

BRIDGING

CO-CREATIVE CULTURE AS
A BRIDGE TO SOCIAL BONDING
AND MUTUAL TRUST



Compendium V: Inter-European



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Colophon

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Foreword

The unique power of creativity to unify disparate groups of people is something commonly recognised by those actively involved in the field. There are, for those who are willing to look, countless stories of co-creative projects and activities that have helped to bridge social divides while offering something that is – above all – fun. Perhaps it is not at all surprising. The act of creating and sharing together, expressing ourselves and sharing in the effort, output, sorrow and joy that all of this entails is intensely personal. Our individual approaches to creativity can often – even unintentionally – belie our personal perspective, preconceptions and prejudices. This helps us to learn about others’ points of view – their experience of the world we live in.

As the world has, in many ways, become better connected than ever before we have seen some traditional structures and means of seeking community and identity start to disintegrate. Many states and local governments are now reporting a growing crisis of loneliness and isolation.¹ Coupled with increasingly polarised public discourse and the spread of extremist views, this has contributed to a fragmentation of contemporary society that threatens our ability to live, work and convene effectively as a civil society who understand, respect and celebrate our differences.

“The capacity of a country to support peaceful collective decision making involves multiple factors including the quality of institutions, intergroup relations, and the effectiveness of channels for resolving conflicts. [...] Trust refers to the extent to which individuals have confidence in people whom they know personally, including family and neighbors. It can also refer to trust in people met for the first time and in people of different religions and nationalities. [...] Civic engagement relates to social capital, participation, and the agency that motivates individuals to be part of collective action.”²

Trust is built on familiarity and understanding and each of these characteristics is crucial in a thriving, cohesive community of any scale. Locally, nationally, or across the broad landscape of the European Union, the need to understand our neighbours and fellow citizens is a common requirement for a happy, peaceful civic society.

¹ Public Health England, Dec 2015, <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2015/12/08/loneliness-and-isolation-social-relationships-are-key-to-good-health/>

² World Development Report (2013) <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/11843>

“Higher income, better health of mind and body, and a high degree of trust in one’s community (“social capital”) all contribute to high life satisfaction; poverty, ill health, and deep divisions in the community all contribute to low life satisfaction.”³

At a time when there is a perceived decline in social cohesion across Europe and the wider world, it is important to interrogate the ways in which people of different backgrounds come together and create shared experiences and find common ground. Our communities are now much more diverse, transient and digitally-connected than in the past but traditional, local connections within communities have not developed as they have in the past and the effects of this are starting to become clear in areas such as crime, mental health and civic responsibility.

This is the context in which the BRIDGING project proposed to investigate the methods through which participation in co-creative activities can help to bridge social capital. The project has focused on those projects and activities that have brought together people from different backgrounds to create together as equals. We have sought to uncover the best approaches and environments which are conducive to bridging existing divides and preconceptions, whether those be cultural, generational or otherwise. The opportunity provided by this partnership between organisations in seven different countries is significant and, in itself, presents some clear commonality in our experiences of culture and social bonding in nations with very different cultures and contexts.

Over two years, the BRIDGING project team are looking at how these creative activities can have an influence on bridging social capital in five thematic areas: inter-cultural, inter-European, inter-generational, inter-regional, and inter-social. Each area has been explored through research, surveys, interviews and case studies. In each area, we have sought out examples of projects, activities and groups that have involved people from across the various divides and asked some key questions about the nature of these activities. How have they been organised? What were the primary goals of the activity? What were the motivations of the participants? Was a welcoming and social atmosphere cultivated, and how? What were the particular logistical considerations for the context of the project?

Through the research conducted, the State of the Art report⁴, and the case studies presented in these thematic compendia, we hope to articulate some common threads and key characteristics of those projects and activities that have been most successful in bridging these divides. Sharing these findings will, we

³ World Happiness Report (2012) <http://worldhappiness.report/ed/2012/>

⁴ BRIDGING: State of the Art report (2018) http://bridgingsocialcapital.eu/?page_id=434

hope, assist other organisers and practitioners to develop new and improved cultural activities that can offer participants a rewarding, enjoyable, creative experience but also allow for personal connections to be made and the social bonds that are so crucial to our communities to flourish within these activities.

Each of the five areas of investigation present their own unique challenges but have been identified as areas where more can be done - across Europe - to bridge divides and help people to learn more about each other through creativity. Whether it is an inter-generational group or one that brings together people of different cultures, the atmosphere cultivated by participating as equals in a creative activity offers a strong platform for personal exchange. It connects people to themselves and, in turn, those around them.

"Higher life satisfaction is correlated with having a more intense relational life in general, such as socializing frequently with friends and relatives, attending social gatherings and cultural events, participating in sports, performing volunteer work, and pro-social behavior..."¹⁵

There are many things that can be considered when devising and delivering the activities to ensure that a more diverse mix of people can feel included, and the case studies expand on these considerations to show different approaches that can be adopted by others. These are presented not as guaranteed methods of success, but demonstrations of the ways in which a variety of potential barriers can be overcome in different circumstances.

The findings of the survey emphasise that those participating are usually driven, first and foremost, by the desire to do something enjoyable and creative. The social benefits are often clearly evident afterwards but these are secondary in the minds of most participants. This is by no means a negative finding. In fact, it marks out the unique appeal of these creative activities to people of all walks of life. They come together in pursuit of creative expression and pleasure and this, in itself, helps to create the environment in which the many beneficial social outcomes can be reaped. In this compendium, we aim to present numerous examples of how this formula has worked well and, from our findings, suggest ways that others can learn from these approaches.

This is the fifth in a series of five thematic compendia. This edition examines inter-European bridging. The editor of this edition is Agnieszka Dadak, representing Fundacja Alternatywnych Inicjatyw Edukacyjnych (Poland), and the co-editors are Aron Weigl, representing EDUCULT (Austria) and Hans Jørgen Vodsgaard of Interfolk (Denmark).

⁵ World Happiness Report (2012) <http://worldhappiness.report/ed/2012/>

Introduction

The decline of trust the last decade is one of the central challenges of our societies. Several surveys by UN, OECD, EU and others indicate that the declining trust refers not only to the usual suspects as governments, companies and mainstream media, but also to NGOs and even more concerning to an increased distrust of other people.

Trust is the fundamental element of social capital in a country, and the World Development Report (2013) shows that countries, where people are more likely to trust others, are also countries where there is less violence and more political stability, accountability and stronger economic growth. Furthermore, trustful social relations are essential for happiness. The World Happiness Report (2012) indicates trust as one of the major reasons that some countries are happier than others.

Trust among fellow citizens is also essential for the subjective well-being or quality of life. Without trust, institutions don't work, societies falter and people lose faith in each other.

This is the background of a two-years long project entitled "Bridging social capital by participatory and co-creative culture" (Project acronym: BRIDGING), realised in the period September 2017 – August 2020 by eight partner organisations from seven countries that represent four strong national umbrellas as well as four knowledge and research centres in Northern, Eastern and Western Europe: Denmark, UK, Poland, Austria, Latvia, Slovenia and the Netherlands.

The BRIDGING project overall aim is to bridge social capital and to promote inclusion, cohesion and trust by strengthening the participatory and co-creative culture activities in the European sector of amateur arts, voluntary culture and heritage. The project was co-financed by the Erasmus+ Programme 2014 – 2020, KA2 Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, Strategic Partnerships for adult education.

The BRIDGING project team shares a belief that the European sector of participatory culture (amateur arts, voluntary culture and heritage) can make a difference. This sector is, next to amateur sport, the largest civil society sector in the EU member states, and it has in the last decade been the civil society area with the highest rate of expansion in members and new associations. A vast number of voluntary and paid staff and artists are employed in a myriad of associations to provide arts and culture-based activities for about 38 pct of the peoples in the member states (Eurobarometer 399, November 2013).

However, the voluntary arts and culture associations could strengthen their societal engagement. Especially in these times, the learning providers in this

sector should prioritise new initiatives that can help to counter the current decline of the cohesiveness and mutual trust in our communities. Bridging - type of activities may help this to happen.

Definitions of main terms

SECTOR OF VOLUNTARY ARTS, AMATEUR ARTS AND HERITAGE: The cross-cultural sector of amateur arts, voluntary culture and heritage is defined as consisting of three sub-groups that are all part of the third sector, civil society and non-profit organizations:

AMATEUR ARTS INCLUDING FOLK ARTS – local and national associations for different kind of arts on amateur level (where the participants are active as amateurs in music, choir, theatre, dancing, visual arts, folk dance, folk music, etc.).

VOLUNTARY CULTURE – local (and national) associations that organize different sorts of mostly professional arts events, such as local classic concerts, visits by theatre groups, arts exhibitions, etc. These sorts of associations are not so much known, even though they constitute a great deal of the sector and provide/organize a lot of more professional arts and culture to the local communities especially outside the bigger cities.

HERITAGE – associations that keep old traditions (sailing, crafts) alive or take care of monuments, associations for local history, local archives, associations for genealogy, or associations related to specific museums that deliver a lot of voluntary work for culture institutions.

CO-CREATION: The term “co-creation”, in the context of this project, refers to co-creation in a free, civic context, where different citizen groups work and create together. It includes the aspect of promoting social capital, mutual trust and recognition as being part of the same national-democratic community.

BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL / SOCIAL INCLUSION: Bridging social capital and fostering social inclusion through co-creative activities is understood as essential learning outcomes of participatory and co-creative culture activities, where former segregated groups are engaged in shared cross-over cultural activities, such as:

- Inter-social learning (include marginalised groups: poor, low-educated, etc.)
- Inter-generational learning (include more generations in shared learning activities)
- Inter-regional learning (include groups from city and countryside, centre and periphery)
- Inter-cultural (inclusion of minority cultures)

-
- Inter-European (include cross-border activities where different European traditions/cultures are engaged with a European added value)

Inter-European dimension of BRIDGING

This compendium aims to provide an overview of good practice examples of co-creative and participatory activities in the sector of amateur arts, voluntary culture and heritage that aim at bridging social capital and promoting inclusion, cohesion and trust in our communities – in the Inter-European context. Inter-European context is meant by including cross-border activities where different European traditions/cultures are engaged with a European added value.

The good practise examples and innovative approaches are compiled in five thematic contexts, where the focus is changed not only from individual creativity to collective creativity, but the co-creation is based on bridging social capital between people normally outside of each other's direct social networks - not just bonding social capital between similar individuals, which is common across other forms of participation. The Inter-European Compendium is one of five compendia developed within the BRIDGING project.

The Compendia present good practices at bridging five types of segregated groups. Apart from the abovementioned Inter-European context, the other 4 compendia relate to the following contexts of co-creative and participatory activities: Inter-social (including marginalised groups: poor, low-educated, etc.), Inter-regional (including groups from city and countryside, centre and periphery, Inter-cultural (inclusion of minority cultures) and Inter-generational (including more generations in shared learning activities). The five Thematic Compendia are published in the seven partner languages: English, German, Polish, Dutch, Danish, Slovenian and Latvian. All the language versions may be found on the Project Portal <http://bridgingsocialcapital.eu/>

We hope that the good practices described could be used as new teaching material for further education of learning providers in the voluntary cross-cultural sector.

Good practices

Here you will read about six Inter-European initiatives. All of them include cross-border activities where different European traditions/cultures are engaged with a European added value. They ase somehow similar – but also different.

We hope that after reading them you will feel inspired to design new Inter-European initiatives for your organisation – or just to add and Inter-European context to the initiatives already being realised. At the end of this compendium you will find a workbook part which is meant to guide you through the planning process. Enjoy!

Case Study: Hornafjörður culture events

By Hans Jørgen Vodsgaard, Interfolk

1. Hornafjörður - a blooming community

Hornafjörður is a community in South-East Iceland with a strong voluntary culture and many cross-cultural activities. The cultural life in Hornafjörður represents a good practice example of how participatory and co-creative culture can make a difference and promote social capital also with a strong Inter-European or even global dimension.

Hornafjörður is a blooming community in one of the most remote places in Iceland, placed at the realm of the greatest glacier in Europe, Vatnajökull. It is a geographically large municipality, covering 260 kilometres of the south-eastern shoreline, but the population is just over 2200 inhabitants. The southern part of Vatnajökull National Park is located in the community and the scenery from the town Höfn and the countryside is breathtaking. The inhabitants in Höfn are just over 1500 and the main industry is fishing and in the rural area agriculture and tourism.

This remote area where there are 200 km to the nearest town in the west and 180 in the east is an active community with theatre groups, choirs, music groups, blues-festival, town festival, a nationally well-known music event, craftsmen, painters, designers and international collaboration regarding arts and crafts.

2. Exemplary culture events

The main yearly culture events, which will be presented below, are:

- Humarhátíð, the Lobster festival,
- Höfn, the global village
- Economuseum and SlowFood
- International dance groups

2.1 The Lobster festival

The town festival, Humarhátíð or Lobster festival takes place every year in late June or early July, and it consists of numerous events and festivities. The last 6 years the festival has had its own part time employer and local businesses invest in the festival, but most activities are carried out by the volunteering inhabitants and all the preparation is made by volunteers. The guests are both the locals

themselves, those who have moved away and are revisiting, and other guests from other parts of Iceland or even other countries. Local food, local entertainment, local traditions are the main attraction and the people of the area show what they have to offer.

During the Lobster festival period every street and neighbourhood has its own colour and is decorated in accordance to the specific colour. Here the inhabitants participate in a parade and the streets compete for the best decoration. Everyone participates in one way or the other; some invite visitors to stop by and meet the locals, some participate in specific events, some sell local products, some have art exhibitions, have a fashion runway or invite the guests to a musical event.

The women's choir invites guests to enjoy a musical event where music from a different country is in focus every year and the food they offer reflects on that. One year they were focusing on Sweden and the food they offered was typically Swedish, one year it was the USA and the next Germany. Organizations and individuals participate in offering a variety of activity for every age group and the family as a whole. Young musicians are given an opportunity to play for the guests and form bands, participate in a parade or play in a venue.



Locals dressing up at the Lobster festival parade

2.2 The global village and SlowFood

The town festival strengthens local identity but it is also important for the local identity to celebrate the different origins of its inhabitants, to see that the little village of Höfn is a cosmopolitan village with connections to different corners of the world.



Guests at the SlowFood event

The municipality founded an event, where representatives of all the diverse nationalities living in the area were asked to participate and present parts of their culture to others – the Icelanders were no exception. The municipality pays for the cost; the participants make their local food and offer it to those who visit. This has been a major event, where the emphasis on the little local village as a partner in a global world has worked wonders.

2.3 Economuseum

The municipality also participated some years ago in a project where representatives from small communities in Norway, Ireland, Faroe Island, Quebec Canada, Greenland and Northern Ireland were working on implementing the ideology of the Canadian model of Economuseum to artisans and handcrafters.

The municipality had been focusing on small businesses and entrepreneurs making their own products with the help of the municipality through collaboration with others in the community, from Reykjavík and even further away.

In the Economuseum-project entrepreneurs were participating in the project with the aim of building their studios or workshops, where they would receive guests, telling them about their craft and local history. This resulted in two artist

studios in Höfn, a designer's studio and a painter's studio and a small business where a tailor opened up a studio.

2.4 International dance groups

The cultural centre in Höfn participated in a project run in collaboration with the Nordic countries and the Baltic countries, where the aim was to connect rural and often isolated areas to the world stage through dancing.

International dance groups were invited to stay for 2-3 weeks at Höfn and other communities during the winter time, when f. ex. in Höfn tourist had not arrived. The dancers had a training facility that the municipality fixed for them and in return they were running seminars for kids and youngsters in the area.



From events with International dance groups

The main focus was not just to bring contemporary dancing to the rural areas or to open the eyes of the dancing groups for the fantastic training opportunities in an area as Höfn, but also to give the inhabitants the sense that they were a part of the rest of the world, that they were a part of the international art scene and that Höfn as well as Reykjavík was a place of interest for the creative mind. This project resulted in two artist residencies in the area and a great collaboration with the local schools, where modern art and dancing in particular got a new audience.

3. Volunteering as expression of social capital

These few examples from one of the most remote towns in Iceland, where the cultural life is so unbelievably versatile, show how important it is for a small community that the inhabitants are willing to participate and have the understanding that you have to do things yourself; to see that with the help of the municipality or local companies you can be a do'er and live in a culturally strong community, even though it is not New York or London. The fun starts at home!

In Iceland, studies show, that around a third of the Icelandic population aged 18 years and older is involved in some kind of unpaid voluntary work and around 75% are members of voluntary organizations. There is a strong tradition of women participating in social organizations or fighting for a better community, raising money for hospitals or helping their community but also organizations where cultural activities and progress were the main focus. There is a long history of women and men joining forces in prevention and rescue work in Iceland, where thousands of volunteers dedicate themselves to work for the rescue teams. Groups of volunteers are always available, night and day, year round but most of them do not consider themselves' to be a volunteer, they are first and foremost rescuers even though we are all well aware of the work they deliver free of charge in the mission to prevent and rescue.

So even though we can have this long tradition of volunteering, working for no pay, where citizens offer their time and skills for the common good, the Icelanders themselves' don't seem to value or see this activity as voluntary work or to talk about volunteering as something special, but rather as a participation or a helping hand that is a normal integrated part of the usual life as a citizen and fellow human being. In Icelandic the meaning of the word voluntary is *sjálfboðaliði*, meaning "a person that gives his or her work by their own free will", and this is accurate the meaning of the word voluntary. It is an interesting fact that the Icelanders typically all are volunteering without knowing it or wanting to use the label as if it was something to brag about.

4. The inter-European dimension

As defined in the foreword of the State of the Arts Survey: "The term *co-creation*, in the context of this project, refers to co-creation in a free, civic context, where different citizen groups work and create together. It aims to promote social capital, mutual trust and recognition as being part of the same democratic community."⁶

Genuine co-creative forms of cooperation with a high level of social capital strengthen - as mentioned in the State of Arts survey, page 51 - the "cultural capability" of the involved and the "cultural democracy" by promoting the freedom of creation and everyday cultural participation to citizens".

"Ultimately, the co-creative activities are the ones with the most effects on participants' networks. They foster the creation of a group (one interviewee presented "a village", another "a family"). Participants are more likely collaborating

⁶ State of the Art Report. Overview of co-creative and participatory activities in the sector of amateur arts, voluntary culture and heritage. Educult, June 2018.

after having created something together, reached a goal, than by simply being in the same class, following a same lesson.” The Survey page 54:

The case study of Hornafjörður indicates in general that a strong participatory culture is based on and promotes civic participation, community bonding and local identity that strengthen the social capital and mutual trusts in the community; and it indicates furthermore that participatory culture with a cross-border dimension can promote openness for and interest in other cultures not only in an inter-European or EU sense but a genuine international and global engagement.

References:

State of the Art Report. Overview of co-creative and participatory activities in the sector of amateur arts, voluntary culture and heritage. Educult, June 2018. Published in the context of the 2-year Erasmus+ strategic partnership, Sept 2017 – Aug 2019, entitled: Bridging social capital by participatory and co-creative culture”

Curricula Guidelines – Bridging social capital by participatory and co-creative culture. Interfolk, May 2018. Published in the context of the 2-year Erasmus+ strategic partnership, Sept 2017 – Aug 2019, entitled: Bridging social capital by participatory and co-creative culture”

“Iceland - To be or not to be a volunteer”, an article from the “Compendium. Arts and Culture on the Nordic Edge. Kulturelle Samråd i Danmark, Sept 2016”. Published in the context of The Nordic Culture Point’s Capacity development project, entitled: “Amateur art and voluntary culture as suppliers of arts and culture in sparsely populated areas in the West Nordic Region”, coordinated by Interfolk.

Case Study: St Magnus festival on Orkney Islands

by Hans Jørgen Vodsgaard, Interfolk

1. Orkney is a culturally rich place

The St Magnus International Festival is an exemplary culture event at Orkney that is an archipelago of approximately seventy islands, which is about seven miles north of the far North-East coast of Mainland Scotland. Around twenty of the islands are populated, and the majority of the around twenty thousand residents live on the largest island – called Mainland – and again the majority of them live in the city and Royal Burgh of Kirkwall.

Orkney is a vibrant, culturally rich and beautiful place, with some of the most important archaeology to be found anywhere in the world. A World Heritage Site – the Heart of Neolithic Orkney – sits alongside important Norse, Viking and Pictish monuments, and even the 20th century wartime and maritime archaeology is unique and internationally recognised.

Also well known for its rich cultural traditions of music, song, dance, dialect, traditional craft, storytelling and creative writing, Orkney is still a place full of artists, writers, musicians and storytellers. Festivals, such as the Orkney Folk Festival and St Magnus International Festival are held all through the year and reflect the rich diversity of cultural life on the islands. The small town of Stromness is home to an internationally recognised collection of 20th century modern art, on show alongside temporary exhibitions at the Pier Arts Centre.

2. St Magnus International Festival

St Magnus International Festival ⁷ is Orkney's annual celebration of the arts. Founded in 1977 by a group including Orkney's distinguished resident composer Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, the Festival has grown from small beginnings into one of Britain's most highly regarded and adventurous arts events. The 40th Festival took place in 2016.

⁷ www.stmagnusfestival.com



Orchestra performance at St Magnus festival

The unique combination of world-class performance, community participation of the highest quality and the magic of Orkney at midsummer attracts audiences from throughout Britain and further afield: many return year after year. Though musical events are at the heart of the artistic programme, the Festival also encompasses drama, dance, literature and the visual arts.

Each year the Festival brings a full scale Orchestra to the islands together with leading ensembles and soloists. They perform in various combinations and in different venues to present shows that are unique to the Festival.

Always a number of World Premieres

The Festival has a long reputation for commissioning and nurturing new work. The Festival always features a number of World Premieres: ranging from work by well-established composers through to a concert with up to eight pieces of music created as part of the Orkney Composers Course.

Specially-commissioned work has also been created for visual arts, drama, film and dance projects. The Festival makes use of various venues around Orkney, from the Romanesque grandeur of St Magnus Cathedral to the poignant intimacy of the Italian Chapel; from a converted games hall to the new purpose-built Theatre at Kirkwall Grammar School; from shore-side churches to the Stromness Town Hall.

Over 400 members each year

Through education and community projects the Festival has built up active participation by adults and children from all parts of Orkney, often devised in collaboration with visiting orchestras, ensembles and artists. Typically over 400 members of the local community perform at the Festival each year.



Event at the St Magnus Festival, 2016

This includes events such as the Festival Chorus performance with the Orchestra, the Johnsmas Foy which showcases local drama and writing, music workshops with leading professionals, large-scale community drama productions and regular 'Side by Side' events where young local musicians join the professionals in full-scale Festival concerts. Through 'Festival on Tour', the Festival send musicians to take part in concerts and workshops in the outer islands, schools and care homes and over the years the Festival has provided a platform for the rising generation of Orkney music stars to have their first taste of large scale performance. In addition over 250 people volunteer to help make the Festival happen, either behind the scenes or front of house.

Orkney Arts Forum

Orkney Arts Forum⁸ supports the development of arts and culture within Orkney. The forum consists of voluntary representatives from art forms including music, visual arts, literature, drama, dance, storytelling, craft, architecture and new media, and film as well as key organisations and community groups. The forum meets quarterly to discuss the priorities for the arts in Orkney and acts as a consultation group for the arts development service within Orkney Islands Council.



Andrew Motion poetry reading, St Magnus Festival 2009

The Arts Forum was originally set up in 2001 by Orkney Islands Council. The Council and other members of the Forum were keen to establish a strategic approach to arts development in the county. Forum members, Orkney Enterprise and the Scottish Arts Council (now Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Creative Scotland), commissioned a major piece of work to audit activity and the state of the arts in Orkney at that time.

Alongside its work to move forward and advocate for the arts in Orkney, the Forum has managed several specific projects such as the Highlands 2007 music commission of the poems of Robert Rendall, "Winterings" performed by the St Magnus Festival Chorus in December 2007, and several showcases for the arts including Tullimentan in 2005, Orkney Out There (OOT) in 2010, and the Orkney Creative Conference in 2015.

⁸ Visit the Orkney Arts Forum at: www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/orkneyartsforum

3. Culture volunteering as asset of social capital

The particular reason for including St Magnus International Festival as an example of good practice is primarily due to their approach to, and significant use of, volunteers.

Without volunteers the festival simply could not take place. Whilst during its history the festival has moved from being entirely run by volunteers to having a very small paid team of staff, the majority of delivery is still by volunteers. In the areas of box office/ticket sales, front of house and the technical crew, huge numbers of volunteers take part, and many more open up their homes to visiting artists and musicians, who often stay with local folk rather than in hotels, ensuring that visiting performers have a very personal and unique experience of Orkney. Many local volunteers also perform in the Festival Chorus and in other events.

The Technical Crew is an amazing part of the Festival infrastructure. A core group of local folk who take a fortnight off work every year to deliver all the technical elements of the Festival. They are also hired by other events and festivals, so professional is their work, with any hire fees ploughed back into the St Magnus International Festival.

All the volunteers are hugely proud, dedicated, and a significant asset to the Festival, including in their ability to promote the Festival locally and in their positive, welcoming approach to visitors. They certainly ensure that audience members are welcomed in the proper Orkney way!

As Francois Matarasso mentions in his report 2012 to the Highlands and Islands Enterprise: "Very little cultural activity would be possible without this gifted work... through them, Orkney's arts and culture are inextricably woven into the social fabric of the community"⁹

4. Relation to the inter-European theme of the compendia

As defined in the foreword of the State of the Arts Survey: "The term *co-creation*, in the context of this project, refers to co-creation in a free, civic context, where different citizen groups work and create together. It aims to promote social capital, mutual trust and recognition as being part of the same democratic community."¹⁰

⁹ Francois Matarasso: "Stories and Fables - Reflections on culture development in Orkney" (The Highlands and Islands Enterprise), January 2012), page 74

¹⁰ State of the Art Report. Overview of co-creative and participatory activities in the sector of amateur arts, voluntary culture and heritage. Educult, June 2018.

The case study of the St Magnus Festival indicates in general that a strong participatory culture is based on and promotes civic participation and community bonding that strengthen the local identity as well as the social capital and mutual trusts in the community.

Furthermore an important part of the activity refers to engaging international arts ensembles and taking care of visitors from outside Orkney. The festival and its participatory culture are born with a cross-border dimension and openness for and interest in the wider European arts and culture. It is a genuine world class story.

To summarise with Francois Matarasso words in Stories and Fables:

“Orkney’s culture is an **important economic asset**, both in terms of the employment and wealth it creates directly, and as an attraction for the tourists crucial to the local economy.

It is also a **vital social asset**, bringing people together in small and large gatherings, developing skills, experience and knowledge, fostering common purpose, and building social capital.

And perhaps most important **a life asset**: in opening up imaginations, building shared memories, raising aspirations, giving hope and delight – and simply making Orkney a place where people want to live.”¹¹

References:

State of the Art Report. Overview of co-creative and participatory activities in the sector of amateur arts, voluntary culture and heritage. Educult, June 2018. Published in the context of the 2-year Erasmus+ strategic partnership, Sept 2017 – Aug 2019, entitled: Bridging social capital by participatory and co-creative culture”

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¹¹ Matarasso: Stories and Fables, page 78

Case Study: Superar

By Educult



© Superar

Background of the project

Superar (from Spanish to surpass, overcome) was created in Vienna in 2009. It was the initiative of three Viennese institutions: the Vienna Concert Hall, the Vienna Boys Choir and Caritas of the Archdiocese of Vienna, with the support of the cultural department of the city of Vienna under the name “Vorlaut”, becoming “Superar” in 2011.

Superar is a non-profit organisation; it is primarily funded by the Hilti Foundation. In 2017, it counts 60 teachers working with 2,700 children and young people in six countries (Liechtenstein, Austria, Switzerland, Slovakia, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Its aim is reaching young people who are not “integrated in cultural and musical structures”. The goals mentioned by the institution are:

“Superar provides training in music and dance and offers access to the positive effects of the performing arts to all children free of charge.

Superar students:

- overcome social and cultural boundaries
- are empowered to seize opportunities
- establish dialogue across borders
- inspire their peers and communities through their work
- celebrate joint creative work with contagious joy”

By the creation of a network of music across Europe (Austria, Switzerland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Slovakia and Liechtenstein), Superar can organize joint concerts and classes across the borders in order to develop music education for children from all background.

The program highlights the positive effects of musical education and music in general for children, to develop well-being, intellectual and emotional development.

What they have done



© Superar

Superar organizes educational programs. Its base is a choir (since 2009), to which they added an orchestral program (since 2013). The lessons are free of charge, the institution furnish the musical instruments. It focuses in schools in deprived areas.

Superar intervenes in schools. The singing and instrumental lessons are open to group of pupils without any selection, and without precedent musical knowledge. It also initiated dancing lesson, in cooperation with the Viennese opera company “Vereinigte Bühnen Wien”.

The strength of the program is in its network between 6 countries. The students in every country have a common annual repertoire, which makes it easy to prepare joint concerts, between different cities or countries.

Superar mentions preparing the teachers and musicians in pedagogy, positive motivation and enthusiasm; connecting with the positive atmosphere necessary for cooperation, observed in the State of the Art report.

How this delivers on the goals described as 'bridging social capital'

To include children, the initiative focuses on the general atmosphere it proposes. The use of a network seems to be inherent to having a European initiative; it provides the opportunity for exchanges. Overall, the inter-European action allows sharing a common knowledge (annual repertoire common for the member of the networks) and discovering new cultures (through exchanges, through folk tunes).

How this relates specifically to the theme of the compendia

Superar focuses on longer projects. It has the basis of a year: a new common to the 6 countries repertoire is chosen annually. This longer period allows fostering exchanges between the members of the network.

The open and accepting atmosphere is another characteristic of Superar. It stresses positivity, and is opened to every child without selection, and without the need of prior musical knowledge. One of the aims is still to build an ensemble of high artistic quality.

By allowing the pupils to travel around the 6 partner countries, Superar addresses indirectly inter-/trans-culturality: children can experience international exchange. This is achieved with the general exchanges but also every year through the participation in Sistema Europe Youth Orchestra (SEYO), a summer camp in collaboration with Sistema Europe which has already taken place in Austria, in Istanbul, in Milan, Gothenburg and Athens. Through these summer camps, the children mix their musical education to folk tunes. These events are based on the seven dimensions teaching framework of Sistema Europe:

“the spirit of listening & chamber music, expressive storytelling, an atmosphere of love in sound, the energy of drive & dance, a focus on ease-in-playing and an awareness of the ethos of dynamic balance”.

To include children, the initiative focuses on the general atmosphere it proposes. The use of a network seems to be inherent to having a European initiative; it provides the opportunity for exchanges. Overall, the inter-European action allows sharing a common knowledge (annual repertoire common for the member of the networks) and discovering new cultures (through exchanges, through folk tunes).

References:

Superar was inspired by the Venezuelan program “El Sistema” for underprivileged children (1975). El Sistema was expanded to the world, Superar is part of the Sistema European network (see <https://www.sistemaeurope.org/>).
<http://www.superar.eu/>
https://www.sistemaeurope.org/SEYO-Sistema_Europe_Youth_Orchestra/

Case Study: Corners of Europe

By EDUCULT

Background of the project

The second case study we chose is the platform “Corners of Europe”. This platform has been running for seven and a half year, and is now terminated. This platform enabled exchange by creating opportunities for researchers and artists. There is a total count of 70 artists and researchers that participated, as well as 50 organisations and institutions from more than 10 countries.

Corners was created in 2010 six cultural institutions: Intercult (Stockholm), Exodos (Ljubljana), POGON (Zagreb), Drugo more (Rijeka), City Culture Institute (Gdansk), and Umeå 2014 – European Capital of Culture. The project was then further developed together with several institutions, new core partners and associates: Donostia / San Sebastian 2016 – European Capital of Culture, Arts Council of Northern Ireland (Belfast), ISIS Arts (Newcastle), REX (Belgrade), DokuFest (Prizren) and Teatro Pubblico Pugliese (Bari).

These cultural institutions supported the platform by providing half of the investment. The European Union provided the other half by funding the research and development phase as well as a production and presentation phase.

The platform aims to be co-creative by focusing on “stories from one corner of Europe, and re-telling them in another”. The artists collaborate between themselves and implement co-creative works of arts, including the audiences as much as possible. This project is also truly inter-European by fostering the moving of art works and artists; and by extension the idea presented by the population in one part of Europe to another.

What they have done

The different co-creations produced by Corners prove that an inter-European co-creation can be achieved without moving the co-producing audiences. Through the move of the artists, they transport the ideas of specific populations to other places, mixing the ideas with the other populations that they will encounter.

For example, the project “Playground” aims to collect games around Europe. For this project, four artists meet game players and learn about their games, before disseminating them in other places of Europe to create new connexions. They

describe games as potential “common languages that could cross different borders, both national and local”.

Another example is the artistic platform “In Between”. Between 2014 and 2017, the project has moved to another city every 15 days. Its goals are to “listen and share personal and communal stories through memories and exploring every day’s life to re-create social memory together and to understand what is important to people”. Through the platform website, they show the material they have collected during their 15 days long stay. The project creates a dialogue between different places, and a new relationship between different populations.



In Between in Ljubljana © Corners of Europe

On a same idea, the “Bridging the Silence” project gathers sound stories (“testimonies, music, poems; and oneself’s silence...”) from emotional journey survivors. The installation is being moved from cities to cities, always on a pedestrian path, to collect new stories.

“Corners of Europe” also proposes more traditional activities, by moving artworks across the partners’ countries.

How this delivers on the goals described as 'bridging social capital'

This case study shows a different type of co-creation by focusing on the movement of scientists and artists. Using a network of local organizations, the artists can travel from one place to another to transport ideas, without necessarily transport the populations. It is an effective alternative to directly moving the audiences from a place to another.

The artists and cultural organizations, as learning providers by their role of transporting ideas, can ensure artistic quality and relevance of the co-creation, by implementing a selection (or not) from a place to another.

Using artists in groups and organizations from different backgrounds and countries allows as well passing over the language barriers that could hinder an inter-European project.



Corners of Europe in East Durham © Corners of Europe

How this relates specifically to the theme of the compendia

The Corners of Europe's target groups depends from a project to another. It seems nonetheless that the projects focus on the local population, by "bringing audience closer to the art". This attachment to local population helps to foster the moving of ideas and testimonies, in a truly inter-European focus.

Focusing on local communities allows addressing the question of inter-/trans-culturality as the differences between these communities is addressed every time a project moves from a location to another by collecting different perspectives.

Most of the projects are developed for a longer time frame, as this is a necessary basis for travelling around Europe in many locations.

The project “Corners of Europe” corresponds to the criteria of an inter-European good practice.

References:

<http://www.cornersofeurope.org/>

Case Study: Slot Art Festival

By Agnieszka Dadak,
FAIE

Background of the initiative & what they do:

The Slot Art Festival is one of the largest alternative culture festivals in Poland. It's five days filled with dozens of workshops, concerts, parties, films, and seminars - as a gateway to new possibilities, friendships and contacts.

The name SLOT stands for "Society of Local Creative Centers" in Polish and it reflects a vision of creativity based on relationships and common values within an autonomous network of collectives, initiatives and organizations actively involved in their world.

The festival's history goes back to the 80's and the counter-culture of that turbulent time. In 2001 the Slot Art festival was moved to Lubiąż – an exceptional location – within the walls of the Baroque, Cistercian monastery-palace complex in Lower Silesia.



One of the Slot Art Festival events. Photo: Ola Zawada

How this delivers on the goals described as 'bridging social capital'

Because it is being run, uninterruptedly, for 25 years by a growing group of friends who are passionate about it. The goal never been just “entertainment” but to challenge and inspire.

Because firstly it is a “people’s” festival and gathering and only after that comes the music, parties and workshops. That’s why besides the music stages there are cafes and clubs organised in little spots all around the castle where people can talk, discuss, experience something together, and learn.

Because it is based on volunteers. Slot is put on by people who are passionate about it plus more than 1000 volunteers (leading workshops, giving lectures, working technically or administratively. A couple dozen people are involved all year round in preparing the festival also on a volunteer basis).

There’s not a clear border between organizers and participants. SLOT is constructed so as to allow involvement and influence on its form by those who want to join in. If someone has a good idea for something interesting and valuable to do for others there is a place for it at SLOT.



One of the Slot Art Festival events. Photo: Karolina Stępniewska

Because SLOT is also a festival of involvement. A Social Initiatives Fair is being organised where interesting organizations and projects are presenting. The SLOT is involved in the Fair Trade movement which is an interesting way to support the poor in the southern hemisphere. It's an international event as well. There are not only bands from other nations but also volunteers and participants.

Because promotes "alternative culture": Fresh, new, seeking ideas in culture which are often missing in popular media forms. Independent, authentic artists are valued, who create because of an inner need to express themselves and not because of the dictates of specialists who want more profit and sales.

Because for many that means realizing one's ideas based on the philosophy of DIY (Do It Yourself). Organisers look for artists/performers who treat the public and their message seriously, and who are not so self-absorbed in themselves or their art. We also look for a public who is not interested in a one-sided view of things or in just consuming, but who are interactive, willing to dialog, cooperate, and experience something together with others.

Because SLOT is more of a movement than an organization. Local creative centers are located all around Poland where groups of people cooperate with SLOT. Usually these people are connected to SLOT and realize their ideas on a local level with SLOT days, film discussion groups, concerts and parties.



One of the Slot Art Festival events. Photo: Mateusz Bilski

Current situation

The Festival, as a grassroots initiative organised by volunteers, takes place every year for 25 years now, growing and developing.



One of the Slot Art Festival events. Photo: Ola Zawada

Potential:

Great potential to develop

How this relates specifically to the Inter-European theme:

Quoting answers from an interview with a participant-organiser (involved in SLOT for 10 years):

Among the long-term results are:

“Awareness, that you may do something without many resources. That it is possible to organize similar events in a home-town. People get to know each other, there are societies created – for ex. people coming from the same city. There are “slot – teams” initiated, that continue to work together after the festival.”

“Definitely it is a possibility to meet people you wouldn’t probably meet otherwise. Usually at the workshops there are meeting people somehow connected with the subject. Slot is different. It is a meeting of people from various subcultures, from various countries, of various interests. The social networks expand.”

Social significance

“Definitely, Slot supports building trust. You need to use and develop your social skills. There are very various people meeting. It turns out, that people are creative, free in what they do. That there are various perspectives. Such meetings affect everyday life then, affect relations, provoke positive emotions.”



Photo: Mateusz Szklarski

Personal gains:

“Self-confidence. Feeling, that things are possible. New ideas, ways, methods, tools – you may use while running workshops. New contacts, friendships, still lasting and developing also after the festival. New perspective concerning the artistic world.

Understanding of the difference between the “honest art” and a “dead product” (if there is no honesty, joy in it).

A 10-years long journey: from a participant – through a volunteer – to a chef of a section, who since two years organizes so called “Art Room” at the festival (a creative meeting space for the festival participants)”.

Translations are also done by volunteers.

References:

<http://slot.art.pl/en>

Case Study: The Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations in Sejny

By Agnieszka Dadak,
FAIE

Background of the initiative & what they do:

The Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations” in Sejny was established by the voivod of Podlaskie Province, in 1991.

Pursuant to the “Agreement on the Joint Management and Financing of the Activities of the Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations”, signed by the Voivodship Marshal and the Ministry of Culture in 2000, the Centre is financed now jointly by the Podlaskie Voivodship and the Ministry of Culture.

At the moment, the facilities of the Centre include three buildings, i.e.: The Borderland House, the Old Yeshiva and the White Synagogue. The Centre studios operate daily, they include: The Centre for Documentation of Borderland Cultures, the Studio for Regional Education, Sejny Chronicles Studio, Music Studio, New Media Studio, Fine Arts Studio, Exhibition Studio, the Small Museum of Sejny, the “White Synagogue” Gallery, and Sejny Jazz Co-operative.

The artistic work teams working at the Centre include: Sejny Theatre, Klezmer Orchestra of the Sejny Theatre and the editorial team of the Sejny Almanac. Among the cyclical, long-term projects run by the Centre, there are: Glass Bead Game, Borderlander, Borderland House, Borderland School, Gate of the East, Open Central and Eastern European Regions.

The Centre is connected/cooperating closely with The Borderland Foundation, which was established 1990. It is an independent, non-governmental institution that does not engage in any political or economic activity. All the programme activities of the Foundation focus on propagating the borderland ethos and bridge building between the people of various religions, ethnicities and cultures.



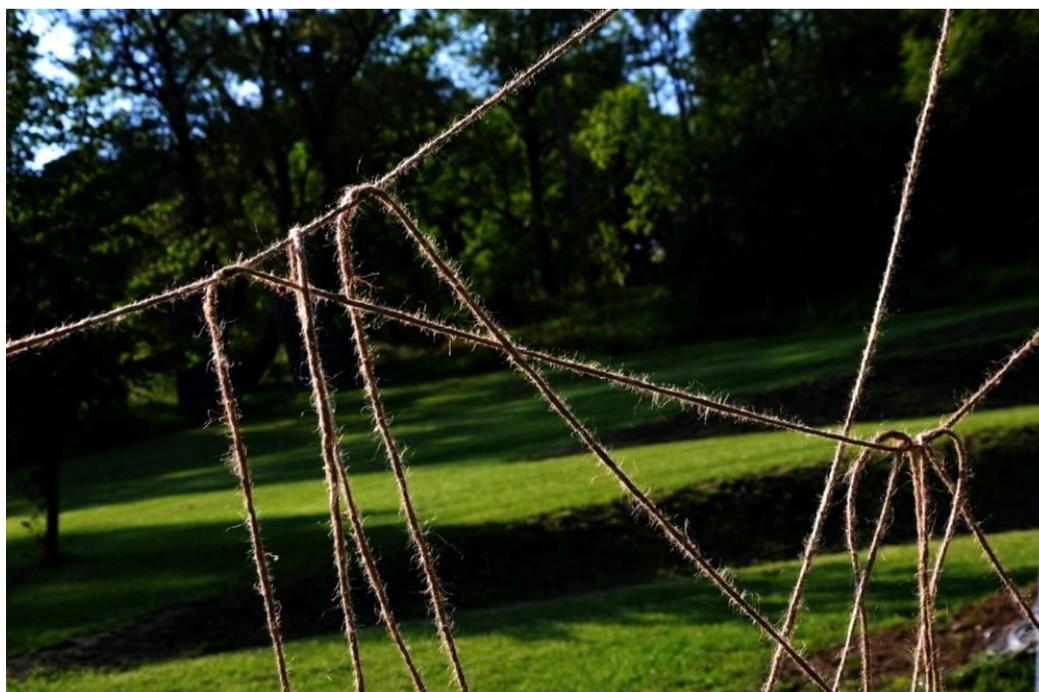
The Bridge Builders Village, ©Fundacja Pogranicze

The Foundation was set up by a group of culture animators, whose cooperation dates back to the mid 1980s and the organization of the annual Village Meeting, International Alternative Culture Workshop in Czarna Dąbrówka.

The Foundation has its headquarters in Sejny but its offices are located currently in Krasnogruda. In 2003, the Society of the Borderland Foundation Friends was established, an organization registered in the U.S.A, with its office in Alexandria, near Washington. The Foundation's activities are supported mainly by grants from various institutions and organisations, as well as by private donations. The Foundation closely cooperates with the Center Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations. Both institutions are connected through similar goals, as well as, statutorily, through the Cooperation Agreement.

Why/ How this delivers on the goals described as 'bridging social capital'

Because all the programme activities of the Foundation focus on propagating the borderland ethos and bridge building between the people of various religions, ethnicities and cultures. In the facilities – the manor in Krasnogruda (Kransogruda Manor House, located at the Polish-Lithuanian border, used to be owned by Czesław Miłosz – an important Polish writer – family) organises artistic and educational activities in the context of multicultural neighbourhood.



The Bridge Builders Village, ©Fundacja Pogranicze

Because in 2011 there was an International Centre for Dialogue founded, located in the Krasnoruda Manor. Its activity focus on the multicultural legacy of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its new meaning in the unified Europe.

Because the Foundation has been just awarded the European Cultural Foundation Princess Margriet Award for Culture 2018 an annual award for cultural change makers in Europe. The Award honors inspiring examples of people and organizations who dare—through various modes of cultural expression and discourse—to imagine and enact a more inclusive, shared European space.

Because Borderland has been working with the children on discovering multicultural heritage of the Sejny region, re-discovering stories from the Lithuanian, Polish, and Russian Old-believers families who used to live there, for years. The program of Sejny Chronicles was carried on with the same group of children for 4 years in a series of meetings and artistic (theater, music, and plastic) workshops, resulting in theater spectacle Sejny Chronicles and a clay-model reconstructing the Sejny town, based on the the stories of Sejny's past inhabitants and those who live there now. Also the Regional Education Workroom, dedicated to children, is working.

Because of realisation “The Tales of Coexistence” idea, that develops key lessons of the “Borderland” looking for new, more capacious forms of artistic and educational work, based on the art of interpersonal dialogue and human

coexistence. Implementing the fully elaborated by the "Borderland" concept of deep culture - an action deeply immersed in the social and natural environment, it focuses on the process and long duration, geared towards social change and development combining: arts and crafts with knowledge, ecology with the empathy towards the Other, people's engagement with a high artistic level, and tradition with modernity.

The cycle of "The Tales of Coexistence" was inaugurated in 2013-2014. An element of "The Tales of Coexistence" cycle is "The Invisible Bridge", aiming to express the most important aspects "Borderlands" philosophy and practice and at the same time address the most important challenges of the modern world - the art of building bridges in open, diversified and disintegrated multicultural communities of the cities and regions.

Current situation

The Borderland Foundation has been just awarded European Cultural Foundation Princess Margriet Award for Culture 2018¹² – as the first Polish organisation. The 10th anniversary of the Award had a theme 'Courageous Citizens'- sought to highlight and celebrate those remarkable and courageous agents of cultural change who inspire to create lasting social alternatives based on an inclusive vision of Europe.



Mystery of the Bridge ©Fundacja Pogranicze

¹² ECF is the founder of the Princess Margriet Award for Culture, an annual award for cultural change makers in Europe, established in 2008. The Award honors inspiring examples of people and organizations who dare—through various modes of cultural expression and discourse—to imagine and enact a more inclusive, shared European space: <http://www.culturalfoundation.eu/pma/>

The laureates have been recognised for their outstanding work addressing urgent contemporary challenges through a cultural lens. Borderland has been selected for bringing the arts of many cultures that have tragically disappeared from a rural community back to the community and is giving this cultural expression new life through young generations. Over the 28 years since it was founded, Borderland has become a lively cultural agora, archive and reflection space thriving within the complex, conflicted history and diversity of Sejny, Poland — a “borderland” of the EU.

Potential:

Great potential to develop.

How this relates specifically to the Inter-European theme of the compendia:

Quoting some press releases and opinions of the participants and organisers of “The Tales of Coexistence” programme:

“The Village of Bridge Builders in Borderland was preceded by many meetings, conversations and evenings dedicated to “The Tales of Coexistence” series. They were particles that created a fragment of a larger whole, a brick, a contribution to erect, to an appropriate level, a bridge between different people, different nations, or even different continents (as in the case of the Masters participating in the VBB). The foundation of the functioning of the Sejny “Borderland” has for over two decades been the art of bridge building basing on multiculturalism, but also on old disagreements or conflicts, as well as on positive relations.”

[Iwona Danilewicz \(2015\), *The Mystery of the Bridge tool place in Krasnoruda, Niebysław Suwałki, Dawka kultury, 24 August 2015*](#)

“Its building blocks are knowledge and experience we have collected on different borderlands of the world. We are interested in “The Invisible Bridge”, the things that during the transition to the other side are associated with hospitality, fear, anticipation, risk, memory and love. We are interested in relationships between human beings, between man and nature, between man and the Other. The builder of the bridge is a craftsman exploring the art of coexistence of different people. Perhaps, it is the most important skill in life, in our multicultural world - observes Krzysztof Czyżewski. -- It's for exploring it that we have organized the Village of Bridge Builders, a constellation of studios dedicated to the creation of various elements of bridges.”

[Monika Żmijewska, *The Invisible Bridge on the border Full of signs and emotions, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 21 August 2015*](#)

Krzysztof Czyżewski (Borderland Foundation): “The bridge is a symbol that has been abused or made look infantile in the contemporary culture. But, it is difficult to find a more suitable symbol to describe our attachment to the whole. We attempt to perceive it anew.”

Lidia Ostałowska, Medea or Bridge, „Wyborcza.pl”. Duży Format 2 September 2015

“The Invisible Bridge was built by us with other builders from Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Uganda, Israel, Great Britain, Norway, the United States and Belarus.

The Invisible Bridge was built from music, stories, ceramics, songs, textiles and wood participating in workshops theatre, art, music, nature, meetings and conversations.”

[Jacek Bożek from the Gaja Club about the Village of Bridge Builders](#)

References:

<http://pogranicze.sejny.pl/?lang=en>

http://pogranicze.sejny.pl/the_tales_of_coexistence,1773.html

Essential Findings

Inter-European dimension: deliberate or side effect?

Here you could read about various forms of the Inter-European dimension of artistic and cultural events with the bridging effect, all over Europe, showing that there are several solutions to choose from:

The Inter-European factor may be seen in transporting ideas – moving of artworks, artists, scientists – and creating dialogue between different places and a new relationship between different populations – from one part of Europe to another – without moving the local populations, as it was the case of the ‘Corners of Europe’ platform initiatives. You may also bring other traditions/cultures to the place people live – as the international dance groups to Höfn – one of the most remote cities in Iceland.

You may find Inter-European dimension in the place you are in, by empowering local inhabitants of different origins to present parts of local various cultures (for ex food) to others – making the little village really cosmopolitan – as it was done in Höfn.

Inter-European dimension may be also deliberately planned while designing an initiative – as it was in the Superar project providing opportunities for exchanges, sharing a common knowledge and discovering new cultures. Also the Borderland Foundations’ founding idea was bridge building between the people of various religions, ethnicities and cultures.

Inter-European dimension may also appear organically – when a ‘small’ event organised locally becomes interesting for international public and grows – as it was the case for Slot Art Festival, the Lobster festival in Hornafjörður or St Magnus International Festival of Orkney.

Various aspects of bridging

For all the six initiatives presented, context of co-creation in a free, civic context appears, where different citizen groups work and create together:

In Hornafjörður – small community distant from nearest towns, there is a lively cultural life created and co-created by the local inhabitants.

Typically, over 400 members of the local community perform at the St Magnus International Festival each year. Over 250 people volunteer to help make the Festival happen, either behind the scenes or front of house.

Superar project builds on high accessibility and no entry-barriers. Participation is opened to every child without selection, and without the need of prior musical knowledge.

For the Corners of Europe platform, attachment to local populations was shown by addressing differences between visited communities every time the project moved from one location to another, by collecting different perspectives.

The people involved in organising Slot Art Festival underline that SLOOT is more of a movement than an organization. It is being run, uninterruptedly, for 25 years by a growing group of friends who are passionate about it. Organisers look for artists/performers who treat the public and their message seriously – and are looking for public who is not interested in a one-sided view of things or in just consuming, but who are interactive, willing to dialog, cooperate, and experience something together with others.

Last but not least - The Borderland Foundation and The Borderland Centre concentrate on discovering multicultural heritage of the region, re-discovering stories from the Lithuanian, Polish, and Russian Old-believers families, based on the stories of Sejny's past inhabitants and those who live there now.

All those activities include the aspect of promoting social capital, mutual trust and recognition as being part of the same national-democratic community. Bridging social capital and social inclusion may not always be seen as a primary goal, still these effects appear, even unconsciously, making the people involved more tolerant, more opened to otherness, proud of and accepting for the multicultural Europe.

"Secrets" for success

How to make a cultural/artistic event a community bonding, with the bridging dimension, in Inter-European context? The case studies described give few tips how to do it. The 'success' factors seem to be:

- Strong involvement of volunteers both from the local community and outside;
- Good cooperation with the local key stakeholders (municipality, businesses, local population etc.);
- Basing on long-term, consequent work of many various people which makes these events well established and sustainable - allowing for longer-term bonding;
- Offering a multi-art form, possibility to get involved both in artistic and organizational/ technical activities, and offer suitable for all age groups – so everyone could find something interesting for himself/herself;

-
- Taking care of open and accepting atmosphere;
 - Recognising both economic, social and life assets of co-creative activities.

All those hints may bring an effect of turning the invisible bridges into visible ones – demonstrating new bonds and increased trust between former segregated groups.

Work with the Conclusion

We do hope that this publication would inspire you – as the manager and/or volunteer of the sector of voluntary arts, amateur arts and heritage – to plan and deliver new cultural/artistic initiatives with the bridging, Inter-European dimension for the communities you work for.

We also hope that reading the good practices gathered here increased your awareness concerning the power the artistic and cultural activities may have in building bridges between former segregated groups; bridges built from “...music, stories, ceramics, songs [...] participating in workshops theatre, art, music, nature, meetings and conversations”.

Please feel free to draw and jot down your own conclusions – how to initiate, implement and evaluate new participatory and co-creative activities with a high potential of bridging social capital. Below you will find some supporting questions. Enjoy!

1. Do we need co-creative activities with Inter-European dimension in our community?

 No

Are you sure? If so, thanks for reading!

 Yes


Continue with the workbook...

2. What would we like to achieve for the community through co-creative, Inter-European activities?

3. Inter-European aspect: deliberately planned or side-effect?

Deliberately planned - pros	Side effect - pros
+	+
+	+
+	+
Deliberately planned - cons	Side effect - cons
-	-
-	-
-	-

4. How could we get new volunteers for our bridging cultural/artistic activity?

4a. Volunteers from the local community?

4b. Volunteers from outside?

5. Who and how could help us/ who would mind = Who are the key stakeholders for the planned event? How will we involve them?

6. The assets of our community, that may help us deliver Inter-European bridging initiative:

--

7. Francois Matarasso's words in Stories and Fables test

7a. How could our cultural, Inter-European event become an economic asset for the community?

Assets to gain	Our ideas
employment and wealth	
attraction for the tourists crucial to the local economy	

7b. What kind of social assets would our cultural Inter-European event build?

Assets to gain	Our ideas
bringing people together in small and large gatherings	
developing skills	
Developing experience	
Developing knowledge	
Fostering common purpose	
Building social capital	

7c. What kind of life asset would our cultural Inter-European event build?

Assets to gain	Our ideas
opening up imaginations	
building shared memories	
raising aspirations	
giving hope and delight	
making my community a place where people want to live	



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