

## SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS, BRIDGING, WP04. State of the Art Survey Context: Inter – European.

### I. LEARNING PROVIDERS

#### Respondents:

- 1) RD, manager in an NGO active in the culture field (wanted to be anonymous).
- 2) JŁ, specialist in an art institution (wanted to be anonymous).
- 3) Mrs Alina Kierod, President, Stowarzyszenie Pomocy Dzieciom i Młodzieży (non – anonymous contribution)

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#### A Introduction

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##### **A1 Please describe in what creative activities you have been involved in and in what role you participated? (What creative sector? What were your responsibilities? Where and how often did it take place? Who are the other participants?)**

**RD:** *Co-organised an international training event for creative sector staff, including cultural activities. Responsibilities involved measuring the training needs and expectations & preparing training programme. The event took place once, in the summer 2017. Participants were culture sector managers and volunteers, from 5 European countries, working in various creative fields: theatre, radio broadcasting, visual arts, music and dance etc.*

**JŁ:** *Is organising international artistic residences in Bielsko-Biała since 2011. Sector: visual arts. Responsibilities: first contact with the artists selected, support at organisation of their stay, logistic matters, contact person during residences. The residences take place once a year, in the summer, in Bielsko-Biała, last for a month. There are 3 – 7 artists from Europe (and sometimes also outside-Europe) participating.*

**Mrs Alina Kierod:** *Is an organiser and coordinator (applying for funding, organisation, logistics, reporting), since 2005, of the international youth exchanges. There are young people from Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Slovakia, Czech Republic taking part. The methods of work applied are creative-based. Creative sector: multi-art forms: creative writing, theatre, dance, singing, puppetry, photography. The exchanges usually take place in the summer/autumn in Poland. Participants are young people.*

##### **A2 How would you describe the idea and objectives of the creative activity you have been involved in? (What was goal for the activity? What are the target groups that participate? What do they gain from their participation? What are the results of such activities?)**

The objectives of the activities mentioned were:

- Testing training programmes for managers and volunteers of the culture sector organisations;
- Inter-cultural exchange, taking the artists out of their everyday context to create a site-specific art-work;
- Breaking stereotypes about Poland;
- For the organisers – learning artists active in other cultural contexts;
- Youth development through non-formal education;
- Building new contacts and networks for cooperation, that would work together after the project.

The main target group were:

- Creative sector workers and volunteers from 5 EU countries;
- Visual artists from Europe and outside Europe;
- Young people from Poland and neighbour countries;
- Indirectly: Wide public, both local and tourists.

The participants gained:

- Contacts and inspiration from their colleagues working in the same field, in other countries;
- Nice projects created (site specific art-works in the public space of the city);
- The organisers: enrichment, upgraded understanding, learning about otherness;
- The artists: possibility to concentrate, for a month, just on the art. Inspiration by working "somewhere else". Learning other artists (they are sharing a flat);
- The spectators: experiencing something "exotic", a hit of different culture – still, expressed with an universal art language; feeling the world is more close to them.
- The youth participants: personal development, learning, practicing communication in foreign language, new experiences of tolerance, cooperation, new relations. They also learn planning, organising, effective communication. Are preparing something attractive together. Are learning about other countries and cultures – by the way – learning more about their own region.

Results mentioned:

- Site-specific art-works in public space of the city (could be murals, sculptures, performances); final exhibitions in the art gallery;
- Common works of the participants: theatre plays, fairytales, exhibitions... etc;
- International experience, some of them – for the first time.

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## **B Social Relevance of Creative Activities**

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### **B1 Thinking about the activities, how would you describe the atmosphere they take place in, for example the interaction and exchange between participants? (Are participants in these activities generally open to other people, do they look for new contacts?)**

All the respondents said the atmosphere was rather good and participants were, in general, open to other people.

Other experiences and comments:

- Some participants preferred to spend time in their national group rather than integrating with the others;
- Atmosphere depends also from the culture the artists come from. Some are more withdrawn. Sometimes there are friendships, sometimes – conflicts. Still – the artists are aware, from the very beginning, that they will be expected to interact with the spectators; are encouraged to that. The organisers are trying to choose those open for new contacts and experiences;
- The atmosphere is something you need to work about. It is important to prepare the participants, so they would cooperate. For this purpose the first days are devoted to integration;
- Openness for the others – it differs. Sometimes there are persons who are not willing to integrate. Still – there is always time for reflection, and the organisers are taking care of building good atmosphere of the event.

### **B2 What do you think are the long-lasting impacts of such activities on the participants? Do you believe that in these activities participants can meet people they normally would not, does it change their social network? (Could you provide any examples?)**

As a long-lasting impacts, the respondents mentioned:

- The new contacts made are sustained after the end of the event. For example, people participating in the event are still in touch within their national groups. The artists are staying in touch with the organisers also after the residences;
- Some participants come back, on their own hand, later;
- The participants make contacts with other local actors, for example NGOs. There was, for example, a common project of an artist and an NGO working in the field of ecology.
- More cultural awareness, other perception of differences;
- Change of attitudes and breaking stereotypes about Poland and the Poles;
- Upgraded language skills;

- More active attitudes. People involved in activity in Poland continue being active when they come back to their countries;
- Sometimes: there exchanges are helpful at deciding on continuing education or choosing a profession. Many young people decide, for example, to study in Poland.

All the respondents agreed, that the events they spoke about enabled meeting people who would probably never meet otherwise. The participants social networks got expanded.

**B3 How would you describe the social relevance of these activities? Do you believe that they are important for building trust, solidarity and understanding between people, and if so, why and how? (Could you provide any examples?)**

All the respondents agreed, that the activities they organises were important for building trust, solidarity and understanding. Usually face-to-face meetings support building understanding between people. Show we are thinking differently – and that it is beautiful. They also enlarge openness to others, fighting xenophobia. An example: Getting encouragement to be active also back home, becoming a local animator – having learnt how to be a volunteer.

**C Co-Creative Activities**

**C1 Have you been involved in any activities that have specifically targeted different participant groups and aimed at bringing together people from different backgrounds; for example people from different age groups, people from different cultural or national backgrounds, the inclusion of poor people, people from different regions? Could you describe this experience?**

All the respondents confirmed, that the activities they spoke about were deliberately targeting different participant groups – in the inter – European context.

As a result, there is something new created, some new quality.

**C2 What are the positive, what are the negative aspects in organizing and leading activities that bring together people from different backgrounds (does not matter if the activity specifically targeted different groups)? (Is it difficult to reach various groups of people? Do you have to make a specific effort in the programme of the project? What are specific things one has to think about when organizing, etc.?)**

All the respondents agree, that there are more positive aspects of organizing inter-European creative activities than the negative ones.

Positive aspects mentioned were:

- Possibility to adjust the event programme to its' participants. Various social groups have various needs – so it is important to adjust the content so it would be comprehensive;
- Experiencing the universal language of arts, intercultural exchange, meeting the others, learning each other. Cooperation not being ended with the end of the project;
- Shaping positive attitudes towards international cooperation;
- New emotions – when it comes to culture, history. If there are emotions involved, people got more interested in the subject (and common history of the neighbouring countries is often difficult).

Negative aspects mentioned were:

- Sometimes: little integration between national groups;
- Conflicts. Sometimes caused, by example, by insufficient knowledge of English (language of communication).
- Sometimes history is a problem. People have learnt some attitudes at homes, and sometimes it is getting difficult. Still, the organisers are aware of the challenge and prepared to deal with it.

The respondents did not experienced problems with recruitment of participants from various countries. There did also not experienced problems with inviting spectators – people are coming.

While organizing this kind of events, it is important to agree on technicalities in advance, the expectations of participants, the details of the projects they would like to realise. Also planning the timetable of events with participation in advance – so to have time to promote them. It is important to prepare the participants for meeting “others”, and then – to give a great care for integration, building cooperation.

### **C3 What makes such activities successful, what are the reasons for such an activity to be successful in term of bringing together people, building trust between people?**

The respondents underlined, that:

- Face-to-face meetings, discovering, that we have much in common. The aspect of “being different” is also important, since it brings curiosity.
- Openness of the participants and the organisers is a success factor. Acceptance and respect for otherness. Understanding.
- It is important to find time for learning each other. Then – to exchange interests and experiences, choose a space of common interests, and do something interesting together, have a common experience. Give space to the partner to show what he is best at and appreciate it. This is the basis for planning future, sustainable cooperation.

### **C4 How would you describe the outputs and outcomes of creative activities that bring together different people?**

Outputs mentioned:

- Art works created in the public space of the city;
- Newly created network, contacts;
- Outdoor games, fairy tales, performances, happenings, newspapers... organised;

Outcomes mentioned:

- Learning new country;
- Getting know new people, learning about each other;
- Exchange of experiences;
- What you will learn on the way, what you experience;
- Learning the (organising) institution, the town, its inhabitants, other artists;
- Experiencing something new in life;
- More culture knowledge, dialogue built;
- Bigger openness;
- Discovering role models (which is important for the young people);
- Opportunity to discuss European issues together.

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## **D Needs / Future**

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### **D1 What would help you in order to support and realize co-creative activities through which different groups of people are brought together?**

- Better channels of promoting such events. Knowledge, how to reach wider groups of participants;
- A network of volunteers who help at organisation, translation, are guides...;
- More finances would be good – more artists could be invited, also those more experienced ones to upgrade the prestige of the event;
- Being a member of wider networks. Some standards developed;
- Appreciation and receiving expressions of gratitude.

### **D2 What do you wish for in terms of the creative activities you are involved in? What would be helpful in the future?**

- More professionals as a support, speaking foreign languages;
- More sustainable network of volunteers;

- More money. Or just more people who could apply for money (writing projects for example);
- Having own space for hosting exchanges, not just the hired one.

### **D3 We have reached the end of the interviews. Do you have any things you would like to add that we have missed?**

*Worth to underline: Value of the Intercultural exchange; learning openness; preparation to global changes; help at understanding otherness. International cooperation strengthen the organizing organization. If the organisers' team love culture, theatre, sailing.. it is great if they can do it also "at work".*

## **II. STAKEHOLDERS**

### **Respondents:**

- 1) IKC, manager in a culture institution (wanted to be anonymous).
- 4) Mrs Ewa Kozak, Wydział Promocji Miasta Bielsko-Biała /Bielsko-Biała City Promotion Department (non – anonymous contribution)
- 2) AMD, manager in and NGO supporting 3rd sector culture/creative field organisations.

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### **A Introduction**

#### **A1 Please shortly describe your affiliation and the perspective of your association/institution on creative activities taking place in your surroundings? (What activities are taking place? Do you cooperate in these activities? Who are the participants and are they also your clients?)**

**IKC:** *The cultural institution has a building, a winter-garden, a library, an archives, a mediateka. This is a public space, open for all interested, an "agora".*

*If there is somebody coming with an idea for a creative activity – and the idea fits to the mission of the institution – the space, as well as organisational/merits/advisory support is being offered by the institution.*

*There are both big and small projects realised there (for ex. Concerts, exhibitions, artistic competitions, meetings with writers, storytelling events...), with various groups of participants, including international ones.*

*The participants of the events are also the clients. Many of them comes back, as private persons, for ex. to see a new exhibition or to attend an event.*

#### **Mrs Ewa Kozak:**

*The Bielsko-Biała city supports, in terms of organisation and promotion, numerous cultural and artistic events. There are various persons and organisations cooperating.*

*As examples, we will be talking about two of them: The Partnership Cities Festival (PCF), where the Promotion Department is an initiator and main organisator, and **FotoArtFestival (FAF)**, organised by the Photography Centre Foundation and co-organised by the Promotion Department and the Culture and Arts Department of the Bielsko-Biała city.*

*PCF invites both official representatives of the cities (majors, vice-majors, chiefs of departments) and culture sector representatives (artists, music bands, dancers, visual artists...) – of the B-B city and the partnership cities. At the moment B-B actively cooperates with 13 partner cities. The festival takes part in June on the old town, lasts 3 days. In 2018 there will be 4<sup>th</sup> edition.*

*The PCF is dedicated the B-B inhabitants, tourists, Polish and foreign guests. The group of recipients is very wide. The events are organised in the public space, are open to everybody, there are no tickets. What is more, there is a touristic offer of the partners presented.*

*FotoArtFestival i san event supported by the City (since the 1<sup>st</sup> edition in 2005, organizationally, financially, in terms of promotion). It takes place every 2 years; there was 7<sup>th</sup> edition in 2017.*

The participants often become also clients: are coming to B-B privately. There are new contacts, initiated informally by the PCF participants.

**AMD:** My organisation specialises in supporting other NGOs in their development. Many of those NGOs work in the field of arts and culture, organising exhibitions, shows, concerts, performances.. we are supporting them in terms of searching for international partners, external sources of financing, organisational issues.

Yes, there organisations are our clients.

**A2 How would you describe the relevance of creative activities in your surroundings? (What are the objectives for the activity? What are the target groups that participate? What do they gain from their participation? What are the results of such activities?)**

The objectives of the activities mentioned were:

- In line with the mission of the institution: to promote the idea of solidarity, democracy, cooperation.
- To learn each other (representatives of the partnership cities);
- To promote – both the organizer and the partners;
- The creative activities organised by NGOs had very various objectives: to teach, to integrate, to develop, to voice a problem or issue...

The main target group were:

- The target groups are very diverse, there is no specific target group. When it comes to foreign participants – most of them is in the age of 40 – 50;
- The event is directed to the city's inhabitants, tourists, but also to local NGOs, cultural institutions, schools... since the representatives of the partnership cities also represent there groups;
- Target groups are – widely speaking – adults and young adults in a process of life-long-learning.

The participants gained:

- Upgrade of knowledge, historical and sociological, for ex. about the history of Poland, learning about solidarity, activities aiming at common good;
- Upgrading skills of cooperation, communication;
- Skills, experiences, new contacts, new awareness.

Results mentioned:

- Upgrade of knowledge;
- Integration, future cooperation in other projects;
- Better understanding of the historical and cultural differences;
- Gaining new “promotional ambassadors” of the city, who praise their stay in the city, the organization, good reception, cultural and artistic programme. They also praise the architectural beauty of the city, and the surrounding nature. The “ambassadors” promote B-B in their regions;
- There are theatre plays, concerts, performances, creative workshops organised. New international cooperation initiated.

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## **B Social Relevance of Creative Activities**

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**B1 How would you describe the personal relevance of such creative activities for participants? (Do you believe that in these activities participants can meet people they normally would not, does it change their social network? Could you provide any examples?)**

All the respondents confirmed that the activities they support enable the participants to meet people they would probably not meet in other circumstances. Thanks to new contacts and integration the social networks of the participants expand.

Other comments and examples:

- There are social media groups or blogs created by the events participants. For ex. Within the Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian project directed to young culture sector managers, who meet regularly;



- In the projects realised there is a space to present the culture of the participants – in order to learn. For example meals are being organised in restaurants serving cuisine from the participant's countries/regions.
- Cooperation of the Bielsko-Biała Polish Visual Artists Circle with similar organisations in the partner cities – where there are painting, sculpture, photography exhibitions organised;
- Romanian partner city – Baia Mare – where the B-B artists' works are presented in a renewed creative space – so called Artists' Colony. There are artistic residences there planned;
- FotoArtFestival gathers participants from all over Poland and other European countries. Best artists – photographers meet. The exhibitions are often first open in Poland (a premiere). There is an "Autors Marathon" organised, when the artists tell about their work, inspirations and discuss with the public. What is important – this event gathers many young people.

**B3 How would you describe the social relevance of these activities? Do you believe that they are important for building trust, solidarity and understanding between people, and if so, why and how? (Could you provide any examples?)**

All the respondents agreed that the events they are supporting are important for building trust, solidarity and understanding.

Other comments and examples:

- The mission of the institution itself includes citizenship activation, solidarity building, inspiring young generation, European remembrance. One of the inter-European projects realised is devoted integration of migrants living in the city the institution is operating in. It is running for 3 years now;
- The most valuable are the workshop-type of projects; they include bigger diversity and bigger sustainability. Where there are less persons participating, they are doing something together (for ex. designing a game) – there is integration through activity – of better value than "conferences". Often also the local people are invited to participate;
- The advantage of the artistic activities is, that there is no political dimension here (it is not being recalled). What joins, unites the participants is culture, promoting multi-culturalism, tolerance;
- There is also trust, involvement, friendships being built between the staff of various institutions and organisations in the partnership cities. An example of its effectiveness is cooperation that continues after the events;
- Common activities, where people plan and realise activities together, usually bring better understanding, trust. In longer project – where the participants have time to learn more about each other – also solidarity and appears. Especially the cultural activities – where everybody can take part, leaving behind "everyday life and problems", creating something new, are helpful here.

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**C Co-Creative Activities**

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**C1 Do you know any activities that have specifically targeted different participant groups and aimed at bringing together people from different backgrounds; for example people from different age groups, people from different cultural or national backgrounds, the inclusion of poor people, people from different regions? What was your experience with such activities?**

All the respondents admit that many projects they support are deliberately directed to various participant groups, including inter-European ones.

Experiences:

- The recruitment of participants is being done in specific countries;
- The partnership agreements between the cities include specific areas for cooperation. Cooperation in the field of culture, tourism, sports and education seems to be the easiest one. Experience shows, that the contacts are passed over to other institutions and organisations. Long-lasting relations are inspiration for initiating new ones;
- For the FotoArtFestival there are artist photographers from all over the world coming, meeting diverse audience of photography lovers, both professional and amateur;
- For NGOs – quite often - creative activities were used as a tool, not a target itself. They help at

achieving other goals – for ex. building understanding, cooperation in international teams, or just having fun together. Groups using artistic, creative activities as a tool are usually better integrated, the atmosphere is positive, cooperation works, people just like each other. It helps in the success of the common initiative.

## **C2 What do you believe are the positive aspects what are the challenges of such activities that bring together people from different backgrounds (does not matter if the activity specifically targeted different groups)?**

### Positive aspects:

- Are related to the quality of cooperation with the partners;
- The institution's staff is learning, they are getting know new people, gaining new knowledge;
- Wide involvement of the volunteers in some events organisation, including many young people. Local youth is strongly benefiting;
- Learning other cultures and nationalities, exchange of opinions and experiences;
- A school of tolerance;
- Opportunity to initiate new contact; due to bilateral visits – people learn from each other;
- For the city as a supporting body: showing its potential – artistic, economic, in sports...;
- Positive aspect for an NGO is that it gains – as an organisation – more prestige and recognition thanks to inter-European activities. The members/volunteers are becoming more proud, more self-confident, motivation grows. The position of the organisation is better, its people learn.

### Challenges:

- Keeping long-time contacts with the participants after the project ends;
- Admitting participants through application forms. It requires extra time devoted for finding common language with the group already recruited;
- Purely linguistically – sometimes somebody does not speak English well enough. Then the question “how to help him/her?” comes along. Maybe it would be worth to verify language skills of the participants?;
- Sometimes also the workshops turns out to have an “overloaded programme” – while it is important that the participants would have time not only for “activities”;
- Young people involvement is some events. There is a need for wider youth representation at this event, that would need to be supported by the schools and teachers;
- So called „human factor“ sometimes becomes a challenge. The partner contact-persons, responsible for international cooperation, need to be aware of the value of such a cooperation. Sometimes happen, than when a contact-person is being replaced by a new one – due to retirement for example – the new person is not equally involved (lack of motivation) in cooperation. Then the long-term good cooperation sometimes is broken, and it is much time needed to restore it.
- For NGOs: Inter-European cooperation is more difficult. Sometimes there are conflicts. Various visions for the organisational development appear. Administration becomes a challenge.

## **C3 How would you describe the outputs and outcomes of creative activities that bring together different people?**

### Outputs:

- Passing over initiated contacts to schools, NGOs, other City departments;
- Showing the best sides of the city, its accomplishments,
- Initiating new contacts abroad – thanks to showing the B-B potential;
- There are new publications about the city and its offer, in foreign languages, developed.

### Outcomes:

- For the institution: extending the network of partner-organisations, reaching to new audience, learning how to cooperate well;
- Possibility to meet, in one place, very various people: of various age and social groups, the artists and spectators...;
- Building good image of the city, its authorities; The festival guests appreciate high quality of organization and often adapt the solutions they have seen in B-B in their cities. The organisers receive



*expressions of gratitude and appreciation; this makes inviting prestigious guests easier to the other city events;*

*- There are new friendships built between the city workers in various countries; trust is being built – which makes organization of the other events easier.*

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## **D Needs / Future**

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### **D2 What do you wish for in terms of the creative activities you in your surroundings? What would be helpful in the future?**

*- Taking better care of the long-term aspect of the projects realised. So the groups could still cooperate later, be close to the institution, support next groups. There's not always time and money for that;*

*- More projects presenting the history of (the Polish) Solidarity movement, to be realised in other countries;*

*- Bigger financial support of the regional entrepreneurs for the event;*

*- To invent what new could be proposed and showed to the (recurring) guests – as well in city itself as in the region;*

*- Hotel facilities are also a challenge. There is too little offer of the medium price range;*

*- For the NGOs: more good examples, showing the benefits of inter-European cooperation in the field of culture and arts, available to everybody – well promoted;*

*- Easier procedures to receive co-funding for this kind of activities.*

### **D3 We have reached the end of the interviews. Do you have any things you would like to add that we have missed?**

*Worth to underline:*

*- Inter-European projects are very important for the institution. They take a great care about them. They are important and developmental for the team of the institution;*

*- Each event, where there is the city's Promotion Department involved, is very well visible in the media – both the traditional and the social ones. There is very good cooperation with the media;*

*- A good – and appreciated - idea turned out to be also on-line, live transmissions of some events – for ex. The Autors Marathon during FAF. Thanks to that persons who couldn't attend the event personally could also participate;*

*- International cooperation is one of the most valuable one. It should be promoted and supported. Creative activities are great tool to support and promote lifelong learning, improving the quality of life and well-being of people.*

## **III. LEARNERS**

### **Respondents:**

- 1) AD, participant of the “Community theatre” international workshop in small Spanish village (wanted to be anonymous);
- 2) Mery, participant of creative workshops at inter-European Slot Art. Festival in Poland (wanted to be anonymous);
- 3) ANW, participant of several long-term voluntary missionary placements (wanted to be anonymous).

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## **A Introduction**

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**A1 Please describe in what creative activities you have been involved in and in what role you participated? (What creative sector? Where and how often did it take place? Who are the other participants?)**

**AMD:** *Participates in a “Community Theatre” international workshop, as a participant. Creative*

sector: community theatre. The workshop took place in Spain in May-June 2013, lasted 9 days. The other participants were people of various age from all over Europe. There were around 20 participants. Also some of the local inhabitants of the village and the migrants living there, where the workshop took place, participated in the preparations and the final performance.

**Mery:** Participated in many artistic, manual, architecture – related workshops at the Slot Art. Festival, one of the biggest alternative culture festivals in Poland, with an international dimension. Participates in Slot for 10 years (the event has around 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary now). Sector – you could tell it is visual arts. Workshops are open for everybody, not only for professionals. Slot takes place once a year, lasts for a week. Workshops last 4 days, there are various available, each participant is free to choose any of them. The participants are both from Poland, from Europe, and outside Europe.

**ANW:** Took part in several long-term, missionary voluntary placements, working as a participant - volunteer at the summer camps in Kirgistan. The placement lasted 5 – 6 weeks; a shift for one group of the youth lasted 10 – 12 days. The participants were the youth – teenagers and students. Participated in theatre, drama, pantomime creative activities with the camps participants. The other volunteers – participants were people from various European countries, including also Asia and USA.

### **A2 What are your expectations when participating in creative activities? (learning of skills; getting to know other people; etc.)**

The respondents mentioned:

- To practice Spanish, since learning the language and the workshop was planned in Spanish, to spend some time in Spain;
- To meet people from all over Europe;
- To experience working with the community theatre method;
- As a creator – and sometimes – reproducer (graduate from a Fine Arts Academy) - to learn new techniques, materials, participate in various workshops;
- Expectation towards using drama-techniques was to facilitate communication between people speaking different languages, especially at the very beginning of the camp-shifts. Ice-breaking, showing that communication is possible even between people from remote parts of the world;
- To make evident similarities between participants from various countries/cultures – showing that people are sharing emotions, sensitivity;
- Sharing traditions and cultures of the participants.

### **A3 How would you describe the idea and objectives of the creative activity you have been involved in? (What was your personal objective for the activity? What are the target groups that participated? What do people gain from their participation? What are the results of such activities?)**

Personal objectives:

- Learning Spain and Spanish;
- Experiencing new method of creative work;
- To get a possibility to try (new things) without being judged, without assessment. Participation in an “experimental zone” where you don’t need to be perfect;
- To reach to the participants, to show that the volunteers are not „different”, „strangers”;
- To show the participants’ traditions, beliefs, legends – by using symbols, pictures, drama;

Target groups:

- All interested in relationship dynamics in mixed groups, amateur theatre members, volunteer in social service associations, cultural and/or social promotion organizations from all over Europe;

- Youth, young adults. But also new generation – children of the participants. As a result there is a new offer – just for children – being created. Sometimes also grandparents come – to take care of the youngsters. So the age group of the festival is expanding;
- The summer camps participants and the volunteers from Europe/other parts of the world.

#### Results:

- Gaining new, intercultural experience;
- Meeting others interested in similar field of work from various countries;
- Experiencing something new, creating something (a performance) from scratch, together (the result was a theatre play, where the scenario, costumes, decorations – were all invented and made by the participants, with participation of the local community);
- Possibility to take with you what you had produced during the workshop(s). If the workshops last longer – there are also some exhibitions in the festival space organized.
- The participants of the creative activities gained better self-awareness;
- Experienced, that the language barrier is not that difficult to overcome;
- Gaining appreciation, recognition for their country of origin – being able to show its culture and traditions in a creative, attractive way;
- Creativity and patience were activated - people had a good time together. After few days the verbal communication was also functioning well. The non-verbal forms remained as a tool for communicating cultural, artistic issues.
- Understanding, new friendships, increased trust towards the volunteers, more “family-like” atmosphere, ice-breaking. Seeing a common goal.

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## **B Social Relevance of Creative Activities**

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**B1 Thinking about the activities, how would you describe the atmosphere they take place in, for example the interaction and exchange between participants? (Are participants in these activities generally open to other people, do they look for new contacts?).**

*All the respondents said the atmosphere was good, positive. Participants – were generally open to other people, new contacts.*

#### Other comments:

- People were interested in the subject, learned, cooperated and created together;
- Participants were also open to other, including the locals, eager to experience and learn something new;
- An atmosphere was a „a positive chaos” – in a good sense. The festival takes place during vacations, where there is more feeling of freedom, people do what they want because they want;
- People are rather open for each other. But of course there are also “positive freaks” present, who do not necessarily integrate with the others. The Slot society creates “a village” – composed of very various people – but still living in one village;
- The atmosphere was very positive – since the persons who were there wanted to be there. There was involvement, creativity, activity, good time.
- The participants were very open to new knowledge, contacts, new people. Wanted to learn. For most of them it was very important experience. The work was going well.

**B2 What do you think are the long-lasting impacts of such activities on you and on other participants? Do you believe that in these activities you can meet people they normally would not, does it change your social network? (Could you provide any examples?)**

*All the respondents agreed that the activities they participated in enabled them to meet people they would normally not need. Their social network got expanded.*

Long-lasting impacts mentioned:

- Learning the reality of living in some other country;
- Learning the way an NGO in some other country is working;
- Learning new people from all over Europe;
- All the discussions, exchange of information and experience;
- Satisfaction from creating "something from nothing";
- Some people take with them w willingness to continue what they have experienced during the festival. For ex. – participated in a crochet-hook workshops – and discovered they like to do it – so they continue at home;
- 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; as an effect of the festival, there are smaller, weekend – events organised by regular Slot participants in many towns – so called "Slot Fests" – in between festivals (in Kraków, Wrocław, Gdańsk, Zakopane..)
- Also the designers of the festival meet regularly, in regional groups, in order to plan the next edition, share ideas.
- Being a volunteer develops social and civil competences. Gives opportunity to learn new cultures, getting new cultural awareness. Makes new contacts and relations possible. It also gives ideas for activities in the future, including new competences. Teaches time and activities management, cooperation skills, defining own expectations, goals and attitudes. It also gives satisfaction, increase in self-esteem. Ability to function in different culture. Increases openness to others, their needs. Gives a clearer view on what a "volunteering" means for me. It also gives the feeling of meaning, achieving some goal.
- The new contacts are being sustained, there are friendships.

**B3 How would you describe the social relevance of these activities? Do you believe that they are important for building trust, solidarity and understanding between people, and if so, why and how? (Could you provide any examples?)**

All the respondents agreed that the activities they took part in had a potential for building trust, solidarity, understanding.

Comments:

- Common work, creation, cooperation – undoubtedly builds bridges. Increases trust, wakes up solidarity, builds understanding;
- Satisfaction from achieving common goal, delivering something valuable, new, creative, where everyone could offer something from himself/herself;
- An example of solidarity: most of the workshop participants supported financially the hosting foundation by buying artistic object produced by the migrant camp inhabitants;
- Such events: a festival – event workshop type, are learning events. You may learn much more than while studying. 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 them, affect relations, provoke positive emotions.
- Thanks to trust you discovered new opportunities. For ex. Certainty that it is possible to organize interesting events in a short time, that people will come, are interested. That you can do something in a short time, of a very good quality, in a good atmosphere, without much pressure – and it will work well;
- The atmosphere is important. You also need to be aware of the cultural dimension, the political atmosphere;

- Positive attitudes of the participants on both sides (both participants and volunteers) are important – so the safety feeling could appear;
- The attitude of the arriving volunteers – their respect, humility towards the other culture is essential. The readiness to learn about themselves, and not to compete.
- Their new experiences may also help after coming back to the volunteer's home country. Drama, for example, helps to overcome communication problems, shyness.

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## C Co-Creative Activities

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**C1 Have you been involved in any activities that have specifically targeted different participant groups and aimed at bringing together people from different backgrounds; for example people from different age groups, people from different cultural or national backgrounds, the inclusion of poor people, people from different regions? Could you describe this experience?**

Two of the respondents described the activities they took part in as deliberately directed to different – inter-European – participants.

Experiences:

- Diversity increased creativity. Such a final performance, including cultural elements from all over the world, various cultures, could never be created by people from one social or national group;
- The assumption of the mission volunteering itself is, that specialists from all over the world shall be involved as volunteers.

In one case, a challenge also was, that the participants were living, in fact, in the middle of a migrants camp. People from two different worlds met: representatives of satiated Europe, and the people who left their homes to have a chance for normal life, and are trying to adjust in unknown conditions. Normally, there would be very little common fields. The fact that some of the migrants decided to get involved into co-creating the performance, new planes of cooperation, communication were created, where speaking the same language or having the same cultural background is not necessary. This was amazing experience.

One of the respondents said that in her world there is no longer such a perspective existing that there is something „for the Poles” and something „for the others”. The world is open, you may go anywhere. There are things just for people (as general). The organisers of the festival also do not divide participants into “from Poland” and “from abroad”. It is, for example, natural that there are interpreters/translators present and available. There are no [national] borders, since Europe is not divided any more.

**C2 What are the positive, what are the negative aspects in participating in such activities that bring together people from different backgrounds (does not matter if the activity specifically targeted different groups)? Is, for example, the communication more difficult?)**

The respondents agreed that there are more positive aspects than negative ones.

Positive aspects:

- Meeting various people, of various background;
- Widening intercultural perspective. Become more aware of how life may look like, learn different scenarios;
- Increasing intercultural awareness; upgrading openness, tolerance;
- Satisfaction from inventing doing something completely new, “from scratch”, together;
- Overcoming barriers, crossing borders;
- Seeing some other part of the world;
- The educative artistic value. Getting open for new things, new (artistic) techniques – both in terms of

the “head” and manually;

- Upgrading the communication skills, getting more sensitive, more aware, better self-control, motivating yourself and the others. Facing challenges, creativity.

Negative aspects:

- Negative aspects may appear when there are participants with little empathy and openness, feeling fear for “the others”. Disrespect for different culture, tradition – which generate conflicts that could be avoided. This risk is small, since this kind of persons usually do not participate in such activities;
- Sometimes some people “choke on” what is happening on the Slot Art. Festival, believing it is a “different reality” and then mourning, getting nostalgic, for a long time that this “different reality” is over and you have to wait till the next year. Being passive till the next year. For Mery there is no “different reality”. Slot is just a part of the „everyday reality”;
- Lack of courage of some participants – to try new things;
- Discrepant expectations of the volunteer and the receiving organization – this should be clarified before a person goes volunteering abroad;
- Religion may be a problem, if too much significance is assigned to it;
- The non-verbal form of communication sometimes rises concerns if good understanding is possible – symbols, pictures - may be interpreted differently than the author imagined.

Concerning communication:

In one case, all the participants of the workshop spoke English well, so there were no problems with communication here. Still – most of us could not communicate with the locals – who only spoke Spanish or other languages (the migrants). In the other case, communication was a challenge on the very beginning. Still – applying the creative, theatre/drama related techniques was very helpful at overcoming this problem.

**C3 What did you gain from creative activities that bring together different people?**

- Better understanding of life and it’s scenarios;
- Better understanding of myself. Increased openness, increased cultural awareness;
- Great, intercultural experience;
- Satisfaction from free creation, doing “something from nothing”.
- 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);
- New ideas. A “drive to activity” after coming back to my own country. Motivation to undertaking challenges. Satisfaction – things are possible! Developing own competences, learning new ones.

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**D Needs / Future**

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**D2 What do you wish for in terms of the creative activities you are involved in? What would be helpful in the future?**

- Creating opportunities so more people could experience this kind of activities. Those who met in Spain were already open, searching for new experience, culturally aware people. Involving those less open, full of stereotypes, not feeling the need to learn new things – would be a challenge. There persons would need some extra preparation (pedagogical, cultural) to be able to benefit from intercultural experience. But as a result we would have more open, more tolerant and more solidary



Europe;

- *Material things. For example more materials for the workshops;*
- *Maybe bigger periodicity – so there would be more “accompanying events” being organised (additional slot-type activities in between festivals);*
- *Having time to participate in all these accompanying activities.*
- *Involved, sensitive people who would like to take part in such activities;*
- *A space. Institutions, that could support at creating the space. For example an amateur theatres base. Thanks to that, it would be possible to propose new workshops, supporting at overcoming communication barriers, initiating contacts, overcoming shyness. And by the way – showing other beliefs, other traditions.*

**D3 We have reached the end of the interviews. Do you have any things you would like to add that we have missed?**

- *Maybe just the fact that cultural, artistic activities are unique because – if well organised - you do not need to know the language, have previous experiences, or special talents. If well organised – everyone can take part and create something unique and valuable with people totally different from himself/herself. Increased openness, better understanding, self-awareness – come as an added values;*
- *You shouldn't be an organiser of a creative event if you really don't know it „from inside”, haven't experienced it first as a participant or volunteer. A good advice for everyone: all the voluntary experiences are very important – you should take part, use there possibilities. You will gain self-awareness – what is not always possible just “going to school”. People will give you this chance, will offer you help – and things get successful;*
- *It would be good if more initiatives of this kind could be possible. Voluntary work – understood as a help to others – shapes attitudes, values, builds social bridges. Upgrades the feeling of making sense, meaning of your own life.*

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