 Lewrick, M., Link, P. and Leifer, L. (2018) *The Design Thinking Playbook: Mindful Digital Transformation of Teams, Products, Services, Businesses and Ecosystems*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

- 1 To state a few, the two main Erasmus+ projects, ADESTE (originally Leonardo da Vinci small scale 2013–2016) and Connect (large scale Knowledge Alliance, 2015–2019), which explored different requirements and methodologies for audience development training and professional development. More about the projects can be found at <http://www.ADESTEproject.eu/> and <http://connectingaudiences.eu/> (Accessed: 12/4/2022).
- 2 ADESTE report, P41. Available at [http://www.ADESTE-project.eu/sites/default/files/ADESTE\\_Step\\_Towards\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.ADESTE-project.eu/sites/default/files/ADESTE_Step_Towards_FINAL.pdf) (Accessed: 12/4/2022).
- 3 Next to project partner Teatro Stabile di Torino, the processes engaged other organisations like GAM – Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Torino, Associazione Marchigiana Attività Teatrali (AMAT), three different Bologna City Libraries, The Opera di Santa Croce, Scabec SpA, the in-house company of the Campania Region, archive and publishing organisation Spazio Ilisso, and Teatro dell'Opera di Roma.

## II.3.6. ZARAGOZA CULTURAL / HARINERA ZGZ: TESTING THE ACED METHODOLOGY AT A COMMUNITY CULTURE CENTRE

MACARENA CUENCA-AMIGO, University of Deusto  
DIEGO GARULO OSÉS, Harinera ZGZ /  
Zaragoza Cultural

Harinera ZGZ (henceforth, Harinera) is an organisation without legal status that depends on Zaragoza Cultural (ZC), a municipal agency that, in turn, depends on the Zaragoza City Council. The mission of ZC is to manage and promote culture in the city of Zaragoza (Spain), and Harinera is one of its most innovative projects because it is a community culture centre based on a shared-management model in which all decisions are taken by consensus and on an equal basis. It is run by the Assembly, the highest decision-making body, which is composed of three parts: the neighbours (through the neighbourhood association), the cultural and social agents and the city council. The volunteers willing to engage in Harinera join a group called "Colectivo llámalo H" which is organised into committees that meet on a regular basis in the Assembly. Apart from a couple of caretakers, there is only one civil servant employed by ZC who is devoted 100% to Harinera, namely Diego Garulo, one of the co-authors of this article. Diego's office is located in Harinera's building which is in a neighbourhood outside of the city centre. He is the coordinator and the actual link between Harinera and ZC. In addition to the important role of the coordinator, Harinera also benefits from the centralised organisational structure of ZC. In that sense, it gets support from the Communication Department and the Planning and Coordination Area, among others.

The University of Deusto (Bilbao, Spain) was responsible for delivering the ACED workshops and for walking Harinera through the methodology. Before the first workshop, an online preparation meeting took place between the partners<sup>1</sup>. As a result, it was clear that the people that were going to be involved in the workshops were people from the community and that Diego was going to assume the role of a change maker. Involving people from the community was the only possible way to carry out the workshops, and while this was very positive, it was also risky. Time is always a scarce resource, but if we are talking about volunteers who work somewhere else, this fact can turn out to be a problem. The University of Deusto needed a certain level of engagement because the workshops were going to be progressive and it was not viable to have a different group of volunteers attending each workshop. In the end, the agreement was to ask participants for a commitment to attend at least four out of the five workshops. The workshops were planned as follows:

106

INSIDE AND OUT

- WS1 & 2: 6–7 May 2019 (Introduction, Empathy and Define)
- WS3: 27 June 2019 (Define and Ideation)
- WS4 & 5: 12–13 September 2019 (Prototype)

On the one hand, it was beneficial to have two workshops back-to-back (as in the case of WS1 & 2 and WS4 & 5); on the other hand, the lapses of time between sessions contributed to a loss of momentum.

The playfulness of the sessions worked very well with the type of participants who were involved, as they were already very used to this type of participative methodology. However, the tasks that emerged as a consequence of the workshops were difficult to tackle. For example, during the first two sessions, the group depicted a persona canvas of Alex, a young person willing to propose a specific activity to Harinera. Between May and June 2019, participants were supposed to undertake simple research to gather some evidence about this type of young person in the neighbourhood. However, this implied a barrier as the task force was entirely composed of volunteers that could not be forced to invest a certain amount of time in this concrete project. The same happened with the delivery of the prototype. This issue was solved by subcontracting work to some external people that would invest their time under the guidelines and coordination of the task group.

Harinera's main goal is to give anyone the opportunity to enjoy his or her right to culture to the fullest – not only consuming but also producing and making decisions about culture. That is the reason the goal of the process and the prototype were not the original one in the ACED methodology (audience development): Harinera already had a community of young people that attended its activities as audience/consumers, but they were not finding ways to produce their own cultural projects. In order to attend to this perspective, the University of Deusto adapted the ACED methodology, trying to analyse not just whether they were engaged in Harinera but the depth of the engagement.

The devised prototype consisted of the launch of a public call for proposals aimed at teams of young people between 14 and 29 years old. They only had to submit a form briefly explaining (less than a page) the cultural project they would want to develop, including a title and a hashtag. From among the proposals received, a maximum of four were to be selected, and for a month, they would receive advice to turn them into real and feasible initiatives by considering the different aspects of a cultural project: objectives, production, dissemination, budgets, etc. Once the final proposals were drafted, they would be taken to the Harinera Assembly for approval and would be effectively launched.

The implementation of the projects would officially be part of the Harinera programming. Due to the pandemic, the implementation of the prototype suffered a delay and was fully implemented between September 2020

107

II. ACED METHODOLOGY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

The open call, "Lánzate con Harinera", was well received by the young people and twenty proposals were submitted, which means that, thanks to this initiative, between 60 and 100 youngsters saw an opportunity to develop their cultural projects. A jury selected four of those projects that were finally set in motion, despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic:

- The shooting of a fashion film called *Coming of Age* by three girls aged 23 to 25;
- The production of a hip hop festival – *Maños Music Festival* – for newcomers run by four boys aged 19 to 24;
- *Preguntando noos*, an investigation and an exhibition about sexual diversity designed by students aged 24 to 26;
- The shooting of a thriller short film, *Black Jacket*, by a team of five 15-year-old boys).

The whole process has now been finished for us but it is still too soon to assess if the long-term achievements will be reached. But we can say that this path has been really valuable for Harinera. As it already was a radically human-centred venue, there will not be significant changes in its organisational model. The future will determine if, thanks to this prototype, these young people will be engaged in Harinera as cultural producers (although there are several signs that make us believe it will happen).

However, at this point on the road, we can confirm that there have been some great short-term outcomes. On the one hand, thanks to the design thinking workshops, the community that manages Harinera – usually more focused on the day-to-day of the venue – concluded that we have to take more time to reflect on our past, our present and our future from a wider point of view, trying to see if there are some communities and profiles that are still far from finding Harinera's doors open to their cultural projects, desires and needs. On the other hand, fourteen youngsters have developed their first cultural projects on their own thanks to our prototype. Sixteen young MCs made their debut on a stage. Eight young amateur actors and actresses made their debut in front of the camera. More than two hundred people – most of them young people like themselves – attended the premieres, the concerts, the opening of the exhibition... and the path of these four projects is ongoing.

It is clear that the main goals of ADESTE+ and ACED methodology are wide-ranging: contributing to an organisational change in cultural institutions in order to make them more human-centred and improve their relationships with audiences and communities. As far as we can see right now, it seems to be working. But even if we never reach those long-term goals, for a venue as Harinera – more focused on the processes than the outcomes and trying to

develop new, wider ways of relationships between citizens and cultures – all this process of testing, prototyping and learning-by-doing has already been a really useful experience that will leave a legacy and an impact that will last, permeating the way we manage our venue, our activities and the way we address our relationship with the communities.



"Black Jacket" shooting. Thriller short film written and directed by five 15-year-old youngsters.  
© Harinera ZGZ

1 The distance between Bilbao and Zaragoza is approximately 300 kms.

2 Any given Thursday is a video that presents Harinera and that was edited on the occasion of its nomination for the Eurocities Awards.

# II.4.

## ITERATION OF THE METHODOLOGY

In the process of participating in the ADESTE+ project, the Kultura Nova Foundation, in considering its users, namely civil society organizations in the field of contemporary culture and arts, focused on appraising their needs and consequently worked on adjusting the methodology. The Foundation's users are organizations predominantly of small and medium size with diverse scopes of activities and limited resources – either with respect to finances, or spatial and human capacities. Their operations are often defined by precariousness, while their employees and associates are often responsible for a large number of assignments. Despite the professionalization processes that these organizations have undergone in the last 20 years, their size prevents them from securing a strict distribution of work, so their employees are frequently responsible for diverse and not necessarily similar types of tasks.

During the implementation of the Summer Schools programme in the ADESTE+ project, the partners had an opportunity to get acquainted with the circumstances and working conditions of independent actors in the field of culture and arts in a wider international context also characterized by flexibility, precariousness and permanent demands for innovation. The challenges that these actors face include the inability to secure stable working conditions and focus on the primary interests that were the impulse for establishing the organisation. They rather have to react to external dynamics and demands and conform to the guidelines of financial programmes that provide their sustainability. In that respect, very often, independent cultural actors don't have the opportunity to develop their programmes but are subjected to the needs of fast and sudden changes in their working environment, the introduction of new themes and formats, and of being open to other sectors and aspects of work. The commentaries we received from the Summer Schools participants frequently pointed to the issues of how to develop the audience for programmes that are in permanent transformation, and how to work on the development of the relationship with the audience in the circumstances in which organizations constantly redirect their thematic focuses and fields of production.

In contrast to highly professionalized cultural institutions, independent actors frequently



highlight the problem of their inability to work systematically on the development of their programmes. This means that they constantly have to get familiar with new fields and thematic sets and develop programmes that are not necessarily in their immediate focus. These actors permanently face the imperative of innovation that requires the organizational transformation to take a completely different approach and process to the one appropriate for institutions of medium, larger and large size.

Having this in mind when working on, and with, the ACED methodology, the Foundation tested its iterations and reformatting in order to respond better to the needs of the described actors. Therefore, the preparatory step in this process took the approach characteristic of strategic planning that enables the appraisal of the entire organization, the establishment of its needs and directions of development, and the definition of the position that audience development and participatory practices have in the organization. In this process, organizations have to establish where and how audience development is situated in the entire organizational constellation. The next step of the ACED methodology, called "Unfreeze" in the adapted methodology, is replaced by the opposite step, namely "Freeze", as being more appropriate. Unlike institutional systems with a clear division of tasks and duties, often known as the "SILOS effect", which requires institutions to unfreeze and blur the borders, gained insight into the operating of independent organizations showed that these organizations need to halt and map the possibility of stabilizing their work, and then integrate their engagement in participatory practices. In the Empathy step, equal emphasis is given to understanding the needs of the audience that organizations address as well as to understanding the needs and specificities of team members so that organizations can distribute their capacities appropriately and tailor them to the characteristics of individual employees. In the Definition step, organizations are directed to reorganize their capacities with respect to both the overall organizational and programme work and to audience development activities. In the Ideation step, actors focus on their activities in order to detect the possibilities for transforming, upgrading and opening such activities toward audiences and to potentially connect diverse types of activities and work in the direction of creating synergies and rationalization of resources. The final step relates to the creation of a Prototype that

will be tested both in the new organizational scheme and in the work on establishing stronger ties with the audience. At the very end of the process, participants examine the first step in order to identify shifts that have been established and defined through this process in the context of overall organizational scheme and development perspectives.

## PREPARE

In this step participants of the programme are focused on mapping their organization and getting an overview of all the aspects in which it is engaged:

- programme activities
- administrative activities
- development perspectives
- human resources.

The important goal of this step is to define where and how the audience focus is set, i.e., defining approaches that the organization is using in the aspect of participation and engagement practices. A useful tool in this step is SWOT analysis.

## FREEZE

In the Freeze step, the goal is to define what type of change the organization wishes to introduce and how it approaches that change. At this point it is important to define the capacity and readiness of the organization to engage new actors, the extent to which existing shareholders are already engaged, and how and how quickly the organization is acquiring the change. For the self-assessment process in the middle of this step, a useful tool is to answer the following questions:

- How much control are we ready to release?
- In which areas of our work are we open to participation?
- Which decisions are we going to share with the community/audience and not bring into question?

- To whom can we allow such interventions?
- Are we ready to take the risk of losing control over cultural content and/or its interpretation?

**In this step, the organization is dealing with defining audience groups, i.e., communities it is focused on, and deciding what the goals are – strengthening the relations with the existing audience, opening towards new groups and, if there are any, who are they.**

## EMPATHIZE

The Empathize step is identical to the one in the ACED methodology, with the addition of focusing on the team members of the organization. Through the process of designing personas, the development of sensitivity to the diversity of motivations, needs and capacities of individuals is directed both internally and externally. Internally, the aim was also to increase the understanding of, and empathy for the team members in order to see how the obligations among team members can be redistributed and reorganized. The external focus on audience members we wish to adopt helps team members understand one another better. In the implementation of this step, the same tools are used as in the ACED methodology.

## DEFINE

This step is identical to the one in the ACED methodology as well as the tools used in implementation.

## IDEATE

This step is identical to the one in the ACED methodology as well as the tools used in implementation.

## PROTOTYPE

This step is identical to the one in the ACED methodology as well as the tools used in implementation.

## COMMIT

In this step, workshop participants get back to the first step and detect the degree to which the process has brought changes into the organizational planning, (re)defining their short – and medium-term goals as well as redistributing tasks among team members. At the end of the process, participants define the work plan through which they will be implementing the process designed for the audience groups in focus. To work on this step, ACED methodology tools can be used.

## EMBED

This step includes changing the designed plan and continuous iteration according to the needs and experiences gained through the process of implementation. Throughout the process, it is possible to revisit approaches, learning and tools used in any step of the way taken during the process in order to help the organization readjust the plan in line with gained insights.

# III.

## EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES OF PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

In 2021, from April till June, in the framework of the ADESTE+, Kultura Nova Foundation and CNT Ivan pl. Zajc implemented together series of Waterfall workshops. In the workshops, organized in two cycles, 11 organisations participated – 10 of them selected through the call launched by Kultura Nova Foundation and one invited by CNT Ivan pl. Zajc. The aim of the workshops was to further test ACED methodology, now adjusted to better respond to the needs of organisations, based on the experiences gained through the project. The programme of the Waterfall workshops consisted of a series of lecture given by Goran Tomka, Cristina da Milano and Maria Vlachou, workshop sessions presenting ACED methodology adjusted further to the needs of organisations of small and mid-size, and finally examples of practices from the South-East Europe region. These examples, which follow below, represent small, independent organisations which are putting their efforts in working with the audience aimed at inspiring participants in their own endeavours.

### III.1. BUNKER: TACTICS RATHER THAN STRATEGIES

TAMARA BRAČIČ VIDMAR,  
head of communication, Bunker Ljubljana

Bunker is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in culture which was established 24 years ago. Our main mission is to produce and present contemporary performing arts practices and artists. We run a venue in Ljubljana – the Old Power Station. It was the first power station in Ljubljana and was renovated in 2004 into a performing arts venue with a complex system of collaboration between the decision makers/financers Ministry for Culture and Ljubljana City Municipality, the building owner Elektro Ljubljana Company and a cultural organisation, namely Bunker. We collaborate with over 40 local arts organisations and present various international festivals that are organised by our partners. We also run two international festivals, the International festival Mladi levi, organized annually at the end of August, which celebrated its 24th edition in 2021, and the Druganje festival in Maribor, which is focused on young audiences.

Talk about strategies for audience development seem to us to be very big words. The idea of being able to make a long-term strategy and live by it seems like a privilege of big and stable companies, perhaps big cultural institutions, who can count on years of stable financing. As an NGO working in precarious conditions, always in fear of losing its funding, needing to quickly adapt to ever-changing circumstances, we can actually only afford to have tactics. Thus, we take a lot of time and thought to figure out the right tactics in various circumstances, to find new opportunities and to seize them.

#### We try to understand the needs in our sector:

- the needs of the artists we work with (we mostly work with self-employed artists and we try to offer them strong support and a wide network of local and international connections that could help them with their development and future work);
- the challenges arising in society (be they social, political, ecological ...); and
- the needs of the audiences.

And we try to respond to them through our programmes, whether artistic productions, developmental projects (like cultural education) or discursive and educational programmes. Our focus on audience development tactics is based on our main programming strands. In the following paragraphs,

118

INSIDE AND OUT

I will focus on two of our programmes through which we try to engage different groups of people.

#### CULTURAL EDUCATION

An important part of our programming and our thinking is cultural education. Based on research in 2009, UNESCO has defined cultural participation to be an important condition of one's social participation. To reach this goal, a system that ensures the accessibility of quality cultural and artistic content is crucial. We started thinking about this in 2008 and created a cultural education project known as *Kulturstik* (A Touch of Culture) through which we first started regularly collaborating with schools. It was a pilot project in which we connected with four partners from various contemporary artistic fields (film, contemporary circus, contemporary dance and theatre) and 10 primary schools. The idea was to try and bring art into the school curriculum in a continuous and innovative manner – through artistic workshops (which we first organised for the teachers and then for the school kids), collaborations between artists and teachers, the common creation of artistic productions and so on. After a very successful conclusion of the project, we decided that it will become one of our strategies – in terms of programme content as well as audience development. We continued by developing pilot projects in cultural education; in 2012, we launched project *Mladibor* together with five high schools in Maribor, and we continued with two cycles of the project *Theatre Playground* (co-financed by the Slovene Ministry of Culture and the European Social Fund) which concluded in fall 2021 and through which we collaborated with 30 primary schools throughout Slovenia.

In our cultural education programmes, we focus mainly on the last third of primary schools, teenagers from 13 to 15 years old in a period just before they start curating their own artistic choices, and on high school kids in a period when they start forming their perceptions and receptions of art. When children are younger, the adults – their parents, teachers, mentors – are curating their artistic choices for them. Later on, when they become more independent, an awareness of the diversity of artistic fields and the possibility to reach and explore them in a manner that is individually appealing can make a big difference in the intensity and depth to which they will relate to art.

In all our cultural education practices, we work with professional artists. The focus is not only on the creativity of the young audiences but also on their experiences and perceptions of art.

Through the project *Theatre Playground*, we run various activities, such as *Cultural days*, in which performances are presented along with the additional content of artistic workshops, discussions, and artistic analysis, and *Theatre clubs*, which take place in schools and are run by a tandem of a teacher

119



and an artist. These are two of our more classical programmes, and they are already somewhat intertwined with school curricula. There are also newly invented formats such as *Tandem hours*, regular school hours that are being taught by tandems of artists and teachers (an hour of biology about the human circulatory system presented through an artistic process), and *Young curators club*, a group of school kids involved in a year of Slovene theatre production who, in the end, choose a performance for the festival Drugajanje. There is also a *Yearly subscription for Teachers: Tovariški abonma* which invites teachers to attend contemporary performances followed by a lecture/discussion on the topic of contemporary art during which professionals share tools and knowledge about art with the teachers. Finally, the most popular activity is *School in culture* in which up to 15 school kids get immersed into the arts for three days in urban surroundings – mostly a bigger city with a lot of cultural infrastructure. *School in culture* is organised as a camp in which kids and two accompanying teachers share a common sleeping space, meals and common experiences of art through various artistic discipline, in various cultural institutions; they work, create and discuss with professional artists, who also explain the context, make introductions to performances, exhibitions and films and talk with them after they have seen/experienced them.

As the cultural education programme is above all an audience development strategy, our goal is to develop this pilot project into a systemic tool that can become a part of all school curricula and enable every student in every school to have experienced three days of immersion into the arts, meeting and working with professional artists and experiencing art in different (participatory) ways. This might arouse curiosity and the desire for the kids to come back to theatre and explore it further as they grow and become adult consumers of culture.

Another important pillar of our cultural education programmes is Drugajanje Festival. We started it 20 years ago in collaboration with the II Gimnazija Maribor high school, which has its own theatre hall inside the school building. It was their headmaster who made the first contact back then and has ever since been very open to this collaboration. The idea of Drugajanje is to present high quality contemporary performing arts to the high school kids in order to widen their horizons about what art can be beyond the very accessible popular culture and to encourage the youngsters to keep discovering it in the future. The performances that we programme are created for adults, but we take care to prepare the context – workshops, talks, reflections, participatory actions/projects – as an introduction, a kind of entry point, which makes an experience of art deeper and easier for the young audience. Drugajanje is organised every year in the fall and every student has an obligation to see at least one performance. But some of them keep returning over the next years and keep following the festival even when they have already left the school. The festival is also open to other audiences in Maribor and

has become quite known for its quality contemporary artistic programme. It often hosts *Schools in culture* (from the Theatre Playground project).

### MLADI LEVI FESTIVAL

The Mladi levi festival is one of the most renowned international contemporary performing arts festivals in Slovenia. It was established in 1998 by Nevenka Koprivšek as part of the international network Junge Hünde in which international partners dedicate their presentation platforms to presenting young generations of artists in the beginning of their careers, just before becoming internationally renowned (and helping them on this journey). Mladi levi is a festival that still presents interesting young artists, but while evolving, it also started presenting internationally renowned artists, the *big stars* of theatre. The festival is known for its distinctive atmosphere and social component, and artists are invited to stay for the whole duration of the festival to be able to see each other's work and to socialise. This is also an important aspect of the festival's atmosphere and it enables local audiences to meet the artists, socialise with them, see performances together and discuss or share their experiences. The festival has built a very loyal audience of all generations who have been following it for years, but lately we have also perceived a rejuvenation of the audience with new young generations of visitors.

Another important component of the festival consists of the festival volunteers who help us in simple (or more complex) tasks at the festival. As a "thank you", they can see all the performances and take part in all the social activities (the big dancing opening party, evening socialising and the festival picnic in the countryside to which all the participating artists, volunteers and collaborators are invited on a day in the middle of the festival). The volunteers are a large group of people who mostly become regular festival goers and due to strong artistic and very pleasant and inspiring social experiences, usually become true festival ambassadors that we can count on year after year.

But the festival is an island in time and space, with good energy and an atmosphere of inspiration and freedom. Our biggest challenge is to bring the festival audiences, especially the young generations of volunteers, to also become regular Old Power Station audiences and active participants in the Old Power Station's events throughout the year.

In all our work, we strongly lean on collaboration. Collaboration with other artistic organisations, educational institutions, numerous international partners and with our volunteers and neighbours – cohabitants in the city. And we are hopeful that our work with young audiences will turn out to be a long-lasting collaboration as well.

### III.2. GALLERY PROZORI: HOW TO TALK ABOUT ART?

IRENA BEKIĆ, Gallery Prozori manager

#### CONTEXT

Gallery Prozori (windows) is a specific gallery space. It is located in the S. S. Kranjčević Library and is a member of the Zagreb City Libraries network with which it shares its space and audience. The concept of the gallery programme is based on this very connection and the fact that there exists a large neighbourhood audience that the gallery addresses. Therefore, to better understand the gallery and the library, it is necessary to first outline the mentioned context: to describe the physical position of the Gallery in relation to the library and to the urban structure of the neighbourhood and to posit some theoretical bases on which this coexistence develops. Following that introduction, I will describe the research "How to talk about art?" that we conducted with elementary school pupils in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The purpose of the research was to come to an understanding of or guidelines on how to talk about art with children.

Basically, Gallery Prozori consists of thirty metres long stretch of windows of the public library located on the ground floor of the Peščenica Municipality building. The building complex was built in the late 1970s as an architectural project by Franka Odak. Envisioned as the centre of a peripheral neighbourhood that was increasingly urbanised at the time, this morphologically modernist complex was designed to cluster key functions of a socialist city – government, finance, commerce, culture and housing. The central municipality building, an elevated cube approached via the front stairway, extends on one side to a low wing that houses the library on the ground floor and defines the pedestrian zone and on the other side ends on a spacious plateau with a bank office, a post office, cafes and shops as well as an apartment building. In addition, this complex that represents a modernist version of a classic town square is centrally situated in relation to the location of other key functions in the neighbourhood, that is, it is located at the crossing of the routes leading to the market, the health centre, the pharmacy, the church, the cultural centre, the kindergartens and the schools. Hence, for the neighbourhood inhabitants the stretch of gallery windows visually marks their daily passing.<sup>1</sup> The windows and the exhibitions in them create their movement, they represent a break, a point of stopping, slowing down, reflecting. They offer breaks, a possibility of a turn in reflecting, a point of defamiliarisation. By themselves, the windows are and are not a boundary. Like an ephemeral membrane between the inner and the external, they are a point at the interference of the interior and the exterior, of intimate isolation and public exposure, of in between. The Gallery identifies its liminal potential as its point of departure.

122

INSIDE AND OUT

On the other hand, the coexistence with the library, more than a mere sharing of the space, is characterised by a complex structure of relations, sets of historical and social imaginaries and narratives. This is an interdependence that is not exhausted in being artistic material or the starting point for artistic reflections, it is also a resource that allows for building new strategies and tactics of librarianship. This interrelation is the foundation of the exchange in which the library, with its established symbolic capital, is the place that emanates trust in the content of the Gallery for the wider nonprofessional audience, while the Gallery opens the floor to examine the library cannons and revise the library policies. The ultimate goal of these efforts is to create a heterogeneous public space with the library/gallery as a place of divergence where new knowledge is created for an enlightened and critical audience.

However, a certain imbalance is present a duality inherent to libraries. By their mission and founding documents, libraries should be accessible to all, which implies that they should be independent of the profit economy and should include marginalised and fringe identities, historical and cultural configurations. As expressed by literary theorist Mario Hibert (2018) in the book *Digitalni odrast i postdigitalna dobra: kritičko bibliotekarstvo, disruptivni mediji i taktičko obrazovanje* (*Digital Degrowth and Postdigital goods: Critical Librarianship, Disruptive Media and Tactical Education*), libraries "still connote a social resource of non-monetized public good, shared public space, while librarians themselves are anomalies in information economy whose work deviates from (or at least should be out of reach of) dominant ideologies of ownership, control and profit" (Hibert, 2018: 22 – 23). But, on the other hand, libraries, like museums and archives, are an instrument of social memory and they codify the dominant culture, monopolise knowledge and represent the governing hegemony. In practice, an attempt to bridge this duality is the concept of professional neutrality which anesthetises critical and activist intentions of librarians and treats the library as a space that supports and reproduces the dominant order.

Still, if we understand the library as a public space following Chantal Mouffe's (2008) view of agonistic public space that is structured in the hegemonic competition of coexisting hegemonic and counter-hegemonic social, political and cultural positions, we can assume that the library could/should be a heterogeneous furrowed space where we are made aware of the agonistic clash through the articulation of public space as a structure open to the multitude of discursive fields.<sup>2</sup> Seen in this way, the library by providing space for diversity becomes a politically and aesthetically differentiated space, while art becomes an instrument to make diversity visible.

From this position Gallery Prozori creates its exhibitions and educational and discursive programmes. That is the reason this programme could also be understood as a strategic decision. Namely, it questions social institutions, including libraries, in an attempt to scratch under the surface.

123

"In the background" is the Gallery Prozori educational programme designed to broaden the field of knowledge by deepening the themes included in artistic works through their different stages and to develop critical attitudes and reflexivity in the audience, on the one hand, and on the other, to point to contemporary art as a communication and aesthetic form – a practice that may articulate issues that we encounter on a daily basis and maybe even open a possibility for change. The programme includes meetings and discussions between the audience and artists as well as experts from various fields. In parallel, we have developed the programme "Let's go to the city", within which we organise collective visits to exhibitions of contemporary art that our audience would otherwise overlook when visiting cultural events in the city. The spinoff of this programme consists of critical visits to the theatre followed by workshops after performances. A day-long excursion with the neighbourhood and professional audience to Raša, Krapan and Labin as a part of Branka Cvjetičanin's project "Delegation" was a participative project drawing on the idea of the collective excursion as a form that supports learning through solidarity and communitarianism.<sup>3</sup>

Notwithstanding the type of audience and the channels of accessing it and communicating with it, our point of departure is the idea that anyone, regardless of their education and knowledge, is equipped to discuss art. We believe that free conversation unburdened by prior instructions or theoretical explanations may lead to key concepts/themes that an artwork tackles and that it stimulates analytical and critical thinking; equally important, it alleviates discomfort when discussing contemporary art which is often perceived as opaque, difficult or addressed to someone else. We have tried to test this thesis in a series of workshops/conversations with the 4<sup>th</sup> grade pupils of the Dobirša Cesarić elementary school in Zagreb and through a research project "How to talk about art?"<sup>4</sup>

### HOW TO TALK ABOUT ART? – RESEARCH<sup>5</sup>

The research attempts to examine whether the method of active learning about art in a free conversation functions at all and to investigate how children perceive art. Additionally, and particularly important for us, we wanted to let children show us the channels through which art could be offered so they would take it as a relevant or at least an interesting part of their life.

The methodological foundation was the concept of the library as a third place, since in the guided inquiry method it denotes a hybrid space of private and official discourse which allows knowledge to be more easily created and adopted.<sup>6</sup> We followed the theoretical thinking of Jacques Rancière and Rita Felski.

INSIDE AND OUT

In the essay *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Rancière (2010) advocates equality of intelligences as opposed to the intellectual submission of the student to the teacher and to the explanatory structure of teaching. All it takes, according to him, is to continuously answer the three questions: What do you see? What do you think about it? and What are you going to do with it? We posed these questions to children participating in the conversations at exhibitions.

In her book *Uses of Literature*, Rita Felski (2016) broadens the discussion on literature by including in it the field of mundane aesthetics and personal experiences. Since cognitive-oriented structural and theoretical analyses exclude possible interpretations of nonprofessional readers as irrelevant, Felski warns of the potential to neglect readers' personal experiences, and with them, their sensory and even corporal dimensions of artwork reception. The change of the field of discussion allows for "being confronted with diverse aesthetic experiences and multiple axes of artistic value" (Felski, 2016: 133). Thus, Felski approaches Rancière when stating that the encounter and overlap of the artistic field with other fields of human activity does not take place in aesthetic transformation of the other fields (since each field has its own aesthetics) but in finding the point of their mutual understanding. It is precisely in the informal conversations of children encountering an artwork without a predefined interpretative framework that the point of encounter of diverse aesthetics could crystallise. We find that becoming aware of micro aesthetics is very important in a culture that has its basic aesthetic models grounded in the rhetoric of spectacle and commercialisation.

### RESEARCH RESULTS

The research questions were: *How do elementary school pupils in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade perceive art in general?* and *Did the participation in workshops (active model of learning/conversation about art) impact pupils' relations towards art and artwork, and if so, in what ways?*

The first question relating to the general perception of art by pupils and the analysis of interviews showed that the majority of students perceive art very broadly and that they perceive as artistic practice almost anything that individuals or groups can produce.

" Art is music; culture, some kind of culture; photography; music; exhibitions in the library; Gallery Dogadžanja in the cultural centre; architecture; dance, singing; nicely served food ...

All pupils agreed that what separates art from other fields is

the fact that viewing or creating art evokes aesthetic experiences in them, beauty and pleasant feelings, and they connect the use of art to the possibility of individual expression and expression of emotions.

" Lorena: *Some artists express their emotions. Or they are angry so they express their thoughts through drawing and painting, or they express happiness.*

" Monika: *People, actually, like to see their work. When I'm playing the piano, I calm down.*

Besides the emotional and individual elements, pupils perceive art as useful because they can learn a lot from studying art, mostly about the past and about life in different historical periods.

" Facilitator: *What do you think, is art useful?*

" Lorena: *Yes, because you always learn something from it.*

" Mia: *I love when in art there is a story about how something came about.*

" Patrice: *It is useful. Because there are very many things which we don't know about and which we haven't studied. There are so many old writings that we haven't studied. And from those writings, we can learn about a building that up to now we haven't mastered to build, while people living before us knew how to build it. We can learn how people built at that time or something similar, how they made bricks and the like.*

The perception of art as a medium for individual expression and the expression of emotions is mentioned in the answers on the difference between art and other school subjects. But some pupils see a similarity between, for instance, art and math, identifying it in features such as precision and measurement. This shows that they perceive art as a process which evolves through certain procedures designed to achieve a desired result.

" Facilitator: *Let's say that (in math) we always know precisely how much is 5 minus 2. Can this kind of precision be found in art?*

" Morana: *Yes, for example, we know exactly which colour we will get if we mix red and blue or what we want to achieve when we draw someone from a certain perspective.*

The second research question investigated how the form and content of the workshops impacted the relation that the pupils had towards art and artwork. The analysis showed that the pupils interviewed remembered very clearly the activity, conversation and exhibition in the library/gallery. When

talking about the impressions of the workshops, they highlighted that the space and ethos of the library are more interesting and fun for learning than the school.

" Dominik: *It is interesting in the library, it's more fun, we learn new things that we almost never learn in school.*

They characterised the workshops as dynamic, fun and focused, so such an approach and active learning in the form of pupils' engagement and open non-hierarchical dialogue contributed to easier and better learning about art.

" Lorena: *Well, there we talked about one topic, and in school there are many topics because there are many subjects. I prefer when we have one topic because then it can be covered more thoroughly.*

The most straightforward impact that the workshops had on pupils' relation towards art is evident from the unanimous agreement that the workshops were useful and that they learned something new, while some of them had already applied new concepts to their artistic expression: a few pupils began using the new techniques of photography that they learned in workshops, and some used the adopted visual techniques more often in everyday life.

In addition, students adopted a new vocabulary and they learnt to express their experiences and interpretations of art using professional vocabulary. For example, instead of the word image, they began using the word photograph and instead of the phrase taking an image, to use the verb photograph.

" Facilitator: *Do you take images of it by painting or photographing?*

" Sara: *Photographing.*

" Facilitator: *Great. And you said you started developing it after these meetings in the library?*

" Sara: *I did it even earlier. I mean, I used to draw it, but when I was explained what a frame should look like and that it could be used so that the image is better and more beautiful, I started doing it ... even more.*



The research *How to talk about art?* conducted in collaboration with librarians/curators, elementary school teachers and a cultural anthropologist has shown that the workshops of active learning about art are a successful technique for free, open and non-hierarchical learning about experiencing and interpreting art, and that the library is a stimulating place for it. It has been proven that the integration of art, librarianship and other disciplines is a strategic fold in the field of librarianship and that this position may be used to turn perspectives and create new spaces of knowledge and ways of learning inside the library. We think that this integration is also important when working with audiences in different contexts. However, such attempts are almost without exception connected to the enthusiasm and willingness of individuals. For example, after the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, pupils get a new teacher and we are left without a partner to extend the work with the same pupils until the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Such work could evolve into more complex conversations and hence have far-reaching impact. Therefore, we believe that one of the key foci of cultural policy should include the development of wide networks within which all subjects of organisations involved in audience development would have their role. Or to put it in Rancière's framework of thinking, to examine and activate the potentials of the points in which different aesthetics overlap.

- 1 At the moment of writing this text, the building is undergoing the process of energy renovation which will profoundly alter its looks, and the stated role of the gallery is completely uncertain.
- 2 On these aspects of the interference of library and gallery, see Bekić, I. and Dolanjski, P. "Public Libraries as Agonistic Spaces: At the Crossroads of Librarianship and Contemporary Artistic Practices" In: Libellarium (to be published).
- 3 See Prozori 17, Zagreb: Knjižnice grada Zagreba, 2018. p. 20.
- 4 The research was conducted as a part of the project "Umjetnost pripada svakome" (Art Belongs to All). The research participants were pupils of the 4th grade of the Dobrša Čosić elementary school; teacher Sanja Škreblin and cultural anthropologist Dorijan Vahtar, as well as Petra

Dolanjski Harni and Irena Bekić, librarians/curators; Photo documentation: Bojan Mrdenović. The research project included workshops in Gallery Prozori throughout 2018 and 2019 and semi-structured interviews about the experiences from the workshops. The interviews were conducted with the pupils in their school while the teacher was absent.

- 5 Available at <http://library.ifla.org/2592/1/s05-2019-bekicen.pdf> (Accessed: 12/4/2022).
- 6 The concept is described in Guided Inquiry: Learning in the 21st Century. For further information see Carol C. Kuhlthau, Leslie K. Maniotes, Ann K. Caspari (2019) Vođeno istraživačko učenje: učenje u 21. Stoljeću, Zagreb: Školska knjiga (Guided Inquiry: Learning in the 21st Century, ABC CLIO, LLC, 2015).

- 1 Felski, R. (2016) *Namjene književnosti*. Zagreb: Jesenski i Turk.
- 2 Hibert, M. (2018) *Digitalni odrast i postdigitalna dobra: kritičko bibliotekarstvo, disruptivni mediji i taktičko obrazovanje*. Zagreb: Multimedijalni Institut and Institut za političku ekologiju.
- 3 Kuhlthau, C. C., Maniotes, L. K. and Caspari, A. K. (2015) *Guided Inquiry: Learning in the 21st Century*, 2nd Edition. Available at: <http://publisher.abc-clio.com/9781440833823> (Accessed: 12/4/2022).
- 4 Mouffe, C. (2008) 'Umjetnički aktivizam i agonistički prostori' in: Kovačević, L. and coll. (eds.) *Operacija grad: priručnik za život u neoliberalnoj stvarnosti*. Zagreb: Savez za centar za nezavisnu kulturu i mlade, Multimedijalni Institut, Platforma 9,81 – Institut za istraživanja u arhitekturi, BLOK – Lokalna baza za osvježavanje kulture, SU Klubtura / Clubture, pp. 220 – 230.
- 5 Rancière, J. (2010) *Učitelj neznalica: pet lekcija iz intelektualne emancipacije*, Zagreb: Multimedijalni institut.

### III.3. GLEJ: WE ARE THE AUDIENCE AND THE AUDIENCE IS US

INGA REMETA,  
president of association Glej

I will first describe our organisation and situate it in the context of independent theatres active in Slovenia. Glej had already begun writing its history in 1970 when it was established as the first experimental independent theatre in former Yugoslavia. Even then, it had the reputation of a theatre that experiments and tries new practices and methods of artistic creation in the performing arts. Throughout the years, it has changed and upgraded its programme structure, but it has never failed to address the key point – to reflect on new practices and ways of working.

In the last ten years, we have focused on the process and the education of artists and not as much on work results per se. We pay special attention to the artists with whom we work and provide them with support not only with respect to their productions but also with education and international collaboration. For years, our unique characteristic has been the ability to identify issues or needs in performing practices and to improve them and make them more efficient and alive through various programmes and working methods.

In the same period, we turned our focus to our audience and the users of our content. We understand that the Slovenian theatre audience is very old and that we have to build/shape a new audience. Therefore, in 2015, we began working on this in two different ways via two separate projects.

The first is Generacija Generaciji (A Generation to a Generation). This is a programme that deals with theatre art for young people with young people. We realised that young people wish to bring theatre closer to themselves and their interests rather than consume classical theatre plays. We knew what we wanted, but we didn't know how to do it.

In 2013/2014 we began surveying the international scene and found excellent teachers and producers in Amsterdam – organisation Likeminds that had been working for a number of years with youth theatre and young people. We learned their practices for two years and educated Slovenian mentors and associates with whom we wanted to develop the programme and who had no previous knowledge of it, just like us. We began a collaboration with Dutch Likeminds, German Das Letzte Kleinod (their work is based on site specific theatre) and French Théâtre du Pelican (their work is based on drama theatre), and drawing on their practices, we found the best method applicable to Slovenia and its specific context. In 2015, we became the coordinator of a European

130

INSIDE AND OUT

project which was used to strengthen and upgrade our knowledge and the entire programme.

Glej chose a slightly more difficult path and included in the project active young people who had no previous experience with theatre. Hence, we had an opportunity to teach them and ourselves about everything we wanted to achieve with the programme.

Our way of working is based on authorial theatre and a theatre that requires the artistic ensemble to be active throughout the entire process of creation, work and final production of the play. Together with these young people, we chose topics of their interest and intensively and actively worked on them with the help of professional mentors (with rehearsals twice a week). The topics that surfaced and instantly became hits were parents and growing up, technology, happiness, Europe and citizenship.

The young people produced materials and brought their own stories. The methodology of collecting material was diverse – from personal stories and experiences to work on interviews and surveys. Our task was to clean the material and put it together dramaturgically, the key elements being not to destroy or change their stories and the information they wanted to communicate in the play. After we had done this and had identified the capabilities of each individual, we went on stage and rehearsed the roles.

In the same year, we began working with students. We designed the programme Student Teater which focused specifically on students troupes and facultative programmes of drama schools which stop after the schooling age; that is, after university. This is the reason we focussed on this specific group of young people who had already gained some basic knowledge of theatre but didn't want to pursue professional theatre careers.

We have implemented this programme for six years and have achieved success. Annually, we have between 80 and 100 candidates with whom we work in groups.

The working method is also based on authorial theatre but professional mentoring refers only to consultations throughout the process. Our mentors meet the groups twice a month, more frequently before the premiere, and give them directions that help to finalise the work.

One of the very important aspects evident in both our programmes is the education of the candidates – young people who participate in the process – on theatre and contemporary art in general. We make it possible for our candidates to watch plays of our colleagues from other organisations, and we discuss the plays with the candidates. What they saw, how they saw it, what

131

III. EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES OF PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

they understood, what was the message the authors wanted to convey, what they understood and so on. This way of working provides us with a critical mass of young people who not only return to Glej and keep tabs on our work but also become an active (and demanding) audience of the arts.

The second level is the education of candidates on basic features and the meaning of theatre. They all have an opportunity to participate in dramaturgy workshops, workshops for directing, acting, authorial theatre and so forth. This knowledge is offered to the candidates at the very beginning of the working process, and we thus create bases on which they grow and develop their materials throughout the programme.

The outputs, that is, the results of these two programmes are:

- Quality programmes that have become referential programmes of cultural education in Slovenia and abroad;
- Efficiency and increased interest of young people in the performing arts;
- Increased interest for active participation in the performing arts;
- Education of a critical mass of young people who think and discover new value in the performing arts and consequently become critical citizens; and
- Rejuvenation of the audience.

In 2018, we began to actively think about elderly audiences through project Glej Rezident with artists Tin Grabnar and Hana Vodeb. We thought of them in the same way as our other groups; how to bring them to the theatre and work with them and their topics. We wanted to meet a new, specific group through theatre, a potential new audience. The results of the active three-year-long work of director Tin Grabnar and Hana Vodeb was the play *Starci (Boomers)*.

The working method we used in this project was named "memory opening". Under the supervision of experts, each individual opened personal stories and experiences that left a trace or a mark on their lives. We visited sites that were important to them, places of birth and places they thought we shouldn't miss. After individual work, we connected individuals into a group and when they felt ready, they shared life stories among the group members. The level of security and the feeling of belonging to the group was crucial for the future work. When we reached both levels, we started to build the play together with the "boomers". Our boomers were not only boomers in the play but have become our trusting audience, along with their friends. The basic circle of boomers still participates in our other artistic works/plays and has become and

remained an inevitable, unchangeable mass of cultural production.

The crucial thing that we learnt through the process of working with these new audiences is that the path of collaboration and building something new is long and difficult but rewarding and worth every effort and every reflection on the ways to collaborate. While the new audience grows with us, we constantly grow with it. It is enriching to realise that in the past six years, we have managed to build a circle of people who are proud of everything we learned and did together.

### III.4. REMONT: IN COMMUNICATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

DARKA RADOSAVLJEVIĆ,  
manager of the Remont

Remont – independent artistic association – was founded at the end of 1999 as an association of citizens and artists active in contemporary visual arts. Initiated by an art historian, Remont was founded by visual artists of different profiles but with international experience. Since the Serbian artistic scene had been heavily damaged in the 1990s due to the social, economic and political environment and isolation, the primary motive for creating the association was the idea of regenerating the artistic scene through transfer of knowledge and experiences. One of its first defined missions (which hasn't changed significantly since then) was to set new professional standards and popularise contemporary art in Serbia. Due to organisational needs and other circumstances, the organisation's management was subsequently taken over by art historians who were specialised in organisational management and other necessary skills and who have always remained aware that their work serves artists and the public.

At the beginning of 2000, we rented a space in the shopping mall on the Republic Square. From the very beginning, we developed activities in several directions: a gallery programme, publishing and education as well as reactions to local cultural policy regarding the position of artists and the non-institutional cultural scene. In addition to the gallery programme, we introduced during our first year of public activity the field of publishing (print and electronic) and various educational activities (workshops, lectures, discussions). At this time, our more important routes of development were already based on researching innovative models of action both in the field of contemporary art and publishing, as well as in collaborations (education through practice) with younger colleagues and in connection with different interesting subjects on all levels.

From the very beginning of our public activity, Remont was recognised as the phenomenon of a new and different non-institutional professional practice, which resulted in significant public and media interest. The media interest could be explained not only by the previous media experiences of some of the founders but also by the unconventional surroundings of the first space: private bookshop, the office of the Association of Independent Journalists, media centre (office, hall, library, club). In relation to the stimulating surroundings, we established good communication with the media that helped us to broaden the community. During and after "the democratic changes" of 5 October 2000, Remont became the symbol of a new cultural practice. As an "experienced" organisation at the beginning of the century, we initiated and administratively

134

INSIDE AND OUT

supported the founding of a dozen new organisations.

In parallel, we were continuously developing direct and online communication with our milieu. Already in 2000, we created a mailing list through which we distributed information related to cultural events and public calls significant for the development of the artistic scene. We experimented with diverse practices to improve the visibility of contemporary artistic productions and surveyed target groups. Some of the models that we initiated ten or twenty years ago have been taken over by others and applied in a narrower professional context (such as annual catalogues, guided exhibition tours, informal conversations with artists, intensive use of the Internet and social media). On several occasions when we were extending our network of associates, we initiated and implemented joint projects/programmes in collaboration with other organisations, state institutions, the private sector and individuals. Still, since 2003, Remont has permanently survived on the edge because we have primarily project financing and we are an organisation that doesn't indulge in trendy compromises. But we have never given up. We survived all crises with the help of our immediate or wider community.

Remont has never been a collective but has rather searched for a functional form to achieve its mission. Very often, we were asked why it is a civil society organisation if it doesn't deal with public goods or address the wider public but is instead oriented towards the improvement and popularisation of a specific field of contemporary cultural creation. And Remont, true to its name of always repairing existing practices and designing new ones, has always done something else; something in between improving professionalism and caring for the development of contemporary independent culture.

We are aware that our array of activities covers a small social and cultural field and that we are always more interested in the content than the form and in quality than quantity, which in itself demands a focus on a narrow social milieu. We permanently question our environment and who we address. Therefore, in one such moment of crisis in 2010 in which we were examining the environment and the limitations of our mission and were fully aware that the circumstances had changed and that we couldn't go on by ourselves, we directed our project funds into the preparations for founding the association Independent Culture Scene Serbia and thus, extended our community.

In that period, we changed our address and moved to a quiet street in the city centre which became a pedestrian zone soon after we had moved. While mostly using the street as the space for personal communication, we established good relations with our neighbours and enriched our micro community with new friendships: workers in restaurants, cafes, hotels, students at the nearby university, neighbours interested in cultural events. We share chairs, tables, handymen, information, pick up mail for each other, give space

135

for meetings of inhabitants and those who use our part of the street, lend Internet access to a neighbour who doesn't have cable TV and so on. We try to engage in our micro community in a natural, personal way through direct communication.

We do not practice audience development; we communicate with the Community. The Community is sometimes micro, other times macro, rarely passive, mostly interactive and based on mutual needs. This Community is made of the wider milieu: artists, art professionals, journalists, connoisseurs and the curious, subjects who directly produce contemporary artistic practices, organisations and institutions, citizens interested in recent trends in contemporary culture and tourists along with some lost passers-by to whom we readily give directions, give advice or look after their package, a child or pet. This Community is not small; quite the opposite, it comprises several thousand people who have an affinity for contemporary art, freedom of expression, experiment, and for an opportunity for non-institutional action. At the same time, it is the healthiest social segment because it thinks, questions itself and society, problematises issues and does so publicly. It mostly consists of a younger population, however, the number of elderly citizens who need this type of practice to feel alive/active is fascinating. It is "the elderly" from whom we seek advice. This approach has stopped us from giving up several times. The Community provided us with a bypass when we hit rock bottom.

We have organised a few specific projects to broaden the Community, which naturally evolved from the team's experience, knowledge and interests as well as from paying attention to the needs of participants and followers of the artistic scene. There have been various artistic workshops for citizens, traditional new year's parties and the like, but we can name two projects designed to animate new participants or establish trust – *Auctions* in the project *Praise* (Pohvala) and *Good habits* (Dobre navike).

## AUCTIONS

We initiated auctions back in 2000, and their methodology is always the same. We design and explain the purpose of fundraising, invite artists to donate their works, edit the donated works (photo, technical editing) and launch a mini media campaign a few days before the auction. The initial bid is usually 0 dinars or symbolical 1 Euro. The auctioneer is always a friend, a famous person, who is chatty and cheerful. Auctions have been organised in various spaces; in the space of the Association of Visual Artists, the independent cultural centre Magacin, the Cultural Center of Belgrade and on the street in front of Remont. Technical organisation is covered from the funds raised from selling auction paddles (symbolic price of 1 Euro) and from the bar. All funds raised at the auction are publicly announced and are used for a specific purpose. Sometimes the purpose is to publish a book, other times it is to provide

136

INSIDE AND OUT

help to an artist in crisis or fundraising to keep Remont running and sometimes for award giving. Besides fundraising, the objective is to make artworks available to the community which has lower economic opportunities but which appreciates contemporary art and wants to own artwork. This community often doesn't know how to get them or finds them too expensive in private galleries. Even though artwork is often sold under a probable market price, everyone is content. Auctions are always fun! All participants feel good and useful because they participate in something which is basically win-win and is motivated by achieving a goal for the wellbeing of the community.

## PRAISE

*Praise* involves a team initiated by Remont and consisting of individuals, leading members of a few civil society organisations and persons interested in contemporary culture. It is conceived as an award given to individuals for their contribution to the local contemporary visual art scene, and it consists of monetary awards fundraised through different auctions or from donations by interested citizens. The reason for this initiative is the desire to draw attention to many good practices for developing the artistic scene: personal contributions, significant ideas, endeavours, shifts, new standards, uniqueness and innovation. The first *Praise* took place in 2015 followed by those in 2017 and 2019 with slightly changed criteria. The methodology is similar to the described process of the auction but with some specificities. About ten days prior to the auction, we put up a web page where anyone can anonymously nominate a person with a short explanation. On the auction day, two equally valuable awards are given based on the list of nominations, the jury award (jury consists of a representative of the organiser, earlier winners, a journalist covering the field and an independent expert) and the audience award (audience consists of all auction participants, either donors or bidders). At the end of the auction, the amount of funds raised is announced. Soon after completing all payments, the total amount is divided in equal parts and presented to the winners. An average amount, so far, has been around 1000 Euro per winner. The entire process requires the engagement of 7–10 volunteers with different tasks who work for free and have good fun.

## GOOD HABITS – A WALK THROUGH CONTEMPORARY ART OF BELGRADE

The project has been realised since 2015, with a break in 2020 due to the pandemic, and it was continued in June 2021. It was created out of a need to bring contemporary artistic practice in a professional and simple way closer to interested citizens and to encourage them to visit exhibitions more often (thus increasing their quality of life). Every year we organize five to seven events (from early spring to late fall). The number of participants is limited to fifteen people who register a day before at the latest, but there's always

137

III. EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES OF PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE



room for exceptions. During each session, we visit three to four exhibitions in the city centre, and each individual visit lasts around 40 minutes. The walks always take place on Saturday and start with getting together in Remont gallery where people get to know each other and we present the current exhibition. Afterwards, we walk to the next destination where the group is welcomed by the host – curator, artists. All visits are accompanied by the Remont team who tries to develop good direct communication within the group. The official portion finishes at 2:00 pm, but people often continue hanging out in an informal setting.

The preparations usually take around ten days. With regard to the type, quality and significance of the exhibitions at a given time, the professional team of Remont selects three to four exhibitions, paying special attention to smaller gallery spaces (because most museums have guided tours). We also take into consideration the diversity of exhibitions/spaces themselves, but sometimes it is possible to conceptualise visits with a specific thematic framework.

For each walk, we prepare a print flyer with substantial information on selected exhibitions and additional recommendations for visiting current exhibitions. The flyers are distributed in galleries, bookshops and other public places in Belgrade and can be used for individual visits. Each walk is announced in print and electronic media, on social media and on our website. After the walk, we publish photo documentation on our social media profiles and the website.

It is symptomatic in both of the mentioned examples that 50% of the participants in each event have already participated in other events, but the rest are new participants. We often find that new participants are usual or occasional visitors of other similar events.

In any case, the point is to start from questioning personal/organisational capacities, interests, positions and environments in a narrow and general sense. Who do we address? What can we offer and what type of feedback do we expect/want? By investing in the Community, we get back active and passive support which can be animated in a crisis.

The recipe is: a smile for the neighbourhood and visitors, informal conversations, memorise/record the names of participants of special programmes, thank them! Being aware of the fact that we are here for them and not vice versa helps.

### III.5. REPLIKA: EDUCATIONAL THEATRE AS AN EMPOWERING STRATEGY TO REVOLUTIONISE EMOTIONS 140

MIHAELA MICHAILOV, co-founder of  
Replika Centre for Educational Theatre

Since the very beginning, one of the main objectives of the Replika Centre for Educational Theatre has been to expand its audiences, in order to create relevant links between various topics and different categories of spectators, who do not go to the theatre. All of the activities developed by Replika Centre focus on broadening access to cultural education, increasing social awareness and imagining various strategies for empowering children and teenagers.

Educational theatre is a form of theatre that opens up a territory of emancipation and participation, bringing together young audiences, disadvantaged communities and artists who strongly believe in the pedagogical mission of art. The artists and the groups with which they work are engaged in the profound exploration of social and political themes and subjects related to acute current realities. Through educational theatre, various invisible groups become empowered and generate methods and means of representation that help them become voices to be heard and taken into consideration. For children and teenagers, educational theatre is a political context in which they become more aware of the everyday issues they face as well as a pedagogical context that allows them to better develop the capacity to express themselves, gain confidence in what they believe, support each other, act like a team, challenge clichés and reflect critically on mainstream narratives, cracking them and producing emancipatory counter discourses.

#### THE BEGINNINGS OF REPLIKA

Replika Centre for Educational Theatre – an independent performing arts space – opened on 13 February 2015 to meet organic cultural, social and political needs. In 2012 and 2013, the four founders of Replika Centre – Radu Apostol (director), Viorel Cojanu (actor), Mihaela Rădescu (actress) and I, Mihaela Michailov (playwright) – worked on a complex project of educational theatre with 10 children and teenagers who were going to school on the outskirts of Bucharest. The aim of the project was to explore one of the most important themes of vulnerability in post-socialist Romania: workforce migration. Migration fundamentally defined the Romanian transition from socialism to brutal capitalism and left millions of people without the possibility to earn a decent life. Migration meant tearing families apart and adapting to an "economy of sacrifice and abandonment" which forced a lot of people to work in terrible conditions and suffer terrible humiliations. According to the statistics,

approximately 350,000 children have been left behind by their parents who are working abroad.

Migration is a political reality which is deeply embedded in Romanian society and affects structures of power and work and the emotional connections within the family, developing a survival economy and a strong feeling of belonging to everywhere and nowhere. The breaks in the economic system have dismantled the fragile social links in a society striving to adapt to new rules and to cope with rapid transformation. Taking into account these disruptive contexts, it becomes more than necessary to reflect performatively on the theme of migration. Thus, I asked Radu Apostol to embark on this educational theatre adventure: to explore the theme of migration from the perspective of the kids left at home with elder people or older siblings to take care of them.

From the very beginning, two questions sprouted in our minds: Who is going to perform in this show, and for whom are we going to conceive it? It became quite obvious that it was extremely relevant for us to have kids performing as well as to design the show mainly – even if not specifically – for those children who experience the situation of being left behind by their parents. We wanted to create an *emotional playground of belonging to a community of experiences* through a performance so that the stories and the daily realities of these kids can be shared. For us, educational theatre proposes a collective emancipation through social and political stories. Educational theatre is a common territory of healing narratives that need to be uttered and heard in order to empower those in search of their voices, those longing for a space where "togetherness" can become tangible. Educational theatre is about fluidly voicing emotions so that they regain their power to liberate inhibitions and fears. As Anna R. Burzynska (2016) accurately noted in the introduction to the volume *Joined Forces. Audience Participation In Theatre*, "theatre has the potential to become a kind of rehearsal space for democracy, a place where one is encouraged not only to observe, but to be critical, active, and responsible for what is happening" (Burzynska, 2016: 9).

We gave our show the title *Offline Family* and worked for a year and a half with kids eager to explore through theatre exercises and games their capacity to interact with each other, their improvisation skills, their empathy and their reflections on various local contexts. The most challenging experience was the national tour we succeeded in doing with the show. We have performed *Offline Family* in almost 20 towns in Romania. In some of them, the workforce migration had a devastating effect. The fact that the kids in the show performed in front of other kids – most of them having parents at work in Spain, Italy, Germany and Great Britain, was an extremely powerful connection. The daily life experiences of the audience were given a voice, a space to mirror themselves and a fragile point of connection. It was as if the kids in the audience could touch their emotions and hear their stories. It was as if they

suddenly felt that what they lived was a broader, common, sensitive reality in which they did not feel alone anymore. From this respect, educational theatre is this fluid territory of spoken emotions. As artists, we gave a lot of creative space to the kids with whom we worked so that they could transpose their imaginative world into a theatrical form that mainly responded to their needs. They came up with performative solutions that were greatly appreciated by the kids in the audience, who found them relevant to their way of thinking. In a very subtle way, we stepped back and let the kids embark on a theatrical revelatory journey.

### MARGINALIZED VOICES

In our approach, we chose to work with kids living in a marginal district in Bucharest, a city in which culture is highly centralised. Most of the artistic spaces – theatres, galleries, museums – are gathered in the centre of the city. We do not have cultural centres in districts or in marginalised communities. This landscape of effaced cultures on the periphery has effects due to negligence. Representative stories belonging to marginalised groups are rarely performed because mainstream theatres tend to reproduce a closed circle of narratives which more or less perpetuates the same themes. The audiences living on the outskirts do not have access to culture and cultural education and are condemned in a way to a non-participatory model of interaction. They are deprived of any possibility to attend performances, resulting in a persistent cultural and political gap between various categories of audiences. We face a sort of *annihilated spectatorship and deprivation of power* that contribute to preserving the same circles of audiences. New categories of audiences that do not attend cultural activities have the feeling of perpetuated exclusion and do not have the power to represent themselves through theatre. This means theatre remains outside their interests and needs and remains a space of double social and cultural ignorance: ignoring those who become more and more invisible and generating a total ignorance on their part. How could you not ignore something that keeps on neglecting your presence and prevents you from direct participation? When theatre preserves its context of representation inside already tested frameworks and does not enlarge, stimulate and engage the narratives of new audiences, it becomes self-sufficient, dismissive and hard to conceptually regenerate.

This is the reason we found it extremely empowering to create a theatre show with children living on the outskirts of Bucharest, a show that extended the frame of representation and encompassed the social imagination of kids coping with the reality of migration. Even if we imagined the project with kids whose parents did not work abroad, we discovered that in their extended family, they all had relatives that went through this experience.

Apart from theatre shows, Replika Centre – led now by seven artists (Radu Apostol, Viorel Cojanu, Elena Găgeanu, Silvana Negruțiu, Mihaela Rădescu, Gabi Albu and I) – also develops other types of cultural activities that encourage spaces of creation for excluded communities. One of these projects which is meant to extend the cultural and educational programmes outside the venue, is *Reading Occupies Schools*, which is dedicated to promoting contemporary novels to middle schools located on the periphery of Bucharest where children and teenagers have little to no access to cultural education. The objective is to encourage teenagers to discover relevant novels translated into Romanian or written by Romanian authors by using the methodology of educational theatre. In the first days, the students are involved in theatre exercises – cooperation and synchronisation exercises to consolidate the team as well as observation and attention exercises and role play games to become more conscious of the value of working together. The next few days are dedicated to the first readings of the dramatizations of the novels and discussions closely related to understanding the benefits of reading and debating through theatre. In the framework of the project, the artists of Replika Centre, the children and the teenagers focus on the significance of understanding the meaning of relevant themes – racial discrimination, bullying, abuse – reflected in contemporary literature. After two weeks of workshops, students perform in front of their peers, teachers and parents. The project succeeds in increasing and developing the appetite of new audiences for culture and in offering them the possibility to represent themselves and get in touch with contemporary spheres of debate. *Reading Occupies Schools* creates an educational platform of reflection on social and political topics that acquaints students with urgent realities. Students approach both literature and theatre in a pedagogical frame that allows them to connect with a broader circle of problematics. As Claire Bishop pointed out, "Pedagogic art projects therefore foreground and crystallize one of the most central problems of all artistic practice in the social field: they require us to examine our assumptions about both fields of operation, and to ponder the productive overlaps and incompatibilities that might arise from the experimental conjunction, with the consequence of perpetually reinventing both" (Bishop, 2012: 274).

### TO WORK WITH WHAT YOU SEE

Another project developed by the team of Replika Centre was *Play On What You See*, conceived with the visual artist Alexandra Bugan (Serebe) to offer teenagers the possibility of engaging in an environmental *intervention*. The project took place in two public schools in Bucharest and consisted of workshops that contained three components: creative writing, visual arts and improvisation and theatre games. The students were invited to observe and carefully analyse an environmental aspect of their schools that they did not

like or would love to change. Their *interventions* took place in the yards of the schools or in locations within the buildings that they wanted to make more attractive. For instance, students wrote various articles from the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" on windows to make them more visible; they imprinted various messages on their T-shirts because they realised the relevance of what they wanted to convey through text; and they upcycled various materials and created objects that transformed their school into a friendlier space while also learning more about best practices related to recycling and environmental protection. Their intervention through art in schools made these spaces belong to them and become part of their daily imagination, social projection and mental design which contributed to their wellbeing and feeling of recognition as participants in the process of changing realities. The conditions of the students changed and progressed: from observers of a distant space to generators of social and emotional dynamics in the space. It was as if, suddenly, their hands left affective traces in their schools; as if their desires got a tangible shape.

## CONCLUSION

There are a few questions that we have been asking ourselves ever since Replika Centre opened: For whom are we doing theatre? Is theatre an inclusive platform of negotiating positions of power, debating our privileges and exploring pedagogies of empowerment? How can theatre create more emancipatory practices and reveal territories of solidarity and schools of togetherness?

At Replika Centre for Educational Theatre, the spectators are participants in a debate that questions relevant issues with the aim of opening up the sphere beyond simply watching a play. Watching is involving into questioning social and political stereotypes. If theatre can help us move forward with the scope of these questions (both political and emotional), it is due to a deep connection between artists and audiences. At Replika Centre, we believe that our main mission is to extend the limits of our walls and gather voices that are not heard.

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### III.6. TRAFÓ: PLATFORM FOR GENERATION OF DIVERSE APPROACHES

ANGÉLA ZEKE & ESZTER DOBOSZ,  
Thatre in Education programme  
Associates, Trafó

Trafó House of Contemporary Arts in Budapest was established in 1998. It is a receptive venue that is unique in Hungary. Trafó is an inviting and co-producing venue – a forum dedicated to social issues and a platform for establishing values and contexts as well as generating new ideas and productions. It houses performances, concerts, exhibitions and community and audience development programmes with a focus on younger generations. It is open to the members of any generation looking for something new.

The venue's professional programme of events, which is presented in a post-industrial space, is based on an unified yet diverse approach. Simultaneously experimental and audience-friendly and inspired by innovation as well as cultural heritage, it provides a space for the presentation of work from both domestic Hungarian artists and international artists. Throughout the years, it has also become a cornerstone of the international contemporary art scene, showcasing various genres – theatre, dance, new circus, music and visual arts – and even a mixture of them.

#### THOUGHT GENERATOR

Initial contemporary programmes were introduced at Trafó House five years after its official opening and ran from 2003 to 2013. The Thought Generator, an art educational department, was established in 2014 and it completed Trafó's already wide-range of programmes. Between 2015 and 2017, the Thought Generator was led by a dramaturg, a drama teacher and a dancer. At that time, its programmes mostly consisted of workshops for high school participants before and/or after Trafó's performances.

In 2017, two students studying at the University of Theatre of Film Arts Budapest to become drama instructors joined the department. As the result of this professional change, the base of the current Thought Generator was reformed – the whole brand behind the department was renewed. Programmes are in tune with those of Trafó House, whose functions and goals have been to fill in the gaps lacking in the cultural sphere for many years. The policy of the Thought Generator is to support artistic innovation without the limitation of genres and to serve the social integration of contemporary arts within institutional frameworks. In 2020, an organiser joined the group in order to provide

146

INSIDE AND OUT

higher professional standards of implementation.

The team's goal is to make the Thought Generator a space for democratic thinking, community development and the development of identity and competence. Through its engagement strategies, we help with the interpretation of the artistic pieces. We want our participants to see contemporary genres as languages for self-expression which they can use whether they are artists or not. With exercises of drama/theatre in education we support abstract thinking, debate skills and abilities to connect, and we provide a chance to create for everyone regardless of their age or education.

Under the slogan "Creation/Art Is for Everyone", which defines our views on the purpose of the Thought Generator, we aim to provide encounters through art. In forming our programme series, we mostly followed two guidelines. The first was to match the wide variety of Trafó's programmes which are from all forms of art. This is the reason we now not only have programmes connected to theatre but also to contemporary dance and fine arts. The other guideline was to provide programmes for everyone who visited Trafó House and even to gain new visitors to Trafó by means of our programmes. Currently, we have four types of programme categories based on target groups and duration: workshops for high school students, programmes for audiences, regular groups and special events.

#### WORKSHOPS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

"Idea Sculpting" workshops that are made in conjunction with Trafó Gallery in which the participants can take an active role in the exhibition, can get an inside view of the phenomenon behind each art piece and can build stories and become the characters.

"Turning Into Dance" a three-step series of workshops connected to a contemporary dance performance in which the participants can take a fresh look at their bodies. They can through movement gradually experience the fact that dance is not far from everyday people.

#### PROGRAMMES FOR THE AUDIENCE

These programmes are the most open/accessible programmes – anyone can participate regardless of age and they do not require a long-term engagement and presence from the participants). Programmes for the Audience include "Switch On", "Point of You" and "Storytelling Sessions".

"Switch On" encompasses creative competitions in different genres connected to the topics of the performances in Trafó. The incoming works are rated by a jury, the competitions are closed by an official announcement of

147

III. EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES OF PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE



the results and an award's ceremony at which the winning works are presented. The works also get presented in the House, on our online platforms and sometimes at other locations.

"Point Of You" is a programme which takes place after performances followed by informal talks in which the participants can put questions to each other and they can think through and re-evaluate the different opinions.

"Storytelling Sessions" is a community event in which the participants can share stories with each other inspired by the topics of one of the performances. The leaders of the workshop use theatrical games to help the process of recalling and expressing the stories.

Beside mentioned events, a Regular group meetings were organized with people who take part in a longer creative process – usually once a week in a single theatre season. "Connector" and "Everybody" are part of this programmes.

"Connector" is a drama group of the department who meet at a drama workshop each week to examine a given topic in the areas of theatre, dance, fine arts and music. At the end of the theatre season, they present the results of their work in the form of a performance.

"Everybody" was a community theatre performance created for the occasion of Trafó's 20th anniversary. In the course of the summer 2018, we collected plenty of personal stories and anecdotes at different festivals on the topics of growing up, change, responsibility, freedom, love, splitting and how it feels to be 20 years old. Drawing on these different viewpoints and bits of narratives, we sketched a panorama of "twentyness" that included the use of amateur actors to recall the stories. It became such a success that there were six performances in the Trafó House through the 18/19 season and the group continued to work together until the end of that season.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

As time went by, we wanted to expand our presence. To do so, we made special events at which people could get to know us and create with us.

"Teacher's Day" is an open day for teachers and for those who are interested in art education which is organised each year at the beginning of the theatrical season. During the day we present the programmes we offer for high school and university students. The participants can try out the workshops to decide which ones they may be able to later apply in their classes.

First "Art Education Meeting" was organized in February 2020 as

a five-day-long course on the topic of theatre, music and visual art education. For each day of the course, a distinguished professional would present his or her methods throughout that day.

### GOOD PRACTICES DURING THE CORONA CRISIS

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we wanted to stay true to our motto "creation/art is for everyone" even if we were not able to keep Trafó physically open. The change had some advantages since we were able, through online means, to reach groups we wouldn't have been able to reach otherwise, such as high school groups from countryside towns and users of Social Media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and, eventually, TikTok. In the framework of the mentioned activities, we have organised virtual programmes such as "Home Challenge", "Everyone's House", "Utopia" as well as programmes adopted to virtual space: "Storytelling" and "Turning into Dance".

Specifically reflecting on the pandemic, the team of Thought Generator created a Facebook event called "Home Challenge", the goal of which was to draw attention to the possibilities of spending time at home: they encouraged the participants to share details, tips and secrets for the isolated time, to help others to fill their homes with inspiration. In this two-week-long event, we shared nine online challenges in which we invited the participants to share pictures, links, create art, etc. connected to the given topic of "being at home".

Everyone's House is an interactive community creative platform created by the Everybody group. With a website that had a home page designed like a house, we "opened" a new room of the house each week, which means a new part of the site becomes available. In the house, you can find the spaces the Everybody group explored during quarantine. In each room, you can see a picture of that place, you can listen to a personal memory or experience one told about the members of the Everybody group, and by clicking on one object in the picture, you are able to upload your own personal stories, pictures and experiences connected to the topic of the room. The visitors' stories are stored on the website, so you can also read through the texts shared by others.

Utopia was another community project in which we made use of the advantages of the lockdown. We worked with student groups coming from four bigger cities in Hungary and the Connector group of Trafó. Our goal was to present our hometowns, our living environments and our homes to each other. The group leaders asked the students to document their view of their world and how they live their everyday lives. The participants sent short video messages to each other in which they analysed the ways of presenting, occupying, connecting, deconstructing and reconstituting our living spaces. The result of this process is the Utopia community short film.

We continued organising the "Storytelling sessions" programme on Facebook with the help of closed groups, and despite the virtual presence, the interest in the programme didn't decline. Each month, we made a new group for those who registered for the Storytelling workshop, and in a given two-hour period, we shared video messages that explained the tasks. The participants were then able to share their stories/experiences in the comments below the videos with the help of texts, photos, emojis and videos.

During the first lockdown period, we wanted to continue our contemporary dance project and create something for the International Dance Day. Since all the schools were closed, we were not able to have our "Turning Into Dance" workshops. Therefore, our only option was to create something online. "Frame Choreography" was kind of an "open call" for dance videos in which the participants used the frame of their screens as a tool or as a partner in dancing. We wanted to reflect on the fact that we are only able to see each other in the small frames of zoom and facetime calls – this time we wanted the participants to see this frame not as a barrier but as a possibility, as a playmate. From the incoming footage, our editor made a video which was presented on the International Dance Day of 2020.

The other dance project of ours which was carried out in the third lockdown in the spring of 2021 was "AnyBodies". We created TikTok videos with the help of the dancers of WillanyLeó, an improvisational dance group working in Trafó, and asked the users to take these challenges. Even though we had already been present on Facebook and Instagram, occupying TikTok was a good chance to broaden our audience.

## CONCLUSION

While we rely on the German practice of theatre pedagogy, we had to adapt to the special conditions of Trafó House. Being an inviting venue, Trafó does not have a fixed company and there are many genres besides theatre represented in the house. Over the years, our programmes changed a lot and probably will change again in the future since we want to stay up-to-date and respond to changes in Trafó House, the Hungarian art scene or even to social changes.

IV.

IN LIEU  
OF A  
CONCLUSION

## IV.1. IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION: MEETING THE CHALLENGES – A PARADIGM SHIFT IN AUDIENCE RELATIONS

DARKO LUKIĆ

Why has audience development become one of the priorities and central themes of the Creative Europe programme and of the most important European centres for cultural policymaking?

The concept of audience development has been developed by analysts and cultural policy creators as a systemic, thought-through and planned response to the challenge of an alarming decrease in audience numbers in the cultural sector throughout Europe. Following the large increase in the number and diversity of visitors to cultural events in the period from the 1950s to the 1980s, there was a period of stagnation, and finally a steady decrease in audience participation in cultural events from the 1980s to the 1990s. Scientists always interpret sudden rises in the curve on the diagram as an indicator of some anomalies in the system, so the problem was identified and named.

The fact that, at the time, audience participation was often, and readily, discussed in terms of "consummation of cultural content" implies very clearly that the issue was addressed from the position of cultural or creative industries unaware that commodification of cultural programmes is problematic or that approaching audiences exclusively as consumers is (in)adequate. In the 1990s, a popular notion of "audience crisis" was present everywhere from everyday parlance to round tables and panels hosting various professionals. Narrowing the problem (moreover the "crisis") singularly to audiences and disregarding the complexity of relations in cultural production, as expected, didn't yield (since it couldn't) any satisfactory results. Therefore, those lamenting about half-empty auditoriums mostly continued looking for "culprits" outside of culture – in the educational system, new media, the way of life, gentrification, competing contents...

However, more in-depth research pointed to a series of diverse factors that, both simultaneously and in synergy, impacted the evident decrease in audience participation in cultural programmes. In order to address all of them at the same time, it was necessary to reach out for a new methodology that would make it possible.

154

INSIDE AND OUT

The need for a new methodology was based on the fact that the classic approach to audiences was simply not enough any longer and that it had yielded unsatisfactory results for years. Traditional tools for communication with audiences and classic approaches proved to be insufficient for new challenges. It was evident that they should be developed, modernized, updated and strengthened but not completely rejected or replaced.

As the ADESTE+ project began before the pandemic and its huge impact on the cultural sector, and especially on audiences, it was precisely this unforeseen and unseen crisis that additionally confirmed its justification and the efficiency of its methods. During the crisis caused by the pandemic, it has become clear that the cultural sector has been undergoing a serious and profound transformation of work in all sectors. More than ever, it has become necessary to find diverse new ways in which cultural production can communicate with as many diverse audiences as possible, not only to maintain but also to increase its public visibility and social relevance. Naturally, cultural production can achieve this only and exclusively through interaction with audiences, because it simply has no other way to exist but through them. Hence, audience development in the times of the pandemic has become, completely unplanned, the primary tool and the main instrument for solving the complicated issue of audience participation in the European, and to a large degree in the global, context.

The ADESTE+ project, implemented through a partnership of research and artistic partners in seven countries in Europe, included diverse activities with the aim of strengthening organizational, but also individual, capacities. It included an analysis of the sector, and the organization of a series of workshops (in person, online and hybrid) that made possible the transfer of knowledge and the introduction of new methods and procedures of audience participation. The model of audience development, based on the principles of mercantile culture and the Anglo-Saxon British system of economically responsible institutions, was to be brought closer to the French model based on the tradition of participation, cultural engagement and inclusion, a model that is closer to the western European continental system of subsidized and socially responsible institutions.

In the process that followed, the development of methodology began from the understanding of the notion of audience development in its complexity. It included the necessary change in the institutional paradigm of reflection on audiences, which led to awareness of the need for a significant change in the institutional conduct towards audiences. The new model of cultural participation and new approaches to the availability and accessibility of programmes and content in the existing infrastructure focused on maintaining the existing audiences, and developing new ones, as part of the methodologically designed process within the existing cultural policy framework. The

155

IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

application of the new model of "audience development", however, not only required organizational adjustments and changes, but implied they were a precondition of a successful implementation of the completely new concept.

The experience of organizational transformation would begin with a paradigm change and accepting the new way of thinking about audiences. This new way would bring awareness of the drawbacks of habitual, petrified, traditional approaches to audiences. The numbers (of viewers, sold tickets) were no longer crucial in the process. Statistical data were critically evaluated due to their being intrinsically conservative and anchored in the past. Undisputable cultural dependence on statistical and numerical data was questioned, and it was replaced by new terms such as the characteristics of audiences, their needs and values, and their behavioural models, as well as the possibility that quality gradually transforms into quantity through participatory processes.

For the majority of participants in workshops and lectures this meant a big change in the way of thinking. The strongest resistance to the new methodology came from inertia, which always leads initially to opposition to such radical changes in thinking and behaving. Understanding the paradigm change and accepting the changes that such transformation requires were certainly the hardest part of the educational process. Needless to say, the readiness to accept change and be innovative, just like the ability to transform, depended on the culture of each individual organization, which caused individual results to be very different.

However, at the end of the process it was evident that all participants, to a certain extent, advanced and modernized their approaches to marketing, communication, education, mediation and animation. They also adopted, developed and applied completely new and previously unknown and unused possibilities of communicating and developing lasting relations with audiences. The allocation of resources and their distribution, and the change in the usual distribution of work along with experimenting with the capabilities of new technologies allowed the participants to begin the process of change without excessive additional financial investments. They segmented and diversified their audiences within the organizational approaches and strengthened participatory practices, reorganized their own potentials, developed capacities and understood the need to change the paradigm. All this led to changes in organizational structure, again to different extents, and modification of organizational culture and business policy towards placing the audience at the centre of an organization's work. The most successful transformations showed a significant increase in organizational flexibility, which made the organizational structure "shallower" due to the fact that the vertical structure of the organization gave way to horizontal and network structures. Audience development teams, formed during the educational process, worked on identifying specificities of concrete audiences according to their motivations, profiles, limitations,

needs and values. In less successful examples they were at least clearly aware of the personalization of the abstract notion of the viewer and the creation of space for empathy for concrete and clearly identified types of audience defined as "our audience".

The methodology used to stimulate organizational change and implement the audience development model started from ACED (Audience-Centred Experience Design), a model based on design thinking. In the process of education, it was highlighted that the project of audience development is multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary and intersectorial work that changes the conduct of the institution, but also of the environment, thus also changing cultural strategies and policies. Understanding the new concept meant becoming aware that the transformation in the organization needed to be implemented simultaneously on the level of curating, managing, production, marketing, communication, aesthetics, programmes, human resources, finances and technology, but that the precondition for all this was to insist on the educational element and permanent capacity building of the organization and all its members. In organizations cross-functional teams were created for implementing the audience development model and such team-based organization was integrated in the already existing organization.

The Croatian partners developed the methodology by leaning on the joint methodology of the ADESTE+ project, but they also modified it according to the local specificities. One of the biggest challenges was to strike a balance between two significantly different models – the need to transform small organizations with more flexible but also more precarious structures versus the need to transform big, clearly structured but also to some extent petrified mechanisms of institutions. During the process, the cultural milieu recognized and adopted the concept of audience development, while through regular re-evaluations the Kultura Nova Foundation strengthened the methodology of knowledge transfer and capacity building for necessary changes. This laid the foundation for further successful education of individuals and organizations and for significantly wider implementation of the audience development model, ranging from national institutions to flexible small civil society organizations.



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