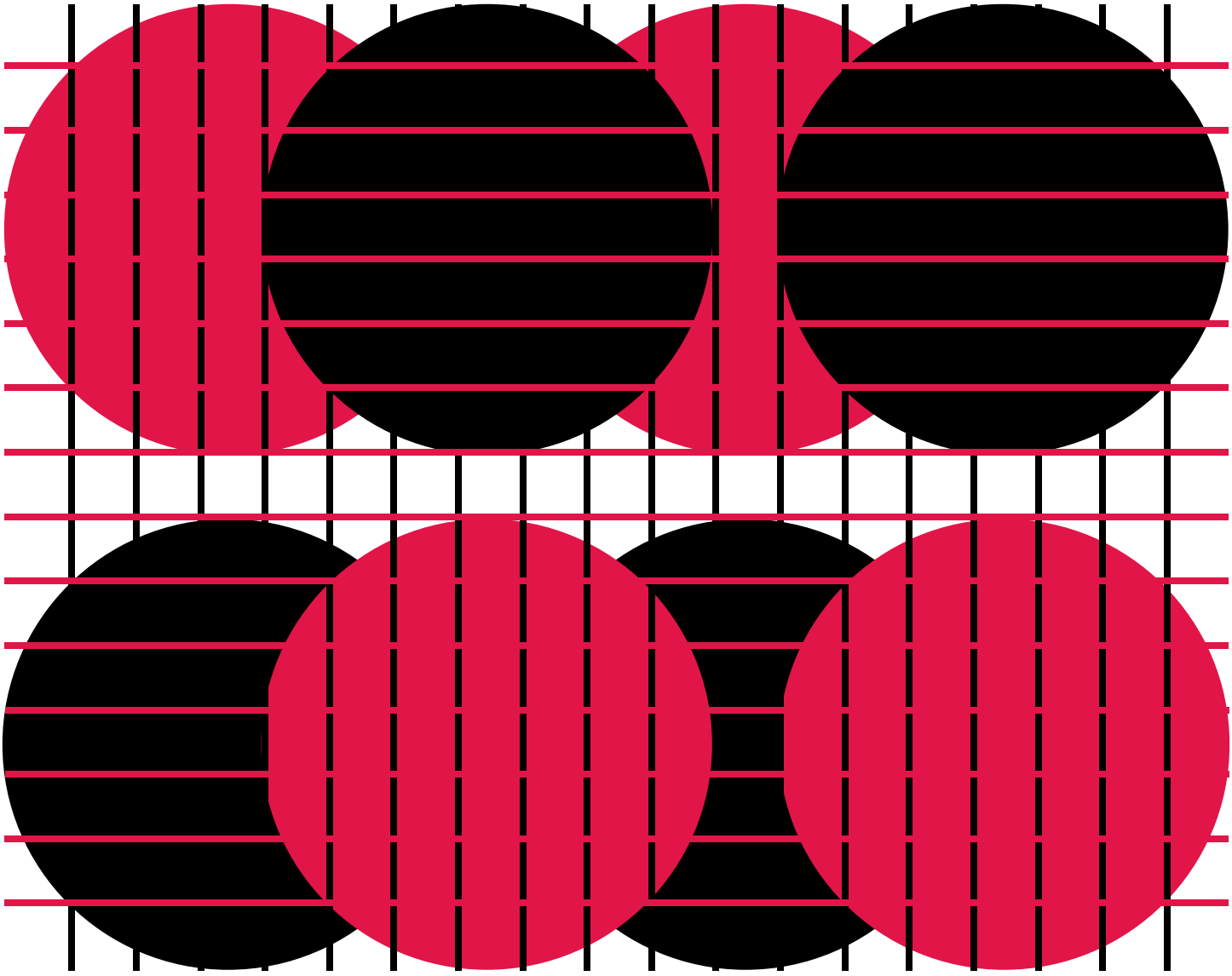
SPACES OF TRANSFORMATION IN ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMME REPORT



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1. Introduction

This report is a record of Spaces of Transformation in Arts Education (SPOTing), a three year Trans Europe Halles (TEH) professional development, peer learning and knowledge exchange programme between eight cultural centre partners from across Europe.

The document starts by briefly contextualising the origins and main aim of the SPOTing programme and then sets out its key methodological principles, adapted from participatory action research (PAR) frameworks. SPOTing's structure is based on partner devised research questions and corresponding research values applied to 'testbed' projects; existing or newly formulated cultural and other activity intended as a practical way to test, examine, reflect on, adapt and learn from different arts education and youth participation approaches. Additional SPOTing mechanisms designed to further support and facilitate reflective working and peer learning, criticality, exchange and dissemination included 'critical friend' relationships, seminars and research interviews. The research interviews formed the basis of a collaborative writing process between the SPOTing researcher and partners which generated the eight case studies featured in this report.

Just under three years worth of action based research spread across eight European organisations has generated a lot of data which this report cannot claim to represent in its entirety. Instead the case studies outline each partner's research journey, including the struggles and successes of their different approaches, documenting how their different implementations of reflective working affected their decision-making processes, their understanding of their work, the development of their skills, thinking and relationships and ultimately their ambitions for themselves, their centres and the future of arts education overall. To orientate the reader there is a brief summary of all the case studies which includes each partner's primary research question, key learning and outcomes.

The report then presents a synopsis of the key overall learning from the SPOTing programme which attempts to offer an honest critical reflection on partners' shared challenges, exploring some of the failures of the programme alongside its successes. Partners should be commended for being prepared to open themselves up to the existentialism that action based reflective learning can provoke and for their willingness to share their sometimes challenging experiences in public.

Finally the report concludes with recommendations which include what the SPOTing partners have identified is needed to support this approach, raising questions about the ethics, desirability and sustainability of quantitative output focused arts and culture funding which limits the flexibility, time and space needed to test, reflect and adapt within projects in order to collaboratively learn and develop with our communities, audiences and youth. For those wishing to learn more about applying or adapting SPOTing's methodology, some of the resources produced for the SPOTing partners are included in the appendices at the end of the report. The bibliography includes the sources they were drawn from as well as additional material used by the SPOTing partners and researcher to inform their learning.

2.
Context

SPOTing was informed by its partners' previous experiences within the TEH Arts Education Platform formed in 2015, which became the Arts Education Hub in 2017, [1] part of a larger TEH project, Factories of Imagination: Investing in Cultural Changemakers. [2]

Through the Arts Education Platform and Hub, TEH member organisations presented their work, facilitated workshops and hosted study visits for individuals from the network. Three Arts Education Hub steering group members who went on to participate in SPOTing also hosted annual seminars in Gothenburg, Belfast and Esch-sur-Alzette from 2017 to 2020. SPOTing was therefore conceived largely as a result of these experiences and exchanges, identified as a research led way of building on the professional development work of the Arts Education Hub to try to develop deeper critical reflections on arts education and cultural participation through practice.

SPOTing was also shaped by a collective interest in reframing the idea of evaluation as a more reflective process of ongoing learning in order to help strengthen practice. At the 2019 Arts Education Hub seminar hosted by Beat Carnival in Belfast, keynote speaker Gerri Moriarty observed that the processes of evaluation in the UK had been skewed to the needs of funders rather than practitioners, suggesting instead that its "proper purpose – as the word evaluation in English implies – is to demand that we think about our values and whether we are actually living them." [3] Moriarty made the distinction between reflexive and reflective practice, defining the latter as "a more collective effort to think critically." [4]

"Everything that can be counted doesn't necessarily count, everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted." [5]

Having a researcher who had been part of the Arts Education Hub [6] devise a research design which informed the programme structure, proposed to and agreed by the SPOTing steering group made up of the eight SPOTing partners and managed by TEH, also helped partners address some of the complex socio cultural issues that had arisen through Arts Education Hub exchanges. For example at the 2020 Arts Education Hub seminar hosted by Kulturfabrik (KUFA) in Esch-sur-Alzette, questions were asked about the changing role of cultural centres and their relationship with communities and wider social participation, enquiries which KUFA took with them into their SPOTing project.

"Is inviting the participants to an already conceptualised project an act of participation?
Or should the participatory project start with shaping the idea together?
Or should the role of the cultural centre completely shift from being an actor that offers ideas to being an actor that helps to implement the ideas of the community?" [7]

The distillation of some these observations, questions and ideas alongside the collective experiences gained through the Arts Education Hub, fed into the formulation of a methodology specifically designed to facilitate peer learning and knowledge exchange through practice, to support the main overall aim of SPOTing; to stimulate and strengthen the field of arts education internationally.

[1] More information can be found online at www.teh.net/project/arts-education-hub/
[2] More information can be found online at www.teh.net/project/factories-of-imagination/
[3] Gerri Moriarty, Keynote Presentation, in Beat Carnival Report, "Imagine Create and Critique." TEH Arts Education Hub Publication, 2019, 19. www.beatcarnival.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/TEH-Arts-Ed-Seminar-2019-REPORT.pdf
[4] Ibid.
[5] Albert Einstein quoted in ibid, 22.
[6] The SPOTing researcher took part in all three Arts Education Hub seminars through her association with Beat Carnival.
[7] Trans Europe Halles, "Arts & Education 2," TEH Arts Education Hub Publication, 2021, 7. www.teh.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/TEH-Publication-Arts-Education-2-09_2021-WEB-Spreads.pdf

3.

SPOTing Methodology and Research Design

3.1 **Starting Points**

Designing a research framework that would accommodate all the international partners involved, taking into account their different; artforms, organisational structures and resources, working practices, cultural and social contexts and range of participants and audiences, while also attempting to build on their considerable breadth and depth of existing knowledge and experience was an obvious challenge that required an adaptable methodology.

To get a more complete picture of each partners' approach to collecting and using qualitative data to understand and support their practices, at the beginning of SPOTing the researcher asked them to provide a synopsis of their existing data collection. What emerged was a complex picture which included many different types of formal and informal quantitative and qualitative data collection processes which included; reflective meetings, discussions and feedback forums, physical games and creative exercises, mind mapping, project diaries, evaluation postcards, forms, surveys, questionnaires and interviews, as well as externally commissioned evaluation reports and market and audience research. This data was typically collected from a mixture of participants (including in some cases their parents, teachers and or carers) audiences and staff. It was generally summative, [8] seeking to specifically understand, refine and develop project processes and future planning and inevitably was also carried out to satisfy the requirements of various funding bodies.

"We do not learn from experience [...] we learn
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Reviewing the relevant literature on comparable participatory programmes which incorporated a focus on practice based research, participatory action research (PAR) stood out as offering a basis for an adaptable methodological approach which was compatible with arts education practices and could centre the partners and their participants as co-researchers with agency and responsibility for their own learning. Jean Mc Niff and Jack Whitehead's extensively practice tested work and structures formed the touchstone around which the key elements of the SPOTing methodology were built, with the deceptive simplicity of their central cycle of "values, reflection and action" [10] imagined as an endlessly rotating project wheel, acting as the main anchor point of all the partners' research projects and the lens through which they are understood.

In the early stages of SPOTing a period of three to four months was designated purely for planning before recorded 'activity' began, although this was different for each partner. A broad idea of what activity could encompass, which included talking, meeting and thinking time was used throughout SPOTing, with partners left to decide with who and how this was done. During this initial planning phase the basic principles of SPOTing's PAR adapted methodology were proposed and set out in online meetings, with resources produced by the researcher for partners to use in their project genesis and development as desired. [11] In early 2021 partners were then asked to collectively present and share synopses of their research topics and questions as well as answering 'starting point' questions about their project plans, later used as a baseline reference point to track changes in thinking. [12] During this period the SPOTing researcher and project manager also had one to one meetings requested by some partners to discuss their project proposals, offering advice as well as signposting to additional resources if needed.

[8] Summative evaluation takes place at the end of an activity while formative evaluation is used as part of an ongoing learning process in order to inform its outcomes.
[9] John Dewey quoted in Chrissie Tiller, "Power Up," (London: Creative People and Places, 2017): 11.
[10] McNiff and Whitehead refer to the "living theory" of "values, reflection and action" describing it as an ongoing cycle. "You judge the quality of your action research in relation to how you live your values of theory – practice integration, transparency in research, the living out of values." Jean McNiff and Jack Whitehead, You and Your Action Research Project, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010) Third Edition, 209. For practitioners inhabiting the role of researchers as SPOTing progressed, I have found it more natural to adapt the order slightly to values-action-reflection to embed McNiff and Whitehead's central thesis that values should be lived in practice within formative rather than summative cycles.
[11] See Appendix A: SPOTing PAR Based Project Planning Checklist.
[12] See Appendix B: SPOTing Testbed Starting Point.

3.2 What is a Methodology?

François Matarasso has highlighted the ambiguities in much of the language used in arts participation, [13] in this project's case further exacerbated by the nature of working across an international network with complexities of meaning created not only by different social settings, contexts, organisation types, histories and experiences, but also the act of literally and figuratively translating ideas and theories.

Methodology, not to be confused with methods as it sometimes is in practice, is understood as the overarching rationale for the SPOTing programme as a whole, adapted from the basic principles of PAR. [14] The SPOTing methodology used PAR principles as a guide to help partners identify the reasons for their action; the action being the practical activity each partner chose to take that formed the basis of their SPOTing project, driven by their research questions. In addition each partner defined compatible research values understood as their primary means of both reflecting on their action and guiding their methods. The SPOTing methodology therefore framed the partners' formulation of research questions, activity design or selection and their methods, driven by the central cycle of h Š ö P µ : g Š § H Þ g 2 µ ù µ § H Þ , to more fully examine their own practices and processes; ultimately taking ownership of and responsibility for their own decision making within a common framework.

SPOTing's PAR based methodological mantra of action and reflection also informed the ongoing collection of data through reflective diaries and critical friend pairs, as well as the researcher-partner interviews and the various interactive peer learning methods used in the SPOTing seminars.

3.3 Why and How: identifying and applying values in practice

If in broad terms a methodology is the explanation of why you are doing something and your chosen methods are the how that have to be compatible with your why , then within a PAR framework a research question and research values have a similar why and how style relationship.

Part of the attraction of a PAR style methodology and the use of some of its corresponding methods was the chance they offered to fulfil the desire, previously expressed by some Arts Education Hub participants, to develop and challenge themselves more deeply through practice. McNiff and Whitehead characterise PAR processes as going beyond what can be an overly pragmatic concept of 'best practice' often present in professional fields of youth work and education, resulting in a collection of 'tried and tested' methods which lack a clearly understood and consistently applied value base or rationale. Therefore the why of projects can easily get lost or become instrumentalised, especially without the how value informed methods used to guide and reflect on them. Instead as McNiff and Whitehead explain, PAR seeks to actively and deliberately make space for reflection and constant questioning in order to determine the ways that self identified values are present in and lived through practice. The SPOTing methodology has therefore attempted to distill the essence of a participatory and peer learning practice which unites "action (what you do) and research (how you learn about and explain what you do)." [15]

3.4 Testbeds and Reflective Diaries: learning through doing

SPOTing's 'testbeds' were a way for partners to ring

[13] Matarasso considers the vagueness of the term participatory art itself, particularly when used in the context of arts outreach often occluding various histories such as cultural democracy, arts activism and community arts; movements and practices which are sometimes at odds with the inbuilt hierarchies of such work when overseen by large cultural institutions. François Matarasso, A Restless Art: How participation won, and why it matters (London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2019), 25.

[14] It should be noted that McNiff and Whitehead and others use Action Research which is a term often favoured in educational settings, described as "a family of practices of living inquiry that aims, in a great variety of ways, to link practice and ideas in the service of human flourishing." Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury, eds., The SAGE Handbook of Action Research Participative Inquiry and Practice (London: Sage Publications, 2008), 1.

[15] "Action research is about two things: action (what you do) and research (how you learn about and explain what you do). The action aspect of action research is about improving practice. The research aspect is about creating knowledge about practice. The knowledge created is your knowledge of your practice." McNiff and Whitehead, You and Your Action Research Project, 5.

fence their SPOTing activity in order to reflect, adapt and learn from it. Testbed was the name given to all the activity carried out under each partner's SPOTing project, which included planning, thinking, meeting, training and any evaluation or consultation work undertaken, as well as creative participatory projects where applicable. Partners either devised specific testbed activity which addressed their research questions or identified some of their existing activity as a testbed that they followed through SPOTing, sometimes using a combination of both. Testbeds therefore became partners' primary source of data, with their online reflective diaries a key mechanism by which this data was in theory [16] aggregated, regularly reflected on and understood, accessible to the SPOTing researcher, other partners and the project manager.

The reflective diaries were based on McNiff and Whitehead's action research principles and questions, in particular their call to "communicate the significance" [17] of PAR processes advocating a cycle of observations, descriptions and explanations. Partners were therefore asked to fill in the following each month:

1. What happened this month?
[Description of activity]
E.g. Account of "Action"/"Inaction"
2. Why? [Explanation of activity]
E.g. Decisions made, by whom and how, rationale, values compatible?
3. What has been learned?
E.g. Process, practice, individual, group, ongoing?
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E.g. How/Will this affect; project, group, individuals, practice, wider contexts?
àØŠH µhÞ®µ §µ Š2µ o P ¦Š:Þ Ð o P2 2µÜµ§
[e.g. Participant feedback, facilitator feedback, stakeholder observations, please describe] [18]

The final question in the reflective diaries about evidence, foregrounded the partners' autonomy in choosing the forms, frequency and sources of feedback that fed their testbed reflections. This also aimed to highlight the range of voices they were including or not. In participatory research multiple stakeholders and participants are typically positioned as co-researchers and understood to be experts by experience, [19] with PAR favouring the valuable depth and insight available through such firsthand lived experience, knowledge and interest. Compensating for undue research bias due to limiting potentially critical sources or differing viewpoints for example, is something that most PAR processes address by actively seeking and involving multiple voices, something that was discussed and acknowledged in most partners' desires to 'go deeper.' [20] However it was ultimately up to the SPOTing partners how much or how little they directly included their testbed participants and other stakeholders in their reflective research processes. [21]

"Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose." [22]

It is also important to note that although

[16] Due to problems most partners had with regularly filling in their reflective diaries because of a range of issues explored in section 6 of this report, SPOTing Key Learning, in 2022 they were changed from monthly to quarterly entries.
[17] McNiff and Whitehead, You and Your Action Research Project, 96.
[18] See Appendix C: SPOTing Reflective Diaries.
[19] The term 'expert by experience' occurs in many different fields using participatory forms of research highlighting the view that participatory researchers do not need a professional grounding in traditional social science research methods. The use of such terms can be traced back to the ideas set out by Paulo Freire on developing bottom up rather than top down social and cultural participatory processes which embody his concept of praxis; "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it." Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 30th anniversary edition, (New York: Continuum, 2005), 51.
[20] Responding to some of these desires we designed an optional ethics session for interested partners which included an online presentation and clinic style workshop, which took place May 11, 2021, as well as the production of an accompanying resource document (available with the participants' consent for all partners to access). Natalia Pierzchawka, the TEH European Solidarity Corps Volunteer assigned to SPOTing during its first year, led the session, her expertise and collaboration focusing on the ethical considerations of the partners' research projects was extremely valuable.
[21] SPOTing's methodology for a variety of reasons including practicality, resources, partners' baseline knowledge and experience has instead advocated through initial researcher led PAR and PAR ethics project planning presentations, workshops, meetings and resources, that partners think carefully about the inclusion of their stakeholders and beneficiaries at various stages beyond co-creating content or contact time, making sure their project design and structures match up with their chosen research questions and underpinning values investigated in their value(s)-action-reflection project cycles.
[22] Zora Neale Hurston, Dust Tracks on a Road (New York: Harper Perennial, 1942), 143.

conceptually guided by PAR principles [23] such as casting SPOTing partners in the role of active co-researchers rather than passive subjects of a research process, SPOTing is divergent from the wider scope and scale of PAR often used by communities of interest due to necessary limitations in the programme's resources and remit. Typically PAR is used to underpin shared commitments to specific and collective change making, for example by involving affected stakeholders in all or multiple project stages. Instead the SPOTing methodology informed by PAR and adapting some of its key ideals and methods, is intended to be interpretable as "an orientation to inquiry that seeks to create participative communities of inquiry in which qualities of engagement, curiosity and question posing are brought to bear on significant practical issues." [24]

3.5 **Peer Learning Mechanisms: critical friends and seminars**

A large part of SPOTing's purpose was centred on advancing peer learning which was reflected in the overall programme structure and research design. Despite hosted study visits having been written into the original SPOTing application, which had been an effective method of in depth peer learning within TEH's Arts Education Hub, this element did not receive funding approval so had to be dropped. Therefore the introduction of a critical friend format as an element of SPOTing's research design was an attempt to address this gap. Critical friends although used as a component of PAR, represents a slight point of departure in SPOTing's case as this role was not someone outside the process offering an external perspective as is more typical, but instead directly involved the partners acting as each others' critical friend.

SPOTing's critical friend pairings were intended to help partners develop and strengthen their critical thinking through meeting one to one to share and reflect on their testbed experiences with each other outside the group setting of SPOTing seminars or online meetings. This PAR adaptation was therefore a pragmatic way to support and cement partners' peer learning and relationships by offering regular points of comparison with peers going through a similar but not identical research process. Once baseline starting points covering their research questions, values and planned actions had been received from each partner, the researcher and the project manager assigned the partners into critical friend pairs according to their research question, topic or organisation type, also accommodating requests for match ups.

Drawing on McNiff and Whitehead's use of Jürgen Habermas' theories on communicative action [25] and "intersubjective agreement" [26] as assessment criteria, initially the intention for the critical friend pairs was to meet quarterly, prepare a short project update, review each other's most recent monthly reflective diaries beforehand and afterwards fill out a form for their critical friend answering the following:

1. Comprehensibility: Did the synopsis presented make sense to you? Was it clear?
2. Truthfulness: What evidence was described? Did it support the claims made?
3. Authenticity: Did the project activity match the project values?
4. Appropriateness: Did the synopsis take other factors/viewpoints into account?

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[23] It is also relevant to consider the wider pedagogical origins and histories of PAR as a force for democratising knowledge and facilitating bottom up approaches to achieving social justice present within the work of Paulo Freire in education and Augusto Boal in the arts. Gary L. Anderson, "Can participatory action research (PAR) democratize research, knowledge, and schooling? Experiences from the global South and North," International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education 30, no.5 (April 2017): 427-431, DOI: 10.1080/09518398.2017.1303216.

[24] Reason and Bradbury, Handbook of Action Research, 1.

[25] For more on Habermas' thinking on what he calls communicative action and its relationship to the production of cultural knowledge see Jürgen Habermas, Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason, trans. Thomas A. McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1981), 140-152.

[26] McNiff and Whitehead set out the idea of "social validation" used in different forms of participatory action research peer assessment processes to ensure research validity and robustness, based on the idea of harnessing collective critical analysis. "Social validation is when others test the validity of what you are saying in light of your evidence. This means also considering the validity of the evidence itself, and coming to a decision about whether or not it, and you, are to be believed." McNiff and Whitehead, You and Your Action Research Project, 195.

[27] See Appendix D: SPOTing Critical Friend Feedback Form.

The partners were supported through their first critical friend meeting online, [28] via a presentation summarising the critical friend rationale and its integration with the reflective diaries, providing space for partners to come together as a group to question and clarify the process. Due to the majority of partners having difficulties with the format as it progressed, the second SPOTing seminar meeting focused on the theme of criticality and peer exchange with a critical friend pair, KUFA and Brunnenpassage, leading a series of 'troubleshooting' workshops. Two different formats, researched and adapted by KUFA and Brunnenpassage, were used within these peer led interactive sessions, which were then also deployed in the following seminar hosted by Brunnenpassage. Collegial or Peer Consulting was an interactive workshop format that invited one partner to share a problem or issue with the group and assigned different advice giving and observational roles to the remaining partners, in a series of facilitated rounds. [29] The Obstacle Tree was another interactive method of collaboratively analysing difficulties or conflicts, seeking to identify and understand their effects, enabling factors and root causes and then harness the knowledge and experience of the group to suggest advice and a possible course of action. [30] Following this seminar, after reviewing and reflecting on the input and feedback received, the researcher changed the critical friends format to try to make it more flexible, useful and partner driven, leaving them to decide on their pairs or groupings as well the amount and schedule of meetings, also adapting the feedback forms to suit. [31]

In total there were four SPOTing seminars with themes connected to different aspects of their hosts' SPOTing research, with Brunnenpassage also integrating some of their ongoing testbed activity into their seminar content. [32]

3.6 PAR Processes: researcher interviews and the case study writing process

The process of writing the SPOTing case studies has also been guided by PAR research values, in particular collaboration and transparency. [33] Using the SPOTing partners' reflective diaries and yearly interviews as its primary source, the drafting of the case studies during the SPOTing programme (rather than at the end) was intended to help support and develop the SPOTing partners' reflective practice skills. Draft versions of the case studies were introduced in the second year of the programme and used as the basis for the yearly partner-researcher interviews, with subsequent drafts reviewed and amended by the partners to help accurately inform the content and its overall messages for readers. The case studies have also sought to assess the efficacy, challenges and potential of adapting a practitioner orientated expert by experience participatory research methodology such as PAR to examine arts education practices.

The case studies therefore centre on the hows and whys [34] within the testbed design and decision making of the partners, particularly in relation to their self identified research values which underpin their research questions, intended as the overarching PAR aligned framework for driving SPOTing testbed development. More generally the case studies' goal has been to collaboratively identify, understand and examine any stated learning and or legacy gained through the experience, seeking to offer an informed critical perspective on any shared issues, potential solutions and or innovative approaches within different European arts education and participation contexts.

[28] This took place as part of the first SPOTing seminar, hosted online by SPOTing partner A4, Bratislava, March 25, 2021.
[29] In German this method is more commonly referred to as Kollegiale Beratung which translates to 'collegial advice' in English. More information can be found online at https://kollegiale-beratung.de/methodik-und-ablauf-von-kollegiale-beratung-in-sechs-phasen.html
[30] The Obstacle Tree is used in conflict transformation processes, more information can be found online at https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/node/resource/drama-for-conflict-transformation-toolkit.pdf
[31] Instead of asking partners to fill out forms after each meeting, they were asked to fill out one form per 'critical friend relationship' after their final meeting, which posed more open and reflective questions about their overall learning. See Appendix E: SPOTing Critical Friend Feedback Form 2.
[32] See Appendix F: SPOTing Seminar Programmes (abridged).
[33] More information can be found online at https://organizingengagement.org/models/participatory-action-research-and-evaluation/
[34] Yin identifies case study research as being "the preferred strategy" when analysing "'how' or 'why' questions" within a "real-life context." Robert K. Yin, Case Study Research: Design and Methods (London: Sage, 2002), Third Edition, 1.

4. SPOTing Programme Activity Timeline 2020 — 2023

September 2020 — January 2021
SPOTing researcher presents and proposes PAR adapted methodology and SPOTing research design to partners online; partners plan their research projects

January 2021
SPOTing testbed research projects officially start; planning stages continue longer than expected for most partners due to Covid

February 2021
Online group partner presentation of testbed starting points including research questions and research values; feedback meetings between individual partners, researcher and project manager

March 2021
First SPOTing seminar hosted online by A4; first critical friends session

May 2021
Optional online participatory research ethics workshop for partners

June 2021 — September 2021
First partner-researcher one to one yearly research interviews online

October 2021
Second SPOTing seminar themed around critical friends; hybrid online and in person meeting in Bratislava

March 2022
Third SPOTing seminar hosted in person by Brunnenpassage in Vienna

April 2022
Case study drafting process begins

May 2022 — August 2022
Second partner-researcher one to one yearly research interviews online

December 2022
SPOTing testbed research projects officially end

January 2023 — February 2023
Final partner-researcher final one to one yearly research interviews online

March 2023
Final drafts of case studies approved by partners

May 2023
Final SPOTing seminar hosted in person by PPCM in Paris

May 2023 — August 2023
Partners host their own local dissemination events

5.
SPOTing Case Studies

5.1
SPOTing Case Studies: CASE STUDY SUMMARIES

A4 – SPACE FOR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE (A4) BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA

Primary Research Question: How do we want to work with people that potentially may become our audience?

Research Values: Enquiry and 'Negotiated Openness'

Testbed Summary: A4 worked with 3 new participant groups over 2021-22, to find out more about the potential for supporting original participatory event proposals and different uses of their space, as well as gathering feedback on perceptions of their existing programme and venue.

Key Learning: A4 recognised the benefits of using participatory action research based methods to test, adapt and learn from different approaches. They identified the importance of openness and transparency in negotiations with participants and colleagues in order for everyone to understand and have clarity about where the limits and the possibilities of their research activity and its aims lie. A4 also underlined the need to dedicate sufficient time through regular discussions with their research participants as well as with the rest of their organisation to be able to reflect on and communicate their learning from multiple perspectives.

Key Outcome: Through their SPOTing testbeds A4 has identified their desire to explore and test long term and sustainable ways to support young people's creative participation in A4's programming and organisational development. They also have plans to research and develop an organisation wide arts education strategy that can incorporate experimentation with different participatory approaches and audiences. In addition A4 has made an agreement with one of their former testbed workgroups to continue using A4's performance space and accessing technical production support which provides A4's volunteers with an ongoing opportunity to develop their lighting and sound design skills.

Key Reflection: That you don't have to be a research expert to start using a participatory action research based approach. A4 reflected that although they struggled in the beginning with the concept of devising and conducting 'research' they came to understand and appreciate having the space to experiment and adapt as things developed without the pressure of having to have a set or desired output or outcome. They also emphasised the importance of taking your time, building relationships, being clear about your intentions and your boundaries, respecting people's differences and having an open mind and heart to be able to really take advantage of the opportunity to reflect on your work deeply.

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importance of connecting with our participants.
SPOTing really made me aware that we have to
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not only be seen as a venue or space with some
infrastructure but that our organisation is also
made up of people that you can meet, talk to and
work with to develop things if you want to." [35]

ARTSOCIALSPACE BRUNNENPASSAGE (BRUNNENPASSAGE) VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Primary Research Question: How do the values of our organisation match up to the actual practice?

Research Values: Transculturality, Access and Participation

Testbed Summary: In 2021-22 Brunnenpassage devised and ran 3 facilitated training blocks for their team and colleagues from partner organisations on classism and transculturality, also incorporating a session into their 2022 SPOTing seminar programme. One training block included some of their regular

[35] Ľudovít Nápoký, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 10, 2023.

collaborators and participants. In late 2022 they examined the feedback and learning generated from all their testbed sessions which led to a peer learning workshop with their team on dealing with difficult situations.

Key Learning: Despite building up expertise over a long time it is important to remain open to the kind of learning that reflective processes can offer. To thoroughly and collectively examine issues like class, cultural identity and the structures that can perpetuate discrimination you need to be prepared to invest enough time, patience, care and sensitivity into un/learning reflectively together.

Key Outcome: Brunnenpassage are taking some of the methods, insight, skills and questions they developed through SPOTing into another long term TEH programme, Cultural Transformation Movement (CTM), combining action research and artistic production with advocacy and activism. At the start of 2023 Brunnenpassage also began implementing some changes to their internal working practices which included extending their winter break in order to reduce their programme and free up time for their team.

Key Reflection: Before starting this kind of reflective group learning it is important to think through what you want to achieve and have at the end, because once you start really opening things up it can turn into a bottomless process of analysis. Although there might be a desire to examine a lot of things, Brunnenpassage found that defining a narrower and clearer framework to take more time and care over their topics and the issues that arose from them, meant that the process had more depth.

"All our research questions are work in progress Š ® ÿŠo¦µ iµ iÞöö µhµ2 ØŠhµ ø Þ:Øµ® Šfor µ2.Ð but we will take these questions with us into other projects. For us it was all about bringing these issues to the team, discussing them and gaining more sensitivity and awareness, trying through this learning process to bring ourselves to another level of openness and understanding." [36]

ASSOCIAZIONE CULTURALE OLTRE (OLTRE) BOLOGNA, ITALY

Primary Research Question: How does space affect our artistic and educational practices?

Research Values: Inclusion and Accessibility

Testbed Summary: Oltre's main testbed activity throughout SPOTing was a programme of creative participation including tailoring, carpentry, ensemble music and bicycle repairs with young people at risk of dropping out of school as part of a collaboration with local education services trialled as an alternative model of education. Oltre also added other collaborations to their testbed such as their annual children's parade and a schools project with young disabled people.

Key Learning: Oltre identified the benefits of designing and maintaining ongoing reflective space to focus on their methods, approach and philosophy with participants and arts educators alike. They used SPOTing as a way to understand and analyse themselves more deeply over time and refine ways of communicating this to others, part of their overall goal to educate a creative community of exchange and resistance, building autonomous and practical relational and welcoming spaces of transformation.

Key Outcome: Oltre is continuing their cosllaboration with local education services and is working on developing their archive as a learning resource and repository of the participatory possibilities of public space.

Key Reflection: Oltre recognised how important autonomous space is, physically and conceptually, including the liberatory possibilities it represents and how much implicit influence it has, especially for young participants. They also reflected on the necessity not only for Oltre to continue to collectively organise in and creatively occupy public space, but to use their past through their expansive archive of materials documenting previous events as a way to help others see alternative social and cultural possibilities for the present.

[36] Gordana Crnko, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 1, 2023.

"SPOTing has shown us the importance of creating a clear narration of Oltre's identity and our history. We are learning how to explain ourselves as an association, to clarify the meanings, methodologies and orientations of the type of artistic activity we do. We have seen that meeting with and learning about other international contexts, which even if very different from ours, can generate ideas in us as well as links, contacts and exchanges." [37]

BEAT CARNIVAL BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND

Primary Research Question: How can (our) spaces be art spaces?

Research Values: Access and Ownership

Testbed Summary: In 2021-22 Beat Carnival developed various forms of creative and celebratory carnival neighbourhood activity using a reflective, value based co-design approach with 4 local community groups in their area. They also conducted research on how to improve access and ownership of larger civic carnival events with a range of stakeholder groups. In 2021 Beat Carnival devised an issue based testbed youth project, launching a publication in 2022. They developed their co-design approach further through their core youth programming and started work on an organisation wide youth development strategy.

Key Learning: Beat Carnival reflected on what they had learnt about how art and creativity could be integrated into different kinds of spaces. In terms of their core youth programming and regular workshop space Beat Carnival noted the importance of working with participants to create the right atmosphere, leaving enough free space for participants to take ownership and feel safe, as well as the need for and utility of fun without specific outcomes. In terms of local neighbourhood and wider civic and public space, Beat Carnival emphasised the need to provide inspiration in order to extend people's perspectives and expectations by manifesting examples of how to create accessible participatory celebrations. They also underlined the value of invitations extended by and to different communities to share space together in a joyful way, helping to expand both a geographical and social sense of belonging and feeling welcomed.

Key Outcome: Beat Carnival's testbed youth project is now part of their core youth programming and some of their 18 plus young people have taken up roles as peer leaders. They have completed a first draft of their youth development strategy and are seeking long term funding to continue working on it through consultation with their young participants.

Key Reflection: Developing and strengthening a reflective way of working across an arts organisation, which also supports a co-design approach with participants and partners, requires time and resources which often aren't properly acknowledged through the public funding available for this work. To really embed and collectively harness the potential of a reflective, value based approach there also needs to be a willingness and commitment from all involved, including funding bodies, to work on building the relationships and skill sets needed to learn, reflect and adapt together as part of an ongoing, regular practice. This is important so everyone can have a sense of ownership, not only over what may be created but over the processes used in creating it, whether it is a performance, a product, a feeling or a space.

"I found that being curious is more important than I thought it was, so leaving room for looking at why anything happens, for example why do participants react a certain way, or why do we act Þ §µ2HŠÞ iŠo: Þ HØµ ø2:H /öŠ§µl ² 2µŠö through why things happen and being able to follow that curiosity gets you to look at ways to make things better for everyone and to create that space that's needed." [38]

[37] Fulvia Antonelli, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 17, 2023.
[38] Rebecca Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 3, 2023.

KULTURFABRIK (KUFA) ESCH-SUR-ALZETTE, LUXEMBOURG

Primary Research Question: How can we succeed in giving ownership to young people within an established institution?

Research Values: Transparency and Ownership

Testbed Summary: Initially 1 long term schools project was devised and ran within SPOTing from 2021-22 to test KUFA's existing bottom up approach to participation. A second testbed project examining youth participation in KUFA was developed in 2022.

Key Learning: The importance of slowing down and creating a reflective collective space to develop more meaningful cultural experiences and opportunities for everyone. Doing less projects and reducing workload overall is not only needed to avoid burnout, but is key in being able to dedicate the quality time and attention to building the types of relationships that horizontal participation, decision making and ownership require.

Key Outcome: Reflective questions and thinking are still being used and shared in KUFA's first SPOTing project, Making a Movie beyond its life as a research testbed. Plans to integrate opportunities for youth clubs, artistic collectives, schools and local university students to use KUFA's space and resources through developing existing programming strands are ongoing.

Key Reflection: KUFA's SPOTing team claimed the reflective space offered by the programme to be honest about the obstacles and issues they encountered across both their SPOTing testbed projects, seeing it as a valuable learning opportunity. They recognised that having the space to fail can offer insights and perspectives that can often be missed. Overall their experiences emphasised the importance of working towards transparency and shared ownership by identifying compatible goals with participants, partners and colleagues alike.

"I think it's important that when you engage in these kind of arts education platforms and projects that you spend enough time discussing things Þ Hµ2 Šööo H ø ® § ÿÿ Ð2 P ® iÞHØÞ o P2 team, so everyone understands what you are doing and why you are doing it in this way. Investing the time to really analyse the values you are trying to apply and their potential to change what you do or even how you think about things is essential in order to move forward." [39]

LE PLUS PETIT CIRQUE DU MONDE (PPCM) PARIS, FRANCE

Primary Research Question: How can non formal artistic education play a role within the formal educational system in disadvantaged areas?

Research Values: Transformation and Ownership

Testbed Summary: In 2021 PPCM followed 2 of their existing in house circus youth arts education and training programmes and added 1 new outreach project to their testbed. In 2022 they continued reflecting on and developing this work and also added a creative construction project to their testbed, part of a long term architecture and neighbourhood engagement programme informing the construction of the first general high school in their local area.

Key Learning: Through continuing to work towards establishing the safe and welcoming creative environment necessary for young people to participate, develop and exchange new and existing skills according to social circus principles, PPCM have underlined the importance of practising and embodying adaptability for both young participants and for the adults working with them in different types of formal education settings. By demonstrating their own adaptability to work across new contexts and artforms they have also developed their own learning about different forms of participation and the possibilities they have to

[39] Inês Alves, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 25, 2023.

collaborate with a variety of partners to contribute to the understanding of education as a wide ranging, inclusive, enjoyable and empowering collective experience.

Key Outcome: PPCM has gained more experience and confidence working in different fields of socio-cultural participation and arts education beyond circus and is committed to experimenting further in order to have more influence on formal education practices by collaborating on new forms of creative learning.

Key Reflection: SPOTing provided an opportunity for PPCM to take a wider view of their ongoing activities and reflect as an organisation on the ways their SPOTing research values of transformation and ownership can apply and are happening across different contexts, including those that go beyond circus.

"The transdisciplinary nature of our testbed has helped us to see our arts education practice from other perspectives and allowed us to slow ® i Š ® 2µŠööo 2µùµ§H iØŠH ÞH HŠòµtake support neighbourhood participation not just in cultural activities, but in the co-construction of the future." [40]

RÖDA STEN KONSTHALL GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN

Primary Research Question: How do we initiate, establish and maintain contact with participants in our art educational programmes?

Research Values: Openness and Co-Creation

Testbed Summary: Throughout 2021 and 2022 Röda Sten Konsthall followed 2 of their existing art education programme youth groups, adding some of their summer and weekend open 'drop in' creative workshops to their testbeds as they progressed.

Key Learning: SPOTing helped Röda Sten Konsthall realise that in general the existing methods of contact used by their art educators worked well, but for co-creation to be able to develop beyond consultation, consistent ongoing work on group dynamics and building relationships was required to adapt to and work with the interests and ambitions of their young people.

Key Outcome: Röda Sten Konsthall have identified openness to change as a key part of what co-creation means for them, dependent on a quality of contact that allows space for dialogue to establish values and build mutual respect and trust between their art educators and participants. They have redeveloped their website and improved their forms of online communication and connection with participants and wider audiences alike. SPOTing has also contributed to long term plans to develop an archive of art education methods in order to more effectively share, apply and adapt their existing knowledge base.

Key Reflection: Working reflectively, in order 'to take the past with you' and try to integrate learning into future plans and projects more collaboratively, through discussions and collective questioning of values and approaches, can sometimes be difficult but Röda Sten Konsthall felt it was an effective way for their whole organisation to develop and grow.

"We are quite good with working with children and young people, so it's a question of do you change something that is working well for everybody, or should you? Is change really needed? I think it's good to try to do some things differently : ÿµHÞÿµ:D : µhµ ÞÏ µhµ2oHØÞ Ðu: ø µ ÞHu important to be brave enough to make changes and learn from them." [41]

TRUC SPHÉRIQUE (STANICA) ŽILINA, SLOVAKIA

Primary Research Question: How can the core

[40] Mia Scanzi, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 31, 2023.
[41] Marie Bergdahl, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 24, 2023.

team at Stanica open up to the younger generation, allowing space for the independent creativity of young people?

Research Values: Communication, Inclusion and 'Supported Independence'

Testbed Summary: In 2021 Stanica's testbed project Young Office, devised and ran approximately 8 small and large events including Kinesis, a 1 day youth culture festival. In 2022 Young Office organised approximately 11 small and large events including Kinesis and successfully applied for an international Erasmus exchange programme.

Key Learning: The importance of establishing young people's autonomy through the idea of 'supported independence'; letting them be creative in their own way within their own peer group without interfering too much. This is essential because it gives young people more collective power to realise their ideas and share their learning with each other as they develop their skills according to their own interests.

Key Outcome: Young Office is a permanent part of Stanica's programme for as long as young people want to participate as Young Office members. Currently Young Office has around 15 active members.

Key Reflection: Using a research process like SPOTing to intuitively test, reflect on and adapt different ways of doing things with new people might be challenging and take more time, energy or finance, but for both Young Office and Stanica it has been worth it. Stanica has got to know a new generation of artists, organisers and audiences and Young Office has a space to learn and gain experience and create culture that they want to be part of.

"Maybe you don't need to have a specific goal or expectation to work in this way, just be open to what it might bring that you can use and develop, because it might show you something unexpected that can change your perspective and move you out of your comfort zone." [42]

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[42] Karolína Bas, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 20, 2023.

5.2
SPOTing Case Studies:
A4 – SPACE FOR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

PARTNER INTRODUCTION

A4 - Space for Contemporary Culture (A4) is an independent cultural centre in Bratislava, Slovakia, focusing on contemporary art forms and new media. A4 aims to support non commercial cultural activities and creative experimentation as well as education and public debate. Established in 2004 as a result of a joint effort between several civic cultural organisations, since 2012 A4 has been based in a former YMCA building which contains a multifunctional live performance and screening venue, a social area and cafe, as well as offices and workshop space. A4's programme features theatre, dance, film and music including concerts, festivals, exhibitions, conferences, lectures and discussion events as well as workshops and other educational activities. A4 also commissions new work, co-organises international festivals featuring Slovak artists, hosts volunteers and artists' residencies and is part of several national and international networks.

PARTNER STATISTICS

Overall A4 has 8 full time staff and 12 part time staff. A4 also works with approximately 20 freelance staff on a regular basis including technicians, designers, production and project managers, as well as offering short term contracts to students working as assistants and cleaning staff. On average the organisation hosts 4 international volunteers and between 600-800 artists a year. Annually A4 runs around 300 events for approximately 9,000 audience members as well as approximately 20 workshops and 4 projects with 120 participants.

STARTING POINTS

From the beginning A4 wanted to explore the possible roles that cultural centres could play in society by examining themselves and their own context, something that fed into the first SPOTing seminar which A4 organised. Initially A4 considered a number of SPOTing testbed options including testing online and in person participation formats to build on the recent audience development research that they had commissioned, [43] as well as the development of an A4 arts education programme for and with children and young people, centring participants as "future audience or future creators of content." [44] A4 originally intended to work with schools as their SPOTing research partners but this had proved impossible due to Covid, as Slovakian schools were closed for the majority of 2020 and 2021. However through this period A4 were able to make some connections with art students which were then developed outside their SPOTing project.

Overall A4's ambitions for SPOTing were to use it as an opportunity to examine the strengths and weaknesses of their organisation to more fully understand their purpose as a cultural centre, as well as challenging themselves to experiment with new ways of working participatively within a collaborative structure such as SPOTing, identifying their work as contributing to cultural and social education without being solely bound by it.

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programming and organising, we do education.
But also, we feel like we are not professionals
in education and we don't have an ambition to
become professional educators, but it's good to
broaden your perspective and maybe understand
what's happening on a theoretical basis, not just
what happens organically." [45]

Through the process of refining their research focus and testbed activity and by adapting to changing circumstances and opportunities, A4 managed to amalgamate some of the different elements of their starting points such as testing participative formats and ways of relationship building with audiences, as well as thinking in more depth about the direction of their organisation's arts education strategy. Over time the connections between these nascent aspects of A4's work and their potential development became clearer.

[43] In 2020 A4 worked with experts from the Institute of Cultural Policy within the Slovak Ministry of Culture on a pro bono basis devising questions for 8 focus groups drawn from a total of 45 respondents looking at the motivations and barriers for their current and potential audiences.
[44] A4 SPOTing Testbed Starting Point, February, 2021.
[45] Nina de Gelder, Interview with SPOTing researcher, August 27, 2021.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How do we want to work with people that potentially may become our audience? How do
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A variety of factors affected A4's initial testbed development, including financial pressures and reduced staff capacity across the organisation after almost a full year of Covid, [46] as well as the considerable workload involved in organising the first SPOTing seminar in March 2021, which had to be hosted online. However collaborating on the preparation and presentation of the seminar with a Bratislava based lecturer and dramaturge Naďa Uherová, led to the opportunity to work with her group of amateur acting students. This chance to develop their testbeds with a pre established group connected through a shared interest prompted A4 to try to clarify their research purpose and to really think about how best to learn about and from these participants.

"The research question is a process for us. It's an interesting process to go through all these ideas
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things a bit harder because we didn't have a really clear idea from the beginning, but it is also useful for us because it's something we want to focus
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way to include a broader audience and encourage their curiosity and think about how to approach
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this group what could be the barriers for them,
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space itself as a building and as a cultural centre, so we can build up a picture of audiences and our external environment." [47]

For A4 SPOTing was a way to move on from research done previously, establishing the socio economic backgrounds, cultural preferences and habits of A4's regular audiences, to develop a greater qualitative understanding of broader audience engagement or non engagement, prompted by what A4 described as "an audience crisis." [48] Ľudovít Nápoký, a member of the A4 team working on SPOTing, explained that while A4 recognised Covid's negative impact on audience attendance for example, [49] for him this crisis in cultural centres' audience numbers and engagement was a much broader societal issue related to "critical thinking, education and cultural preferences of younger generations on an national and international level." [50]

After discussions explaining A4's intended research purpose and proposing and agreeing the general testbed structure and content with Naďa's drama group, which included access to A4's theatre space and technicians for their rehearsals and performances, the intergenerational participants were split up into workgroup 1, adults aged 18 to over 56 years old, and workgroup 2, aged 13 to 15 years old. This decision to split the groups came from a joint realisation by Naďa and A4's director Nina de Gelder, that the young people tended to speak most freely when the other adults were not around. An additional element of A4's testbed which was also negotiated with the group at the start, had been to draw up lists of recommended A4 events in consultation with Naďa, offering complimentary tickets to members of both workgroups to attend and feed back on. Part of the challenge in selecting programming for the younger participants was that their age range was not well catered for in A4, however attendance at these recommended events was not consistent across either workgroup.

This particular part of A4's testbed design was driven by a desire to compile a representative sample of their programming to get a sense of A4 as a cultural centre from participants who were mostly unfamiliar with

[46] A4 were not open to the public for the majority of 2020 and 2021 and were only able to hold unrestricted in person public events at full capacity from March 2022.
[47] Ľudovít Nápoký, Interview with SPOTing researcher, August 27, 2021.
[48] Nina de Gelder, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 16, 2022.
[49] For more analysis of the post pandemic challenges facing European cultural centres including audience development see https://encc.eu/resources/database/invisible-damage-report-cultural-centres-after-year-crisis
[50] Ľudovít Nápoký, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 16, 2022.

their venue, while bearing in mind their interest in theatre. This was intended to feed into the ongoing bi monthly online and in person discussions that A4 conducted with the adult workgroup participants about different aspects of arts and culture, reflecting on tastes and preferences and how these related to concrete elements of A4's programming such as their PR. This was also connected to A4's proposal to their workgroups that they "organise something inspired by the space" [51] in order for A4 to learn more about their potential audiences and to understand how they could open up and develop a relationship with them.

This 'opening up', which with some caveats was also one of A4's SPOTing research values, presented the organisation with the difficulty of knowing how far this kind of openness, especially to content, should go in their non commercial, alternative cultural space. In order to balance the kind of feedback they might get from a group that was so different to their typical audiences A4 came up with the idea of having a 'control group' made up of 3 young people from the neighbourhood who were already familiar with A4, presenting them with the same research proposal and negotiated approach as the other two workgroups.

TESTBED ACTIVITY

2021

- SPOTing testbed objectives and options widely discussed within A4 team with ways to develop recent A4 audience research explored
- Preparations made for first SPOTing seminar including discussions with A4 team and partners as well as meetings with TEH project manager and researcher
- A4 hosted first SPOTing seminar online due to Covid
- Contact made with testbed participants (Nadˈa's drama group aged 13 to 56 forming two separate workgroups of youth and adults) through questionnaires and an introduction to A4's space, with access agreed for rehearsals and presentations and free entry to a selection of A4's existing programming in return for feedback
- Roughly bi-monthly online and in person moderated themed arts and culture discussions with testbed participants from workgroups 1 and 2 related to A4's practices
- Recruitment of additional 'control' group made up of 3 youth participants from local neighbourhood already familiar with A4, discussions started about how they would like to be involved in the research and with A4
- Ongoing A4 team discussions about developing in house approach to arts education activities and participatory programming reflecting on SPOTing testbed work
- List of A4 events and activities recommended to testbed participants from workgroups 1 and 2 to review with questionnaires prepared to gather feedback
- Control youth group took up voluntary roles in A4's production team as well as attending and proposing events

In 2021 A4 had approximately 20 participants in their testbed activities

2022

- Public performance of testbed participants' production of Chekhov's Uncle Vanya in A4 including post show audience discussions with follow up meetings and questionnaires gathering feedback to inform future work
- As part of understanding A4's programming better workgroups met with the art directors and founders of A4 to discuss how the programme is created
- Work started developing testbed participants' next production in A4, Molière's The Miser
- Ongoing A4 team discussions reflecting on testbed activities
- Ongoing testbed participants discussions on arts and culture as well as ideas to develop further testbed activity
- Occasional independent attendance at A4 events by some members of workgroup 1
- Workgroup 1's final testbed activity responding to the question; what does A4 inspire you to do? Presentation of their production of Molière's The Miser as part of the 13th Slovak Night of Theatres festival

[51] Nina de Gelder, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 16, 2022.

■ Workgroup 2's final testbed activity responding to the question; what does A4 inspire you to do? Presentation of their production of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet as part of the 13th Slovak Night of Theatres festival
■ Control youth group's final testbed activity responding to the question; what does A4 inspire you to do? Lecturer from Bratislava Academy of Fine Arts and Design invited to present university students' case studies on the use of design processes in different environments for high school students studying art and design
■ A4 team discussions about steps for developing organisation wide arts education strategy

In 2022 A4 had approximately 16 participants in their testbed activities

TESTBED APPROACH

Partly due to the conceptual discipline and new terminology involved in working within a research framework and with a methodology, for A4 SPOTing was a steep learning curve which was overwhelming at times especially alongside all the other challenges of running a cultural centre, particularly during Covid. However in general A4 were motivated to engage with the self examination implicit in a PAR based approach and in particular they were interested in looking at why and how they did things, acknowledging a need to understand and broaden their potential audiences. Nevertheless there was some disagreement within A4's team about the extent they should 'open up' to different kinds of audiences, over fears this might create permanent changes to what some in the organisation saw as A4's essential uniqueness as an uncompromising avant-garde cultural space, possibly confusing or alienating their core audiences. This tension between being open to new audiences and wanting whatever relationships and learning that developed from their SPOTing testbeds to have largely beneficial consequences for both A4 and their research participants, while also realising there were obvious limits to that openness, over time became a useful ongoing process of internal reflection for A4. Nina who had joined the organisation as director just over a year before SPOTing started, noted that identifying the key values which informed A4's research in practice, although "quite difficult sometimes, because you always need to ask more questions than you would do otherwise, is a good process to be involved in when you want to get to know something or someone." [52]

In terms of their testbed approach, A4's form of 'negotiated openness' was demonstrated in the willingness to compromise shown both by A4 and their research participants when it came to operating under Covid restrictions. While Covid undoubtedly exposed some fundamental differences in the value base and outlook between A4 and Nad'a's workgroups, it also demonstrated that both parties were motivated to find a way to continue working together. For example some workgroup members who had remained unvaccinated during the pandemic showed interested in getting vaccinated in order to be able to meet, rehearse and perform in the venue, while A4 sought to accommodate those who did not want to do this but still wanted to take part in the group's performance in A4, by allowing a negative Covid test as an alternative pre condition to entry.

A4 felt that the work done with their control group represented a collaborative approach that enhanced their programming and offered mutual benefits to both the organisation and the control group participants. This was seen in the 'organic' development of control group, with the young people gradually exploring and finding their place in the organisation by getting more involved in helping to run and propose events, which led to them having paid volunteer roles with A4 whilst still part of SPOTing, offering feedback on different aspects of programming and taking active steps in realising what they wanted to see more of. While this kind of collaboration did not develop in the same way with Nad'a's workgroups, nonetheless the workgroup participants were very positive about the experience of working with A4 as a professional rehearsal and performance venue and with A4's volunteer technical team on the light and sound design for their productions. [53] Although A4's event recommendation

[52] Nina de Gelder, Interview with SPOTing researcher, August 27, 2021.

list did not work as well as hoped with workgroups 1 and 2, some research participants did sporadically attend events not on the prepared list independently. [54]

As their testbeds progressed A4 reflected that some of their struggles with audience engagement, relating to opening up and developing relationships on a more personal as well as on a wider community level, were connected to their need for a more strategic approach to arts education activities relevant to the unique alternative cultural experiences they are committed to offering.

"We also realised that it's really important to think more strategically in the educational programme because if we don't want to end up creating activities for no one, we really have to think about what we are actually doing and who for. Who is going to attend these things and what are going to be the next steps after these events are over. We did a lot of super interesting things, but it was kind of ad hoc and we didn't really know much about these people who came and left, or create any closer relationship with them, because we're missing some strategic thinking. So SPOTing is helping with this process of realising and understanding our weak points." [55]

As the culmination of their SPOTing testbed activity, A4 posed the same question to workgroups 1 and 2 and the youth control group; what does A4 inspire you to do? A4 recognised that Nadťa's workgroups were most comfortable continuing to use their venue as a performance space and that no significant change in cultural preferences had developed from either A4 or the participants despite having developed a working relationship of mutual respect and benefit. Although there were some suggestions from the younger workgroup members that went beyond staging theatre Nina explained that in trying to develop them further there was a collective realisation that "they didn't like my ideas and I didn't like theirs, so we compromised." [56] This compromise resulted in two different workgroup theatre productions, both staged as part of a nationwide Slovak theatre festival. [57]

In contrast the control youth group's final testbed activity, proposed and organised by the one remaining member of the group of three Lota Triašková, supported and advised by A4's staff, was the type of art education event that A4 could see a lot of potential in developing further. Lota approached a lecturer from a local university and asked him to prepare a lecture that would be of interest to her peers, high school art and design students. The lecture consisted of a presentation of 5 case studies from his visual communication students' showcasing how design processes are used in different real world environments as well as a question and answer session with the high school students afterwards.

"This is an example of what we could do with o P Đ /µ /öµD H ĐÞhµ HØµÿ Š §ØŠ §µ H P:µ space how they want, of course they don't have a completely free hand, but we can discuss their ideas and work it out. We can offer the space for free along with our support, so they can do a lot of things and just see where it goes. I think helping o P Đ /µ /öµ ø ® Š ® P:µ HØµÞ2 h Þ§µ iŠ®Š very important." [58]

PUTTING VALUES INTO PRACTICE

Although A4 were initially hesitant about their capabilities of engaging with the processes of reflection essential to developing their testbed activities, internally they discussed the 'whys' and 'hows' of their research ideas, plans and wider purpose as a cultural centre extensively. It was through these discussions that A4 identified one of their research values as enquiry and framed the idea of values as being part of an ongoing process of questioning

[53] A4 described the decision to connect their international volunteers with their SPOTing testbeds, working as active participants on the lighting and sound design with members of the workgroup, under the supervision and mentorship of A4's technical crew, as being "mutually beneficial." Nina de Gelder, A4 SPOTing reflective diary entry, Summer 2022.
[54] In total 6 individuals attended different events not on A4's list without claiming their free tickets.
[55] Ľudovít Nápoký, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 16, 2022.
[56] Nina de Gelder, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 10, 2023.
[57] Both workgroups presented their productions, again working closely with A4's lighting and sound design volunteers and hosting post show discussions with their audiences as part of the Slovak Night of Theatres 2022, www.nocdivadiel.sk
[58] Nina de Gelder, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 10, 2023.

within their organisation.

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2µùµ§HÞ Š ® hŠöPµ: Š2µ Š[59] 1Pµ:HÞ IL

Alongside enquiry, reflecting on the opportunity presented by Naďa's group to more fully understand and examine themselves through the lens of an unfamiliar audience, A4 carefully considered the nuances and implications of putting their research value of 'negotiated openness' into practice within their SPOTing testbeds. This made them aware of the importance of clarity and transparency in thinking through what they were prepared to offer their participants and where their limits were.

"We want the feedback, but maybe we don't know yet what we are going to do with that feedback, because we don't necessarily want to dramatically change everything we're doing. Actually I think we should frame it as a participatory approach iØÞ§Ø ÿµŠ : HØŠH iµ i Pö® öÞòµ H H2o H ø ® some compromises. We are offering something and we are curious about what people think about it, so let's negotiate how we can improve it. But it shouldn't be some narrative about asking participants to tell us what we should do and we'll just do it." [60]

As their testbeds progressed A4 also recognised that a key part of their organisation's stated purpose in pushing cultural and creative borders and encouraging people to cross them, was not only taking place through their testbed discussions with their research participants, but "also happening in the mindset of our A4 team." [61]

Just prior to beginning SPOTing A4 had started organising post performance discussions for their events giving their audiences the opportunity to talk with cast and crew as way to try and address their audience crisis, something that was also part of workgroup 1's public presentations. A4 saw this addition to their programme as connected to the reflective overview of their organisation's work that SPOTing had helped them develop.

L ßM: i 2ò H iŠ2®: ¦PÞö®Þ Đ Š 2µöŠHÞ :ØÞ/ iÞH
audience is linked with SPOTing because it creates this platform for us to do it, you know through exchange and contact with the other partners, with you [the SPOTing Researcher] and the writing we have to do from time to time, it offers us the structure to do it. I'm not sure if we would be doing it if there was no SPOTing because there's always another priority, because like now for example we after we opened up, every day we are organising an event so it's super busy and at the same time we know that it's not only about organising an event every day but it's also trying to look on it from above and like see if it makes sense. Is this worth it for us?" [62]

CHALLENGES

From the start A4 expressed reservations about the skills that they identified they lacked to be able to conduct this kind of research project, explaining that in their team "we discussed a lot about how to state questions in the right ways so we get to the answers we are looking for." [63] In order to address this A4 tried to recruit a researcher as a project consultant but this proved unsuccessful due to time and budget. This issue was discussed with the SPOTing researcher who encouraged A4 to try and think of their testbeds as information gathering within a collaborative and transparent learning process, hopefully conducted flexibly enough to accommodate inevitable but potentially useful 'mistakes' which would help shape the process.

"I can see how it's better in some ways, because it Ï 2§µ: P: H ® : ÿµHØÞ ĐD Š ® iµ iÞöö ®µø ÞH
learn more from this experience than if there was someone who came in and did it more or

[59] Nina de Gelder, Interview with SPOTing researcher, August 27, 2021.
[60] Ľudovít Nápoký, Interview with SPOTing researcher, August 27, 2021.
[61] Nina de Gelder, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 16, 2022. Ľudo also explained that despite some major doubts expressed within the team concerning A4's artistic direction, over time the whole team came to see the broader benefits of different audiences making use of their space especially for the experience it provided for A4's volunteer technicians.
[62] Nina de Gelder, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 16, 2022.
[63] Nina de Gelder, A4 SPOTing Technical report July-August, 2021.

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¦µ ¦µ µø§ÞŠö ¦PH ÞH Šö: ÿŠo¦µ ÿŠòµ: ÞH ÿ 2µ

stressful, and maybe a bit more vague for us." [64]

Although A4 acknowledged the advantages of their position of 'lived experience' as experts in the field, which is consciously emphasised within PAR based methodology, their lack of familiarity with participative arts education approaches coupled with a fear of getting the research wrong, was a challenge which persisted particularly during the initial formulations of their SPOTing testbeds. L'udo, reflecting on what he described as a 'block' to working this way and the extent to which A4 was able to overcome it, explained he felt this was largely due to the typical parameters of most arts and cultural projects and the kind of mentality they propagate.

"We had some kind of block caused by project outputs, habits and thinking, because 99% of the projects we do are really strictly set and there are outputs that you have to deliver, so there was the stress of trying to deliver the right output, even though this was a completely different case, the process was more important without this § ÿÿÞHÿµ H Ï ®µöÞhµ2Þ Ð : ÿµHØÞ Ð :/µ§ÞøSi I think this is what really took some time for us to get maybe a bit more brave about trying and maybe failing." [65]

As previously stated A4 was badly affected by Covid with operational restrictions remaining in place during the first two years of SPOTing. As with other SPOTing partners this not only affected their capacity and delayed their testbeds but also meant that more activity had to be conducted online than anticipated. This particularly affected A4's intention of developing working relationships with educational institutions in order to connect to young people. However through their experiences during this period A4 realised that not only was it unnecessary for them to go through schools to work with youth participants, but that they preferred to have a more direct working relationship with young people.

KEY LEARNING

Both Nina and L'udo reflected on how much they had learnt during the course of SPOTing about working participatively and the ways that A4 could develop and grow with their existing and potential audiences.

"I would say that in the last year it has become clearer to us what it actually is to work participatively and how can we work in a participative way, thinking about what is useful or what is possible. From the easy things like offering audience discussions after performances, which certainly has helped in building relationships with our audiences, to also working more with young people through participative programming to develop their ideas and also to develop what we can offer as a cultural centre." [66]

The knowledge and experience A4 had gained through the relationships developed with their SPOTing testbed participants also helped inform the thinking and approach to another A4 youth arts education partnership programme L'udo was working on, focused on experimental music. L'udo noted that SPOTing had helped him reflect on the importance of designing the programme to enable connections to be made between A4 staff and their participants, not only by dedicating enough time, energy and attention to establish the trust needed for 'real' feedback, but also in order to develop lasting relationships with the potential to grow.

L² : ÿµ Ï HØµÿ §Šÿµ H ¦µ h öP Hµµ2: ŠH ß öŠHµ2 Ð H ÿ 2µ Þ h öhµ® Þ : ÿµ :/µ§Þø§ /2 and events. Because they were around 16 years old, they were also evolving as personalities and they iµ2µ ÏPöö Ï Þ®µŠ:D : iµ § Pö® 2µŠööo :µµ and this kind of environment helped them develop their interests. It was really nice to see how some people changed after one year and how they are soaking everything up." [67]

Although things had not developed the same way with the participants from Nadˇa's workgroups, Nina

[64] L'udovít Nápoký, Interview with SPOTing researcher, August 27, 2021.
[65] L'udovít Nápoký, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 16, 2022.
[66] Nina de Gelder, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 16, 2022.

recognised that A4 had learnt a lot from the experience which had also resulted in what both parties hoped would be an ongoing agreement for access to A4's performance and rehearsal space and volunteer technical support. Both Nina and Ľudo reflected that despite the challenges that their divergent viewpoints and cultural tastes had thrown up, the experience had enabled them to 'relax' more with the idea of research, first through acknowledging the need for transparency about A4's aims as well as their limits, but also by recognising the value in things not going according to plan. Additionally Ľudo noted that in moving beyond their bubble A4 had gained useful insights in what is needed to develop participatory relationships further, such as a mutual curiosity that does not depend on leading people towards a specific activity or outcome but being able to learn equally from what they want or do not want to do and adjusting accordingly.

"So I think this is the biggest thing for me, to change this mindset, to not to be so scared to do something wrong, because basically this is exactly the opportunity where we could have a comfortable, clearly negotiated and supported :/Š§µ H ø ® PH ÞÏ : ÿµ HØÞ Ð: i 2ò 2 ® MÞ i 2òt XÏ HØµoM2µ i2 ÐD ÞHM: ø µD iµ §Š 2µùµ§Ÿ Š® i 2ò out why they were wrong." [68]

Furthermore although there was no particular 'meeting of minds' which might have led to A4 programming or audience development, Nina noted that she had been able to see the understanding and respect demonstrated by Naďa's workgroup for "the way we work and what we value in A4" [69] which she felt made it possible for A4 to be able "to work with audiences that are not familiar with the space for any reason." [70]

OUTCOMES AND INTENTIONS

The contrast between their testbed workgroups and control youth group as well as the young people Ľudo was working also provided A4 with a clear direction for developing their arts education strategy.

"It was really good working with these different groups to get different perspectives, they're ¦ HØ ÿPHPŠööo ¦µ µø§ÞŠö 2µöŠHÞ :ØÞ/:D ¦PH workgroups that I was working with will not evolve into something else. In contrast the group that pP® iŠ: i 2òÞ Ð iÞHØ Š2µ Šö2µŠ®o Þ h öhµ® Þ helping us create other activities because these young people want to be part of what we do, they want to work on their own ideas and they are also interested in developing themselves. We want to offer a space where they feel safe and free to come up with ideas and they also want the mentoring we can offer them; they are open to having this kind of relationship with us." [71]

Through SPOTing A4 identified that they wanted to continue using an action based research approach to test, reflect on and adapt different formats and ways of working in order to integrate them into more of their regular programming. Nina and Ľudo also noted that they saw quality over quantity in terms of developing their participatory relationships as very important, partly due to staff capacity but also in order to be able to take their time to really learn and grow alongside their participants, future audiences and user groups. Therefore they have formulated a new 'post SPOTing' research question to inform A4's overall organisational development as well as their arts education strategy which they want to work on collaboratively with an outside expert to help further facilitate their learning.

LR i ® iµ Þ h öhµ o PHØ Þ ß ÐÞhÞ Ð HØµÿ freedom and joy and make it a sustainable partnership?" [72]

A4 explained that for them sustainability means working on a long term basis to test and adapt mutually beneficial cooperative arrangements with future generations that also help their organisation to develop as a proactive cultural space for active citizens.

[67] Ľudovít Nápoký, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 10, 2023.
[68] Ibid.
[69] A4 addition to case study draft, emailed to researcher, November 2, 2022.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Nina de Gelder, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 10, 2023.
[72] A4 addition to case study draft, emailed to researcher, November 2, 2022.

PERMONÍK
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5.3
SPOTing Case Studies:
ARTSOCIALSPACE BRUNNENPASSAGE

PARTNER INTRODUCTION

ArtSocialSpace Brunnenpassage in Vienna, Austria, has been operating as a laboratory and venue for transcultural and participatory art since 2007, located in a market area characterized by a high percentage of socially disadvantaged residents and individuals with migration experience. Its former market hall building is used for rehearsals, workshops, discussions and events ranging from performance and dance to music, exhibitions and film. Brunnenpassage's main aim is to provide access and opportunities for everyone to participate in contemporary art and culture, actively reaching out to diverse audiences and offering space for informal and alternative learning using transcultural encounters. [73] Brunnenpassage's team consists of specialists including cultural workers, researchers, social scientists, activists, city planners, artists and technicians from diverse backgrounds who speak 25 different languages between them. Brunnenpassage also participates in international artistic exchanges, projects and professional networks.

PARTNER STATISTICS

Overall Brunnenpassage employs 12 people, 2 are full time and the rest part time. Their team also includes 4 independent contractors employed as event technicians and one to two people doing civilian alternative service. [74] Brunnenpassage also has a volunteer team of approximately 25 people. On average the organisation hosts 650 artists and cultural workers a year. Annually Brunnenpassage runs around 400 events for approximately 18,000 attendees.

STARTING POINTS

For Brunnenpassage the overall idea of SPOTing understood as an in depth reflective research process building on the types of exchanges previously held through the TEH Arts Education Hub, was an important factor in shaping their SPOTing project. They wanted to use their SPOTing testbed as a way to direct a process of self examination and critical exchange, assessing how their organisation's values of transculturality, access and participation were realised in their everyday practices and projects. Brunnenpassage's original intention was to conduct this process both internally and externally; with its staff, volunteers and associates, as well as with collaborating artists, participants, neighbours and those who were less well acquainted with the organisation.

"For us the PAR methodology allows a kind of M2µŠöÞHo §Øµ§òMN Þ hµ:HÞÐŠHÞ Ð Š ® 2µ
our current practice at Brunnenpassage in more depth, testing our usual approaches, patterns, convictions, organisational culture and so on." [75]

Gordana Crnko and Zuzana Ernst, the Brunnenpassage team members responsible for devising and designing testbed activity explained that both they and their organisation saw the research as a way to try and carve out a reflective and learning space for staff who were "usually too busy in their daily routine to analyse past and current projects and methods more deeply, while at the same time inviting participants and people from outside the organisation to bring in new perspectives and feedback." [76]

From the beginning Brunnenpassage were fully engaged with the potential they saw for SPOTing's PAR based methodology to help them identify their weaknesses and "areas for further learning, or course correction if needed, to be more in line with our values." [77] This openness to the concept

[73] Brunnenpassage's use of the term transculture is informed by cultural studies and postcolonialism, recognising culture not as a homogeneous set of competing traditions or practices but as a fluid and dynamic site of meaningful exchange which requires "critical reflections on relations of power and (re) produced relations of dominance in society, and also in the internal artistic practice." Zuzana Ernst and Ivana Pilić, "Thinking in Practice - Contextualizing Vienna's Brunnenpassage," in Art Practices in the Migration Society: Transcultural Strategies in Action at Brunnenpassage in Vienna, eds., Ivana Pilić and Anne Wiederhold-Daryanavard (Vienna: Transcript Verlag, 2021), 18.

[74] In Austria, instead of compulsory military service, young men can choose to do 9 months Zivildienstservice, 'civilian alternative service' working in either agriculture, education, social or health care settings. www.info.bml.gv.at/en/topics/civilian-service-and-volunteer-work/civilian-alternative-service-in-austria.html.

[75] Brunnenpassage SPOTing reflective diary entry, January, 2021.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

of (self) criticality and what it might reveal, as well as a willingness to pursue any changes deemed necessary, was aligned with Brunnenpassage's commitment to transculturality. Brunnenpassage's application of transcultural principles was visible in the multi-lingual signage on their building, [78] their engagement with diverse audiences, and in the diversity of their staff. Conceptually transculturality also informed Brunnenpassage's awareness of the importance of acknowledging and critically engaging with the power dynamics present in cultural work as well as within art and cultural institutions and groups involved in such work. [79]

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How do the values of our organisation match up to the actual practice? v v

Brunnenpassage's research topic centred on four main research sub questions related to how the organisation's values were evident in their work, values which had been developed through practice within their specific context, as well as being informed by contemporary art discourses and their work with practitioners.

"Are our projects transcultural? How participative is our programme really? Is our programme accessible for everyone? Does our self-image match how we are perceived from the outside?" [80]

They sought to collaboratively examine their sub questions with their audiences and participants and also with their staff, volunteers, colleagues and artists, by looking at multiple aspects of Brunnenpassage's participative methods and approaches as well as considering their collaborative relationships both in the local neighbourhood and with larger institutions. In attempting to understand how and to what extent these values of transculturality, access and participation were visible, understood, or shared both internally and externally, their sub questions reflected the beginnings of their thinking about how the organisation's perceptions might differ from others' and what course corrections might be needed.

"What does transculturality mean for us and is the concept understood or relevant for others? What criteria can it be judged by?" [81]

"Where does actual co-creation happen? How much is planned versus coincidence? Who has ownership over a project and is it made transparent?" [82]

"Where do we possibly reproduce patterns of exclusion? We work with 'positive discrimination' strategies in order to reach diverse audiences, how transparent are we about this? Where are our borders?" [83]

By considering how they could create and facilitate testbed formats capable of accommodating 'real' criticism, Brunnenpassage began to reflect on what kind of skills or experience they might be lacking in and the type of support they would need.

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of our own work and impact? Where do we experience criticism? Do we reserve enough time and resources to listen? Do we dare to look where ÞH ÐµH: P § ÿÏ 2HŠ¦öµJ (iµ ØŠhµ :PÏø§Þµ H (communication) skills to foster a constructive atmosphere for (self) criticism?" [84]

These questions helped shape Brunnenpassage's thinking about approach, early on deciding that external experts were essential to be able to sensitively facilitate and 'front' such a process. Overall

[78] Brunnenpassage's strategic choice of location for their venue, outside Vienna's historic cultural centre in an outlying market district; a working class neighbourhood with a lot of residents coming from a migrant background, was also part of a deliberate attempt to engage with participative transcultural approaches and the creation of new transdisciplinary cultural forms.
[79] "The need to orient the culture industry in a way that counters discrimination applies to established institutions as well as the independent scene and sociocultural institutions, as these are just as permeated with racism and inequalities as the major institutions." Ernst and Pilić, "Thinking in Practice," 13-14.
[80] Brunnenpassage SPOTing Testbed Starting Point, February, 2021.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.

4 themed training blocks of guided reflection and feedback sessions were planned, with Gordana and Zuzana briefing the different facilitators chosen according to their specialisms and experience and working with them on the session design and preparation as well as gathering feedback from them afterwards.

Brunnenpassage explained that their first testbed 'block' examined accessibility, with a specific focus on classism, which they started by doing a workshop with their core team led by trainer and academic Francis Seeck, [85] presenting theory followed by group exercises and reflective discussions. The next part of this block was an external focus group made up of Brunnenpassage's visitors, artists and colleagues from institutions connected to Brunnenpassage, moderated by artist Denice Bourbon. [86] The feedback from this focus group was then shared and discussed with Brunnenpassage's team, followed by two more sessions held internally reflecting on the testbed process and content to date. One of these sessions was a workshop led by two facilitators, Myassa Kraitt [87] and Brigitte Puhr [88] specialists in social anthropology and conflict resolution respectively, with Brigitte informed by her internal experience acting as an external trainer and supervisor for Brunnenpassage.

Gordana and Zuzana explained that the structure of these testbed blocks was not fixed and they changed according to the needs of the participants and how much attention certain topics demanded.

"It was evolving based on what the results of each session were, because this process really is an experiment for us. What we were thinking about at the beginning was that we will have discussion with the experts and then there should be a meeting where we are processing, exchanging and 2µù§HÞ Ð iÞHØ HØµ HµŠÿ Š¦ PH HØµ:µ recommendations

we decided to continue with classism as a topic, ¦µ§ŠP:µ HØµ ø2:H i 2ò:Ø / iÞHØ I2Š §Þ: öµÏH with a lot of open questions." [89]

At the beginning of their SPOTing research process Gordana and Zuzana proposed the topics for their testbed training blocks and then presented them to the wider Brunnenpassage team adjusting them where necessary according to the feedback received. Once the processes started involving ongoing discussion and reflection they generated more questions and additional issues that fed into later topics. After examining classism Brunnenpassage's subsequent training blocks focused more on participation and transcultural approaches although there was some overlap with accessibility and classism, "looking at who can participate as audience and participants, but also in the decision making processes within the team." [90]

The key topics that emerged from Brunnenpassage's SPOTing testbeds included questions of how to foster awareness and appreciation of non Eurocentric aesthetic experiences, the power relations at play in determining and upholding standards of artistic excellence, who really controls the project design and delivery as well as issues of how to build lasting connections with local youth. By the end of their SPOTing testbed in 2022 Brunnenpassage had completed 3 training blocks. They then invited one external and one internal colleague to form a focus group with them to review all the feedback and output generated through their testbed processes to identify needs and recommendations. As a result of this process Brunnenpassage ran a peer learning workshop for their team and those who also regularly use their space discussing and sharing different strategies for dealing with difficult situations during their events. [91] Additionally in early 2023 they started implementing some further testbed recommendations into their daily practices such as

[85] Francis Seeck is an author, anti-discrimination trainer and PhD candidate based in Berlin www.francisseeck.net.
[86] Denice Bourbon is a performance artist, singer, writer, show host, curator, and stand-up comedian www.brut-wien.at/en/Artists/Bourbon-Denice.
[87] Myassa Kraitt is a cultural and social anthropologist, performer, dancer, rapper and activist www.kollektiv-sprachwechsel.org/myassa-kraitt-en.
[88] Brigitte Puhr is a specialist trainer and mediator www.gewaltfrei.at/profile/brigittepuhr.
[89] Zuzana Ernst, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 29, 2022.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Zuzana explained that through their testbed discussions various team members had raised the issue of people coming into Brunnenpassage's open, 'porous' venue during events and potentially causing disruption, noting the difficulties trying to manage that whilst seeking to maintain a welcoming and safe atmosphere in their space.

trying to create more collaborative reflective space by reducing their overall programming.

TESTBED ACTIVITY

2021

▪ Internal discussions with whole organisation as well as feedback from regular facilitators to help formulate research topics and ideas for testbed design
▪ Work started on themed training blocks of expert led workshops and follow up group discussions planned, participant feedback questionnaires for existing projects devised
▪ Meetings with potential hosting partners (Belvedere 21) for 2022 SPOTing seminar defining transculture as the seminar theme
▪ Feedback collection formats tested through some of Brunnenpassage's existing programmes
▪ Testbed preparation meetings held with facilitators for first 'internal' training workshop and 'external' focus group feedback session
▪ First internal training workshop Classism in the Cultural Sector held for 15 participants from Brunnenpassage and colleagues from Kulturhaus Brotfabrik and Tanz die Toleranz (also part of Caritas Vienna, the umbrella organisation which oversees Brunnenpassage)
▪ Focus group held with 17 'externals' (project participants, collaborating initiatives and artists, volunteers and neighbours) conducted by facilitator without Brunnenpassage present
▪ Debriefing sessions held with facilitators
▪ Follow up reflective feedback meetings held with Brunnenpassage team sharing results of external focus group and discussing previous internal training workshop
▪ Meetings with SPOTing researcher and project manager and work done with KUFA developing sessions for second SPOTing Seminar in Bratislava
▪ Preparation meetings with facilitators for second internal testbed workshop
▪ Second internal training workshop continuing the theme of classism delivered by two facilitators
▪ Follow up reflection meetings held with Brunnenpassage team
▪ Planning for third testbed training session on transculture to be integrated into 2022 SPOTing seminar programme

In 2021 Brunnenpassage had approximately 30 participants in their testbed activities

2022

▪ Preparations made for third SPOTing seminar including discussions with Brunnenpassage team and partners as well as meetings with TEH project manager and researcher
▪ Third SPOTing 3 day seminar Diversity & Artistic Process hosted by Brunnenpassage in Vienna
▪ Transcultural approaches workshop with artist Amanda Piña held as part of seminar programme
▪ Follow up reflection meetings with Brunnenpassage team on transcultural approaches workshop and SPOTing seminar overall
▪ Planning for final block of testbed activity reviewing all the results from previous sessions and meetings
▪ Focus group composed of 1 external and 1 internal adviser drawn from previous facilitators and staff team to review material gathered so far and recommend next steps
▪ Internal workshop on how to deal with difficult situations during events held with Brunnenpassage team and users

In 2022 Brunnenpassage had approximately 30 participants in their testbed events with an additional 35 local and international attendees at Amanda Piña's transcultural approaches workshop

TESTBED APPROACH

For Brunnenpassage's SPOTing research to function as the reality check they wanted it was particularly important that their research values of transculturality, access and participation carefully shaped their approach when constructing and conducting their testbeds. This was not only due to action based research principles stressing the connection between the why of research questions and the how of testbed activity, but because in Brunnenpassage's case they wanted to ensure that there was enough ethical validity built into their testbed process to justify any changes in

their practices that might be collectively identified as necessary. Therefore there was an important symbiotic relationship between concepts such as transculturality and Brunnenpassage's research rationale and approach.

"Issues of discrimination, such as classism and how to deal with them are essential to understand HØµ : §ÞŠö ®ÞÏø§PöHÞµ: Þ P2 §ÞHoD µ neighbourhood. We as a team are very aware that we not only need to have these issues present, but also to communicate them very transparently Š ® 2µùµ§HÞhµöoD H Š ® iÞHØ HØµ PH that we can have deep, honest encounters and connections with our neighbours, and especially to reach the young people in our neighbourhood." [92]

Informed by their first externally facilitated workshops and reflective feedback sessions with the Brunnenpassage team on the theme of classism as well as through their own additional role as research participants, Gordana and Zuzana carefully considered the task of how to sensitively and openly facilitate a critical process involving personal exchange within a group setting of colleagues where there may be power and status imbalances. Some of the feedback from Brunnenpassage's team underlined the need to counter any sense of unintended peer pressure to participate in ways some team members felt uneasy about. As Brunnenpassage's testbeds developed this was supported by using a padlet to collect anonymous online feedback from those who felt uncomfortable about sharing private information in a group situation.

Another key factor which shaped Brunnenpassage's testbed approach was the scale of the resources, time and commitment needed for this type of ongoing collaborative reflection in order to fully digest what was presented and shared as well as building adequate trust in the process and each other to be able to express different and perhaps conflicting perspectives. This was something that Brunnenpassage recognised as an ongoing goal that they felt they were working towards through the development of their testbeds.

"The topic which we discussed a lot within the framework of critical friends, the question of how to be critical with each other and how to voice criticism, I think is something that is going to accompany us throughout the whole process. It is a challenging aspect of this project because it becomes personal, I mean we can discuss the topic of classism structurally on a social and on an institutional level, but then it becomes also relevant on the personal level, like who has what role within the team, who has how much speaking time, who is heard more than others, who has decision making power and so on." [93]

Brunnenpassage originally planned to have an external focus group within each themed training block but it didn't work out that way. This was partly due to the fact that they identified a more pressing need and responsibility to examine their themes internally, having opened up processes with staff that needed further attention. In addition to this Brunnenpassage realised that the external sessions "required a lot of resources to mobilise and then continue the conversation" [94] which went beyond what was available solely through SPOTing funding. This also affected their shift away from developing audience and participant feedback methods such as questionnaires which they had originally seen as a way to become more skilled in formulating questions.

Moreover Brunnenpassage's experience in their first external focus group session, which was compromised of "Brunnenpassage lovers;" [95] people who were more interested in offering positive feedback than criticism, presented them with the issue of how to facilitate a more critical response from those outside their organisation. Recognising the difficulties of how to meaningfully engage with those who were known to be more critical of their

[92] Brunnenpassage Technical report September-October, 2021.
[93] Zuzana Ernst, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 4, 2021.
[94] Zuzana Ernst, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 29, 2022.
[95] Gordana Crnko, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 29, 2022.

work,[96] Brunnenpassage explained that overall they felt it was a more realistic use of their time and resources to focus their research internally within their organisation.

"Before we do any more external sessions we think that we need to really sharpen what the questions are that we want to ask and that these need to ø2:H ¦µ ®µHµ2ÿÞ µ® Þ Hµ2 Šöööl X i Pö® the entire SPOTing project our priority is really the internal process."[97]

PUTTING VALUES INTO PRACTICE

In contrast to some SPOTing partners who developed their research questions and identified their research values through a more gradual process of reflection, from the beginning Brunnenpassage's core organisational values of transculturality, access and participation were recognised as central to their SPOTing research approach and to their overarching research value of self examination.

"L² HØµ ÿµHŠ öµhµö X ŠÐ2µµD oµ:D :µ would be a value and it would be a skill that we are training ourselves in now and I would say that it's a value that we want to gain and strengthen to be able to involve it in our daily practice in the future."[98]

Working towards developing self reflection is integral to the action based research concept of 'learning through doing' and something that Brunnenpassage saw as being in line with their participative approach in general but had not sufficiently been implemented as a consistent element of their day to day work.

Despite Brunnenpassage's overall affinity with SPOTing's PAR based methodology there was a struggle with some of the terminology involved, particularly with the idea of what a value actually represented and how to explain it to Brunnenpassage's wider circle of research participants.

"I understand that there is this methodology and that it makes sense for all the partners to be iÞHØÞ µ Ï2Šÿµi 2òD Š: ®ÞÏø§PöH Š: ÞH Þ: Ï wrap our heads around sometimes. I also think it's something that is interesting to learn from and to frame ourselves within, but when we explain the SPOTing project to the team, we cannot talk in this language about values, it's not so easy."[99]

Brunnenpassage explained that their decision to discuss their SPOTing research with their team in terms of their core concepts of access, participation, classism and transculture rather than use the language of 'values' was also driven by translation issues, given that in German 'Werte' has strong connotations with capitalist ideals.

CHALLENGES

Although for Brunnenpassage SPOTing was a chance to reflect on an organisational level, the work was carried out by a team of just two people who were directly responsible for delivering Brunnenpassage's SPOTing testbed activity. The extent of the work involved in designing, managing and developing the research to their desired standard was considerable, as well as the time commitment required from fellow staff members, which sometimes proved a struggle, especially combined with the extra workload involved in planning and hosting the third SPOTing Seminar in March 2022.

"The scope of the funding could not cover the intensity necessary for the process."[100]

However Brunnenpassage did note that their choice of diversity and artistic processes as the theme for the SPOTing seminar, to tie in both with their organisation's work and their testbed focus, although logistically demanding, was also beneficial to their research.

[96] Gordana and Zuzana explained that they had invited those who they knew were more critical of Brunnenpassage but that they had not come to the external session. Ibid.
[97] Zuzana Ernst, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 29, 2022.
[98] Gordana Crnko, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 4, 2021.
[99] Zuzana Ernst, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 29, 2022.
[100] Zuzana Ernst, Note to SPOTing researcher, September 1, 2022.

"This whole process is very positive for us, because these challenges bring us even closer to the origins of our themes, the intensive work on them brings even more clarity and strengthens our intentions." [101]

In a sense the entire premise of Brunnenpassage's SPOTing research question was about embracing challenge, which obviously was a challenging process in itself, sometimes in unforeseen ways.

"I think this just underlines the importance of starting this process because in an ideal world we would do this in every organisation ŠPH ÿŠHÞ§Šööo hµ2 HÞÿµD HØ2 PÐØ 2µòµ§HÞ Š® challenging yourself on a personal, institutional and a social level, that would be the perfect way to do it, but it also shows us how urgent it is to start to deal with these subjects because when you start to open up something you see just how much there is to deal with." [102]

As well as issues occurring from staff sharing their personal details and lived experiences of the research themes including realisations about the sometimes complex intersections between different forms of discrimination and privilege, the process of opening up these issues both on an individual and an organisational level was something that raised some concerns in the earlier stages of Brunnenpassage's testbeds.

"I do not feel totally equipped to go into this process, to guide conversation in a productive way so that we do not open up something we cannot then close again, to be able to lead people out of the process at the end of the session with a kind of a closure." [103]

Reflecting on these concerns in retrospect Gordana and Zuzana recognised that they had arisen not only in relation to ethical issues but also the difficulties negotiating the multiple dimensions of designing, planning, participating in and analysing the results of their research process which fed into their decision to involve outside experts to deliver their testbed workshops. Finding appropriate facilitators who had the right combination of skills and knowledge also proved initially challenging for Brunnenpassage, with adaptations needed to achieve the right balance of input and discussion opportunities to suit different group dynamics. Zuzana also explained that the decision to continue working with the theme of classism through an additional workshop led by experts was made to try and to achieve a sense of closure and use concrete strategies to implement the results into the team structure and processes. Gordana observed that rather than being solely motivated by a perceived lack of their own skills or capabilities, noting the similarities with processes used in other areas of Brunnenpassage's work, their desire to work with external facilitators was also about "learning from their expertise." [104]

"Because this work is happening on so many different levels we are also trying to think about ø ®Þ Ð Š /2Š§HÞ§Šö ÿµHØ ® HØŠH iµ §Š P: SPOTing as well. So things that we could maybe implement on a monthly basis to help develop our team in terms of this kind of knowledge and ŠiŠ2µ µ::D H2oÞ Ð H ÐµH Š ¦µ µøH PH Ï Þ work in the long term." [105]

In common with other SPOTing partners Brunnenpassage found the level of reporting required for SPOTing overall quite onerous and sometimes repetitive. Gordana and Zuzana also explained that while they could see the benefits of the PAR methods used in SPOTing such as reflective diaries as a way to look back on and review their thinking, they had developed their own mechanisms such as regular internal meetings, which they found more effective in driving their reflective process overall.

"I think it's just the fact that it's a lot and our resources are little. While it felt like an extra

[101] Brunnenpassage Technical report November-December, 2021.
[102] Gordana Crnko, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 4, 2021.
[103] Zuzana Ernst, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 4, 2021.
[104] Gordana Crnko, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 29, 2022.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Zuzana Ernst, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 4, 2021.

¦P2®µ H øöö PH HØµ Ï 2ÿ:D ÞH Þ: :HÞöÞP2Ï®PH H ®µø µ Š §öµŠ2 Ï2Šÿµ µhµ HØ PÐØ
have written the thoughts down and have this information recorded." [106]

KEY LEARNING

Both Gordana and Zuzana noted the benefits gained from using SPOTing as an opportunity to be able to work with their entire team to collectively develop a wider perspective and understanding of how their values translated into practice. Referring to Socrates' maxim 'I know that I know nothing' Gordana explained that Brunnenpassage's SPOTing research had revealed an ongoing need to learn more and develop a greater sensitivity to the multiple ways in which discrimination and exclusion are commonly reproduced in social and cultural life for different communities and individuals. Both Gordana and Zuzana also emphasised the importance of maintaining 'a beginner's mind' [107] despite having decades of experience or expert status in a particular field.

"Expertise also means being aware of this necessity to learn all the time, to stay open to new things and never reach the point where you say yes, I know everything about discrimination-critical work." [108]

Gordana and Zuzana also explained that an important part of their key learning about this way of working was the need to balance an ambition for change with a responsibility to effectively and sensitively manage a collective peer learning process to ensure enough depth and care for everyone involved. For Zuzana this meant really thinking through what Brunnenpassage wanted to achieve, what was collectively possible and adapting to people's feedback and needs as the process developed.

"Our key learning is to narrow down and choose

see the need and have the ambition to change everything and try to be this perfect space where P2 hŠöPµ: Š2µ 2µùµ§Hµ® Þ Šöö P2 Š§HÞ :I we have a responsibility to set a focus because we are involving the entire team. What exactly are we involving the team in? I think this needs to be iµöö ®µø µ® Š ® HØ PÐØH Š¦ PH Þ :ÿŠööµ2 ÿ achievable terms so that this process can have depth and quality." [109]

Considering exactly what had been achieved Gordana and Zuzana noted a concrete attitudinal shift in their team as a whole in terms of more openness towards learning from each other, as well as an overall recognition of the need for Brunnenpassage, as a cultural organisation engaged in critical practices, to develop more "awareness and ability to simply understand the discriminatory mechanisms or language and values that we engage with and reproduce." [110] They also identified that learning collaboratively using a reflective process to enhance their (self) criticality and awareness was as essential to apply inwardly and transparently to Brunnenpassage's internal working practices with colleagues and staff as it was to their external working practices with participants and partners.

Thinking about the extent to which they had been able to arrive at an 'answer' to their main research question Gordana and Zuza explained that they saw all their research questions as work in progress, helping Brunnenpassage to develop more sensitivity and awareness around the themes and terms they were examining, knowledge that had permeated many different aspects of their work.

"It is so much about ongoing learning. Within this process, with all our different experiences and inputs over the last 2 years, although not everything has been directly part of SPOTing,

[107] The idea of having a beginner's mind is present in Buddhist and Zen philosophies and outlines the importance of staying open to new learning, concepts and experiences regardless of whatever pre existing knowledge you may have.
[108] Gordana Crnko, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 1, 2023. In German the term diskriminierungskritisch is used to describe a method of engaging in cultural work that is sensitive to discrimination with a critical focus on how socio-cultural structures can be inequitable and prejudicial. In English this term can be related to decolonial theory and practice.
[109] Zuzana Ernst, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 1, 2023.
[110] Brunnenpassage SPOTing reflective diary entry, Spring, 2022.

I feel that SPOTing equipped us with special glasses that we put on in order to sharpen the focus and become more sensitive to certain things like hidden power dynamics and subtle forms of discrimination and exclusion." [111]

Despite not having explored some of the themes of their sub research questions such as co-creation Gordana and Zuzana outlined how these questions now formed part of new work including another TEH project, Cultural Transformation Movement (CTM).

OUTCOMES AND INTENTIONS

Although the need to 'slow down' due to overwork and a lack of collective reflective opportunities had long been recognised by Brunnenpassage and was an important factor in informing the starting points of their SPOTing research, the collective perspective gained from learning together through their testbeds brought a renewed focus to the practical steps required to do so sustainably and consistently. This was also one of the recommendations from their focus group analysis of their testbed feedback which identified a need for regular team reflective meetings and training sessions. Although Brunnenpassage did manage to delay their programming to late January in 2023 to extend their winter break and try to make space for individual and group reflections there were varied results across their team due to the fact that some workloads were largely unaffected. However both Gordana and Zuzana saw this as taking steps in the right direction, explaining they want to "find ways to seriously conserve resources and create time for these internal reflective processes." [112]

Gordana and Zuzana outlined the opportunity they saw in their new long term TEH project CTM, to develop their reflective learning process further and use their SPOTing sub questions dealing with co-creation, ownership and transparency within transcultural practices as a way to sharpen and inform their understanding from outside perspectives they perhaps lacked.

"In this Cultural Transformation Movement project we have plans to invite artists from §µ2HŠÞ § ÿÿP ÞHÞµ: H Øµö/ P: Þ P2 2µù structures, so spending half a year or a whole year being included in a team. The point is to have people in our team who are helping us through these questions, having a really critical look at our work, patterns and structures and maybe uncovering some truth that we are not able to see from the inside. I would really connect this to SPOTing because the idea of doing this in this way came out of some of these testbed processes." [113]

Set to run over 4 years, Zuzana explained the application for CTM was rewritten during the course of SPOTing and also involved working with a researcher alongside extra dimensions of advocacy, activism and artistic production. Both Gordana and Zuzana agreed that they would take SPOTing with them into this project as well as across their practices and thinking.

"Our plans for CTM are very much informed by the SPOTing process and our experiences, so although there are multiple layers to the project, the one regarding strengthening competency through H2ŠÞ Þ Ð iØÞöµ 2µùµ§HÞ Ð HØµ /2Š§HÞ§µ comparable to SPOTing. So now we have a really great basis to continue developing from." [114]

[111] Zuzana Ernst, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 1, 2023.
[112] Gordana Crnko, Note to SPOTing researcher, September 1, 2022.
[113] Gordana Crnko, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 1, 2023.
[114] Zuzana Ernst, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 1, 2023.

#TERMINOLOGY?

5.4

SPOTing Case Studies:

ASSOCIAZIONE CULTURALE OLTRE

PARTNER INTRODUCTION

Associazione Culturale Oltre (Oltre) was founded in 1997, in Bologna, Italy. It operates across two venues, the first is a big hall under a bridge near the city centre where theatre, circus, aerial dance and music workshops are held.[115] Oltre's second venue Camere d'Aria, is an ex-factory multifunctional space for arts and crafts in Bologna's suburbs. It has a theatre hall, a costume and dressmaking workroom, a social kitchen and areas for carpentry, recycled materials, screenprinting and bike repair, as well as guest rooms used for international youth exchanges, artist residencies and 'workawayers'.[116] Oltre organises performing arts events, festivals and parades, as well as participatory projects with local communities, aiming to activate inclusive and eco-sustainable urban animation to build social relationships, particularly with youth and minority groups. They work with professional and volunteer artists through their art education programmes, offering young artists guidance and support from more experienced educators. Oltre is part of a number of local, national and international associations and networks.

PARTNER STATISTICS

Oltre is a membership organisation which does not have any paid staff, it is run by volunteers and overseen by a board of directors.[117] On average the organisation hosts between 4 and 5 artistic residencies and about 20 workawayers a year. Oltre also hosts between 2 and 3 youth exchanges yearly with an additional 4 to 5 happening in partner countries. Annually Oltre usually runs around 15 events on site or in collaboration with others for approximately 2500 attendees. Oltre also runs roughly 8 to 10 one off workshops, 7 ongoing workshops and 1 or 2 public space projects in Bologna each year; regular examples are the International Soup Festival for around 5000 participants, and their children's parade Par Tòt Parata , for about 1000 participants.

STARTING POINTS

Oltre's identity as a cultural association made of up local and international volunteer members fed strongly into the starting point of their SPOTing research. Many of Oltre's members have an activist background and are concerned with building opportunities for reciprocal intergenerational and intercultural relationality. As a voluntary association Oltre is dependent on the time and commitment offered by their members helping to run their venues and programme. Much of their regular activity such as their Par Tòt Parata, harnesses the neighbourhood networks that Oltre has built up over the years and is equally reliant on people's collective willingness and energy to create and participate in cultural expressions of joy and community in public space.

"Somehow I think it's like a river under the earth, HØÞ: òÞ ® Ï /ØÞö : /Øo Þ: Þ ùPµ §Þ Ð P2 / and I think it's something we are not really aware of but it's there."[118]

The non hierarchical horizontal structure that enables Oltre's type of cultural activism coupled with the ebb and flow of volunteer members also means that "things are always discussed and re discussed because not all of the members always agree, things are questioned especially by younger people who come in and who would like to create their own working place."[119] Their initial SPOTing research question, which came from discussions

[115] This venue known as BUCO, which Oltre has run for over 15 years, has had some problems with new municipal regulations concerning the hosting of public events in recent years, so their case study is mostly focused on their second venue, Camere d'Aria.
[116] Oltre hosts people who come from all over the world to help out. www.workaway.info.
[117] Under Italian law Oltre exists as 'an association for social promotion' as part of the third sector or Ente del Terzo Settore (ETS), defined as a not-for-profit private organisation that pursues civic solidarity and social benefits, carrying out activities of general interest for the benefit of its members or third parties in an accountable and transparent way. An association for social promotion is a particular category of volunteer organization (ODV) that mainly uses the voluntary work of its members. It must adopt the legal form of an association and be composed of at least seven individuals or three associations for social promotion. The number of employees cannot exceed 50% of the volunteers or 5% of the members. www.italiancompanyformations.com/it/italy-implemented-a-comprehensive-reform-of-the-third-sector-and-other-not-for-profit-organizations.
[118] Lydia was referring to the influence the Paulo Freire quote "being a teacher demands that we be simultaneously a politician, an epistemologist, and an artist," had had on her personally during the course of her career. Lydia Buchner, Interview with SPOTing researcher, July 7, 2021. Freire quoted in Paulo Freire, "Reading the World and Reading the Word: An Interview with Paulo Freire," Language Arts 62, no. 1 (1985): 17. www.jstor.org/stable/41405241.
[119] Lydia Buchner, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 30, 2022.

among the membership, centred on examining the lived experiences of Oltre's arts educator members more closely. This was done by looking at their formal and informal educational experiences and focused on how that shaped the way they worked with and related to young people, particularly those from migrant backgrounds or others experiencing social exclusion or marginality.

"How do we put our life experiences to good use in social, artistic and educational practices with children? How do we develop an educational sensibility without imposing our own aesthetic values and world view on children? We are conscious that our aesthetics are different to adolescents with a migrant background. For µnŠÿ/öµD iØµ HØµo ÿµµH P: Ï 2 HØµ ø2: Oltre supports teenagers tell us that we are hippies, we don't correspond with the expectations these children have of adults. The cultural diversity of religion, sexual orientation, etc., among educators is often in contrast with adolescents who are often insecure, rigid and unwelcoming towards some aspect of their identity and the differences of others." [120]

The idea of understanding a 'common life story' of the volunteers and activists working as artists and educators with Oltre, including those who also had previously been involved with the organisation when they were younger, often taking circuitous routes into art and education whilst maintaining a commitment to civic engagement, was of interest to Oltre in relation to their ongoing goal of facilitating and educating an inclusive and accessible artistic and creative community in their city.

"Many of us are activists in political spaces, so I think that Oltre helps us to understand how to do politics with other instruments; with art and education." [121]

Attempting to communicate the belief system underpinning Oltre's work and focus on how it was embodied in the non didactic approach of their arts educators was an important factor in orientating Oltre's SPOTing research, generating a number of sub questions as their testbeds progressed. These questions dealt with the idea of space inside and outside their venue and the limits and possibilities of maintaining autonomy through their collective DIY modes of building community and creating mutual forms of accessible learning and cultural and social exchange, especially when working with institutional partners.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the formal and informal experiences and knowledge that characterise the artists, craftspeople and educators who lead Oltre's education workshops through art? How can Oltre support teenagers' collective growth and development through artistic and cultural practices?

Oltre's initial research questions, concerned with understanding how experiential learning shaped their arts educators' collaborative approach with their young participants, were also connected to Oltre's idea of the importance of maintaining relational space. What Oltre termed "the elephant in the room" [122] during the Covid crisis in Italy was how much the work of cultural centres and community associations had been restricted, closed to the public from March 2020, with some limited reopening in summer 2020. This fed into Oltre's testbed development, motivated by the urgent need they saw to continue to facilitate collective 'hands on' creative activities whenever and wherever possible. Therefore some of their testbed activity took place outside their Camere d'Aria centre in Bologna's suburbs, prompting a further SPOTing research question about space.

How does space affect our artistic and educational practices? How can we maintain our identity and our style of action in and out of Camere d'Aria?

The prolonged effect that Covid had through official restrictions and the subsequent climate of fear, mistrust and isolation, further highlighted

[120] Fulvia Antonelli, Interview with SPOTing researcher, July 7, 2021.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Associazione Culturale Oltre Presentation, TEH SPOTing Seminar Programme, Online, February 9, 2021.

the role of having spaces; buildings as well as non commercial 'free' public space in the city, to facilitate the collective creative and social exchange that Oltre had long been concerned with. Their pre Covid commitment to building such open and relational space so often lacking in modern urban environments, shifted during the pandemic towards trying to recreate the essential qualities of Oltre's physical and conceptual space in more formal education settings through collaborations with an educational service and a school.

"The space - its organisation, its implicit messages and what it represents for young people - has a Ð2µŠH Þ ùPµ §µ HØµ Š§HÞhÞHÞµ: o P performance anxiety space freer from rigid rules and roles but based on spontaneous mutual recognition frees both children and educator-artists by promoting an 'incidental education' [123] richer in results with less constraints. We are learning the limits and advantages of structured educational µhÞ2 ÿµ H: Š ® 2µùµ§HÞ Ð P2 /2Š§Hh§µ styles of relationships with groups of children." [124]

Oltre's workshops in bicycle repairs, carpentry, tailoring and later ensemble music, normally held in their Camere d'Aria venue with young people from the neighbourhood, were developed as their main SPOTing testbed activity through collaboration with a local educational support service Stanze Educative, specifically tailored to young people who were in danger of dropping out of or being excluded from school. These weekly workshops took place in Stanze Educative's premises during school term time and were different from previous activity that Oltre had delivered before in partnership with Stanze Educative in Camere d'Aria, which had been part of after school recreational activity for young people. Their testbed workshops in Stanze Educative were not done on a project by project basis but actually formed part of the education service's parallel schooling structures. Therefore they were subject to a formal education agreement between Oltre, Stanze Educative and the school, seen as "a form of 'remotivation' for students to attend 'official' school on a more regular basis." [125]

Oltre also started another offsite testbed collaboration with a school in their district, working with three girls with disabilities who were the only pupils allowed to attend school in person with their support teachers during the pandemic. This generated further research questions.

How do we deal with different abilities and physical possibilities in a group context? How do we lower performance anxiety in these workshops and allow art to be an instrument of free expression in itself?

Oltre was motivated to collaborate with these students due to issues with distance learning and online teaching affecting young people with disabilities in particular, observing that although they felt they had a good working relationship with the girls' support teachers, recreating the atmosphere and effects of an Oltre style space even in a designated room within the school was difficult.

"Once these girls came to our cultural space, this really made a big, big difference, how they related to our space and the situation of trust Š ® § ø®µ §µ HØµo § Pö® ®µhµö / Þ P2 §P centre, which was not so easy to develop in school, showed us space really does have a lot of Þ ùPµ §µ [126] L

In addition to these SPOTing testbeds exploring their research questions concerned with experience, development and relationality, for both their arts educators and participants, framed by Oltre's notion of collaborative creative space understood as a source of 'incidental education,' Oltre also included their annual children's carnival parade Par Tòt Parata . Oltre's schools testbed participants were also

[123] Oltre cite British anarchist and architect, Colin Ward's ideas of 'incidental education' as pivotal to their practice and understanding of the importance of self organised autonomous collective learning space. Ward wrote about "ideas of the environment as the educational resource, ideas of the enquiring school, the school without walls". S Mills, "Colin Ward: The 'Gentle' Anarchist and Informal Education," The encyclopedia of pedagogy and informal education, last modified January 1, 2013, www.infed.org/mobi/colin-ward-the-gentle-anarchist-and-informal-education.

[124] Fulvia Antonelli, Oltre SPOTing reflective diary entry, January, 2021.

[125] Fulvia Antonelli, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 30, 2022.

[126] Lydia Buchner, Interview with SPOTing researcher, July 7, 2021.

invited to work on Par Tòt Parata, which Oltre is best known for, based on a network of neighbourhood participant groups, artists, makers and performers coming together to realise Oltre's idea of inclusive and accessible participative civic space.

"Building a community pedagogy starting from 'arte popolare' [127] and developing environments capable of including everyone, starting with those who bring cultural diversity with them, is fundamental. The Par Tòt Parata is basically a spirit that is not only part of the parade but is part of every activity we carry out, even in workshops that do not culminate with a public moment of such strong impact. The parade reminds us every year who we are, reunites our community and rekindles our creativity and desire to build and be active in an art at the service of sociality between people." [128]

Overall Oltre selected their SPOTing testbeds according to the continuity of the participant groups involved, the availability and interest of their arts educators to offer and contribute to ongoing reflective feedback, as well as the possibility to articulate their methods clearly. When it was possible to do so post Covid, Oltre also added some of the typically eclectic community based social and creative activity and events happening in Camere d'Aria to their testbeds to help with their overall reflections on their research questions and themes of space, relationality and learning.

TESTBED ACTIVITY

2021

■ In late 2020 meetings took place between two researchers from the University of Bologna who are also members of Oltre and Oltre's arts educators to agree on their testbed activities and data collection methods. They also had meetings with other project stakeholders such as local educational services and cultural associations to explain Oltre's SPOTing aims and explore possible collaborations

■ An ongoing programme of testbed workshops including tailoring, carpentry, bicycle repairs and ensemble music were started with young people at risk of dropping out of school in collaboration with local education services, held in Stanze Educative

■ Started interviews with the artists and educators leading the testbed workshops

■ Series of regular feedback meetings started with Oltre arts educators and a researcher checking progress of testbed workshops and planning future activity as well as recording observations in reflective diaries kept throughout SPOTing

■ Meetings with teachers and principals of local schools discussing proposals for arts education designed for adolescent boys having difficulties in school and other young people struggling with maintaining their education during Covid restrictions

■ Visual art testbed workshops started with 3 young people with physical and learning disabilities at Manfredi-Tanari secondary school, co-designed by a working group of Oltre artists and educators and support teachers from the school

■ Term time evaluation meetings with Oltre arts educators and teachers following the young people's progress in school and other educational services

■ Preparatory workshops for the 2021 Par Tòt Parata began with the construction of new networks of artists, associations and participants making costumes, props and parade floats

■ Reflective feedback gathered from young people in testbed workshops through conversations

■ Internal progress review and meetings held with local educators, teachers and principals reflecting on the testbeds to date, discussing their possible redesign and or development for new school year starting in September 2022

■ Meeting with association of artists and acrobats to discuss developing stilt making testbed workshops aimed at local girls in preparation for the 2022 Par Tòt Parata

■ Collaboration initiated through request from informal group of young adolescents for use of Oltre's space for communal cooking, including clothes swapping parties using the tailoring workroom

[127] Oltre members Fulvia and Lydia have had several conversations with the SPOTing researcher about how best to translate arte popolare into English and have agreed that 'community art' is probably the closest approximation. François Matarasso defines community art as "the creation of art as a human right, by professional and non-professional artists, co-operating as equals, for purposes and to standards they set together, and whose processes, products and outcomes cannot be known in advance." Matarasso, A Restless Art, 51.

[128] Fulvia Antonelli, Oltre SPOTing reflective diary entry, July, 2021.

▪ Meetings with educational services about developing new workshops in ceramics and bicycle repair in January 2022
▪ A series of live concerts centred on musical diasporas organized in November and December 2021
▪ Carnival float building workshop for Par Tòt Parata

In 2021 Oltre had approximately 500 participants in their testbed activities

2022

▪ Continued programme of testbed workshops for students at risk of dropping out of school delivered as a ongoing collaboration with local education services held in Stanze Educative
▪ Additional music and carpentry workshops held in Oltre's Camere d'Aria base, as part of partnership with Stanze Educative
▪ Planning, organisation and delivery of the Par Tòt Parata which took place May 15, 2022 spread throughout the city which then merged into the Bologna city parade
▪ Various artistic and recreational DIY activities carried out at Camere d'Aria
▪ Invited by local education service to talk about methodologies used in their testbeds with Stanze Educative
▪ International youth exchange with music arts education groups from Belgium and Aruba which took place in Camere d'Aria with the 6 local young people involved currently attempting to start their own music group
▪ Presented SPOTing research at a University of Bologna seminar for future educators
▪ Oltre was involved in supporting creative and social activity for different civic and environmental activist campaigns

In 2022 Oltre had approximately 600 participants in their testbed activities

TESTBED APPROACH

For Oltre it was important that their testbed approach echoed their organisation's overall philosophy, centred around creating and maintaining collective participative space free enough to be inclusive and accessible; materially, socially and politically.

"What's important is that there are no barriers to accessing culture so everybody can have access to it. So most of the projects we do and try to do, for instance, are for free. We do most of the projects in public spaces, not only in our cultural centre because public spaces give you the possibility to go beyond a certain identity and to open things up so everybody can have access without imposing ideologies or 'artistic' identities. I think this is a very important value to have in this kind of activity." [129]

This idea of building and sharing space with participants who may have a very different belief system and world view was not seen as antithetical to Oltre's work but instead a key component of their relational approach.

"This non-sharing of basic values with the young people we work with, this not having a common horizon in this sense does not mean we are not able to confront each other, or be around one another, but it certainly implies that we as educators put aside a certain moralism that always seems to me to be present in educational practice and instead that we observe and deeply understand the experience of those we work with." [130]

Developing a holistic understanding of their participants' motivations and needs was an important aspect of Oltre's approach to creating inclusive space in their testbeds, particularly when operating outside their own centre. Oltre explained that in each workshop their main objectives were to create a group able to cooperate and work together, in which everyone could feel valued, recognised and capable. This was made possible through the experience of participating in a creative practice, where different aesthetics are experimented with in order to enrich knowledge and cultural tastes.

For example, in Oltre's ensemble music workshops

[129] Lydia Buchner, Interview with SPOTing researcher, July 7, 2021.
[130] Fulvia Antonelli, Email to SPOTing researcher, October 14, 2021.

the young people made their own percussion instruments and learned the specific language of rhythm as well as their instruments' different roles and technological evolutions. They also explored the contexts of percussion in examples of popular music such as murga, a form of street protest music widespread throughout Latin America, examining how it is used to attract attention in a creative way to establish a celebratory and disruptive presence in public space.

"In the workshops we also talk about the musical genres listened to by the young people, their preferences, the themes addressed in their favourite songs and so on. In short, music is also an instrument of the relationship between the children themselves and with educators; of mutual knowledge, of discussion on their own styles of consumption, on issues that are important for their generation." [131]

Oltre followed how this sense of inclusive, accessible and safe space developed through; informal feedback sessions with their participants, analysis of audio visual testbed documentation where appropriate, ongoing reflective diaries kept by Oltre's arts educators as well as interviews with them, focus groups held with educators and teachers and Oltre's internal team meetings.

PUTTING VALUES INTO PRACTICE

Oltre was motivated by the opportunity they saw in SPOTing to dig deeply into their practices and membership, something they noted along with other SPOTing partners was very difficult to achieve in any kind of regular or structured way, "especially when you're a fluid organisation like ours, you're always doing things because there's always some kind of emergency." [132]

"We have never had the opportunity to look at P2:µöhµ:D H 2µùµ§H HØµ ÿ HÞhŠHÞ techniques to

which we have come to think and practice art as a form of social activism." [133]

Oltre identified their SPOTing values as being centred on enabling participation, seeing inclusion and accessibility as the embodiment of their macro ideals as an organisation helping to "strengthen the relationship between art and cultural and social diversity" [134] as well as guiding their testbed approach and data collection methods. Aided by their members who were also researchers, Oltre made sure they included regular reflective collective feedback from participants, scheduled at intervals to review not only their experiential learning but also in order to "deconstruct any negative representations of themselves learned through school." [135]

Oltre set out to facilitate accessibility and inclusion particularly for young people in difficult socio economic situations or living in peripheral areas of their city through upholding a series of principles in their testbeds. These included; pursuing co-operation over competition embedded through collective not individual work, automatically adjusting to linguistic differences and needs, having open groups whenever possible so parents or other guests could join in, as well as making sure attendance didn't cost anything or require registration or mandatory attendance in most circumstances.

LÀØµ2µ Þ: µ iØ § H2 ö: ÞÏ Š ø Šö 2µ:PöH produced or not, it is the desire and commitment of the group that spontaneously produces objects, activities or presentations." [136]

Oltre also realised their participative values of inclusion through content for example in their testbed workshops with young people with disabilities, using examples from art history to enable the participants to experiment with different techniques to broaden their conception of art and

[131] Fulvia Antonelli, Note to SPOTing researcher, September 3, 2022.
[132] Lydia Buchner, Interview with SPOTing researcher, July 7, 2021.
[133] Associazione Culturale Oltre Presentation, TEH SPOTing Seminar Programme, Online, February 9, 2021.
[134] Fulvia Antonelli, Interview with SPOTing researcher, July 7, 2021.
[135] Fulvia Antonelli, Oltre SPOTing reflective diary entry, May, 2021.
[136] Fulvia Antonelli, Note to SPOTing researcher, February 23, 2023.

understand that there is no right or wrong art, beauty or ugliness, instead only uniqueness and subjectivity." [137]

"The workshops, in addition to being an exploratory, sensorial and experimental site, are also a moment of recollection and training, comparison, narration and listening." [138]

These kinds of realisations and examinations of the nuanced 'unique and subjective' qualities that Oltre's conceptual space could offer were an important thematic thread in their research, noting the development of autonomy in their disabled participants as the testbeds continued. This idea of a space of autonomy as key to 'incidental learning' and civic and social development also emerged as an important factor in facilitating inclusivity when it was possible to open their centre for international exchanges, by giving opportunities, time and space to local young people motivated to try and start their own band, as well as other examples of neighbourhood youth peer education through self-managed activities such as cooking and clothes swaps.

Oltre also noted by developing their testbeds according to PAR principles of ongoing collective reflection, that SPOTing had enabled them to recognise and more clearly articulate the 'organic vision' within their work.

"SPOTing has helped us develop a series of workshops with an organic vision and as spaces of intervention, that Oltre has in various situations, for example a testbed workshop that came from a relationship with the social education service. So SPOTing helps us to ask; What are we doing? How we are doing this? and Why are we doing this? In this way, we are asking ourselves what are the common features of our action? It's a form of emerging consciousness." [139]

CHALLENGES

The Covid situation played a significant role in the initial phases of Oltre's SPOTing research, not only requiring flexibility of approach but also providing an impetus to develop collaborations with their educational partners as well highlighting the key issue of space. Whilst this brought challenges it also created opportunities, clearly demonstrated need and "showed Oltre's possibilities to be resilient." [140] Oltre also noted how the Covid period meant their usual style of expansive social and creative activities had to be simplified which gave them a narrower focus.

"The pandemic has somehow helped us to build more intimate environments in the workshops with the children (this is also due to the small numbers of children in the different groups) it has also pushed them to talk more and more openly Š¦ PH HØµÞ2 ÏµŠ2: Š ® ®ÞÏø§PöHÞµ: Š ® ØÞ the strong limitations of schools' ability to include children who struggle in environments that are too formalized and regulated." [141]

In 2021, due to the difficulties presented by Covid restrictions, Oltre attempted to use the theme of their Par Tòt Parata; the song of the whale, as a way to "keep a symbolic thread of connection with our centre" [142] referencing whales' forms of communication. Participants from the neighbourhood, including some who were also part of Oltre's other testbed workshops, worked separately on different elements such as floats and masks coming together on the day of the parade "to discover that they are part of a wider community even when physically divided by the pandemic, one which still manages to communicate, collaborate and plan together." [143] Oltre's sense of autonomy, DIY action and commitment to practising arte popolare also meant that they found whatever way they could through the bureaucratic system of

[137] Fulvia Antonelli, Oltre SPOTing reflective diary entry, March, 2021.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Fulvia Antonelli, Interview with SPOTing researcher, July 7, 2021.
[140] Lydia Buchner, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 30, 2022.
[141] Fulvia Antonelli, Oltre SPOTing reflective diary entry, June, 2021.
[142] Fulvia Antonelli, Oltre SPOTing reflective diary entry, March, 2021.
[143] Ibid.

official permission, sidestepping some particularly onerous elements of administrative paperwork which would have made such activity impossible.

"We just did it and it worked out because sometimes it's necessary to be transgressive, to keep going otherwise you won't be able to do anything." [144]

One of Oltre's ongoing challenges in working more closely with education services and institutions was that these relationships were often purely instrumental. Oltre noted this was reinforced by "the structure of the public education service and what is recognised as valid in terms of education." [145] When attempting to explain their SPOTing testbed value base in more depth with some of their educational partners Oltre felt that they were met with a lot of resistance.

"It's problematic to explicitly share this value base with institutional actors such as teachers, educators and in particular public education Ï ø § Þ Š ö : N H Ø µ / µ / ö µ i Ø Š 2 µ Ï P ® Š ÿ µ d r S ö to constructing the infrastructure for our workshops. There is often no space to discuss this within the educational institutions which support our action or to construct a common understanding of art and education because there is often a very utilitarian attitude towards the workshops that we carry out as if we are H Ø µ 2 µ H ø ö ö Š Š Ð µ ® Š Ï Š § H Þ h Þ H o I ? þ r H § š þ µ ® Þ Ï ø § P ö H H Þ h ö h µ Þ : H Þ H P H Þ : Þ P 2 ö D e § Ï cooperation and reciprocal participation." [146]

Oltre has since moved on from partners who are not willing to devote time to building more equitable collaborations, despite encountering some individual teachers who share their approach and see the need for "school to go outside its walls" [147] and participate in community projects, a view which has received more mainstream attention in Italy as a result of the severe social restrictions placed on students during Covid. Oltre felt they had received little benefit from this however, since schools in particular generally preferred to collaborate with more prestigious and high profile cultural institutions.

Oltre also recognised that since their SPOTing research questions were developed internally within their organisation and were particular to their work, needs and interests, it was difficult to fully involve their educational partners in their participatory action research processes despite those partners' role as "necessary interlocutors for us." [148]

"Although I think that our SPOTing values, or how we embody them in our approach, are not necessarily completely shared by all the institutions we work with, I think that these values cross all of our research questions; on space, the body, diversity and how we understand and practice arte popolare. This work has an aesthetic that can speak to different people, it is an art that d r S ö transformational which people can see and feel." [149]

However the potential for Oltre's methods to have more influence with some of their institutional partners was evidenced by an invitation they received from the local education service to talk about their work with Stanze Educative and explain their approach. Oltre was also invited by the University of Bologna to talk about their organisation and present their SPOTing testbeds at a seminar that formed part of a training course for future educators.

KEY LEARNING

Lydia Buchner and Fulvia Antonelli, long standing Oltre members closely involved in SPOTing, noted the benefits of the prolonged reflective space which SPOTing had allowed them to develop

[144] Lydia Buchner, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 17, 2023.
[145] Fulvia Antonelli, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 30, 2022.
[146] Fulvia Antonelli, Interview with SPOTing researcher, July 7, 2021.
[147] Fulvia Antonelli, Note to SPOTing researcher, September 3, 2022.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Fulvia Antonelli, Interview with SPOTing researcher, July 7, 2021.

through their testbeds, as well as its catalysing role in helping them explain unique aspects of their identity, philosophy and purpose to others. Fulvia also explained that Oltre's reflective work with their testbed participants had also enhanced their understanding through the young people's different critiques and enthusiasms.

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more systematic way over a longer period so not just at the end of a workshop or at the beginning of a project. These discussions also to helped us to be more analytical and to communicate this externally. For example we had a public event with a large Stanze Educative team from every neighbourhood, presenting our experiences of collaboration between Oltre and Stanze Educative as another model of education for those at risk of dropping out of school. Also discussing our testbed with you [the SPOTing Researcher] and other SPOTing partners and describing our philosophy has been very useful because we can now explain this to others in a deeper way." [150]

While they both recognised the utility of working reflectively Lydia underlined the ongoing challenges of finding the time and resources to do so especially for a volunteer run organisation like Oltre. Lydia also emphasised the different operational landscape between Northern and Southern Europe, noting that in countries like Italy "social policies would fail if there wasn't all this voluntary work." [151] For Lydia Oltre's SPOTing testbed had helped to highlight the extent to which formal educational institutions in Italy are dependent on informal organisations like Oltre to meet the needs of students who struggle in institutional settings.

In terms of answering their SPOTing research questions Lydia and Fulvia explained the connections between the characteristics of their arts educators and Oltre's ideas of cultivating autonomous collective participatory space. This was seen in Oltre's arts educators' view of their voluntary work with Oltre, freely choosing to give their time outside their main jobs in various fields, which included but were not exclusive to the arts and education, because of their commitment to creating and benefiting from community and the ideals of arte popolare. Like Fulvia, many had prior connections with Oltre, in her case as a university student.

"So for us this arte popolare, community art, is a space of political activism. Camere d'Aria is a space of organisation for a large community of people and the activity is decided on when there's an energy and a willingness to develop this connection with the neighbourhood. So our activity is always thought about in this way in terms of community, art, life and inclusivity. For much of our work the funding is so low Oltre doesn't
¦µ µøH Ï2 ÿ ÞH µ§ ÿÞ§ŠööoD ¦PH ÞH Þ: Þÿ/
for our volunteers themselves to work in the neighbourhood and collaborate to make life better. Our goal is to respond to a need." [152]

Lydia also noted that for most people this way of working was ultimately short term and limited by the other demands in their lives. Both Lydia and Fulvia explained that an additional factor in their members and people from their wider networks overall affinity and attraction to Oltre was that their space was recognised as autonomous and experimental.

"Oltre is a space where you can experiment more freely with education methodologies without it being so preplanned and bureaucratic. For future educators this is important, because in institutions, education is more about the organisation and control of children. So here we can show them the possibility of adaptable active forms of education that take people, their abilities, interests and their contexts into account." [153]

[150] Fulvia Antonelli, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 17, 2023.
[151] Lydia Buchner, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 17, 2023.
[152] Fulvia Antonelli, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 17, 2023.
[153] Ibid.

OUTCOMES AND INTENTIONS

In addition to their ongoing educational partnership work with Stanze Educative, and the invitation Oltre accepted to present their SPOTing work to Stanze Educative's wider network, Oltre were also invited to the University of Bologna to talk to future educators. Oltre has a large archive of materials including diaries, flyers, images and video from their previous events and activities and so began to think about ways to organise and use it, not only as an introduction to Oltre for their international visitors, but also as a way to communicate their history, philosophy and approach through presentations.

In reviewing their archive Lydia noted not only how much more difficult it was nowadays to do the big events that Oltre had done in the past because of greater restrictions on the use of public space, but importantly that there was no living memory or even awareness of such activity among younger generations. Oltre has therefore committed to make the past more visible and available through the development of their archive.

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SPOTing has been important because it's helped us to search for answers and clarify our identity. We have a great archive of work that we want to use to show people not only who we are and what we have done but about the possibilities for the present reality to be different." [154]

[154] Ibid.

EGEA

5.5
SPOTing Case Studies:
BEAT CARNIVAL

PARTNER INTRODUCTION

Beat Carnival, established in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 1993, aims to produce spectacular, participative carnival arts events with diverse communities that inspire and leave a legacy of creative skills, collaboration and celebration in local neighbourhoods and beyond. Their core artform activities include drumming, dance, puppetry, costume design and production as well as prop, set and float construction for everything from bespoke celebrations to large-scale outdoor events. Situated in a former industrial building in one of Belfast's interface areas, [155] Beat Carnival Centre is home to its ongoing adult and youth participatory programmes as well as hosting skills training for artists and open public workshops. They also offer off-site arts outreach activity for community and voluntary organisations. Beat Carnival participates in a number of national and international networks and exchange programmes.

PARTNER STATISTICS

Overall Beat Carnival employs 3 full time staff, 2 freelance part time staff members and 200 freelance artists a year. Annually on average Beat Carnival runs 3 large scale outdoor events in public spaces for approximately 60,000 attendees as well as approximately 700 workshops and 15 projects with around 1,500 participants. They also provide around 30 small scale outdoor performances.

STARTING POINTS

Beat Carnival's own starting point as an organisation formed in the pre ceasefire period of the Troubles, [156] has always had a strong connection to people and place. This was and is demonstrated by their work developing participative street performances using culture as a means of inclusive celebration, intended as a creative reaction against conflict and negativity in local social and political life. Therefore following its core organisational values of inclusivity, collaboration and legacy, Beat Carnival has regularly commissioned and engaged in various consultation and research processes with a variety of its stakeholders. An ongoing factor in Beat Carnival's motivation in doing so has been to try to develop a further understanding of the need, relevance and community significance of its work within the changing circumstances of Northern Irish society, as well as to strengthen its local connections.

"We spend a lot of time asking people about their opinions on what we're doing and what they want to do, we do it all the time, usually in a small way, sometimes in large, comprehensive exercises. We're creating the opportunity and a mechanism for people to think, discuss, give their opinions and see what might result. And inevitably as I keep saying to people in all these processes, that takes time, things can be slow." [157]

Partly as a result of these previous consultation experiences and the scope of their arts and community development work, Beat Carnival's original SPOTing starting point was quite wide ranging, attempting to understand multiple aspects of the impact of their activity across a broad spectrum of individuals and communities in a citywide context, initially assigning all of their core organisational values to underpin their SPOTing research. However as their research developed Beat Carnival was able to further refine their question and identify their key SPOTing values of access and ownership, through which to design, develop and assess their testbed activity, attempting to understand the extent to which these values can be more fully realised in Beat Carnival's practices overall.

Beat Carnival's first SPOTing steps included co-

[155] In Northern Ireland interfaces refer to "the intersection of segregated and polarised working class residential zones, in areas with a strong link between territory and ethno-political identity." Neil Jarman, Demography, Development and Disorder: Changing patterns of interface areas (Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research, 2004), 5. Beat Carnival is in an interface area on the edge of the city centre roughly located between West and North Belfast, which scores highly in local measures of deprivation.

[156] 1994 saw paramilitary ceasefires from the violence known as 'the Troubles' which was an "ethno-sectarian conflict in the north of Ireland starting in the late 1960s and ending with the signing of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement in 1998, in which an estimated 40,000 were injured and over 3500 died." Sheelagh Colclough and Sarah Feinstein, "Carnival as a Practice of the Possible: Belfast, the Beat, and the Politics of Civic Celebration," Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies 18, no.1 (2022): 25, www.liminalities.net/18-1/carnival.pdf.

[157] David Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, August 10, 2021.

design project discussions with local communities which helped inform their refined research question about the idea and importance of space. This topic which acted to shape and connect their research across multiple testbed projects, was also influenced by the emergent neighbourhood need for accessible street based celebrations affected both by the Covid situation and by some negative experiences with local 'gatekeeping' [158] of previously developed community partnership activity.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Why can't all spaces be arts spaces? How can (our) spaces be art spaces?

The idea of concentrating on the relationship between everyday and creative space, physically and conceptually, encompassed many subtly different aspects of civic participation in arts and culture which directly related to Beat Carnival's chosen PAR values of access and ownership, both for those they worked with and for the organisation themselves. Beat Carnival explained that their refined research topic was intended to act as a framing device that served the organisation's development interests and also helped to provide a catalysing focus for neighbourhood involvement, especially for those "who in their words are 'left out' of opportunities." [159] The relevance of having this nuanced understanding of space as the focal point for their SPOTing testbeds, primarily viewed through the lens of access and ownership, was also supported by research exploring reasons for engagement and non-engagement with existing cultural provision that formed a part of some of their initial testbed work examining co-design methodologies. The contemporary significance of their research topic was also informed by the expression of a renewed desire to share communal cultural experiences in public space after periods of Covid restrictions, evidenced through direct requests Beat Carnival received for celebratory community activity in "people's own streets, right on their doorsteps." [160]

"Outdoor spaces and smaller scales of gathering have become new priorities for safe re-emergence from pandemic isolation and damage. For us, delivering arts and support in neighbourhood areas is an essential way forward. The opportunity for 'creative community' and 'carnival community' as meaningful expression and identity has been gratefully welcomed in our neighbourhoods, when we have been able to act." [161]

Beat Carnival's attempts to further examine their updated topic, looking at "how carnival as an artform inspires use of spaces and change of space, looking at places differently" [162] also led them to consider questions such as "what resources are required to work in ways that combine action with reflection and co-design?" [163] As Beat Carnival's thinking developed, informed by the experiences and understanding gained through their testbed activity, so too did their research question, with part two 'How can (our) spaces be art spaces?' occurring as a result of considering the realities of implementing the values of access and ownership across their testbed project organisation and management, particularly in areas such as briefing, lead in time and delivery. This additional research question helped cement Beat Carnival's desire to gain a practical understanding of the necessary resources and structures required to be able to realise their value based SPOTing approach and the ways in which it could assist the organisation's strategic development beyond SPOTing.

In their final year of testbed activity Beat Carnival took various practical steps towards realising some of their development goals. One example was their work with some of their 18 plus young people who

[158] A local winter lantern parade which had formally been built through community partnership and participation was taken in a more commercial and less participatory direction by one of the partner agencies involved, so Beat Carnival made the decision to step back and instead focus on smaller-scale neighbourhood parades and creative celebratory activities when it was possible to do so.
[159] David Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, August 10, 2021.
[160] David Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 9, 2022.
[161] Beat Carnival SPOTing Testbed Starting Point; Updated document, September 22, 2021.
[162] Rebecca Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, August 10, 2021.
[163] Beat Carnival SPOTing Testbed Starting Point; Updated document, September 22, 2021.

were 'aging out' of their core youth programming on individual personal development plans, with some former participants assuming new roles as peer leaders and one individual also working with Beat Carnival artists on community programmes. Additionally based on the learning gained from their SPOTing testbeds, collaborative work between staff and artists began on devising an overall youth development strategy, with initial ideas being presented to Beat Carnival's board.

TESTBED ACTIVITY

2021

▪ Carnival consortium questionnaire devised to help direct wider organisation development
▪ Due to Covid restrictions Beat Carnival's core youth programming [164] continued online
▪ Beat Carnival Director participated as a volunteer member of a group project in Belfast exploring co-design methodology, effective forms of arts project design, delivery and experience as well as barriers to cultural participation conducted with 6 arts and community 'experts-by-experience' and 2 co-ordinating and writing consultants
▪ Co-design catalyst project Woodvale Bandstand developed from co-design group project above; conducted local neighbourhood creative consultation using co-design principles to inform commissioning brief for possible future use and or renewal of existing site, results submitted to local council
▪ Beat Carnival staff met with University of Atypical, a local disabled led arts organisation, to learn more about their approach dealing with barriers to participation and creating welcoming spaces. Following this University of Atypical's Creative Programmes and Participation Lead was invited onto Beat Carnival's board, joining in October 2022
▪ Request from Glencairn Residents Group to deliver a surprise mini carnival celebrating their children's end of primary school year with a parade and participatory performance workshops for children in their neighbourhood
▪ ! ø®µ§µ H mµŠ®, a weeklong creative youth carnival programme including leadership training workshops developed through consultation with Beat Carnival's core youth participant group Junior Beat
▪ A creative flag making and dance performance project developed with local community in Glencairn following on from previous local activity culminating in a participatory neighbourhood carnival parade
▪ What's the Story? issue-based creative youth project started exploring themes of identity and community
▪ Consultation questionnaires created for local communities, arts organisations and artists on how St Patrick's Day should be publically celebrated in Belfast looking at barriers to participation. This research contributed to a co-design proposal for a new Belfast St Patrick's Day pilot project with recommendations for further development
▪ New winter neighbourhood parades and workshops developed with two local areas beside Beat Carnival's centre, building on previous SPOTing testbed activity
▪ Co-design planning commenced on a Spring Neighbourhood project for 2022

In 2021 Beat Carnival had approximately 343 participants in their testbed activities

2022

▪ What's the Story? publication launch, work started on indoor mural for Beat Carnival's centre building
▪ Peer leader roles offered to older Beatstyle members (16-18 years old) to help facilitate younger participant activity, with 3 supported by the main youth group facilitator to design and deliver visual arts and circus workshops. An additional 2 older Beatstyle members shadowed Beat Carnival's artists contributing to carnival design development
▪ Planning started on co-design development of

[164] Formed in 2000, Beatstyle is Beat Carnival's core in house multi arts youth programme, currently running approximately 30 sessions a year during term time. It consists of Tiny Beat for 5-11 year olds and Junior Beat for 12-18 year olds. Beatstyle participants come from a range of socio economic and ethnic backgrounds from across Belfast including Beat Carnival's local neighbourhood. Some Beatstyle participants have disabilities and some are neurodiverse. Many Beatstyle young people are the children of Beat Carnival's past and current community programme participants as well as some having parents involved with Beat Carnival as artists, performers and crew. Many participants have continuously attended Beatstyle classes throughout their childhood, from 5 up to 18 years old.

peer led youth programme What's the Story? based around social action using visual arts as a medium for social change
▪ Spring Neighbourhood Festival took place in Beat Carnival's neighbourhood, Beat Carnival artists worked with two local groups who had participated in previous SPOTing testbed activity to design two new spring themed carnival floats that were built and showcased during the parade
▪ Spring Neighbourhood Festival props and costumes created to perform with in the parade through participatory arts workshops held with local children and young people
▪ m „ ! , a community dance group were invited to perform alongside professional Beat performers in Spring Neighbourhood Festival
▪ Beatstyle celebration event marking older members who had been participants for 13 years aging out of the programme (18+ years old) leaving for work and university
▪ Further research on Belfast St Patrick's Day impact on Belfast public space, 14 Beat Carnival artists met over 2 days to review, evaluate and critique methods used in the production of 2022 Belfast parade and community engagement programme
▪ Stakeholder questionnaire and feedback meeting on plans for annual large scale events
▪ Based on SPOTing reflections and testbed experience Beat Carnival artists and staff collaborated on devising a youth development strategy summarising learning so far and recommending next steps to Beat Carnival's board at a strategy away day
▪ 'Back to basics' assessment of Beat Carnival's youth development progress conducted to inform future programme
▪ Research carried out on improving Beat Carnival's centre as a supportive arts space
▪ Fundraising and planning for Take A Beat, a new Beat Carnival run arts and wellbeing summer scheme for young people aged 6-18 years old
▪ Beatstyle and What's the Story? youth participants planned their own programme through facilitated discussions and anonymous surveys
▪ 2 former members of Beatstyle who had aged out of the programme joined What's the Story? as peer leaders, having been supported by Beat Carnival staff to create individual personal development plans
▪ Beatstyle participants created props, backgrounds and costume for their self written and directed movie trailer
▪ What's the Story? invited and hosted a series of social activism guests, [165] chosen by the group to tell them about why and what they do, how they began and offer advice on getting started
▪ First draft of Beat Carnival's youth development strategy was created and work started on a 5 year grant proposal for the UK y Š H Þ Š ö m H H µ 2 o Community Fund's Empowering Young People programme

In 2022 Beat Carnival had approximately 141 participants in their testbed activities

TESTBED APPROACH

Due to the additional demands and difficulties that Covid placed on an already small staff team, Beat Carnival needed to take a pragmatic and flexible approach to their SPOTing testbeds, achieved through accommodating their SPOTing research within existing programming and also by responding to opportunities to explore, test and refine ways of working driven by their SPOTing values of access and ownership. The initial work that came to form their SPOTing testbeds was either already in development, part of their ongoing programme or consultation work, or was a response to community requests. This early phase was also influenced by the co-design research project that Beat Carnival director David Boyd took part in, which happened during the life of the SPOTing project and led to the development of several testbeds based on co-design principles. [166] Rather than

[165] The guests included the Turner Prize winning Array Collective, a group of individual artists based in Belfast who create collaborative actions in response to the socio-political issues affecting Northern Ireland; Another World, a community interest company who build practical projects, events and spaces to bring diverse communities together and provide aid for people experiencing hardship; Pure Mental, an entirely youth-led charity campaigning for mental health education and early intervention in Northern Ireland's schools; and Beat Carnival's founder-director David Boyd, MBE.
[166] Beat Carnival's use and continuing development of a co-design process within their youth programmes and additional parts of their community programming most commonly involves negotiating and agreeing mutual project objectives and obligations and co-creating content with the participants and artists making and presenting the work, alongside the use of collaborative reflection and evaluation processes to inform future planning and shared goals.

designing specific stand-alone project activity to examine their research topic Beat Carnival's SPOTing testbeds largely evolved across a variety of formats, participants and publics, sharing a thematic and value based connection.

An additional part of what galvanised Beat Carnival's approach to their testbeds in the beginning was the potential offered by co-design methods to more holistically realise their SPOTing values of access and ownership in other areas of the organisation's work. An example of this was the co-design development proposals they drew up for the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Belfast, the largest event in their current annual programme. For most of the past two decades, due to a complex combination of local politics and civic (mis)management, the St. Patrick's Day Parade has operated as a city council owned 'top-down' event, particularly in terms of public participation and planning, governed by a labour intensive tendering process which results in very short lead in times, inadequate budgets and highly pressurised working conditions. David explained as a result of Beat Carnival's recent co-design work that on paper Belfast City Council now officially claims the event operates as a co-design partnership between participating organisations, however all the same issues noted above remain.

"Currently the St. Patrick's Day Parade is Beat Carnival's only large scale citywide annual event iØµ2µ iµ P:µ® H ØŠhµ øhµ µŠ§Ø oµŠ2l àlonger have our own independent carnival which would be more in tune with the values of access and ownership. We are commissioned through competitive tendering to create this large scale cultural celebration in Belfast and in many ways the city council's handling of the St. Patrick's Day Parade is the antithesis of what we are trying to do in our testbeds, so the question is how does it afford an opportunity to enact our SPOTing values?" [167]

In contrast Beat Carnival identified their visual arts based youth storytelling SPOTing testbed project, What's the Story?, as a key example of using a co-design approach which integrated their SPOTing values of access and ownership from the start. This was seen in Beat Carnival's approach to recruitment, with participants joining through expressing their interest after a series of taster sessions were held with community groups, youth groups and schools. The project was part funded through a specific Northern Irish devolved government grant that states its strategic 'post-conflict' focus is on "improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society." [168] However the young participants weren't interested in exploring traditional local ethno-political identities, explaining that such labels didn't feel "relevant to them" [169] as they hadn't experienced the conflict or ceasefire periods directly. Instead the young people "wanted to talk about what did make them feel like a community" [170] which Beat Carnival and the artists working on the project supported, negotiating the content, format and length of the project with the participants and explaining those changes to the funders. Rebecca Boyd, Beat Carnival's development worker and projects manager, reflected on how acknowledging the need to change course and renegotiate with funders had also been a way for Beat Carnival to model ownership for their young people.

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about needing to change things, so trying to make them understand why that change is important and the impact that it will then have on the participants that they want us to be working with. I think a big part of that is because we're trying to create that space for the young people to learn to do that, to speak up and take ownership, then we need to do it as well." [171]

The young people involved in the What's the Story? group are now part of Beat Carnival's core youth

[167] David Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 9, 2022.
[168] "About Together: Building a United Community," The Executive Office, accessed July 16, 2022, www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/about-together-building-united-community-tbuc.
[169] Rebecca Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 9, 2022.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Rebecca Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 3, 2023.

programming due to their continued interest in developing art and social action projects, so Beat Carnival has been working closely with them to devise future plans.

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strongest examples of co-design and it has legs to continue, we intend to use what we have learned to continue and grow it into something else." [172]

PUTTING VALUES INTO PRACTICE

Beat Carnival used their SPOTing value base and commitment to co-design to focus their reflections on how they responded to local requests for bespoke Beat Carnival input, ironically partially possible due to Covid's curbs on some of their bigger projects. For instance they identified the negotiations involved in their attempts to meet these requests as being more expansive and starting from a position of greater equity as opposed to their usual processes for larger commissioned carnival events. For example larger events commonly employ a 'call out' for community groups to participate which often have more fixed terms and conditions due to funding requirements. Although Beat Carnival noted attitudinal differences from community groups making these requests for local participatory activity such as a willingness to offer 'in kind' contributions where possible, this didn't typically extend as far as support with joint funding applications to carry out or develop the work.

"There's an ongoing dilemma because we are committed in terms of access to do all this activity for free which makes it dependent on funding, so as much as we are trying to gear our work towards a value based methodology there's always going
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outcome based rather than process based." [173]

Beat Carnival reflected on these testbed experiences specifically in terms of how to enable and maintain community ownership through the development of such partnerships, which was sometimes also challenging in terms of participant interest levels in working this way through follow up activity. This led to additional reflections on the need to further test and adapt Beat Carnival's co-design approaches, including more or simpler initial activities and a greater focus on communication and engagement to build momentum, especially when their partners' investment in co-design strategies were not necessarily fully explained internally within groups or with participants. This was connected to realisations about the need for flexibility in accommodating both participant and artist interest levels in developing different forms of project ownership. Beat Carnival noted the overall importance of investing time in fun, creative and hopefully positive collaborative experiences which have the potential to be built on over time.

"We aim to create a space and opportunity for artists and facilitators, as well as participants, to be involved as much as they want, having choice in decision making, programme development and over what their contribution to Beat Carnival looks like. We want to make sure everyone in the process has a good experience – participants, partners, artists, staff, funders and audience." [174]

A renewed appreciation of the importance of collectively experienced fun, especially to mental health, also came via a Covid induced re-evaluation of the essential elements of Beat Carnival's work; providing and facilitating spaces for people to come together demonstrated through their ongoing core youth programming which moved online for most of the early part of SPOTing. This reflective learning about the importance of access to and ownership of such spaces also fed into the ongoing development of Beat Carnival's What's the Story? youth group, underlining the importance of leaving enough participant led space for fun, as through organising and running their own themed internal parties and events Beat Carnival has seen developments in the groups' confidence and leadership.

"I think there is a lot that I personally have taken on board in the planning of our youth programmes

[172] Rebecca Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 9, 2022.
[173] David Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 9, 2022.
[174] Rebecca Boyd, Beat SPOTing reflective diary entry, Spring 2022.

from looking at ownership and from co-creating the programmes with the young people because it's putting more of a structure to our thinking." [175]

Overall through Beat Carnival's experience of using a co-design approach with both their established and emerging youth programmes, the significance of space came through not only as a geographical or cultural concept of creativity, connection and celebration but also as something that encompassed the idea of safety, expression, reflection and learning. When reflecting further with their young participants on what in particular made spaces feel safe for them, many expressed that this was something mainly created by people, especially those who were "open-minded, non-judgemental, welcoming and accepting." [176] This also supported Beat Carnival's wider understanding of the qualities needed for a inclusive and collaborative 'civic art space.'

"I am part of an art community and they make me feel comfortable." [177]

CHALLENGES

One of the main challenges, acutely felt for an organisation with such a small team, was the Covid situation and the limitations that placed not only on the initial development of Beat Carnival's SPOTing testbeds but also on the operations of the organisation as a whole. However Covid delays and restrictions only exacerbated the key issue, also experienced by other SPOTing partners, which was the amount of time and resources needed to fully realise and support this value based action research led way of working.

LÀØµ2µ µµ®: H ¦µ :ÞÐ Þø§Š H HÞÿµ H ®µ¤µ ö/ Š programme and to work out what we're doing whether that's as a company as a whole or within a project, which is seldom afforded within the normal iŠo Ï i 2òÞ Ð Š ® ÞHM: µ:/µ§ÞŠööo ®ÞÏø§ÞöH because of Covid circumstances. The SPOTing way of working is different and I think the main learning would be that there are useful methods of planning and practice, that we've always known, but we need the resources to work in that 'questioning-developing' way, which is more demanding than acting in a 'standard, pre-programmed' way." [178]

For Beat Carnival participation in a programme like SPOTing also exposed a lack of support, peer learning opportunities and a wider dearth of investment or interest in developing a value led way of working at home.

"Outside of our SPOTing colleagues what's our ongoing network of support? People don't necessarily want the headache of this way of working because it's not just about delivering a §P22Þ§PöPÿ ÞHM: Šöö HØÞ: HØµ2 2µùµ§HÞ time, commitment and effort and the support is not widely available around us." [179]

In common with other SPOTing partners Beat Carnival also noted the reporting requirements which accompanied the programme as an additional source of pressure on their resources, alongside specific Erasmus conditions for example affecting their use of freelance artists, presenting them with an additional logistical challenge to navigate. Additionally due to SPOTing's funding stipulations, despite being responsible for contracting the SPOTing researcher, Beat Carnival felt they didn't receive a direct benefit since her time was spread across 8 organisations.

KEY LEARNING

Both David and Rebecca restated that Beat Carnival grew and developed from collaboration with communities, something that the idea of carnival in particular depends on their specific context; understood as an inclusive, accessible form of participatory celebration that everyone can have a feeling of ownership over. So although the practice of

[175] Rebecca Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 9, 2022.
[176] Rebecca Boyd, Beat SPOTing reflective diary entry, Autumn 2022.
[177] Project participant, What's the Story, project publication, March, 2022. www.beatcarnival.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Beat-Carnival-Project-Our-Home-Stories-booklet-Digital.pdf.
[178] David Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, August 10, 2021.
[179] David Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 9, 2022.

reflecting on their work and its overall development was not something new, Rebecca explained that the day to day demands and problem solving that are typical of working in the arts always seem so much more urgent than finding time for the type of collaborative reflective practice that they were able to realise more consistently through SPOTing. Both reiterated the key importance of having the time to dedicate to creating and maintaining this kind of reflective space.

David added that the commitment to taking the time needed to work this way; to develop relationships, agree on values and or objectives as appropriate, test and adapt different modes of co-design and collectively reflect and learn from such action, has to be reciprocally agreed on by participants, partners and funders alike. Rebecca also noted that using a PAR based reflective approach with Beat Carnival's youth participants to help co-design programming and develop everyone's existing skills and capacities further, including staff and artists, had made her more likely to argue for and stress the benefits to be gained from allocating reflective time when applying for funding.

"If you can build in time and agree on a structure Ï 2 i 2òÞ Ð 2µùµ§HÞhµöo Š ® HØµ2 /µ /öµ ØŠ2µ HØŠH idea and that commitment, so our participants, our partners and equally our funders then that changes the whole tone of what you're doing and how far you are likely get with it. It allows for much more space for everybody to build their skills and to create and shape projects together. It also makes things more equal as well, if we're all on the same page it gives us more power." [180]

Additionally, Rebecca observed that by regularly using SPOTing as a space to ask how and why, she had also come to realise the importance of being curious, to try to really understand behaviours and patterns especially in decision making.

"Working out how to best use co-design, it's totally different person to person, that's why you need to work out how it works best for them, so therefore the resources you really need are time and curiosity." [181]

Thinking about answers to their research questions Beat Carnival recognised some similarities between what they had learnt across their testbeds regarding space. In terms of the creative activation and use of neighbourhood space David reflected on both the possibilities and limitations of what their testbed activity had shown. He explained that on one hand working locally with communities 'on people's doorsteps' had been very positive and clearly shown the possibility for all space to be 'art space.' It had also proven inspirational for other communities who were then motivated to get involved, which had also included responding to invitations received from others. Through Beat Carnival's testbed consultations and conversations about the question of wider civic and notionally shared public space, some groups expressed their perception of being excluded through their peripherality to city centre space as well as feeling unwelcome there, part of wider post conflict problems that encompass complex intersecting cultural, social, economic and political issues. On a practical level David and Rebecca felt part of what SPOTing had shown them was how to ensure that participating groups were left "feeling good and part of something bigger" [182] something they wanted to research and develop further across all their activities.

"It's important to put time and effort into making events open and welcoming, for example having one neighbourhood invite the other in. It's also important that we keep working to help groups create and develop a sense of belonging outside their immediate space." [183]

Both David and Rebecca acknowledged for some groups, due to multiple factors including issues with capacity, resources, leadership and long term desire, the ownership of developing neighbourhood

[180] Rebecca Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 3, 2023.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Ibid.
[183] David Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 3, 2023.

participatory celebratory activity further was not equally shared, with Beat Carnival remaining in the role of instigator. Rebecca reflected that in terms of leaving space for a sense of community ownership to grow, as well as putting Beat Carnival's SPOTing research value of access into practice, meant accepting people's participation on their own terms by "meeting people where they are." [184]

"The reality is we have always accommodated people who just want a fun, creative colourful experience and we will continue to do so whenever possible. We also have and do work with groups that want to develop what they do with us each time, they do take ownership in terms of being ambitious with their plans and offering opportunities for their young people for example, so it's not an 'either or' situation. But our main priority and purpose is to work to help develop that sense of ambition for others in all the communities that we work with." [185]

Within Beat Carnival's core youth programming the same approach to and learning from space imagined as a site of cultural self expression containing the potential for development and inspiration, was shared with their community testbed projects. Additionally in their existing and more recent youth testbed groups Beat Carnival had recognised the importance of having flexible, unstructured and supportive space to facilitate ownership and to nurture a safe and comfortable sense of belonging and community for their youth participants. One of Beat Carnival's artists involved in their youth testbeds noted that in allowing space to cultivate creativity, confidence and ownership "to bring out the best in activities and participants, the less outcomes that I had the more outcomes I received." [186] Resources, time and Beat Carnival staff and artists' attitudes were also identified as key factors in contributing to this notion of 'art space.' In addition Rebecca noted that Beat Carnival's SPOTing research values had facilitated a regrounding of the essential purpose of the organisation's youth programming as well as providing a focus for further growth, seen in their work on both the youth development strategy and in supporting individual young people's personal development plans.

"We have always listened to our young people and focused the direction of our programmes based on their wants and needs when we can, but SPOTing allows time and space to ask additional questions :P§Ø Š:N MiØŠH ® µ: ùµnÞ¦ÞöÞHo Š ® Š®Š/H in our programmes actually mean for our young people,' 'what exactly are we doing to cultivate this free space and how can we replicate that in our other programmes,' 'how can we be more intentional with our approach to access and ownership and ensure our participants understand the process.'" [187]

OUTCOMES AND INTENTIONS

In addition to direct outcomes such as participants from their SPOTing testbed project What's the Story? becoming an ongoing group which now forms part of Beat Carnival's core youth programme, as well as having produced a first draft of their youth development strategy, Rebecca observed that the space, time and skills that Beat Carnival's staff, artists and participants had been able to develop during SPOTing were all valuable outcomes, especially for the organisation's long term strategic thinking overall.

Beat Carnival's intentions for the future are to continue using reflective ways of working collaboratively through co-design. They are keen to clearly capture and communicate their approach and to continue to explore and develop that through supported participatory research processes. They also have long term plans to work with their artists and participants to develop training on using a value led approach to creative participation. Overall the question of how to collaboratively create and develop cultural safe spaces for everyone is one they will continue to ask themselves and others.

[184] Rebecca Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 3, 2023.
[185] David Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 3, 2023.
[186] Tanya Kearns, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 3, 2023.
[187] David Boyd, Interview with SPOTing researcher, February 3, 2023.

5.6
SPOTing Case Studies:
KULTURFABRIK

PARTNER INTRODUCTION

Kulturfabrik (KUFA) is a cultural centre in Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg, founded in 1983, based on the site of the former municipal slaughterhouse, initially squatted by groups of actors, artists and musicians who went on to form KUFA. In 1998 the site was refurbished and currently consists of two performance halls, a gallery, a cinema, a bistro and a bar, as well as several rehearsal rooms and offices. Committed to centring creation, artists and audiences, KUFA's activities include staging concerts, festivals, theatre, film screenings, exhibitions, conferences and workshops across art forms such as dance, performance, literature and visual and urban arts. KUFA also runs non formal education projects and artistic residencies and is part of several national and international networks.

PARTNER STATISTICS

In 2022 KUFA employed 30 full time staff, 15 women and 15 men of 13 different nationalities. Their 2022 programme included 55 cinema screenings, 47 concerts, 23 artistic residencies, 11 conferences, 10 readings, 9 exhibitions, 8 theatre productions, 3 flamenco performances and 2 stand up comedy shows. Overall during 2022 KUFA ran 225 events for 31,928 visitors, including 19 workshops and pedagogical projects.

STARTING POINTS

KUFA's original starting point centred on examining their existing methods of devising and developing participatory projects, which had evolved through their schools and community programming, previously operating within their now disbanded pedagogical department. [188] Over time KUFA had gone from offering stakeholders the chance to participate in largely predetermined projects to developing what they termed 'a bottom up approach' to constructing their participatory activity more collaboratively. KUFA described their bottom up approach as operating within a triptych of stakeholders consisting of themselves as project holders, their project partners and the artists involved "with everyone representing their own interests and bringing their specific expertise to the table to build projects together." [189]

A small SPOTing team was formed from the staff working on KUFA's participatory programming and a specific film making project, Making a Movie was devised in order to try to involve their stakeholders in their PAR based process from the beginning, invited to be their co-researchers examining the question iØŠH Š2µ HØµ ¦µ µøH: Ï ¦ HH ÿ P/ Š//2 Š§Ø projects to the project holder, stakeholders and participants? However at an early stage, through their own reflections, as well as through exchanges with their SPOTing critical friends and the SPOTing researcher, KUFA identified some problems with their plan. One of the key issues was the role and decision making power of their participants who, as their SPOTing testbed was a schools project, were not directly part of KUFA's stakeholder triptych but instead were represented by their teachers and in some cases did not have any control over their choice to participate.

In order to have a framework that schools were likely to sign up to over a 3 year period and to satisfy additional funding requirements needed to support the project, KUFA had predetermined the artform as well as formulating elements of the structure, which initially happened without consulting their artist stakeholders and lacked direct input from their participants. KUFA acknowledged that was contrary to their bottom up intentions, with one of their SPOTing research sub questions asking "is inviting the participants to the already conceptualised project an act of participation?" [190]

"Before SPOTing we were just doing what we were doing in an automatic way, you know, we weren't asking questions. Participating in SPOTing highlighted this curiosity about our approach

[188] KUFA's pedagogical department ran from 2014 until 2019. Subsequently a new public relations job role was created and public discussions on non formal versus formal arts and cultural education initiated.
[189] Fred Entringer, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 15, 2021.
[190] Kulturfabrik SPOTing Testbed Starting Point, February, 2021.

and our desire to understand it better by asking questions [...] So I think it is having a huge impact in the way we analyse what we are doing." [191]

As their testbed developed further, the degree to which their "exhaustive" [192] research sub questions could be fully explored was severely impacted by sudden staff changes, so eventually the decision was made that Making a Movie should become part of a different programme within KUFA. This was also influenced by Making a Movie's artistic team seeing issues with the projected timescale and being able to maintain motivation for participants. Inês Alves, the remaining member of KUFA's original SPOTing team, noted that combining participatory research with non formal creative education required the creation and maintenance of a certain amount of space for consistent collective reflection in order to discuss and check progress and allow for the kind of relationship development necessary to enable collaborative decision making. Reflecting back Inês explained that this space wasn't properly factored in when Making a Movie was designed as KUFA's SPOTing project, or even really realistic within the resources and time available.

KUFA's reflections that their Making a Movie testbed wasn't sufficiently participant centred had grown over time, in part influenced by an awareness of how other SPOTing partners' testbeds were progressing. This contributed to their desire to examine their modes of developing and delivering participatory projects and to reflect on how they could be altered.

"We would like to do a project differently looking at how to involve participants from the beginning. Then you don't know exactly what you're going to do, how do you decide which are the most suitable participants to get on board and how H ø ® /Š2H µ2: H i 2ò iÞHØ H ® HØÞ guiding the process is a bottom up approach, how can you have participants involvement from conception, is that possible?" [193]

In some ways this thinking fed into KUFA's second testbed project focused on youth ownership, which was shaped by internal discussions and examination of their organisational strategy, as well as critical feedback received from SPOTing partners as part of the SPOTing seminar held at Brunnenpassage in Vienna in 2022.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

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approach projects to the project holder, stakeholders and participants?

KUFA's Making a Movie testbed was formulated to look at an existing participatory approach which was already well established, however reflecting on it more deeply led to somewhat of an existential crisis about its limitations. Transparency was identified as the main value driving this research question, which for KUFA's original SPOTing team included developing a critical awareness of the decision-making whys and hows of their participatory projects. This self examination was supported by their SPOTing critical friends Brunnenpassage, who were on a similar journey, which they collectively characterised as "going where it hurts." [194] This also led to further reflections on the ethical implications of occupying the role of participatory culture experts, the power structures embedded in this work, as well as the status of participatory programming in KUFA as a whole.

"What I would like to say, actually, because we're talking about transparency and being honest, is are we really being honest, or are we just manipulating people? So we get them around the table but they cannot build anything if you don't ÐÞhµ HØµÿ Š :H2P§HP2µ ø2:HD : ŠÐŠÞ XMÿ guiding them to do what we want to do. So are we being really transparent? To have a good balance ÞHM: 2µŠöö ®ÞÏø§PöH ¦µ§ŠP:µ o P Š2µ µhµ2 equal position sitting around the table because

[191] Fred Entringer, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 15, 2021.
[192] Inês described KUFA's multiple SPOTing sub questions as exhaustive, explaining that this "also added a lot of pressure that I'm not sure we were prepared to deal with." Inês Alves, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 14, 2022.
[193] Fred Entringer, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 15, 2021.
[194] KUFA and Brunnenpassage's critical friend partnership informed the content of the second SPOTing seminar in Bratislava, 2021, working together to devise and co-facilitating interactive sessions for their fellow SPOTing partners. See section 3.5 of this report, Peer Learning Mechanisms: critical friends and seminars.

you are always the leader being asked what to do. So it's a kind of game that people create, yes we have complimentary expertise and we are working together to bring an idea to life and we can present a beautiful methodology, [195] but it all collapses when someone asks about the role of the participants." [196]

For KUFA SPOTing became a way to identify these kinds of paradoxes in their work more clearly and begin to think about how they might be able to address them, eventually prompting an internal discussion about KUFA's participatory approaches with a wider staff team. Through these conversations some KUFA staff questioned why their organisation was part of an arts education platform when arts education or participatory methodologies were not an integral part of KUFA's programming, or even fully understood or agreed on by everyone. There was also the observation familiar to other SPOTing partners about the time that working reflectively demands, as at a certain point in the midst of all their other work pressures, for KUFA such organisation wide discussions "just became too academic, too theoretical." [197] There was also an acknowledgement particularly within KUFA's new SPOTing team, that although thinking through and discussing ideas was a useful way to refine and adapt their plans, ultimately action research understood as 'learning through doing,' meant actually testing different approaches through concrete action, which also required the "space to fail." [198]

"We have to learn to do the research by actually doing it, but this approach sometimes brings obstacles that at the beginning you didn't see and didn't think about that because you don't have the experience in building these types of projects." [199]

2. How can we succeed in giving ownership to young people within an established institution?

The new SPOTing team decided to shift their focus from schools to a more direct form of youth participation within KUFA. This was partly inspired by fellow SPOTing partners' Stanica and their Young Office project, as well as through some commonalities they shared with Stanics regarding the professionalisation of their organisations over time; both originating from alternative cultural groups with DIY approaches, as well as currently having aging audiences and staff. KUFA used the opportunity of a collective critical friend process at the SPOTing seminar in Vienna, which they had helped develop with Brunnenpassage for the previous SPOTing seminar in Bratislava, to present and get feedback on their new testbed ideas. Their initial intention was to include youth from 15 to 25 years old in KUFA's governance, programming and as audiences by consulting young people already involved with KUFA, as well as learning from local partners and researchers in order to try to develop an effective structure for a 'KUFA youth group.'

Some of the potential issues KUFA had voiced themselves were also highlighted in the SPOTing partners' feedback in Vienna which included observations about viability, need, motivation, ownership and inclusion as well as the requisite levels of experience, commitment, or likely interest in such a proposal from a youth perspective. The importance of reciprocality in building trust and clarity about the limits to autonomy were identified as being key as well as the likely support, resources, time and flexibility needed for a youth group not to be a tokenistic or top down initiative. Mateusz Buraczyk, one of KUFA's new SPOTing working group, noted that the feedback process in Vienna was helpful in counteracting the tendency to "automatically go bigger and bigger" [200] with their plans.

"The feedback that was the most useful I think was about us wanting this big thing, without already really having youth programming and without

[195] The extent to which KUFA's bottom up approach could be categorised and understood as a methodology rather than a project structure or set of methods is debatable in research terms. See section 3.2 of this report, What is a Methodology?
[196] Fred Entringer, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 15, 2021.
[197] Inês Alves, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 14, 2022.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Mateusz Buraczyk, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 14, 2022.
[200] Ibid.

really having a concrete idea about where we want to go and how to do it. Yes, it's mostly that insight about those initial plans that we are attacking the thing from the wrong side, instead of beginning with little actions that change our programming and that maybe encourage youngsters to have autonomy in different ways, so it doesn't have to be already a set committee with 12 members who meet every week, have a room and do their own programming. So yes that Š®hÞ§µ H ø2:H ö ò ŠH iØŠH Þ: / ::Þ¦ö for results I think: this is really healthy because needed and work more on that level." [201]

Reflecting on the advice received from their SPOTing partners in Vienna and after discussions with KUFA's director and management team regarding the organisation's strategy objectives and how their preliminary SPOTing ideas could be aligned, some adaptations to their testbed plans were made. KUFA recognised that the main issues with their original proposal of working towards establishing a youth group within the organisation was a lack of staff capacity and experience also noting the dangers of possible replication of other similar initiatives in their area. Although KUFA's new research question remained the same, their planned testbed actions were changed to reflect a slower, more open and organic approach to experimenting with creative and social activity in order to try to make more connections between local youth and their organisation.

KUFA's new testbed plan therefore included reflecting on the potential for youth involvement within their existing programme strands, developing connections with the local university and youth organisations, movements and artists as well as promoting existing opportunities for youth volunteers and interns within their organisation. KUFA identified that the main value driving their new testbed thinking was exploring ways to encourage a sense of youth ownership over what might develop, which they recognised would involve not only slowing down and scaling back from 'bigger and bigger' ambitions which were not necessarily shared or needed by local young people, but also required KUFA to be more open to investing time in taking smaller steps.

"I think that we're also giving ourselves some time H øÐP2µ ÞH PH Š ® H 2P:ØD ¦µ§ŠP:µ ŠÏHµ2 Š w hÞµ iµ iµ2µ H2oÞ Ð H ø ® : ÿµHØÞ ÐI X HØ there is a will to have more young people involved at KUFA but I think that also for once we are giving P2:µöhµ: HÞÿµ H 2µùµ§H Š ® H ïP:H /P:ØÞ Ð Dresults I think: this is really healthy because most of the time we don't have this space. We just immediately go for it and we don't consider other ways [...] Sometimes we want to reach a community or a certain audience, but they cannot :µµ HØµÿ:µöhµ: 2µùµ§Hµ® Þ P2 /2 Ð2Šÿÿµ : maybe we should start there with little actions. And also acknowledge that sometimes we are also not the space for certain things, we don't have to be the space for everything." [202]

TESTBED ACTIVITY

2021

▪ 3 KUFA staff experienced in participatory pedagogy formed a team to develop and oversee SPOTing project
▪ Making a Movie testbed framework developed as a 3 year project to answer KUFA's SPOTing research question iØŠH Š2µ HØµ ¦µ µøH: Ï ¦ HH ÿ P/ approach projects to the project holder, stakeholders and participants?
▪ Potential schools partners approached and confirmed, Making a Movie working group established with schools and artists
▪ Mechanisms for ongoing participatory evaluation designed and agreed
▪ Additional funding application made
▪ Making a Movie workshops started
▪ Meetings with SPOTing researcher and project manager and work done with Brunnenpassage developing sessions for second SPOTing Seminar in Bratislava
▪ Internal discussion session held with wider KUFA

[201] Mateusz Buraczyk, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 14, 2022.
[202] Inês Alves, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 14, 2022.

team about SPOTing research and the concept of bottom up participation

In 2021 KUFA had approximately 35 participants in their testbed project

2022

▪ Making a Movie transferred from SPOTing to another KUFA programme with SPOTing research sub questions retained to inform project evaluation
▪ New team of 3 KUFA staff formed to develop a new SPOTing testbed project
▪ New testbed youth group idea presented to SPOTing partners at Vienna SPOTing Seminar
▪ Feedback from collective critical friend process in Vienna shared with KUFA's programming team
▪ Meetings held with KUFA's directors to identify the relevance to organisation strategy and development
▪ Meetings and discussions held with local youth groups including schools and the local university about potential collaborations, interests and needs
▪ Research plan reformulated to incorporate youth activity into existing KUFA programming and resources

In 2022 KUFA had approximately 30 participants in their testbed activities

TESTBED APPROACH

KUFA's initial decision to use a participatory action research framework to test the ethical validity and 'bottom upness' of their working practices helped to expose issues with their approach. By embracing SPOTing's reflective space and mechanisms KUFA's first SPOTing team noted the inconsistency in having developed their research question, sub questions and almost the entirety of their testbed content and framework in isolation, although this was partly due to pragmatic reasons of working with schools stakeholders who expect and appreciate a certain amount of structure.

"I think that if you really want talk about bottom up and horizontal approaches, then we need to be transparent about how we do things, and the terms that we use. I think that the biggest problem for me was using these kinds of concepts without really honouring HØµÿI „Ï § P2:µ iµ µµ® HØµ :/Š§µ H 2µùµ§H to reach these kinds of conclusions and SPOTing provided that because sometimes everything happens so fast that we don't really go beyond the surface, we don't go deeper Þ P2 2µùµ§HÞ[203] :IL

Inês reflected that in KUFA's eagerness to get their stakeholders on board they downplayed the potential time and resources needed for the reflective aspect of the project, preferring to highlight the more 'exciting' aspects of Making a Movie which immediately cast the teachers as the 'bad guys' when they pointed out the possible difficulties against KUFA as the 'dreamers.' In hindsight, Inês noted that "we were naive about how we thought that it would work." [204] The focus on collaboratively building a reflective safe space within the project through regular social events and activities for both stakeholders and participants "to try to establish a common ground" [205] to share feedback and ideas to improve ways of working together fell by the wayside, mainly due to all the additional pressures that KUFA experienced with staff turnover and capacity. Inês also noted that once KUFA's original SPOTing team started to really reflect, which predominately happened between themselves and their critical friends rather than with their fellow project stakeholders and participants, "we got really lost with the terms." [206] Egos also got in the way and a sense of frustration and fatigue set in, which had a detrimental effect on the research, alongside the realisation that "bottom up was not a universally agreed concept" [207] across their organisation.

"The space for participants for me is important,

[203] Inês Alves, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 14, 2022.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid.

but it got lost in this project, that's one of the Þ::Pµ: Š: iµöö Š: HØµ P:µ Ï :/µ§Þø§ Hµ2ÿ: iØÞ§Ø sometimes can be used so broadly because everybody has a different perception of what it [bottom up] is." [208]

In developing their second research project SPOTing became a way for KUFA to try to balance reflection and action by deliberately attempting not to get stuck on a 'conveyor belt' of doing project after project without any analysis, or to feel overwhelmed with terms, theories and circular discussions. Therefore they wanted to take enough time to respond to their potential collaborators' feedback, interests and needs to be able to adjust their approach accordingly. For example through their initial discussions with youth clubs, young artistic collectives and local university students KUFA's new SPOTing team identified a lack of free, accessible, safe and creative spaces in and around Esch that could offer resources and support for young people's cultural expression as well as the chance to develop their creative potential through advice and mentorship.

As young people taking ownership was also an important founding value in KUFA's history, there was a desire within the new team to recreate a similar free, creative space for contemporary youth to use how they wanted.

Their second testbed therefore gradually shifted from an 'in house' youth group to a more fluid and pragmatic approach to finding ways for young people to use existing features of KUFA such as their cinema space and bar as well as their newly developed visual arts residency programme Squatfabrik. Although this shift was also partly affected by top down creative strategy decisions being made across the organisation as a whole, KUFA's SPOTing team recognised this as an opportunity to provide space and support for young people to access and participate on their own terms as much as possible.

PUTTING VALUES INTO PRACTICE

Like many other SPOTing partners, KUFA began by drawing on the entirety of their organisation's foundational values of "passion, collaboration, commitment, humor and creativity" [209] while also specifically posing questions about the openness of their bottom up approach. By developing a more critical analysis about the aims of their testbed questions they were able to identify their research value as transparency, which when applied to their Making a Movie testbed resulted in some existential reflections on the nature of the participation KUFA typically offers and how there could be room for more openness.

"Existential crises can also be good, they don't have to be anything dramatic, it's just this process of us questioning ourselves. We found that there are some disadvantages with how we worked but there are also positives. We have learnt that we need to listen more and be more open to ideas that perhaps go a little outside of what we had envisioned." [210]

The processes KUFA used to develop and modify their second SPOTing research testbed plans, for example incorporating the feedback generated from the critical mechanisms that they had helped to facilitate for other SPOTing partners in Bratislava, showed a commitment to the type of reflective thinking PAR is designed to foster and strengthen. Their desire to embed ownership as a value to shape their new testbed activities was seen in their prioritisation of more space, time and flexibility for collaborators to inform what might develop.

CHALLENGES

KUFA experienced challenges through the Covid period in terms of delays, workload issues and general difficulties maintaining momentum, exacerbated through their staffing situation.

"The fact that everyone has been dealing with the

[208] Ibid.
[209] Kulturfabrik SPOTing Testbed Starting Point, February, 2021.
[210] Inês Alves, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 14, 2022.

current pandemic on a both professional and personal level has not been easy for anyone and it made the process of co-creation and development of the feeling of belonging towards the project much slower than expected." [211]

As well as dealing with the demands of an admin heavy European project of SPOTing's scale, KUFA also experienced a learning curve getting to grips with the concept of PAR based research, and at times were frustrated by a peer learning programme which was even more online than initially intended.

Some of the realisations thrown up by a testbed design so heavily based on their existing approach was that it already was a very pragmatic and successful way of working in terms of what it delivered for KUFA's schools stakeholders.

"What we already do does work somehow as a bottom up participatory approach it's just probably not in the way that we think it does. And it's important to acknowledge and to value everything that has been done before that we will keep doing. So I think that so far the biggest lesson has been that sometimes you need to acknowledge what works for you and your situation, and in your reality and in your country. So, this for me is a struggle because we know what works and doesn't work with schools, no matter how much research I do, I think I have a lot of answers already. For me, iØŠHM: ®ÞÏø§PöH Þ: HØµ ÏŠ§H HØŠH X is important for our partners but also for the change, but sometimes, most likely I will have to acknowledge that it won't be possible." [212]

Part of KUFA's challenge of fully realising a co-research role with others in Making a Movie was the issue of identifying shared values and attempting to realise them in practice via a collectively negotiated research question or topic. It was through reflecting on the Making a Movie testbed that Inês noted that this had not happened and was not a typical part of KUFA's bottom up approach.

"I wouldn't change anything, because otherwise iµ i Pö® MH ØŠhµ Š o :/Š§µ H öµŠ2 Š ® we would just do the project and move on to the next one. Yes, from the point of view of SPOTing, including stakeholders from the very beginning Þ HØµ Hµ:H¦µ® H ø ® PH ÞÏ HØµ2µ Þ: : that is related to their work they would like to examine perhaps this would have had a great impact on the research. I think the insights we have gained will affect how we approach working with schools in the future and motivate us to try to open up more space when we try to co-construct projects." [213]

As their schools stakeholders had initially expressed some reservations about adding a reflective research dimension to examine Making a Movie as a bottom up process in action, when this element was removed from the project, Inês expressed surprise that both the artist and school stakeholders asked for access to the overall project reflections and case study information. Despite the challenges posed by working in this way Inês reflected that even the act of asking questions about the students' freedom to opt in or out of the project had prompted some reflections among their stakeholders which they saw as worth exploring.

"In the end ironically, sometimes it feels like Making a Movie is still part of SPOTing because it ended up opening up a debate about autonomy and ownership amongst the working group that [illegible] participants but also for the participants. We plan to go back to the research sub questions initially proposed and gather as much information as possible with the working group and the young people in order to grow and improve together." [214]

The challenges of developing another research project mid way through the programme with a new team are obvious and far from an ideal position to be in. However Inês recognised that Making a Movie had laid some groundwork for their

[211] Inês Alves, SPOTing reflective diary entry, January, 2021.
[212] Inês Alves, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 15, 2021.
[213] Inês Alves, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 14, 2022.
[214] KUFA addition to case study draft, emailed to researcher, December 8, 2022.

new testbed in terms of how internal discussion processes considering KUFA's participatory approaches "surprisingly opened some space for reflection within the organisation that we thought was closed." [215] As the lynchpin between projects Inês noted that as far as taking learning from one project to another, the fact that new people were involved in KUFA's new testbed also meant they were "a different team and this generates a different kind of energy, and we also discuss things differently. I think everything is just much more organic." [216] Reflecting on this organic quality, KUFA's new SPOTing team noted that they felt that their commonality, in their professional lives working with young people and in their social experiences with grass roots movements, other cultural centres and associations as well as through their shared networks and friends, meant that they saw themselves as active citizens. They identified that "this naturally has an impact on how we work and how we want to develop projects and engage with the local community." [217]

KEY LEARNING

Reflecting on what had been learnt across both KUFA's SPOTing testbeds Inês described an increased awareness of the issues with working on multiple simultaneously managed cultural participation projects. This was recognised as problematic not only in terms of workload, but also in how it contributed to a type of cultural consumerism through an ongoing conveyor belt of projects, which although providing creative experiences, lacked the mechanisms, space, time and expectation to go deeper, to develop relationships and build desire and capacity for more partner and participant ownership and involvement beyond content.

"As production managers, programmers, technicians and so on we are often engaged
Þ : ÿŠ o /2 ïµ§H: HØŠH ÞHM: 1PÞHµ ®ÞÏ¤§ÞoH H
invest quality time in all of them, which is quite essential when we are producing participatory and pedagogical projects with the will to run them in an horizontal way." [218]

Considering Making a Movie specifically, especially given the working groups' continued investment and interest in reflective learning, Inês recognised a depth to the knowledge gained about balancing the need for some predetermined project structure with the possibilities of additional 'open' decision making space when working with schools. Additionally, patience and time needed to gradually build trust across working relationships were mentioned, not only with partners but also with participants through active listening and acknowledging and responding to different viewpoints.

Mateusz described how some personal and professional limitations had been exposed through the experience, in particular reflecting on the initial approach to designing their second SPOTing testbed, reiterating the importance of seeking out, listening to and applying feedback.

"I learned that I have to analyse the limits in which we operate and that it's important to also be more realistic about your own skills,
H ÿŠo¦µ HŠòµ Š :Hµ/ ¦Š§ò ÞÏ o P ø ® o P2:µ
thinking even if I don't have experience in that it will just automatically work. Maybe you could be a little bit more humble and say yes, not everything that you want to do is actually realistic or even necessary. Just because you want to do things in a certain way and it seems logical to you it doesn't mean that others have the same perspective." [219]

There was also a general acknowledgement of the difficulties in developing learning and building common ground internally within the organisation was some frustrations expressed at the lost

[215] Inês Alves, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 14, 2022.
[216] Ibid.
[217] KUFA addition to case study draft, emailed to researcher, December 8, 2022.
[218] Ibid.
[219] Mateusz Buraczyk, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 25, 2023.

potential to continue conversations about bottom up and participatory concepts. KUFA's SPOTing team also recognised the contradiction in their desire to both slow down and also enthusiastically rush ahead with ideas, noting that they experienced a certain amount of paralysis because of multiple factors beyond their control across both their testbed projects. Although this affected the feeling that they should have experimented more with small concrete actions and integrated the results into their planning more quickly, they also reiterated the value of and need for the space to fail as well as to reflect.

OUTCOMES AND INTENTIONS

Making a Movie is set to continue into 2023, adjusted to accommodate students' skills development, with a final evaluation process agreed on by partners which will incorporate access to SPOTing reflective diaries and a group review of KUFA's original SPOTing research sub questions.

Both Inês and Mateusz are invested in exploring potential ways to work with young people to provide space and opportunities within KUFA, seeing the mutual benefits of more representative youth programming and events and what that could evolve into.

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5.7

SPOTing Case Studies:

LE PLUS PETIT CIRQUE DU MONDE

PARTNER INTRODUCTION

Le Plus Petit Cirque du Monde (PPCM) was founded in 1992, in Paris, France, to promote creative talent and innovative artistic proposals specialising in research and experimentation. Its 1900 sq ft building, specifically created for circus arts and new acrobatic practices, was constructed on the site of a former gymnasium and inaugurated in 2015. The building provides a base for PPCM's own local and international programming and performing arts productions as well as hosting touring shows and artistic residencies. PPCM's artistic programme combines circus arts, hip-hop dance and emerging urban practices alongside more established artforms such as music and theatre. PPCM is also involved in arts education through social circus, [220] working with schools, youth exchanges and research projects as well as running professional development training which includes third level accreditation.

PARTNER STATISTICS

Overall PPCM employs 35 full time staff. On average the organisation hosts 50 artists and 15 artistic companies a year. Annually PPCM runs 40 circus performances and 4,300 hours of weekly circus classes. On average PPCM has 16,000 participants and attendees across its programmes which includes activities with schools as well as with neighbourhood and disability groups. PPCM also provides vocational training for approximately 60 trainees annually.

STARTING POINTS

PPCM was able to use their well established existing knowledge base and experience in evaluation and research gained through their arts education work with other cultural organisations, networks and statutory agencies to inform their SPOTing project. [221] PPCM established early on that they wanted to focus their SPOTing research topic on the relationship between non-formal and formal educatsion within their context. This interest partly arose through PPCM's participation in previous TEH network meetings, considering their peers' definitions of what non-formal education experienced through the arts is and what it can be said to do. They set out to use SPOTing primarily as a way to conduct a longitudinal study across some of their existing schools and arts education programming strands in order to better understand the effects of PPCM's circus based artistic and cultural activity on participants' lives and learning.

PPCM also noted that in the beginning, part of what they identified as an advantageous aspect of SPOTing was the opportunity to keep their research open and iterative, "generating multiple questions about this topic" [222] as their testbeds developed, as well as being something that the whole organisation could be involved in.

"We talked about how SPOTing could be something more holistic and less focused on one :/µ§Þø§ PH§ [223] yµIL

A relationship between openness and adaptability (essential during periods of Covid restrictions) was also noted by Katérina Flora, one of PPCM's SPOTing project team, as a key conceptual and practical element of PPCM's work and something they had observed was generally lacking within formal education.

"Adaptability is inherent to artistic practice. It is Š iŠo Ï ÏŠ§Þ Ð ®ÞÏø§PöHÞµ:D öŠ2Ðµöo Š¦:µ formal education programmes, yet it is one of the main qualities along with empathy, inventiveness, 2µ:ÞöÞµ §µD § ø®µ §µ Š ® : öÞ®Š2ÞHo HØŠ need in order to survive in the uncertain new world which is coming." [224]

[220] PPCM defines social circus as an innovative and adaptive means of education and social inclusion for children, young people and adults with fewer learning opportunities. Social circus generally refers to using play and circus arts as empowerment tools for transformation, discipline, creativity and artistic expression, understood as a form of kinaesthetic education. https://www.circostrada.org/en/ressources/guidebook-social-circus-trainers.
[221] Some of PPCM's collaborative work with networks such as Circostrada and Caravan has helped to define and develop the theory of social circus through practice.
[222] Katérina Flora, Interview with SPOTing researcher, July 1, 2021.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Katérina Flora, PPCM SPOTing reflective diary entry, January, 2021.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can non formal artistic education* play a role within the formal educational system in ® Þ : Š ® h Š H Š Đ µ ® Š 2 µ Š : J ? ² / µ § Þ ø § Š ö ö o § the importance of the body as a site of learning through circus arts.

Although PPCM already had quite a broad basis of research and understanding about circus arts practices, the initial focus of their SPOTing research topic was about reaching a greater understanding of both the effects and the potential of such practices in the specific context of formal education.

"We wanted to see how formal education and non formal education can meet through the participation of the young people, how we can link these two sometimes very opposite ways of learning and doing in artistic and educational programmes, also because we were working a lot with schools and we have never had the occasion to work on this question more deeply." [225]

Although PPCM's research question in principle aligns perfectly with a PAR based methodology; seeking to explore, understand, and refine key aspects of their work through a process of reflective practice from a practitioner's perspective, there are some obvious pitfalls involved when starting with a base of prior knowledge. Typically arts organisations tend to operate with a hypothesis that their work has social impact and value whether 'proven' [226] or 'unproven' which when applied to a research process can easily result in exclusively focusing on generating supporting evidence, turning research into advocacy. PPCM explained that they wanted use SPOTing to focus on more qualitative information which specifically centred on the young people engaged in their programmes rather than the more general data they usually collected about their activities.

"We tried to develop a SPOTing centred focus on the young people we were working with in order to understand more about them and our work. How do they perceive our work with the neighbourhood? Do they accept our artistic values? How do they feel about the links that we make with social circus?" [226]

Due to Covid making it difficult to work in and with schools, over time PPCM's research topic shifted slightly from looking exclusively at formal education environments by adapting to accommodate different groups and contexts, although the link with education remained. Initially this occurred as short term but reoccurring collaborations with w Þ : : Þ m § Š ö µ, a youth employment and training agency, with PPCM later integrating part of a much larger long term local architecture, urban planning and neighbourhood engagement programme m µ m o § ¶ µ h Š H m µ m o § ¶ µ (LAL) based on the construction of a new general high school, into their SPOTing testbed activity.

TESTBED ACTIVITY

2021

- Small PPCM core SPOTing team of 4 formed consisting of intern, tutor and 2 staff members to develop SPOTing research strategy and inform the wider organisation
- Existing internal research reviewed and participant data from PPCM questionnaires analysed
- Internal PPCM team meetings held discussing which projects to follow as testbeds
- Arts Acrobatiques Urbains vocational training programme for young people wishing to become professional performers selected for PPCM's SPOTing testbed
- One week of circus skills and ÿ ¶ ® Þ Š H Þ [228] workshops (30 hours) with young unemployed adults in the local area run with w Þ : : Þ m § Š ö µ

[225] Katérina Flora, Interview with SPOTing researcher, July 1, 2021.
[226] François Matarasso notes that finding conclusive, hard 'proof' of the social impact of arts participation is extremely difficult, and in his view, is a counterproductive task. Instead he emphasises the view of participation in art and culture as a cultural right and act of communal expression and exploration. François Matarasso, Keynote speaker TEH online seminar, A4, Bratislava, March 26, 2021.
[227] Katérina Flora, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 3, 2022.
[228] In French speaking cultures, médiation or médiation culturelle are terms used to describe participatory activities where the goals are to promote knowledge exchange and to break down social and cultural barriers. These terms can be loosely translated to English as outreach, audience development, or public engagement depending on the context.

▪ Classe à projet cirque for schools attending PPCM three times a week added to testbed
▪ Planning began for final SPOTing seminar in Paris hosted by PPCM

In 2021 PPCM had approximately 792 participants in their testbed activities

2022

▪ mµ mo§¶µ (µ(µÿŠÞ (The High School of Tomorrow) project with two local technical high schools was added to PPCM's SPOTing testbed, part of a larger long term architecture and neighbourhood engagement programme mµ mo§¶µ hŠ H mµ mo§¶µ (LAL) informing the construction of the first general high school in PPCM's local area, Bagneux
▪ Arts Acrobatiques Urbains vocational training programme for young people continues
▪ Classe à projet cirque for schools attending PPCM three times a week continues
▪ Two weeks of circus skills and ÿ¶®ÞŠHÞ workshops (60 hours) with young unemployed adults in the local area run with wÞ::Þ m §Šöµ
▪ LAL facilitators talked about PPCM hosting final SPOTing seminar with participants discussing ideas and possible frameworks for their participation in seminar programme
▪ Preparations made for final SPOTing seminar including discussions with PPCM team and partners as well as meetings with TEH project manager and researcher

In 2022 PPCM had approximately 2,100 participants in their testbed activities

TESTBED APPROACH

Part of PPCM's focus when reflecting on their attempts to apply a value based methodology was in examining the existing balance between their openness to participants' input and the ways in which they tried to foster a sense of participant ownership, whilst still delivering the key elements required to facilitate a circus skills based practice which is a very specialist artform. PPCM explained that within their everyday practice although their learning and skills objectives are typically set without participant involvement, their tutors take great care to adapt the content according to demand and interest, incorporating oral and written participant feedback into the planning and development of future sessions.

PPCM therefore began by experimenting with subtle adaptations to their facilitation methods such as relating circus to wider physical practices and movement cultures to try and make the process more participant centred and open where this was possible within their testbed projects, for instance in their first collaboration with wÞ::Þ m §Šöµ. This led to reflections on SPOTing's potential to change some of PPCM's skills based working practices and where the limits of their own openness to that were as an organisation.

"Through funding from the European Social Fund and the collaboration with Mission Locale we were able to offer young people a chance to practice circus and to see what possibilities exist in order Hø®Š2µöŠHµ®ï¦ÞHØµ§PöHP2Šö:µ§H project ownership came through strongly because the young people came with their own needs and questions in order to get information but also to share their own experience of the reality of being a young person and not having a clear path in life." [229]

A clear example of PPCM's continuing attempts to centre a sense of openness and ownership was demonstrated by their approach to LAL, or The High School Before The High School, a 5 year collaborative social architecture programme using a broad mix of creative public engagement and consultation processes. Through their history working in the neighbourhood, when part of a large ex-military site was made available for public use, PPCM were invited to collaborate to help envision and inform plans for the first general high school in Bagneux. [230] Working in partnership with the local municipality

[229] Katérina Flora, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 3, 2022.
[230] Bagneux, where PPCM is based, is a large suburb approximately 8km from central Paris and does not have a local general high school, only 'technical' high schools, lycées techniques. In the French secondary education system only those attending general high school, lycée general, can obtain the baccalaureate qualification needed for university and entry to non manual or basic clerical jobs.

and an association of architects, mŠ §2µPhµ §Š2 â who specialise in public participation and engagement in urban design, PPCM identified a strong connection between LAL and SPOTing, seeing the programme as both a physical and conceptual site of participatory action research. In part due to the decades long issue of Bagneux not having a general high school, the approach to developing the site and building is involving as much of the neighbourhood as possible to create local connections, understand needs and incorporate different ideas and skills.

LÀØµ2µ Š2µ ÿŠ o 2µùµ§HÞ : Š¦ PH Ø i ÀØµ RÞ ÐØ School Before The High School will be, because the municipality is working with us and other local culture actors in order not to create the same inequalities in the educational system as before, to imagine a different way to do things and to give a place to culture, art and imagination so it is there from the beginning."[231]

As part of their LAL activity PPCM is working in partnership with local technical high schools on mµ mo§¶µ (µ (µÿŠÞ (The High School of Tomorrow), a project which involves using the specialised vocational skills participants are learning at their existing schools on the site of the future general high school through creative collaborations with different artists. This has involved connecting electricity to different onsite structures, constructing raised bases and steps for portacabins, designing, building and painting a totem pole structure as well as a large advertising hoarding for the future general high school featuring slogans and poetry.

"They have been using this site as an experimental space, where they apply their existing knowledge through working with different artists. So that's why it's about dreaming, thinking something new, imagining what the future high school can be."[232]

Other parts of PPCM's LAL activities have involved running various workshops and performances to engage with locals and collect feedback about the area, gathering dreams and desires related to the general high school, including hosting different artistic residencies on site. The LAL site is normally open to the public every Wednesday afternoon so people can come learn about the project and see any building progress made or just explore, with areas for children to play or take part in circus or other kinds of creative workshops. In addition to PPCM's onsite activity there are many other cultural, civic, social activist and environmental associations which meet there, running different projects with local people all linked to the construction and future use of the general high school site. Mia Scanzi, another member of PPCM's SPOTing team, explained that PPCM saw their activities in LAL connected to these wider manifestations of social inclusion and active citizenship.

"We're very open to other ways of doing the thing that we're most interested in which is participation, so it's broader than just circus."[233]

PUTTING VALUES INTO PRACTICE

At the start of the programme in common with other SPOTing partners, PPCM broadly identified the set of values underpinning the mission of their organisation as a whole; such as promoting access to and awareness of artistic practices, as what was primarily informing their research question. As SPOTing progressed, through Katérina's work with colleagues discussing PPCM's existing research and also collectively examining the resources produced for the SPOTing partners, PPCM began to further refine what the specific values driving their research were, reflecting on the challenges of trying to realise them in practice. Some of SPOTing's mechanisms, such as the yearly interviews with the researcher, offered an outside perspective which helped them to clarify how they were articulating and applying these values across the projects that they were using as their research testbeds.

"It was interesting to see things through someone else's eyes, for example, for you [the SPOTing Researcher] our research values were transformation and ownership, this was quite

[231] Katérina Flora, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 31, 2023.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Mia Scanzi, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 3, 2022.

important for us to hear although we hadn't necessarily formulated it like this, because transformation is something we that we are looking at all the time, but I think it was the ownership that was the most important value to strengthen and develop in our work with young people. How do they believe that the project belongs to them?" [234]

PPCM defined ownership as the attempt to create a space for their participants to be as actively involved as the discipline would allow, to accommodate the expression of their interests and needs and ultimately to cultivate their sense of belonging and engagement with a creative practice. Reflecting on how this value of ownership had been further developed in practice, Katérina explained that for example in PPCM's workshops where participants were tasked with creating their own group and solo performances, negotiating a balance between direction and freedom had shifted towards leaving more room for peer education to take place.

"The idea of peer education, how we learn from each other, I think that became more focused through SPOTing, changing the way that the workshops work by leaving more space for people to decide how they want to work together, what they want to do." [235]

Considering the types of transformations experienced through a circus based practice Katérina underlined what was required both to impart and to master such skills; a reliance on collaboration, physical responsibility for others, an acceptance of failure and the need for difference in physicality and in aptitude. [236] PPCM saw these processes of transformation as being closely conceptually associated with the idea of social transformation, also identified as a research value, cultivated as a natural 'by product' of participation (at various levels) in creative practice. Where possible PPCM followed in detail how transformation manifested in their individual participants, particularly those involved in their vocational training, [237] through ongoing informal conversations, regular feedback meetings, and through questionnaires tracking their knowledge of different circus related practices and to what extent participants chose to apply or adapt them in their own personal creative and physical practices.

PPCM also noted how they as an organisation showed evidence of transformation in their approach within this vocational programme by adjusting schedules and content according to the kinds of evaluative information they were collecting from participants. PPCM also cited an example of making adjustments for an individual trainee, explaining that usually they only had one non negotiable rule as a condition of continued access and advancement within their vocational programme which was full attendance, but when a participant was having difficulties they chose to try and work out a solution with that young person so they could continue into the following year.

"I think dialogue and communication is one of the most important things that we can do with the young people, we were doing it before of course, but perhaps through SPOTing and the focus on ownership we are more aware of this. I don't know if it's entirely SPOTing encouraging us to think maybe more carefully about things like this but now there is always a small voice saying ok keep your mind on that, how do our participants feel about what they're doing, perhaps you're asking them to do things that they don't want to do." [238]

CHALLENGES

The main challenge for PPCM was the Covid situation and the limitations that placed on the development of their testbeds. However this encouraged PPCM to adapt, extending the scope of their research question

[234] Katérina Flora, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 3, 2022.
[235] Ibid.
[236] "Circus is a small society but you can find very diverse values so everyone can find a place. We need people that are very tall, others that are small, we need people that are very strong, others that are very light. [...] Another example is about failure or being accepted as we are. Think about the juggler for example, the ball, falling down very often and you have to just accept it. Eventually it will fall down less often. It's the idea of accepting failure and accepting all the different types of personalities and bodies." Katérina Flora, Interview with SPOTing researcher, July 1, 2021.
[237] PPCM's vocational circus skills training programme for young people aged 18 to 22 offers them fully subsided scholarships with progression over 1 to 2 years. Young people from different social backgrounds attend from all over France as it is one of the few free and accessible programmes in Europe. PPCM assists participants with finding further training or employment opportunities with some participants offered the chance to work at PPCM delivering circus classes.
[238] Katérina Flora, Interview with SPOTing researcher, June 3, 2022.

to incorporate a wider range of activity than they may have initially considered and also accelerated the development of new working relationships. One example of this during 2021 when cultural activity in France was restricted to vocational training, was PPCM's partnership with wÞ::Þ m §Šöµ, a local organisation working with under qualified and unemployed young people, which PPCM previously had not found an appropriate opportunity to work with. Covid also affected PPCM over a longer term than just the immediate period of the pandemic, with knock on economic pressures affecting both attendance and the viability of circus professions for PPCM's vocational trainees.

At times PPCM found the logistics of managing all their different testbeds challenging especially those taking place beyond their building. In particular PPCM found it difficult trying to follow all the different aspects of their LAL activity in order to keep up with how young people were constructing and creating "new spaces of knowledge" [239] together. This was exacerbated by the staff departures and changes PPCM experienced during SPOTing as well as issues with receiving timely feedback from their schools partners, with PPCM acknowledging that a reflective learning approach was not commonplace in the French education system. PPCM also explained that because of the difference in opportunities to be present and develop connections with participants in some of their other testbeds compared to their in house vocational training for example, it was much harder to pinpoint individual transformation. However there was one instance of a young person who had participated on a weeklong block of PPCM's workshops with wÞ::Þ m §Šöµ who had since enrolled in PPCM's circus classes and wanted to apply to the vocational training programme.

KEY LEARNING

Both Katérina and Mia emphasised that they felt SPOTing had given them an opportunity to reflect on their work overall, as well as having the renewed focus of a value base acting as a lens to examine different forms of cultural participation in more depth.

"Thanks to SPOTing we were able to go out of our comfort zon easily I think, because it gave us a way to focus more on the participation of the young people, than just on the activity itself. We were also curious to examine something which is not solely linked to circus through our involvement with The High School Before The High School, this is coming from SPOTing too, because through the other partners we have a wider idea of what the participation of young people can be." [240]

They noted that the influence of other SPOTing partners' testbed approaches and the overall SPOTing framework of peer learning and exchange combined with their responsibilities in hosting the final SPOTing seminar, had encouraged them to compare and reflect more deeply on how they were working with their participants and partners. In addition to PPCM's reflections on their own overall learning internally in preparation for the final SPOTing seminar, they were also committed to working with their participants on developing a comfortable space for them to also be able to reflect on and communicate their perceptions of ownership and transformation as openly and honestly as desired.

"Planning the SPOTing seminar also gave us a common space and the opportunity to make links Š ® 2µùµ§H iÞHØÞ P2 HµŠÿ Þ Š ®ÞÏÏµ2µ H iŠ iµ ØŠ® ¦µµ Š¦öµ H ¦µÏ 2µ ¦µ§ŠP:µ iµ ø Šööo all had the same objective which was the young people and their involvement in this seminar rather than simultaneously working on lots of different projects. So we were able to have some internal discussions about ownership and how can we involve everyone without things being alienating, ®ÞÏø§PöH 2¦2Þ Ð Ï 2 HØµ o P Ð /µ /öµD H H Ïø§ÞŠö ¦PH Šö: Ïø§ÞŠö[241]µ PÐØIL

PPCM's recognition of the extensive range of

[239] Mia Scanzi, Note to SPOTing researcher, September 26, 2022.
[240] Katérina Flora, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 31, 2023.
[241] Ibid.

community participation and civic engagement with the general high school site as a form of action research in itself also translated to the control they had given their technical schools participants over what they wanted to develop and work on within the project and ultimately their decision to participate in the final SPOTing seminar or not, with PPCM identifying the seminar as an extension of their testbed.

"[illegible] key learning is in organising a framework that [illegible] this aspect of the research. We can't talk about participation and ownership without creating a framework that allows decisions to be taken in a horizontal way. Results also depend on conditions. I think it is important to keep in mind that the [illegible] environment and the existing conditions that offer stability and create trust." [242]

OUTCOMES AND INTENTIONS

In terms of reaching an overall conclusion to the research question PPCM had asked themselves about the role of non formal artistic education, Katérina noted that rather than clear answers they had observations. Both Mia and Katérina acknowledged that the new opportunities for learning about participation 'beyond circus' offered by their LAL programming had confirmed their existing experience of the benefits of working physically, using playful approaches and imaginative forms of collective interaction. This was clearly demonstrated by seeing the positive responses of their participants and schools partners keen to use and develop their existing skills and knowledge creatively in the case of The High School of Tomorrow project.

Considering the specifics of their research question Katérina observed that while formal education structures limited the possibilities of introducing more creative formats within schools' day to day learning, there was however slightly more movement attitudinally within projects and partnerships, something that PPCM was keen to try to develop further.

"There is still a lot to work to do to develop the relationship between formal and non formal types of education, because fundamentally the thinking about what education is and can be for, is not yet on the same page. Formal education still generalises and categorises without adjusting to or accommodating individual strengths and weaknesses and doesn't take the time to see every person as a whole world in themselves so this is something we can help with." [243]

The fact that across their LAL programming PPCM had been able to successfully apply the same core social circus principles of inclusion, acceptance and support used in their other circus skills testbeds through working with participants to collectively create a safe and welcoming creative space, had also made them reflect on the necessary conditions to develop ownership. They also noted how their own adaptability in working across disciplines, another key social circus tenet, had helped to strengthen their resolve to try to realise their SPOTing value of ownership in new and different ways.

"At the beginning of SPOTing our main issue was how many projects and participants to select for our testbed. Finally we see this is more a strength than a weakness by accepting the fact that SPOTing for us is a process which aims for youth ownership and empowerment, so this has helped us to dare to explore areas that we don't control as well as circus practice. Although deciding to include The High School Before The High School; a big ambitious project which means more time needed for coordination, meetings, analysis and follow up with partners, the [illegible] is the best example of how non formal [illegible] with formal education." [244]

[242] Katérina Flora, PPCM SPOTing reflective diary entry, Summer, 2022.
[243] Katérina Flora, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 31, 2023.
[244] Katérina Flora, PPCM SPOTing reflective diary entry, Spring, 2022.

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SPOTing Case Studies:
RÖDA STEN KONSTHALL

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PARTNER INTRODUCTION

Röda Sten Konsthall is a contemporary art centre located in a former boiler house in the harbour area of Gothenburg, Sweden, opened in 1996 and renovated in 2000. It is run by a non-profit membership organisation Röda Sten Cultural Association, founded to save the site as a cultural space. In acknowledgement of the building's past DIY use for raves and street art there is a graffiti wall outside. [245] Inside, Röda Sten Konsthall exhibits painting, photography, video, sound and performance art by national and international artists, offering guided tours, lectures and creative workshops based on their exhibition programmes. Their art education department employs specialist art educators running a number of ongoing participatory programmes. Röda Sten Konsthall is the main host and organiser of the Gothenburg International Biennial for Contemporary Art (GIBCA) and is part of various national and international professional networks.

PARTNER STATISTICS

Overall Röda Sten Konsthall employs 8 full time and 11 part time staff. On average the organisation hosts three exhibitions a year. In 2022 Röda Sten Konsthall ran 113 creative workshops with their youth groups; Art as Meeting Place for ages 19-26, the Tuesday Group for ages 12-26, J 2 Š Ï ø H Þ ² Š H P 2 ® Š o : for ages 12-19 and Summer at Röda Sten Konsthall for ages 12-19, as well as approximately 40 classes for schools.

STARTING POINTS

Röda Sten Konsthall's director Mia Christersdotter Norman, noted that the evolution and development of the SPOTing programme as a more in depth examination of practice stemmed from a "long term commitment to these questions within the TEH network." [246] Röda Sten Konsthall's SPOTing starting point was focused on enhancing their connection with their youth participants through attempts to develop new and existing forms of communication and co-creation in their art education practices. This desire came from a recognised need for "organisational development" [247] partly as a reflection of the overall importance of Röda Sten Konsthall's art education programme, as well as from their impression that in some ways their engagement with young people had perhaps reached a point of stasis.

"We started to have this kind of feeling that maybe our approach has become sort of institutionalised, in terms of sitting back waiting for the participants to come to us. And I mean we are an institution, so that is also a factor." [248]

Initially their SPOTing research was devised with a member of Röda Sten Konsthall's art education team who subsequently left, this alongside new art educators joining the organisation slowed down the development of Röda Sten Konsthall's research at first. While the change in personnel did not result in a complete overhaul of their SPOTing research question, new staff engagement meant a more holistic appraisal of Röda Sten Konsthall's original research intention to "focus on our methods and our capacity for acting, evaluating and adapting our practice." [249]

"I think we have internalised the research question into our work more generally, I mean by introducing new educators it has become like a backbone to our programme." [250]

As their testbeds developed Röda Sten Konsthall also started to interrogate their research aim "to provide a co-creative platform and social environment for personal and artistic exploration and growth." [251] They thought about what co-creation actually meant (for them), where its limits were and whether or not as an organisation they felt they were at the right stage to

[245] The graffiti wall located directly outside the entrance to Röda Sten Konsthall known as Draken, the dragon in English, is a 41-meter-long sculpture by artist Per Agélii. It was inaugurated in 2004 and is one of two legal graffiti walls that currently exist in Gothenburg.
[246] Mia Christersdotter Norman, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 10, 2021.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Röda Sten Konsthall SPOTing Testbed Starting Point, February, 2021.
[250] Mia Christersdotter Norman, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 10, 2021.
[251] Röda Sten Konsthall SPOTing Testbed Starting Point, February, 2021.

implement it in more areas of their programmes.

"We have some types of co-creation, but we don't approach it in a formulaic kind of way, I mean it's also really a question about what co-creation is, is that a case of the participants deciding on the programme? Because in a way we do that already, for example when we discovered that many of the youngsters are very interested in Ð2ŠÏøHÞ Š ® :H2µµH Š2H iµ Þ §2µŠ:µ® those projects. But I think co-creation as such, is not the topic we are working on through SPOTing right now, I think it's more about outreach at the moment because I think that it takes a bit more to reach that point to able to fully realise or talk about co-creation." [252]

As SPOTing progressed, Röda Sten Konsthall's research began exploring what the most appropriate versions of co-creation were for them in their different art education groups and across their organisation, by examining how and what they already did co-creatively and the ways that could be developed, assessing what they needed to establish or augment in order to do so. This also led to questioning the need for 'more' co-creation as Röda Sten Konsthall considered how different youth led participatory approaches being tested and developed by some of the other SPOTing partners could be adapted to their context.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How do we initiate, establish and maintain contact with participants in our art educational programmes?

For Röda Sten Konsthall their research question was fuelled by what they expressed as a desire for "broader and deeper contact" [253] with the young people involved in their programmes, primarily to improve existing participant retention and aid further recruitment. Röda Sten Konsthall felt that they needed to improve their initial youth engagement methods as well as then maintaining and developing contact, helping to build momentum and connection in their participative work, something which was heightened during the Covid situation and the necessity of online outreach.

With the additional of new staff to their art education team it was agreed that part of their art educators' roles should be to develop Röda Sten Konsthall's social media presence "to be utilised as a space of contact." [254] New team members therefore got involved in introducing themselves via video clips, profiling different art activities and "showcasing what they do in the creative workshops." [255] This increased online presence was something that Röda Sten Konsthall continued to build beyond the pandemic, in particular through guided tours introducing new exhibitions presented and filmed by their art educators, made available on their social media channels. [256] Röda Sten Konsthall felt that this ongoing element of virtual connection was successful, evidenced by their increased follower numbers on social media platforms and also because it became an additional way for their art educators to creatively collaborate through developing online content.

Something that Röda Sten Konsthall's SPOTing team also saw as part of their research was exploring the idea of community building, through developing their relationship with young people in the immediate area as well as presenting themselves as a creative outlet for local youth. One of the 'new' art educators Sifen Wibell, who joined the SPOTing team in 2021, linked the idea of community building with encouraging connection and collaboration in the open 'drop in' weekend street art and graffiti workshops that became part of Röda Sten Konsthall's testbed activity. At the start of SPOTing Röda Sten Konsthall applied their research question to two of their pre existing ongoing youth art education programmes: Art as

[252] Mia Christersdotter Norman, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 10, 2021.
[253] Marie Bergdahl, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 10, 2021.
[254] Sifen Wibell, Interview with SPOTing researcher, August 2, 2022.
[255] Marie Bergdahl, Interview with SPOTing researcher, August 2, 2022.
[256] An example of an online guided tour by one of Röda Sten Konsthall's art educators, Malin Griffiths, presenting Pilvi Takala's exhibition, If your heart wants it, can be viewed at www.facebook.com/rodastenkonsthall/videos/503862148327571.

Meeting Place [257] and the Tuesday Group [258] later including some of their open drop in workshops. All of these testbed activities were connected to Röda Sten Konsthall's contemporary art exhibition programme in one way or another, inspired by its themes, materials or techniques, with their open creative workshops based around art forms such as graffiti and street art, which Röda Sten Konsthall and its surrounding area have a historic link to.

After experimenting unsuccessfully with different content and formats, these open workshops which had a 'first come first served' sign up policy on the day, over time proved popular enough for an additional workshop to be added. [259] Sifen noted that there were some regular returners among the group alongside young people who came and went from week to week, explaining that the workshops sought to establish a collaborative space to try to embed forms of co-creation. This idea of 'drop in co-creation' was encouraged through welcoming the young people into a temporary group, emphasising the activity's social and relational aims, collectively working to themes and by offering participants a combination of individual and group authorship and responsibility in the making of the work.

"So we have these set themes for each week
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groups and then they plan the area of the wall that they want their pictures on. They work together on how to arrange it and how they are going to do it. They prep/paint the wall themselves. They are very involved in the making of what we're doing that day, even if we are setting the theme. It's another way of doing co-creation in that people are actually creating things together and taking a lot of responsibility to make it happen. It's not like just come and experience and then leave." [260]

In terms of Röda Sten Konsthall's more established art education programming which formed a key part of their SPOTing testbeds, they worked to adapt to the needs and desires of one of their groups, Art as Meeting Place over the course of SPOTing. They did so by raising the age limit, prompted by the group getting older and not wanting to quit, as well as moving from doing different activities from week to week to working on bigger, more ambitious projects such as making an animated film which was exhibited in a local youth arts space. With this group Röda Sten Konsthall's SPOTing team noted that they were able to realise the maintenance and continuity aspect of contact posed by their research question by working "longer on a task and in depth." [261]

In addition, Marie Bergdahl, Röda Sten Konsthall's art education programme coordinator, explained that as part of their ongoing work the art educators had specifically focused on creating a space of inclusion, openness and connection, which they recognised as necessary for co-creative processes to function, in both Art as Meeting Place and the Tuesday Group. This was established through various welcoming and ice breaking exercises and by creating group agreements with participants to negotiate collective guidelines on how everyone "should treat each other by listening with respect, to give everyone space to speak out and discuss their values." [262]

TESTBED ACTIVITY

2021

- In late 2020 Röda Sten Konsthall started to build up a project team, had meetings with their staff and participants to discuss their testbed plans
- Weekly online meetings started between

[257] Konst som Mötesplats, Art as Meeting Place, has been running since 2018 and currently the age range is from 19 to 26 years old. The group meets weekly for 2.5 hours year round excluding summer. There is a maximum of 12 participants and two art educators work with the group.
[258] Tisdagsgruppen, the Tuesday Group, has been running since 2006. It also meets weekly for 2.5 hours year round excluding summer, with participants from 12 to 19 years old. There is a maximum of 12 participants and two art educators work with the group.
[259] Although they are 'drop in' workshops, participants have to be there at the start. As word has spread the participants are often there before the workshops start, waiting for the art educators to arrive.
[260] Sifen Wibell, Interview with SPOTing researcher, August 2, 2022.
[261] Marie Bergdahl, Röda Sten Konsthall SPOTing reflective diary entry, Spring 2022.
[262] Marie Bergdahl, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 24, 2023.

art educators and two different sets of already established ongoing youth groups, the Tuesday Group and Art as Meeting Place acting as Röda Sten Konsthall's main testbed activity
▪ Spring testbeds planned in consultation with young people mixing online and outdoor activities, new and past participants recruited through online invitation
▪ Decision made for art educators to communicate directly and more regularly with participants on social media, developing Röda Sten Konsthall's online presence and content
▪ New art educators joined Röda Sten Konsthall and started working on SPOTing and developing online exhibition tours
▪ Long term goal outlined to develop archive of art education methods including those used in Röda Sten Konsthall's SPOTing testbeds
▪ Different summer outdoor open drop in testbed activity formats developed and proposed, ending up with a focus on street art and graffiti based on demand, with an additional session added on Saturdays for participants aged 12 to 19

In 2021 Röda Sten Konsthall had approximately 631 participants in their testbed activities

2022

▪ Work on longer term development conducted by Röda Sten Konsthall's SPOTing team with whole organisation in the form of 'in-reach' sessions
▪ Collaboration between Röda Sten Konsthall's communication and art education teams on participant recruitment and outreach
▪ Content planning by art educators continued in consultation with participants of the Tuesday Group and Art as Meeting Place, Röda Sten Konsthall's two ongoing youth groups
▪ Open drop in street art and graffiti sessions on Saturdays in spring and summer
▪ Open drop in print making and painting sessions on Saturdays in autumn and winter

In 2022 Röda Sten Konsthall had approximately 668 participants in their testbed activities

TESTBED APPROACH

In relation to the content of their activities, Röda Sten Konsthall saw co-creation as already very much "part of our art educational approach." [263] Röda Sten Konsthall's exploration through SPOTing of what co-creation might include within their context, beyond participant consultation or demand, was linked to the gradual and "organic" [264] progression of their research approach.

This research approach, which was primarily focused on Röda Sten Konsthall's capacity to act, evaluate and adapt their practice flexibly and continuously, was a natural fit with SPOTing's iterative PAR based reflective methodology. Marie explained that this approach was particularly effective with their well established and slightly older ongoing youth group, Art as Meeting Place, where there was an appetite for developing more co-creation from "close-knit" [265] participants, seen in their involvement in planning their annual exhibition for example. However, as with other SPOTing partners, when it came to using some of SPOTing's mechanisms such as the reflective diaries, designed to support a holistic reflective practice and embed a value based way of working, outside the workshops as well as inside them, this felt like a slightly alien process. Marie, who was tasked with filling in Röda Sten Konsthall's reflective diaries, explained that "I really haven't found it useful, but I understand how it could work." [266] Despite this Marie noted that some progress had been made in developing more habitual reflective thinking and questioning across Röda Sten Konsthall's art education programmes.

"I think it's this awareness of how we work that I've learned from SPOTing, I'm aware of things more, when we're not on track and when we are on track. I think I've learned how to be aware of asking questions like how and why. It is this

[263] Mia Christersdotter Norman, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 10, 2021.
[264] Marie Bergdahl, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 10, 2021.
[265] Marie Bergdahl, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 24, 2023.
[266] Marie Bergdahl, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 10, 2021.

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used to working in that way, so to implement
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Although SPOTing's lack of a requirement for its partners to have specific or set goals, unless self determined, was a source of some stress for Röda Sten Konsthall in the beginning and contributed to their feeling somewhat uncomfortable with a reflective way of working, they quickly recognised the advantages of not having to meet fixed targets by testing out relatively small programme adaptations, relaxing more into action with uncertain outcomes with a readiness to learn from the results.

PUTTING VALUES INTO PRACTICE

Röda Sten Konsthall invested time in identifying their research values of openness and co-creation and reflected on the nuances of how their understanding of those values was affecting the development of their SPOTing testbeds.

"We are constantly talking about being open and welcoming for everyone so I think that openness really is a value and the thing we are all striving for. I think co-creation will be a sort of method or a way of helping us reach that openness." [268]

Being open themselves to where the limits of co-creation were within their organisation, beyond a relationship building and consultative approach of asking their participants what they were interested in and adapting projects around that, as demonstrated through their Art as Meeting Place group for example, led Röda Sten Konsthall to reflect more deeply on the overall values and purpose of their organisation's work.

"We have also had discussions on what is needed to facilitate this research question being successfully handled within the organisation. So the [illegible] different things that we have discussed but tried out in the testbeds, some that worked out or didn't, but we also worked with 'in reach' inside Röda Sten Konsthall on what are the core values behind how we want to work in this way. So we started in the art education team and then we realised that we need to do this for all of our colleagues. So we did these workshops on what our core values are, what we want to be as an institution and what are the ways ahead. All of these things are weaving into this research question." [269]

This need for 'in reach' alongside outreach was in part fed by SPOTing seminars and exchange with SPOTing partners, which dovetailed with new staff joining Röda Sten Konsthall and reflections on a lack of awareness of institutional knowledge, including the background and evolution of the art education programmes that had gone before. This observation revived the director's idea of compiling an archive of art education methods which although not specifically part of Röda Sten Konsthall's SPOTing research, was explained as being connected to "this way of thinking about things that is encouraged by SPOTing for us to be reflective in this way and not lose this tacit knowledge." [270]

"I think that some of art educators who had been reluctant also started to see the possibility of SPOTing in aiding in this way of thinking to develop our art education approaches in a way that the organisation needs." [271]

The 'in reach' process also extended to the art education team working more closely with Röda Sten Konsthall's communication team on the public information being released about programming. [272]

[267] Ibid.
[268] Mia Christersdotter Norman, Interview with SPOTing researcher, September 10, 2021.
[269] Sifen Wibell, Interview with SPOTing researcher, August 2, 2022.
[270] Ibid.
[271] Ibid.
[272] Staff involved in what most art organisations would call Public Relations (PR) or marketing, in Röda Sten Konsthall have the job title kommunikatörer, which in English translates to 'communicators.' This emphasised the idea that Röda Sten Konsthall's communication team were also trying to make more of a relational connection with visitors and participants, beyond just promoting the organisation and its exhibition programme.

Through some of this 'in reach' work, [273] which included using a peer learning exercise developed by SPOTing partners KUFA used in several SPOTing seminars, [274] Röda Sten Konsthall's SPOTing team came to realise that they didn't actually know but instead were guessing at what young people wanted, which led them to think about the possibility of developing a focus group made up of existing participants, also in part influenced by the SPOTing work of their critical friends Stanica and Young Office. Sifen also noted that the success of Röda Sten Konsthall's open workshops in a way had circumvented the urgency or need to establish this kind of planned co-creation on a more strategic level, explaining that part of the motivation for the focus on 'in reach' "was also about articulating where we are at in this process. In a way I think now we have a goal that is ahead of us which is to work out where Röda Sten Konsthall's definition of the kind of co-creation that we want lies." [275]

"I think that SPOTing has ended up being for us not that much about the actual testbed in a way but it is more this like sort of perspective shift or this way HØŠH iµ §Š i 2ò ÿ 2µ 2µùµ[276]ŠHÞhµöoIL

CHALLENGES

In common with some other SPOTing partners, Röda Sten Konsthall's rapid shift to a mostly online environment in the early part of 2021 due to Covid was undoubtedly a challenge, particularly in terms of their SPOTing testbeds, which required "new ways of working with planning, implementation and evaluation." [277] Röda Sten Konsthall also came to appreciate the additional resources needed to work effectively in a digital landscape, demonstrated by the extra meeting and planning time needed to devise, record and edit the content for their online exhibition tours for example.

Röda Sten Konsthall's staff turnover affected different aspects of the organisation's work. Although they identified challenges in terms of a slowdown in the progress of their testbeds in the beginning, they could also see the advantages of having new arrivals to their SPOTing research; offering an opportunity to reappraise some of Röda Sten Konsthall's approaches as well as the addition of fresh perspectives and energy.

"While our situation of having a turnover of staff is ®ÞÏø§PöH Ï § P2:µ iØµ ÞHM: Ð Þ ÐD Þ 2µöŠ the SPOTing project I think this has helped to sort of set a new standard for the work. We discovered and formulated this need to work a bit more with outreach and this is now the norm of the new educators. In fact, I don't think the old ones disagree with this approach either but you get used to working in a certain way. So I think it's both helped and delayed the process." [278]

Marie also explained some of the problems experienced with long term staff absences due to illness during the later stages of Röda Sten Konsthall's SPOTing project, noting how this had particularly affected their Tuesday Group through cancellations and a lack of consistency, resulting in varying levels of participant attendance and some difficulties maintaining and developing relationships between the art educators and participants. However Marie also reflected on some of the realities of working with young people attending as individuals not affiliated with school or other groups, recognising the different and competing demands on their time. This led to further recognition that for Röda Sten Konsthall's art educators trying to create and maintain a sense of cohesiveness and community, it was important to stay mindful of the need to keep working on group dynamics and relationships even in their well established and ongoing groups.

The openness and autonomy of SPOTing's lack of externally set or fixed outputs identified by Röda Sten Konsthall as a source of stress, particularly in the initial stages of their SPOTing research, combined with other challenges such as the learning curve of managing value driven reflective practice, the changes in staff and getting to grips with exactly what kind of co-creation is most effective and sustainable for an organisation like Röda Sten Konsthall.

[273] Sifen explained that after the second SPOTing seminar in Bratislava, October 2021, themed around critical friends processes which featured a talk by Chrissie Tiller, Röda Sten Konsthall used Tiller's text, Power Up, as the basis for some of their 'in reach' work. https://www.artworksalliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Power_Up_think_piece_Chrissie_Tiller.pdf.

[274] See section 3.5 of this report, Peer Learning Mechanisms: critical friends and seminars.

[275] Sifen Wibell, Interview with SPOTing researcher, August 2, 2022.

[276] Ibid.

"I understand that this is process based research, but I feel the lack of concrete goals can make HØÞ Ð: öÞòµ HØÞ: ÿ 2µ[279]®ÞÏø§PöHIL

Reflecting at the end of their SPOTing project, Röda Sten Konsthall felt that they could have been more proactive in their research development process by collaborating with their whole art education team from the very beginning. They also noted the practical difficulties in involving more of their art educators in different aspects of SPOTing peer learning such as international or even online seminars due to issues with lost revenue due to travel, lack of cover for their ongoing groups and all the other demands on their time. However despite these obstacles Marie suggested that overall Röda Sten Konsthall had improved their collaborative planning processes with art educators, for example using reflective ways of working to evaluate their programming and implement that learning into the organisation's future plans.

"I think if things have to be planned in a short time schedule somehow it's easy to forget about things we have done in the past, sometimes that learning gets a little bit lost. So I think it's good to have the past with you, to compare and help you plan for the future." [280]

KEY LEARNING

Reflecting on what Röda Sten Konsthall had learnt through their SPOTing research about their forms of contact with participants in their art education programmes, Marie noted that they had come to realise that a lot of their existing methods already worked well, such as their channels of communication outside the workshops, with their art educators using phone and email to help maintain contact and regular attendance for example. What SPOTing had also underlined for Röda Sten Konsthall was that inside the workshops "a lot of contact is needed" [281] to sustain connection and create strong working relationships with room to progress.

Röda Sten Konsthall also recognised the opportunity SPOTing had given them to examine the type of contact they wanted to build on, using their research values to help explore the potential of different areas of participatory co-creation. This was demonstrated by their art educators' focus on gauging interest and leaving space for their regular participants to be more involved in types of co-creation that went beyond designing and making art, seen most strongly through their Art as Meeting Place group and the work done on planning for exhibitions of their work, inside and outside their building.

"The participants have the possibility to come with their own ideas and to be part of the planning, because the art educators spend a lot of time listening to them and talk to them about what to do next. So I think that has changed, now there is more dialogue about what to do together and there is more space for the participants to ØŠhµ Þ ùPµ[282]ŠµIL

In part due to some of the differences between Röda Sten Konsthall's regular youth groups, especially notable in attendance which had been adversely affected by a lack of continuity in the art education team, Marie also reflected on how important an open and supportive atmosphere was to co-creative development. This was identified as a baseline that needed to be constantly maintained and built on by art educators which led to some additional questions about how to manage sustainable teams within Röda Sten Konsthall that would be able to withstand absences and occasional but inevitable staff turnover. Mia also reiterated that in hindsight, for Röda Sten Konsthall to have been able to get the most out of SPOTing's PAR based processes, the whole team of art educators could have been more involved at a much earlier stage, developing and integrating the research into their daily practice and reflecting on it together.

OUTCOMES AND INTENTIONS

Reflecting on some of Röda Sten Konsthall's

[279] Ibid.
[280] Marie Bergdahl, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 24, 2023.
[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid.

SPOTing ambitions and the influence of other SPOTing partners' projects such as Young Office, Marie noted that in a way the success of slowly and organically experimenting with different forms of participative co-creation both in their regular and drop in art education programming had made bigger changes, such as a youth steering group strategically advising and co-devising Röda Sten Konsthall's activity, seem less necessary. This also led to further reflections about the need and nature of change and who should drive it.

"I think in a way we are also stuck in something that works well for everybody. So it's not that we need to change because something is not working, it's that change would be more about supporting what the young people are open to doing themselves and that we don't exactly know yet." [283]

Marie explained how Röda Sten Konsthall's definition of co-creation with participants was centred around openness; through being open to what the young people were open to doing, as well as also trying to embody openness within the art education team and how the organisation approached the idea of change overall.

LX HØÞ ò ÞHM: Š ¦ÞH ®ÞÏø§PöH H §ØŠ Ðµ Š organisation, it's not fast and I'm happy for each change that goes to forward to more co-creation. I think we have internal co-creation in the sense of working together in our team with our art educators, me, Mia and our other colleagues and it works very well. We have a very open atmosphere so I think that also spreads out to the participants, through the art educators having that value of openness in the groups." [284]

Beyond their emerging definition of co-creation 'as being open to change' Röda Sten Konsthall's SPOTing outcomes were a recognition of and a commitment to relationship building with their participants, in order to grow and develop with them, which had they felt been improved in their drop in arts education programme formats and in their modes of online communication via their website information and their social media channels. Röda Sten Konsthall's plan to establish an archive of art education methods remained a goal which they hoped to work on through a schools collaboration developing approaches to arts education for young people with hearing disabilities. They were also keen to improve their long term planning to allow for more of these types of collaborations in the future, including the possibility of more participatory co-creation for their young people across organisations.

[283] Ibid.
[284] Ibid.

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5.9
SPOTing Case Studies:
TRUC SPHÉRIQUE (STANICA)

PARTNER INTRODUCTION

Truc Sphérique is a civic association founded by students in 1998 in Žilina, Slovakia, to support contemporary art and culture. They have two different venues: Stanica which is based in a functioning railway station and Nová Synagóga which operates from a historic monument, also the site of a former synagogue. Activities include concerts, theatre and dance performances, film screenings, festivals, discussions, symposiums, exhibitions, readings, workshops for children and adults and community projects. In addition to their regular events, Truc Sphérique offers an interdisciplinary arts education curriculum designed for children of preschool and school age as well as for adults or specialised groups. They host artists as part of international artistic residencies as well as young people from abroad through the European Solidarity Corps.

PARTNER STATISTICS

Overall Truc Sphérique employs 17 people in Stanica and Nová Synagóga, 13 of which are full time. On average the organisation hosts 3 international and between 3 and 4 local volunteers a year. Annually Truc Sphérique runs around 152 events for approximately 15,000 attendees.

STARTING POINTS

Initially Truc Sphérique's SPOTing project was based in their Nová Synagóga gallery space which specialises in contemporary art exhibitions and arts education programming. Nová Synagóga's research question was based around developing and testing ways to communicate and explore the ideas present in contemporary art with young adult participants. They identified communication, connection, inclusivity and openness as the values driving their research question and reflected on what they felt was one of the key purposes of their organisation's work overall; capturing and developing practice based learning.

"It is a long run relay. We carefully pass the baton from one lecturer to another and from one generation to the next" [285]

Nová Synagóga saw SPOTing as an opportunity to focus on connecting and working with young adults in their community who they felt were culturally underserved, as well as a chance to develop and challenge themselves professionally. Operating under Covid restrictions they experimented with small guided tours as well as changing their exhibition information and messaging through consultation with their youth volunteers. Although staff changes in April 2021 meant that Truc Sphérique's SPOTing project had to be relocated to Stanica, which in practical terms resulted in starting from scratch, some of Nová Synagóga's initial motivation and thinking, as well as a relationship they had developed with a young international volunteer, continued through Stanica's SPOTing work.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How can the core team at Stanica open up to the younger generation, allowing space for the independent creativity of young people? How can this be done with mutual trust and effective communication?

Stanica's revised SPOTing research topic came from discussions between a small group made up of Stanica's director, some core staff and youth volunteers. These initial discussions and early activities supporting volunteers to programme events specifically for young adults, which included informal consultation of the young people attending, shaped Stanica's thinking about how they could best help support and realise what young people identified was missing for them from cultural life in Žilina.

Stanica's early commitment to a youth volunteer led way of working was also informed by a gradual acknowledgement that there was a gap in youth provision and participation within their organisation. [286] This was connected to what was described by Stanica staff, in the context of being a now established

[285] Hana Hudcovičová, Presentation, TEH SPOTing Seminar Programme, Online, February 9, 2021.
[286] Karolína explained that in the beginning "Stanica's lack of involvement with young people was not explicitly named but it kind of came up through the SPOTing discussions and how volunteers were working in the organisation." Karolína Bašteková, Interview with SPOTing researcher, May 31, 2022.

(and aging) cultural organisation with inevitable commercial and sustainability concerns, as a desire to improve intergenerational dialogue in their city. Also noted by the core staff closely involved through this initial phase was not just the young people's energy and creativity but the differences in their thinking and ideas, something that Stanica as an organisation which was originally started by young people felt they had lost over time.

"The main thing is to get young people involved in what's happening in Stanica, give them support to learn and to actually make something or to work on it. So not just teach them but really get them involved in practical things and learn by doing." [287]

Stanica's SPOTing testbed eventually developed into Young Office: a youth led, self organising group running cultural events with a youth focus supported and assisted by Stanica. [288]

TESTBED ACTIVITY

2021

▪ Young Office core focus group made up of 2 international young volunteers, 4 local young people from high school, university and an alternative cultural centre Squat Hajovna, [289] as well as one Stanica staff member
▪ Young Office presentation and questionnaire designed for local high schools canvassing young people's interests and aspirations for cultural life in Žilina
▪ Inaugural Young Office Mad Hatter's Tea Party event ran with a wider Young Office group assisting preparation. Feedback on ideas for future events collected from approximately 40 participants, Young Office presence established through online and offline promotion
▪ Young Office questionnaire delivered to Stanica's core team to better understand and develop working relationship: 'building trust' emerges as key finding
▪ Speed Dating event held with Young Office and Stanica to get to know each other better
▪ Young Office member Kristína Husáková joins Stanica staff as the Young Office liaison and coordinator
▪ Young Office ran Garden Takeover events to create a designated youth space with benches and a temporary stage as a way to 'occupy' and personalise an area of Stanica for youth activity. Small garden concerts featuring young Žilina based musicians held as well as open mic and jam sessions
▪ Young Office led ò Þ ö Þ Š ª µ g X h µ H µ ® C J 2 µ µ ² § 2 µ the City and Staging Utopian Space workshops with a local school and university to generate ideas and input on future engagement
▪ Young Office collaboration with drum and bass DJ collective Pivanica Rave on a 6 week introduction to DJing course
▪ Naked Gallery exhibition in Nová Synagóga co-created and installed by Young Office and exhibiting youth participants
▪ Young Office staged Kinesis: 1 day Festival of Youth Culture featuring 20 young artists presenting and performing music, poetry, art and photography as well as running workshops and discussions designed to highlight youth culture in Žilina, informed by the consultations done at prior Young Office events
▪ Team building session between Young Office and Stanica discussing shared values and ways to build trust and strengthen relationships
▪ Live drawing event filmed by regional TV as part of a feature on Young Office
▪ Video about Young Office made by a volunteer centre in Žilina
▪ Online meetings about future plans between Young Office and IUVENTA, the Slovak Youth Institute
▪ Young Office organised clothes collection for charity
▪ Young Office invited to Stanica's Christmas party

In 2021 Young Office had 9 members and approximately 300 participants came to their events

[287] Karolína Bašteková, Interview with SPOTing researcher, July 5, 2021.
[288] Young Office was partly inspired by a museum based project in Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, where Stanica's young international volunteers Luna Fontes Maldonado and Rubi Jansen came from. The Maastricht project is based on "the understanding that to have a programme that attracts young people, the programmers must be young people themselves." Young Office SPOTing reflective diary entry, May, 2021
[289] Squat Hajovna is a DIY cultural space operating out of an abandoned gamekeeper's lodge on the edge of the forest in Žilina.

2022

- Young Office co-wrote a successful funding application for an international Erasmus exchange with Spanish youth organisation La Periférica
- Young Office won a local prize for volunteering
- Young Office linocut workshops organised at Stanica's request as part of Nová Synagóga's programme
- Inspired by the SPOTing Seminar at Brunnenpassage in Vienna on diversity, Young Office held events inviting Ukrainian young people directly in their own language
- English meetups a series of themed English language discussion events run by Young Office in a local cafe
- Young Office members attended TEH meeting in Prague
- Young Office held a community picnic event in Stanica's garden
- Cartographies for Change international Erasmus exchange project started with Spanish youth partners La Periférica
- Nová Synagóga residency artist facilitated a sound mapping workshop for Young Office members
- Young Office members attended a project management workshop run by IUVENTA, the Slovak Youth Institute and also participated in a conference about youth initiatives in the region
- Young Office ran Drawing in the Park and Photowalk drawing and photography workshops
- Peer training workshop on stereotypes and hate speech organised by new Young Office members
- Košice University art students and professor 1 week artistic residency at Nová Synagóga hosted by Young Office followed by exhibition of their work
- Young Office ran their second Kinesis: 1 day Festival of Youth Culture with increased events and attendance
- Young Office and Stanica started running TvorbYOmladiny, a joint music event held every 2 to 3 months featuring up-and-coming young Slovak bands

In 2022 æ P Ð „Ï ø § µ had 15 members and approximately 600 participants came to their events

TESTBED APPROACH

When thinking through the ways they could develop what effectively was their second testbed project, Stanica wanted to make sure that SPOTing's transformative potential was not limited only to those directly involved, which had previously happened due to Nová Synagóga's much smaller staff numbers. Instead they wanted something that could benefit their organisation as a whole across both venues. Although initially challenging Stanica saw this SPOTing 'reboot' as an opportunity to really embrace the freedom of setting and answering their own research question.

"So that was really something that motivated us even more, that we can really decide by ourselves what we are going to work on and think through what do we actually need to work on and we're given support in that." [290]

Young Office therefore started as an experimental format within Stanica for a small group of international and local young people to test and refine different ways to devise and run youth events. Karolína Bas, the Stanica staff member who assumed responsibility for overseeing the SPOTing programme, described how her role as part of the Young Office core focus group incrementally came to be one of practical or technical support, advice and consultancy, seeing Young Office operating as an "independent cell" [291] within Stanica. Karolína explained that in the beginning the process of event planning and management support offered to Young Office was similar to how Stanica worked with visiting dramaturges or theatre directors who booked their venue.

"The event is put in a calendar, so we all know it's happening, and then the dramaturge comes to talk to the whole team about it and the whole team adds what they think is necessary and we all discuss it." [292]

Although Young Office was initially conceived of

[290] Karolína Bašteková, Interview with SPOTing researcher, July 5, 2021.
[291] Ibid.
[292] Karolína Bašteková, Interview with SPOTing researcher, May 31, 2022.

as a way to develop Stanica's cultural provision for young adults, relatively quickly within the 3 year life of SPOTing the idea of Young Office as an experimental testbed within Stanica shifted to more of a permanent partnership between the two. This was due in part to the dedication and drive of Young Office members and the accommodation and support from Stanica, seen as a mutually beneficial long term relationship, as well as a unique opportunity for both parties. The development of their working relationship was also assisted by the careful attention paid to the realisation of their research values.

PUTTING VALUES INTO PRACTICE

One of the main values embedded within this work was communication, identified by both Stanica and Young Office as integral to the success of their ongoing relationship. Stanica and Young Office came to see communication as more than just a process of dialogue or exchange but as a willingness to be open to different ways of doing things, with the intent to build trust and a genuine sense of reciprocity, with learning and accommodation going both ways.

"Mixing different people with different backgrounds and points of view sometimes makes communication harder, but it actually moves us forward and we learn what we were doing wrong before. Why we don't get what they're saying, why we don't understand each other, is maybe because I'm expressing myself the wrong way, so we need to be more careful and be conscious about how and what we communicate." [293]

The need to strengthen communication through planned activities such as icebreaking and team building events was initiated by Young Office, initially driven by the international volunteers' awareness of potential problems emerging through their more regular involvement with Stanica. For example the volunteers observed that certain methods and patterns of communication were outside Stanica's established ways of working. This was evident in the early stages of the project in the seemingly rapid and random requests made via text to some of Stanica's wider team from Young Office members they had not yet met.

Kristína Husakova, a Young Office member currently employed part time as part of Stanica's staff team, explained that part of Young Office's motivation to improve communication also came from a sense of wanting to show their appreciation for the time, space and resources Stanica provided, and to demonstrate how much they were invested in the opportunities Young Office represented for them.

"I think that every meeting and event that we had with Stanica's team was really important. It improved over time from meeting to meeting, so we've made big progress from the point where we started to now. For example, we are at the point HØŠH æ P Ð „Ïø§µ Þ: Ð Þ Ð H ØŠhµ P2 i :µH keys which I think is a really important milestone, and a good example of trust. So I think that it was really important that we got to know each other better and it's still improving, it's still in progress." [294]

As SPOTing progressed Young Office and Stanica both articulated the importance of balancing a sense of independence with support. Kristína explained that Young Office were given an opportunity to have their own physical space separate from Stanica's building but preferred to keep Stanica as their base in order to safeguard their connection. She expressed Young Office's view of Stanica acting like a roof, "something that we can rely on, we have their support and we appreciate it and that's very important to us, but at the same time we feel it's important for us to be independent in our activities." [295]

Inclusion was another named SPOTing value central to how Young Office developed over time both as a concept and a practice, based on being open to any young person who wanted to propose and realise an idea that other members were enthusiastic about and wanted to collaborate on. This form of inclusion is seen in the horizontal nature of decision making within Young Office, described as an organic leaderless

[293] Karolína Bašteková, Interview with SPOTing researcher, July 5, 2021.
[294] Kristína Husáková, Interview with SPOTing researcher, May 31, 2022.
[295] Ibid.

process, with event management duties divided up between working groups and all roles requested or accepted voluntarily. Although during Young Office's evolution members have discussed the idea of having individuals with designated responsibilities, they have settled on a pattern where the person who proposes the idea generally takes the lead, with supporting tasks assumed by other members. Inclusion has also been built into the various creative forms of consultation and informal feedback central to Young Office's activities from the start.

CHALLENGES

Issues about the sustainability of Young Office arose early on as although there was a lot of enthusiasm and commitment in the core team generated through the early days of youth consultation and in the subsequent planning, promotion and staging of events, the most experienced Young Office members who were generally initiating the activity were the international volunteers Luna and Rubi, who would be leaving at the end of 2021. This was something that was addressed and carefully reflected on by the international volunteers themselves and others in Young Office and Stanica, as well as discussed at the SPOTing seminar held in Bratislava in 2021. Plans were therefore made to give plenty of practical learning opportunities to the growing Young Office membership so they would not be too reliant on the international volunteers and therefore not adversely affected by their departure.

This awareness fed into Young Office's early strategy to use their events as a way to canvass youth opinion and build awareness (and membership) of Young Office as a potential activity platform or source of advice, support and connection, seeing their 1 day youth culture festival Kinesis as the culmination of this phase of their action. As a result of such a high volume of concentrated activity organised around the summer and autumn period of 2021, as well as the recognition and appreciation they were starting to gain in the region, local Young Office members built confidence in their abilities as an independent group.

Additionally Kristína explained that by planning future projects and outlining goals Young Office was able to sustain some of their early momentum, also buoyed up by interest from other SPOTing partners and from the wider TEH network.

"For me personally during the SPOTing meetings the fact that other culture centres showed a lot of interest in this idea and would like to do something similar and everyone is a fan of what we are doing here, that also kind of gave us energy to continue." [296]

Awareness of the importance of communication between Stanica and Young Office was noted as an ongoing concern. In the beginning setting aside time with Stanica to clarify common ground and explore ways to grow and learn together through various team building events as Young Office developed, was a challenge in terms of time pressures and even a lack of interest from some of Stanica's wider team. This resulted in shared reflections on the tendency for established organisations to often operate in a 'bubble'; sharing a more uniform outlook and fixed ideas about the 'correct' way of working. However respect and admiration from Stanica staff did grow for Young Office, including from those who had previously expressed doubts. Stanica recognised Young Office's achievements and were impressed in particular by their openness to all and their interest in facilitating alternative forms of culture and community activity.

Læ P Ð „Ïø§µ ØŠ: i ¦µ§ ÿµ Š /Š2H Ï ²HŠ Þ§ and everybody understands it. There have been many successful projects that have brought new people to Stanica, so the team see it works and HØŠH æ P Ð „Ïø§µ Þ: ÿ 2µ :òÞöö µ® ŠH 2ÐŠ things now." [297]

Karolína noted that Young Office as an open collective by its nature involved young people coming and going or being more or less active, which sometimes meant a lack of consistency in event organisation and management. She also explained that as Young

[296] Ibid.
[297] Karolína Bašteková, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 20, 2023.

Office's membership grew over time and was seen as a more permanent part of Stanica, this meant she was no longer the main point of contact within Stanica for Young Office members, which left more room for gaps in communication or misunderstandings. Therefore in order to try to build up new working relationships and strengthen existing ones, as well as establishing more consistency overall, it was agreed that there would always be an event manager from both Stanica and Young Office at all Young Office's programmed activities in Stanica.

The expansion in membership also created some issues for Young Office's own internal methods of communication and organisation, which led to their realisation that it is not possible or necessary for every member to be at every meeting. Instead Young Office have continued to work in smaller groups with certain members building up different knowledge and expertise in organising reoccurring events for example, information which is then informally passed on mostly through conversations with less experienced, familiar, or newer members as needed. [298] As Young Office developed they also identified tensions between their desire to stay open, flexible, spontaneous and "maybe a bit naive in a good way" [299] and scheduling projects and making plans in order to maintain momentum and help with the group's overall sustainability. Awareness of the need not to programme too much or too far ahead to leave room especially for newer, younger, or less experienced or well represented Young Office members to propose events and help shape activity was expressed, alongside the recognition that this required a delicate balance between plans and 'free space.'

Another challenge for Young Office as its membership grew was the increase in age range for example between members in school and university, resulting in conflicting schedules as well as times where "it felt like Young Office was asleep." [300] Acknowledging that Young Office essentially exists as a leisure activity that has to compete with all the other demands young people have in their lives has required an acceptance of dormant and active periods. Acting on Stanica's advice Young Office decided to run their one day Kinesis festival again in 2022, reporting increased audience numbers and finding that the event organisation overall ran more smoothly than the previous year. However Young Office also found that in 2022 simultaneously running big and small events partly due to scheduling issues beyond their control in their busiest summer period, left them overstretched and at times things got a bit "chaotic." [301] Young Office reflected that it is for better for them to concentrate on a few smaller events or one big one rather trying to do everything at once.

KEY LEARNING

Both Karolína and Kristína talked about how their thinking had shifted over the SPOTing period and how their understanding of the relationship between Stanica and Young Office had subtly changed.

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and through developing and improving ways of communicating with them and relating to them, Stanica realised how different young people's thinking can be from ours, so seeing their point of view, their thoughts and ideas, that was also important for us to learn as well. SPOTing wasn't just about coming up with æ P Ð „Ïø§µ Š: Š µi Ï 2ÿŠH H µ ÐŠÐµ o P Ð audiences, only thinking about how that could really be useful for Stanica, but actually realising we didn't even know exactly what we were missing until we started working with Young „Ïø§µD iµ ïP:H Ïµ[302]öH ÞHIL

[298] Kristína explained that Young Office has one open online group chat that helps keeps members connected and aware of what's going on as well as different group chats for specific events. Young Office have their own email address and a shared online drive with all their planning documents and meeting notes that they refer back to. "We have had some debate about whether or not there should be some kind of step by step manual for Young Office events that have become annual like Kinesis. I think this is maybe missing a bit, but at the same time I'm not sure what way we should do it. We are always trying to reflect after each event what went well and what went wrong and what we want to do better." Kristína Husáková, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 20, 2023.

[299] Young Office, Stanica SPOTing reflective diary entry, June, 2021.

[300] Kristína Husáková, Interview with SPOTing researcher, May 31, 2022.

[301] Young Office, Stanica SPOTing reflective diary entry, Autumn, 2022.

[302] Karolína Bašteková, Interview with SPOTing researcher, May 31, 2022.

Although Karolína noted that the experience had confirmed Stanica's need for change, at the end of the SPOTing programme she explained that learning from a younger generation was only one aspect of what she felt had been gained from the relationship overall.

"As this project became more established and we started to routinely include more people in our process of generating and producing our programming, now somehow I don't look at æ P Ð „Ïø§µ Š: ïP:H o P Ð /µ /öµ Ï2 ÿ Š ®ÞÏÏµ2µ H generation, but that it is really important to have new people with new ideas involved in what we do at Stanica." [303]

Kristína shared her perspective on outsiders referring to Young Office as an example of a kind of 'radical' co-creation, explaining that it felt contrary to what she identified as its potentially simple replicability; experimenting with what was really attractive and interesting for young people to get involved with and then giving them some separate or autonomous space, on or offline, to organise and manage themselves. Karolína also reflected on the approach to their research value of 'supported independence' noting that although in the beginning Stanica didn't know how, or if it was really going work, she identified that a key factor in its success was not just the openness offered but also making sure that the young people had the collective power and support of their peers.

"The group's independence and autonomy was essential because that gives them power, without that it would be a completely different situation. If there are just few individuals it's very different than if there is a stronger, bigger group with more abilities, more perspectives." [304]

Kristína explained that in the beginning this power and trust represented by the freedom Young Office had in being able to realise what they wanted to do with relatively few limits, resulted in a desire among members to 'prove themselves' to Stanica as well as making sure that they took advantage of the rare opportunity for young people to gain valuable experience in local and international arts and culture. However she noted that over time as Young Office's position developed beyond being an experimental testbed project to a more permanent and symbiotic relationship, it also became more evident to Young Office what they could offer Stanica.

"I see it like an exchange, we are getting something from Stanica and trying to give them something as well by bringing in more young people and doing successful events." [305]

Reflecting on the learning that Young Office represented overall for its members, Kristína described that they had previously been "behind the curtain" [306] as consumers of cultural events and programmes but that now "we know what it takes to create them. We know what it costs to run a place like Stanica when it comes to resources, but also the work and energy that go into it." [307]

OUTCOMES AND INTENTIONS

Læ P Ð „Ïø§µM: ÿŠÞ /P2/ :µ Þ: H ¦µ Š /öŠHÏ for young people to self-organise and co-create events in the city." [308]

There was agreement that the reason for Young Office's existence had remained the same from the beginning and had now gone past the point of being a testbed to being an established and ongoing core part of Stanica's programme, acting as a practical action research 'answer' to Stanica's SPOTing research question.

Læ P Ð „Ïø§µM: /2µ:µ §µ Š: Š /Š2H Ï ²HŠ Þ§ now the answer, because other young people see them creating events and being active on

[303] Karolína Bašteková, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 20, 2023.
[304] Ibid.
[305] Kristína Husáková, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 20, 2023.
[306] Ibid.
[307] Ibid.
[308] Young Office, Stanica SPOTing reflective diary entry, November, 2021.

social media and that they have the power and the possibilities to do that, so they don't contact Stanica, if they have concrete ideas they contact æ P Đ „Ï ø § µ[309] L

Through their continued connection with international volunteers Luna and Rubi, Young Office successfully applied for Erasmus funding to do an international peer exchange project with a Spanish youth organisation which represented not just a learning curve in grant writing, project management and budgeting but also meant a significant step up in terms of the workload and challenges involved. Young Office used what they had learned about the importance of communication to connect with and work out their planned activity with their Spanish partners, receiving support from Stanica in reading over their application and signposting support for their future proposals. [310] Although these kinds of long term plans can prove difficult for Young Office due to the changing nature of their membership and despite already experiencing some scheduling issues, they are keen to make connections and learn from other young people and contexts so that other Young Office members can benefit from new experiences and shared knowledge on an international level. They remain committed to learning by doing.

[309] Karolína Bašteková, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 20, 2023.
[310] Since this first grant writing experience one Young Office member has attended a grant writing and project management course recommended by Stanica.

ITALIANO

6.
SPOTing Key Learning

6.1 STEEP LEARNING CURVE

As noted elsewhere in this report, in relation to what had gone before in the Arts Education Hub, overall SPOTing represented a challenge for partners on several fronts, further exacerbated by the extra restrictions experienced through Covid. Working with a research methodology based on deceptively simple PAR based principles of action and reflection focused through self defined research questions and research values, for most partners brought with it new terms, thinking and approaches. Grasping the PAR based principles of the methodology and successfully applying them took some time and required building levels of confidence as well as understanding; when all action or inaction is self defined and managed, much of the learning lies in the examination of value based decision making, achieved through questioning the rationale and explanations offered. Identifying the why and its relationship to the how was a process of learning in itself, as was putting concrete examples of this learning into practice.

Without specific project examples of how this pared down version of PAR could look in similar arts education participative contexts, at the start it was difficult for the majority of the partners to visualise what would be 'enough' in terms of their intended testbeds, with some setting out overly ambitious plans which they had to scale back, or not leaving themselves enough room to adapt, or for their stakeholders' or participants' input. However this was also seen as an inevitable part of the learning through doing approach, therefore partners were encouraged to reflect on and understand their 'mistakes' and take appropriate steps to adjust when needed, folding that knowledge back into their testbeds.

Many partners reported feeling overwhelmed at the beginning, trying to make sense of the methodological framework and lack of tangible outcomes beyond learning, exacerbated for some by the idea of what constituted a 'value' and how well this translated across languages and cultures. Typically many partners started by applying the value base set out in their organisations' mission statements and gradually refined and identified the specific values that related to their research questions, which over time they were able to use to guide, reflect on and adapt their action.

6.2 ADAPTING TO OPENNESS

Despite wrestling with the challenges of having a research focus where the partners' optional creative outputs were simply by-products of their learning, SPOTing's open parameters were embraced by all the partners over time. PPCM noted the advantage of SPOTing's openness in allowing them to include and compare a wide range of testbed activity, which gave them an opportunity to slow down and reflect, not only on the value base that united their transdisciplinary work, but also what was needed to support it. For Oltre, SPOTing represented the chance to work longitudinally without having to devote so much time to securing resources, outlining the difficulties that many organisations often face in matching their activity to funding programmes' constraints, having to be doubly creative to achieve some continuity for themselves, their volunteers and participants by making things fit on paper. With the openness to formulate their own research questions, values and testbed activity, the partners assumed responsibility for how much or how little they learned and developed, making the case for the quality of their engagement rather than the quantity. Undoubtedly SPOTing affected all the partners' perspectives, knowledge and ambitions for their organisations, often in wide ranging and holistic ways which went beyond their testbeds.

Additionally two values important in defining the parameters of SPOTing's open participatory research approach were identified by partners as transparency and negotiation. This was regardless of whether or not their participants or stakeholders had been a part of formulating partners' research questions; most had not but some participants did have co-research roles in different aspects of partners' research. Transparency was clearly illustrated by A4's approach to their testbed workgroups with the realisation that people tend to participate on their own terms, so for cultural centres to really be able to learn from PAR based research the idea of 'leading' people towards certain outcomes was understood

as counterproductive to gaining equitable mutual knowledge and insight. A4 also saw SPOTing's openness, which took a period of adjustment to be able to adapt to, as provoking a change in their mindset which also involved an openness on their part; both in the transparent discussions and negotiations with their participants and in their own willingness to experiment, take risks and make mistakes, confident that they would be able to learn from them.

6.3 WORKING REFLECTIVELY

Although all the partners came to embrace a collaborative value based process of working reflectively through SPOTing, by examining and questioning the whys and hows of their testbed planning and activity, few consistently and habitually used their reflective diaries as they were intended; to support and strengthen reflective practice. One clear exception to this was Stanica's testbed project Young Office, who used their reflective diaries as an anchor point serving as a central record of activity and thinking for both Stanica and Young Office to refer back to; reflecting on what they had done and learnt, highlighting what they felt they needed to improve and develop as well as offering an important space for personal observations. This reflective approach underpinned Young Office as an ongoing learning process for its members, supporting their collective desire to build and share their knowledge.

Despite the majority of partners agreeing that SPOTing's reflective diaries were a useful exercise to undertake, essentially they represented another task among many which did not become part of most partners' regular working practices. This was understandable given the level of additional ongoing reporting SPOTing required from each partner which included regular financial and technical reports, as well as online steering group meetings that happened at different points over the duration of the 3 year programme. Partners also noted they initially found the process of writing the diaries somewhat abstract and not as effective as talking one on one with the researcher in terms of the depth of their reflections.

However the reflective process of questioning encouraged by the reflective diaries was something that each partner made their own, most commonly through regular internal discussions about their testbed learning and development, a method which many also used with their participants and other stakeholders. In general most partners recognised the reflective space that SPOTing offered as a rare and valuable opportunity to stop and think, instead of rushing to keep up with the demands of their often frenetic workloads. Many also felt that they had gained more insight and a means to focus not only on their testbed methods but also on the internal structures and processes of their organisations through applying a value base to their thinking. For example Beat Carnival reported how the practice of using a value base to work reflectively had helped clarify some of their long term strategic goals, focusing their ideas about how to further support their young people's creative and social development. A number of partners also embarked on various types of internal exchanges, workshops and reviews with colleagues and stakeholders beyond their immediate SPOTing teams, with some inspired by other partners' work as well as their experiences in SPOTing seminars.

Alongside having the space to experiment and explore within their testbeds, a number of partners also underlined the importance of reflective honesty in claiming the space to fail and being able to learn from failure. Public honesty about failure was noted as generally uncommon across arts and cultural sectors, but several partners saw it as an essential part of trying new approaches and being able to understand more about when, how and why they didn't work. Some partners also connected this to being brave enough to take risks and embrace change in order to develop and push themselves out of their comfort zone. Others noted that they saw value based reflective thinking as a way to create the space to recentre themselves when they felt projects were going off course or losing momentum.

6.4 PEER LEARNING

Peer learning, professional development and knowledge exchange were an important component

of SPOTing which the methodology and programme design sought to support and facilitate through mechanisms such as the critical friend pairings and the partner hosted seminars.

In the case of critical friends, this had limited overall success as a peer learning mechanism. The main role of a critical friend is to be a sounding board and offer an outside perspective, although when used in PAR contexts typically a critical friend is external to the process, SPOTing instead paired up partners to act as each other's critical friend in order to try to further knowledge exchange as well as provide mutual support and an outside view. Within SPOTing critical friends were also envisioned as an extra measure to add robustness and criticality to the partners' research so the initial structure was designed to reflect that, however this did not work well for most partners for a number of reasons which also relate to issues with embedding peer learning across different international contexts.

One issue which all the partners identified was the amount of effort it took to understand enough about each others' organisations and working environments to be able to offer considered critique or advice, further exacerbated when partners had staff changes or major shifts in their testbed activity. The wide range of organisations taking part in SPOTing, from circus to contemporary art, also made it difficult to establish a common understanding, in addition to the contrasts between how cultural centres across Europe functioned, for example through vastly different levels of funding and state support. This challenge to understanding was underlined through partners' different interpretations of terminology such as 'grass roots' for instance which also extended into their divergent testbed approaches. A4 also made the observation that because of these kinds of differences, in comparison with other international exchanges they were involved in with a smaller number of more similar partner organisations, overall SPOTing critical friends' mutual understanding tended to stay on a more superficial level. These gaps in understanding were also affected by how much more online the project had to be due to Covid, as well as the removal of hosted study visits between partners through which individuals would have been able to experience different contexts and ways of working in person.

Due to these difficulties the researcher, project manager and a SPOTing critical friend pair who felt they had benefited from their critical friend sessions, worked on the content of the second SPOTing seminar themed around constructive criticality and peer learning. Within the seminar we discussed the need to take responsibility for your own learning implicit in the concept of peer learning, as well as the kinds of structures and skills required to support peer ownership within a programme such as SPOTing. As a result of these discussions and the individual feedback gathered, for the rest of SPOTing's duration the critical friend format was revamped in an attempt to make it more flexible and partner driven however essentially this did not have a noticeable effect, as for most partners, critical friends exchanges were not a useful part of their testbed development.

In contrast overall SPOTing's seminars, although representing a considerable amount of work for the hosts, did support peer learning in terms of some of the collaborative methods developed and used within them to problem solve and elicit feedback such as the Peer Consulting and Obstacle Tree exercises. As the seminars evolved, the hosting partners' research questions more explicitly informed their seminar themes and content. This depth of focus also had a number of influential effects on others' testbeds and thinking, seen in partners' reflections on different aspects of their research, particularly evident through Brunnenpassage's 2022 seminar on diversity in artistic processes, which led some partners such as Stanica's Young Office to take active steps to try to include a greater diversity of young people in their membership and testbed activity.

However some partners missed a way of updating each other on their testbed activity in a more traditional individual 'PowerPoint style' presentation, feeling this contributed to some difficulties with understanding and 'keeping up' with each other's work. Instead of relying on partner presentations the researcher, project manager and the different hosting partners favoured more informal conversational

exchange formats to try to avoid the 'information overload' commonly experienced in such settings as well as attempting to more effectively manage and use the limited time available within 'closed' SPOTing partner only sessions.

6.5 OVERALL FAILURES AND SUCCESSES: WHAT WORKED AND WHAT DIDN'T

The partners' lack of regular engagement with their reflective diaries, which meant a certain amount of cajoling to fill them was needed at key pre researcher-partner interview points, presented the researcher with some problems in terms of access to partners' ongoing learning, thinking and decision making, to be able to fully understand and interrogate this further with them in the interviews. Therefore when a lot of reflective data was missing or hastily filled in, this put more emphasis on the yearly research interviews as the primary means of tracking changes and jointly reflecting on partners' practical application of research values and the effects this was having on their learning. This influenced the decision to base the research interviews around early case study drafts from year two onwards, in order to more thoroughly clarify and check understanding and identify key learning collaboratively. Although undeniably this required more of their time and attention, partners reported that the co-writing process was useful in helping them reflect overall by marking and understanding the changes in their thinking, how their approaches had developed and what they had come to realise. Working reflectively and having supported space to do so, is something that all the partners have recognised as important to their future development. In their own way every partner made SPOTing's methodology work for them despite the early challenges it posed, with all the partners using SPOTing's PAR adapted principles to reflect on and direct their action.

Similarly while all the partners recognised the utility of critical friends as a concept, the format devised within SPOTing did not work well for most. In the beginning there was perhaps too much focus on formal criticality and research robustness, likewise the changes made most likely went too far in the opposite direction, with a lack of mandatory meetings meaning most opted out from an additional obligation that didn't seem worth the effort. In hindsight having an externally sourced critical friend to act as a mentor with experience of PAR or other relevant aspects of arts education or participation may have been a lot more useful. Undoubtedly the reduced opportunities to develop critical friend relationships more naturally in person, especially at the beginning of SPOTing due to Covid, also contributed to their lack of overall efficacy.

The peer learning facilitated by SPOTing's seminars although more effective overall than the partners' critical friends experiences was perhaps somewhat uneven in terms of the key role assumed by the hosts in devising, designing and managing these important points of knowledge exchange despite the considerable work load involved. For example PPCM reported that organising the final seminar gave them new opportunities to connect and reflect across their whole organisation, taking up the mantle of SPOTing's previous seminars to communicate their testbed learning and themes. Despite the group exercises within the seminars where partners were invited to share a specific problem or issue, with the rest assigned support roles of critique, advice or observation, not all partners could, needed or wanted to participate as the receiver of this advice, in part due to time limitations. This specific focus for those who wanted to claim it, three out of the eight partners in total, perhaps also contributed to some partners feeling they did not have a very detailed overview of all the partners' testbed activity and learning.

In contrast many partners emphasised the role of the researcher in assisting their understanding, explaining that they found the yearly interviews were an important space that facilitated deeper reflections and self knowledge. In part this worked in the same way as the critical friends' exchanges that were effective for a small number of partners, through partners having to explain themselves to others; carefully thinking through their decision making and indentifying any inconsistencies in their rationale or actions. For example A4 explained that they felt they got a lot from having this reflective space facilitated by the researcher, encouraging them to go further in

their thinking than they were accustomed to. Within PAR this active facilitated approach to reflective thinking, holding space for supported learning, is an important component that is less common in other fields of social science that are more reliant on observation and summative analysis. Beyond the research design, programme structure and responsibility for writing up, the SPOTing researcher saw herself in a co-research role as a 'research facilitator' providing support through offering advice and signposting when needed as well as helping partners identify, question, reflect on and articulate their learning.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS: TIME, SPACE AND RESOURCES

Inevitably when devising a long term participatory research programme such as SPOTing, the extent of the inputs necessary to make it effective are not always fully knowable. SPOTing's PAR adapted methodology of reflective working was something universally identified by partners as valuable and desirable and they named three key factors needed to support it: time, space and resources.

All the partners identified the ongoing time commitment that reflective working required. This was noted across many levels which included; the planning and review discussions carried out by all the partners throughout their SPOTing projects, the process of building and developing relationships with participants and other stakeholders, working with other colleagues and board members in clarifying organisational values, purpose and wider goals at different key points, as well as disseminating testbed reflections and learning internally and externally. In some small way having this time at least nominally accounted for, in that thinking and planning time could be included within each partners' testbed activity as desired, was useful in acknowledging its' central role. This had a noticeable effect on some partners' desires to try to proactively name and set aside more reflective time. For example this was seen in Beat Carnival's thinking about specifically adding reflective time as a budget line when applying for youth development grants and in Brunnenpassage's implementations of more internal collaborative reflective time for all their staff.

However during the course of SPOTing other funding mandated aspects of the programme cut into this reflective time, overall the financial and technical reporting was onerous and not particularly commensurate with the resources of most partners, creating an excessive amount of administration. In addition the time permitted in the overall budget for the researcher did not accurately reflect the overall input required. For funders wishing to support professional development programmes particularly for independent, small and or volunteer led cultural organisations, which often employ artists and arts educators on a freelance basis, more attention needs to be paid to developing more suitable and sustainable forms of interim reporting and project management.

The relationship between time and space is a tricky one to unravel given that in many ways they are largely metaphysical concepts; where does time stop and space begin? Different partners' research questions examined the idea of space in different ways both conceptually and physically, underlining its importance in terms of ownership, autonomy, inclusivity and accessibility, all closely related to supporting and (re)claiming collective power enhanced through civic participation and relationality.

SPOTing's focus on reflective working essentially gave partners the space to examine themselves and their roles as cultural centres as well as their longer term goals, with many emphasising the rarity of having designated space to stop and think. Incorporating reflective thinking guided by a value base allowed this space to be relatively free and autonomous, by giving partners the responsibility for and control over their own practical forms of learning. This claiming of autonomous space by equally embracing both its responsibilities and its possibilities, was something also identified by several partners as an important message that they wanted to pass on to their young participants. All the partners named this space, although challenging to adjust to when more accustomed to an output led way of working, as vital to the depth of their learning.

In SPOTing's case more space did not lead to less accountability, as testbed failures and successes were reflected on in equal measure, with both informing partners' knowledge and understanding.

It should also be noted that while the majority of partners had the additional task of explaining their thinking in a foreign language, which added an extra level of difficultly, those whose first language was English also had very similar struggles with interpreting and using SPOTing's research methodology in a way that made sense and worked for them. This suggests the inevitably of most cultural centres having a steep learning curve when a research methodology is used to promote practical learning and professional development in an open and self determined way, underlining the need to have a more concentrated approach to initial support and monitoring which would obviously require more resources. While it is very difficult to navigate a path suitable for everyone, all the partners reiterated the missed opportunities to learn more from each other's approaches and contexts in a more practical and personal way, denied and complicated by Covid, as well as the lack of study visits.

Overall the key learning and outcomes from the partners' case studies demonstrate a continued commitment to trying to find the necessary time, space and resources to continue at least some of what they have started through SPOTing. Furthermore they have gained a heightened level of clarity about why this work is important and should be supported.

"Of course young people are naturally transforming all the time but we hope we are giving them some tools and ideas that they can use in the future. SPOTing through arts education knowledge exchange is about also offering tools and ideas to those who work with young people, to open up spaces and give them more decision making power. In this way it is possible to imagine that art can be the laboratory of the future and its creative processes can be a way for us to learn how to make decisions together." [311]

[311] Katérina Flora, Interview with SPOTing researcher, January 31, 2023.

7.
APPENDICES

7.1 APPENDIX A: **PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR) SUGGESTED SPOTING PROJECT PLANNING CHECKLIST**

IDENTIFY A RESEARCH QUESTION OR TOPIC

It could be a centred around a problem, need, wish, or relevant issue or method to develop, investigate, or test

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- How is this related to your work?
- Who does this affect?

(org, staff, participants; potential stakeholders)

- How is it relevant to your values?

(Are they shared, agreed or negotiated between stakeholders?)

- How/will your stakeholders influence the content or direction of the research?

(Does this fit with shared or agreed values?)

- How can values be applied in practice?

(How will your project planning, organisation and methods be related?)

- What are the relevant contexts?

(Are they the same or different for all stakeholders? Where and what supports might be needed?)

- What do you know already?

(What is your evidence base and what will you need to find out? Who or what can you learn from?)

- How/Will this change anything about how you work?

(What will the knowledge do or affect?)

Try and keep your research question or topic focused and manageable,
it can be iterative and develop over time

WAYS TO THINK ABOUT FORMULATING A QUESTION MIGHT BE:
How can we improve/support/develop...?
What does .... look like in practice?
What do we need to do for... to happen?

DESIGNING YOUR PROJECT

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Who needs to be involved and at what stages?

(How do your values and or your working relationships/structures support this?)

- If different project stakeholders are invited to join at different stages what information do they need and who from? (How will this feed into the design, management and data collection?)
- What kind of prior research or thinking do you and or others need to do?
- Is some kind of ethical project agreement appropriate between stakeholders?

(How will this support project development?)

- How will you negotiate difficulties or disagreements?

(How will this be communicated and agreed with stakeholders?)

- What kind of data is important to collect and share and who from?

(Who owns it, can share it, and is involving in developing and interpreting it,
and will it be significantly different from the SPOTing testbed data?)

▪ How will data collection be managed, will it be integrated into project methods, process and outputs?
(Will data collection and or interpretation be negotiated or designed with stakeholders?)
▪ How will you build in flexibility to adapt as the project develops?
(Who will be a part of making these decisions?)
▪ Do the potential methods fit your values?
(What is the relationship to your research question, data collection, or ethical agreement?)

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THE ABOVE IS NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST BUT SHOULD CONTAIN KEY POINTS TO THINK THROUGH ALONGSIDE THE PREVIOUSLY SUGGESTED REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. How will this be different to how you normally work?
2. Why have you chosen this model/way of working?
3. What preparations are you undertaking? What do you think you will need to have in place?
4. What research have you done or what resources have you consulted: theory, case studies, toolkits, peer advice etc.?
5. Who have you consulted about this approach: participants, staff, board members etc.?
6. How do you plan to assess and communicate the project's ongoing success or failure? Is it important how and who this happens with?
7. What do you think will be the challenges involved with this approach?
8. What excites you about it?

Suggested resources to explore:
www.atlasoftransitions.eu
www.cappnetwork.com/about-capp/about-the-project
www.c4aa.org
www.participedia.net
www.arte-util.org
www.usdac.us
www.casestudiesforeducationalturn.blog.hu/2011/05/24/homework
www.eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/id/eprint/4120
www.pbnetwork.org.uk/category/resources/case-studies

7.2 APPENDIX B: **SPOTING TESTBED STARTING POINT – SPOTING PARTNER**

1. What is your research question/project?

2. What action are you planning to undertake?

3. How is it relevant to your values?

[OPTIONAL] Any other information or thoughts about your project you would like to provide

7.3 APPENDIX C: **REFLECTIVE DIARY FOR SPOTING PARTNER**

1. What happened this month? (Description of activity)

E.g. Account of "Action"/"Inaction"

2. Why? [Explanation of activity]

E.g. Decisions made, by whom and how, rationale, values compatible?

3. What has been learned?

E.g. Process, practice, individual, group, ongoing?

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E.g. How/Will this affect; project, group, individuals, practice, wider contexts?

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E.g. Participant feedback, facilitator feedback, stakeholder observations, please describe

Any other comments (optional):

7.4 APPENDIX D: **CRITICAL FRIEND FEEDBACK FOR SPOTING PARTNER:**

Meeting 1 of 4 Date:

1. Did the synopsis presented make sense to you? Was it clear?

2. What evidence was described? Did it support the claims made?

3. Did the project activity match the project values?

4. Did the synopsis take other factors/viewpoints into account?

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Any other comments (optional):

7.5 APPENDIX E: **SPOTING CRITICAL FRIEND FEEDBACK FORM 2**

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critical friend sessions.

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on what in particular?

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they learnt from you?

4. How/did you incorporate any of this learning
into your SPOTing testbed?

Any other comments
(optional):

SPACE FOR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE
TRANS EUROPE HALLES
Role of culture centres as sites of informal education on LOCAL REGIONAL NATIONAL INTERNATIONAL level
25-26.03.2021
PARTNERS:
PDCS
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With the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

SPACE FOR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

TRANS EUROPE HALLES

PROGRAMME

March 25 | DAY 1

13:00 - 13:30	**Welcome & Introduction,** *Nad'a Uherová*
13:30 - 13:45	**Video tour of A4,** *Nina de Gelder, A4*
13:45 - 14:30	**Introduction Session** *Participants meet each other in breakout rooms*
	BREAK
14:40 - 15:00	**TEH SPOTing project research,** *Sheelagh Colclough in conversation with Hanna Olsson*
15:00 - 15:20	**Targeted education of small communities** *Janka Hanzelová Mikušová & Róbert Repka Diera do sveta, Slovakia*
15:20 - 15:40	**TEH research on cultural centre business models** *Hanna Olsson & Natalia Pierzchawka, TEH*
	BREAK
16:20 - 17:20	**Breakout room sessions with speakers** *Participants will select 2 speakers of the day and discuss in 20 minutes' sessions in breakout rooms*
	BREAK
19:00	**Concert live streamed from A4** *Erik Pánči*

SPACE FOR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

TRANS EUROPE HALLES

PROGRAMME

March 26 | DAY 2

9:45 - 9:50	Video tour of Bratislava
9:50 - 10:00	Outline of the programme for the day, *Nad'a Uherová*
10:00 - 10:40	Key note speech, *François Matarasso*
	BREAK
11:00 - 11:20	Psychology of young audience, *Timotea Vráblová Slovak Academy of Sciences, SK*
11:20 - 11:50	Unexpected education opportunities by the pandemic *Simona Gottierová & Hana Hudcovičová Lukšů, Stanica, Slovakia*
11:50 - 12:10	Bridging tangible and intangible heritage in Museum Education through Storytelling, *Giovanna Conforto, Centro Italiano Storytelling, Italy*
	LUNCH BREAK
13:00 - 13:15	Brother deer, short movie by Zuzana Žiaková
13:15 - 13:35	Community work as a space of transformation for representation in theatre, *Brechtje Van Bel, Hussein Mahdi Al Khalidi, hetpaleis, Belgium*
13:35 - 13:55	How to share the experience of improbability? *Nebojsa Milikić, REX Cultural Center, Serbia*
	BREAK
14:00 - 15:00	World cafe style discussion *Discussions in breakout rooms, possibility to share thoughts and ideas with other participants*
15:00 - 15:15	Closing words from A4

GIVE & TAKE:
Constructive and Creative Criticism
SPOTing SEMINAR PROGRAMME
Bratislava, 6-8 October 2021

DAY 1_October 6th at A4 Space for Contemporary Culture

TRANS EUROPE HALLES

10.00-10.30 **REGISTRATION**

10.30-12.00 **SEMINAR OPENING SESSION**

(SPOTing researcher)

- SPOTing Critical Friends: research purpose and rationale, plus general end of Year 1 overview
- Seminar programme outline and group goal setting: *What do we want to get out of the seminar individually and as a group? How do we agree on the necessary parameters to be critical together thinking about: confidentiality, trust, support, appreciation?*

12.00-13.30 **LUNCH**

13.45-16.15 **PEER LED INTERACTIVE SESSION**

(SPOTing Partners: Brunnenpassage & Kulturfabrik)

- *Collegial Case Consulting: an interactive workshop using a collegial consultation structure to examine and offer peer knowledge and advice to one of the SPOTing testbeds*

Photo credit: Frank Meiers

DAY 2_October 7th at Nová Cvernovka

10.00-11.00

Critical Friends Speaker Chrissie Tiller

- Balancing empathy with critical thought: how to be a helpful critical friend
- Open question session

15 min BREAK

11.15-12.15

PEER LED INTERACTIVE SESSION

(SPOTing Partners: Brunnenpassage & Kulturfabrik)

- Obstacle Tree: an interactive workshop analysing conflict issues identified by the seminar participants; focusing on visible everyday effects and the conditions that allow these problems to persist and their root causes.

AFTERNOON

- *Self arranged SPOTing critical friend session*

DAY 3_October 8th at Nová Cvernovka

09.00-10.00

SEMINAR CLOSING SESSION

(SPOTing researcher)

- Reviewing Day 1 group goal setting: *What will we take home and how will/can we put it into practice? What changes do we need to make to SPOTing's critical friend structures?*

15 min BREAK

11.15-12.15

EVALUATION SESSION

(self directed)

- Open question session: reflecting individually on our time together

AFTERNOON

- *Self arranged SPOTing critical friend session*

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

SPOTing
Seminar
in Vienna
Diversity & Artistic Processes
Umjet-
nost
za sve!
Art for
every-
one!
30.3.–2.4.2022
Brunnenpassage & Belvedere
Vienna, Austria

PROGRAMME

SPOTing Consortium only

Wednesday 30.3.2022

Venue: Brunnenpassage

09:30 - 10:00 Open Doors

10:00 – 11:45 **Welcome & Collective Work**

Overview of the current development of each other's SPOTing projects. All partners are invited to have an interview style conversation in pairs about the current standing of the testbeds.

- *What is special about your approach and way of working in your SPOTing testbed? If it was a 'secret sauce' what would the key ingredients be?*
- *Who is involved in your testbed and in what role? How does your testbed 'fit' within your organisation?*
- *What stage are you at with your testbed? What are your plans for the rest of the year?*
- *What do you anticipate your testbed's main impact on your staff, participants or others will be? What has the impact been so far?*

11:45 – 12:00 Short Break

12:00 – 13:30 **SPOTing Updates & Discussion**

Updates of practical information. Sharing on the current status of the research project and discussion of the new 'critical friend' format. Open space for discussion ideas and possible concerns.

13:30 – 15:00 Lunch

15:00 – 18:00 **Transcultural Approach** – Putting Decolonial Theory in Pratice

Input & Training Session with Amanda Piña

How to do transcultural work without falling in the traps of modern/colonial thought as whiteness? How to unlearn whiteness as a mode of superiority by unlearning its apparent universality? How to undo modern/colonial ideas of time, of space and of the body?
In this workshop Amanda Piña proposes to use oral narration to share with her knowledge on Decolonial thought and practices with the participants, with the aim to dismantle engraved categories present in our bodies using non-western ontologies as inspiration.

18:30 *open end* Dinner

Thursday 31.3.2022

Venue: Belvedere 21

09:30 - 10:00 Open Doors

10:00 – 11:30 **Critical Friend Group Session #1** / consortium only

This session is a continuation of the collective critical friend process started at the seminar in Bratislava. We focus on one organization and its project per session and give space for in depth reflection and feedback using the combination of 'obstacle tree' & 'collegial case consulting' methods.

11:30 – 11:45 Short Break

11:45 – 14:00 **Time to Diversify**

Input & Training Session with Fairooz Tamimi

So, you believe in diversity, equity and social justice and want your institution to live up to those values, but how? And where to start? This session starts with an introduction to a framework, concepts, terminology, common mistakes and practices around diversity, followed by a hands-on exploration of a step-by-step process to apply the diversity lens to different dimensions of a cultural institution. A facilitated discussion among the participants will enable them to discuss their priorities and the challenges faced or anticipated during the implementation of such a process in different types of institutions.

14:00 – 16:00 Lunch

from 16:00 **D/Transformation: Diversity in Leading Positions of Cultural Institutions**

an event by D/Arts – Project Office for Diversity & Urban Dialogue

Society is more diverse than the cultural sector. This event focuses on the necessary transformation of cultural institutions from within. How do programs and content change, when discrimination-critical attitudes and diversity are anchored at the staff level? What measures are needed to strengthen diversity-sensitive perspectives in decision-making positions? And how can these processes be promoted at the level of cultural policy? Using examples from the national and international cultural sector, we will discuss how discriminatory structures can be identified and diversity processes implemented in the Austrian context.

Thursday 31.3.2022

Venue: Belvedere 21 & Upper Belvedere

16:00 – 18:00 **Part 1: World-Café**
Venue: Belvedere 21
Moderation: ***Djamila Grandits***

- ***Miriam Siré Camara*** *(Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Advisor, akoma | Managing Director) - discussion in German*
- ***Natalia Hecht*** *(Monitoring & Cultural Evaluation Manager, Community Artist) and* ***Angela Wieser*** *(Educult, Forschung & Beratung) - discussion in English*
- ***Ivana Pilić*** *(Diversity Advisor, D/Arts-Projektbüro für Diversität und urbanen Dialog) and* ***Sophie Rendl*** *(Expert for Anti-Discrimination, Frauendomäne) -discussion in German*
- ***Hassan Mahamdallie*** *(UK Playwright, Journalist, Specialist in Diversity and Art) – discussion in English*

16:00 – 18:00 **Parallel Programme – Museum Tour**
Guided tour through current exhibitions of Belvedere 21 by the Department of Arts Education with information about location and context.

18:00 – 19:00 break / change of location

19:00 – 21:00 **Part 2: Keynote & Panel Discussion**
Venue: Upper Belvedere
Moderation: ***Djamila Grandits***
Keynote
Hassan Mahmadallie *(UK Playwright, Journalist, Specialist in Diversity and Art)*
Panel Discussion
Eva Blimlinger *(Member of the National Council)*
Miriam Siré Camara *(Diversity and Anti-discrimination Consultant, akoma | Managing Director)*
Jonathan Fine *(Director Weltmuseum Wien)*
Natalia Hecht *(Monitoring & Cultural Evaluation Manager, Community Artist)*
Veronica Kaup-Hasler *(City Councillor for Culture and Science)*
Hassan Mahamdallie *(UK Playwright, Journalist, Specialist in Diversity and Art)*
Stella Rollig *(Belvedere General Director)*

Friday 1.4.2022

Venue: Brunnenpassage

09:30 - 10:00 Open Doors

10:00 – 11:30 **Critical Friend Group Session #2** / consortium only

This session is a continuation of the collective critical friend process started at the seminar in Bratislava. We will focus on one organization and its project per session and give space for in depth reflection and feedback using the combination of 'obstacle tree' & 'collegial case consulting' methods.

11:30 – 11:45 Short Break

11:45 – 12:30 **Art Practices in the Migration Society**

Presentation by the team of Brunnenpassage

In 2021, the expanded edition of the Brunnenpassage book 'Art Practices in the Migration Society' was published. This presentation, based on the handbook, will give insight into the practice of Brunnenpassage. It opens up strategies for implementing art practices that are critical of discrimination, and for reaching new dialogue groups. Successes in partnerships with unequal cultural institutions are analyzed, and concrete strategies for action are shown.

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 *hybrid event* **Cultural Transformation Movement**

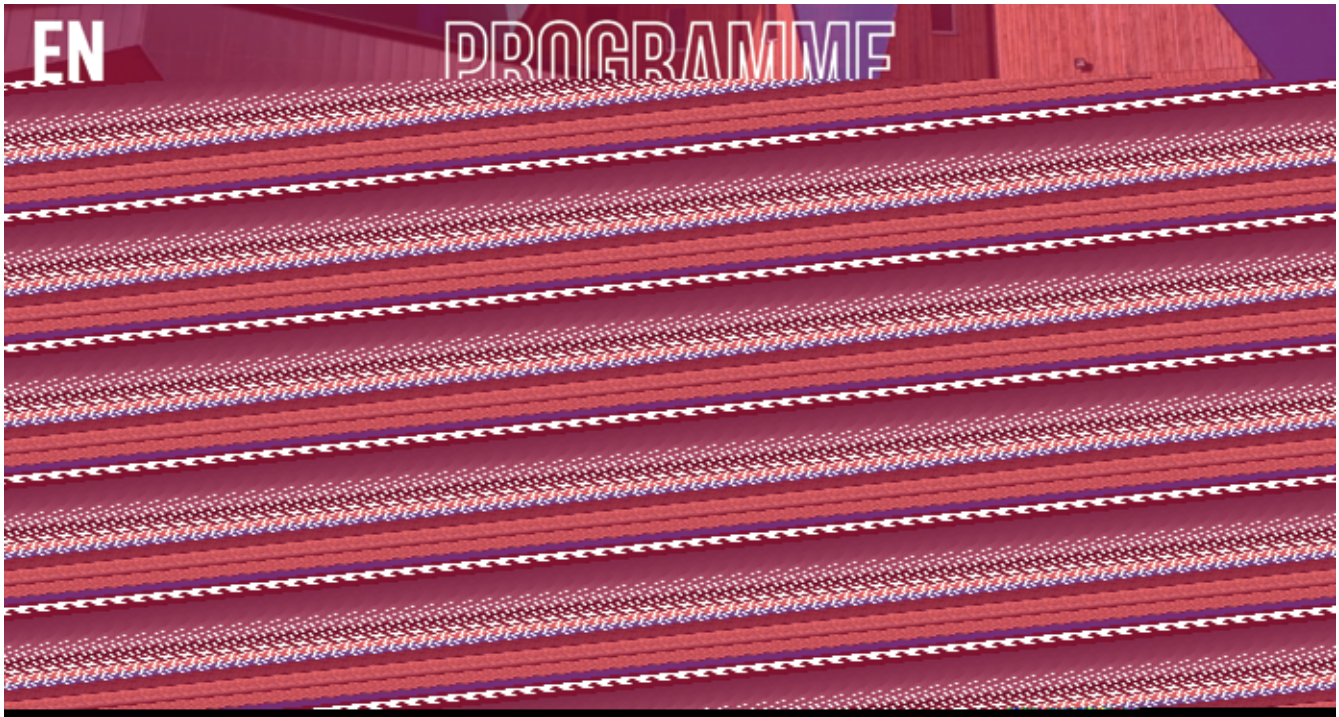
Diversity Parameters for Institutions / Collective work session with inputs by Fairooz Tamimi, Tiffany Fukuma and movement members

Why do we need a movement and why now? Why the top-down approach towards diversity is broken and why a real transformation towards social justice means home-growing of advocates? How does the relationship between the institution and the community change? In this session, Trans Europe Halles members who started the Cultural Transformation Movement will introduce the movement, explain their approach to transform their organisation from within, contribute the lessons they learned from their own experiences, and shed light on some inspiring initiatives, good practises and recent trends.

16:00 – 16:20 Short Break

16:20 – 17:00 **Wrap Up & Outlook** / consortium only

Open space for feedback & reflection. What are the next steps?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