

# SUMMARY IMPACT EVALUATION

## Results of the main impact survey questions

**Question: The idea of “bridging” is to increase social cohesion by involving people of different social groups in participatory and co-creative cultural activities. Do you think that this is possible? Why/why not?**

The great majority of survey participants agreed that such activities can bridge social differences. Generally, the survey results show that participants are convinced that culture and art do not differentiate people according to their language, social status. Therefore they can contribute in a sense of **BELONGING**.

- ▶ “Co-creative activities develop the sense of belonging to community and increases the motivation to participate and to be involved.”
- ▶ shared experience of artistic emotion opens shared thoughts, communications and sensitivity
- ▶ People are much more opened as we think they are. Just smart, individual approach is needed.

It is emphasised in the answers to the survey that cooperation on a local level is crucial in order to strengthen cohesion between different groups and actors.

**Question: What are the benefits of participatory/co-creative cultural activities to contribute to social cohesion compared to non-participatory activities?**

The main benefit that survey participants see is that the **EXCHANGE** between different people and thereby, the understanding of each other can be facilitated through participatory/co-creative cultural activities:

- ▶ Participants get more involved towards other participants and engaged citizens.
- ▶ People can exchange ideas, customs, see how the other people live and by that, expand their own horizons.
- ▶ Such activities provide the opportunity to share knowledge over all generations, across different sectors and through a cross multi-cultural view.
- ▶ They open a field of multiple experience and exchange of different views and backgrounds.

The exchange and common experience that is shared in a participatory/co-creative cultural activity provides benefits on a personal as well as social level, connecting the individual to the society and support the **APPRECIATION** for it:

- ▶ It supports social dialogue instead of individual isolation
- ▶ Personal growth and development are benefits

- finding new friends and partners
- through participation people feel to be part of something bigger
- Appreciation of the common as well as diverse cultural surrounding can be supported.

Furthermore, a clear benefit of participatory processes from the perspective of the survey participants is the **COMMITMENT** to the project that results out of the increased involvement of the participants. This has been highlighted by survey answers such as the following:

- When participating you get emotionally and physically involved, you make it to your own, and you start caring.
- When we take part in creating a solution we have a different attitude towards it. We develop a stronger bond to it.
- Moreover the commitment to the project is higher.
- Also higher identification of the participants with the process & the outcome of the process (because of their contribution) can be expected.
- Those participants who are committed can then function as ambassadors or multipliers of the processes.

#### **Question: What are the challenges of such activities to generate social cohesion?**

The main challenge according to the survey answers is to **FIND DIFFERENT PEOPLE, FROM DIFFERENT SOCIAL BACKGROUNDS** and a common point of interest:

- The main challenge may be to arrange activities, where people from very different background, social classes and "subcultures" in fact meet and cooperate in joint activities
- Thereby, one has to avoid "to go the easy way" when trying to find participants from different social societies.
- A common interest and a point of connection helps to find different people who would like to participate.
- When looking for participants from different social backgrounds, organizers must also be aware of the fact that participants who are not used to this kind of activities might have a low level of self-confidence and have difficulties in working together

Furthermore, some answers also emphasise the need to make sure that marginalized people have the opportunity to participate in the process.

When it succeeds to find participants from different social groups the next challenge that has been repeatedly listed in the survey answers are **PREJUDICES**

- Sometimes it is difficult to put yourself in other people's shoes, to overcome your own philosophy and way of thinking, to understand others
- The development of belonging to the group, the emotional growth of individuals and groups, and the reduction of prejudices are great challenges in these activities.

In connection to this, survey answers emphasise the need to **HANDLE THE SITUATION CAREFULLY**:

- ▶ Try to not put any pressure on the participants.
- ▶ Try to moderate the co-creative process in a warm and welcoming, but professional way - it will help participants to feel valued.
- ▶ Motivate people to contribute

Last but not least this whole process costs a lot of **TIME AND MONEY**. Co-creative and participatory processes are not a “one time shot”, they take time if they want to support social cohesion and this time needs to be financed.

**Question: What kind of activities do you consider most conducive to increasing social cohesion?**

**Please give examples:**

Examples given in the survey are art forms that are easy to access and to start with, such as:

- ▶ Dance, sports, painting, sculpturing
- ▶ Art in public space, local projects and projects connected to every-day-life, i.e. projects, without fee, taking place where the people are living and activities where people may plan their own future and surrounding
- ▶ Furthermore, courses of native language for foreigners or art projects that are multilingual
- ▶ Also, from the experience of survey participants, it is necessary to work in small groups and have "multiplier" for special groups.
- ▶ Activities, where kids are involved are also interesting, because it seems easier for them to jump over social boundaries.