



SHIFT + CULTURE – Digital Transformation

Key insights and policy contributions emerging from

TEH#100 Camp Meeting in Riga



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Foreword

Dear reader,

What you have in front of you is the second version of key outputs from our sessions at #TEH100 Camp Meeting in Riga hosted by a TEH member, Kaņepes Kultūras centrs. These insights are based on knowledge we systematically captured collectively; and intended to inform and support ongoing policy development and advocacy efforts. Developed as a continuation of the TEH Advocacy Working Group that was launched in 2025, this paper forms part of our broader effort to strengthen our coordinated advocacy at a time of increasing political and financial pressure. Thank you to everyone who contributed by sharing their notes, thoughts, insights and inputs after #TEH100 Camp Meeting in Riga. With the aim of strengthening both this handout and the process behind its development, we look forward to continuing to reflect, draft and test TEH's advocacy work together with you in the future.

This document contributes to thematic priorities of the new cycle of the current network project funded by the Creative Europe programme of the EU - Common Spaces – and delivered by Trans Europe Halles. The Common Spaces network project prioritizes culture for digital transformation as well as data collection and analysis in this cycle of 2025-2028. It sets out to understand how to leverage new technologies, how to work with data, and most importantly address the various risks and ethical concerns associated with digitalisation and the implementation of tools in everyday cultural work.

As part of this continuous work, TEH strives to draft a digital strategy and data collection for its network activities, that is building on the identification of digital

skills needed across member organisations and culture professionals; a mapping of existing digital capacity within the network and commoning; and an exploration of new ways of working in digital or hybrid environments, mapping both opportunities and challenges.

This work also aligns with and contributes important insights to the digital transformation work across the European cultural sector, addressed in the Culture Compass for Europe (2025). As stated in the Culture Compass, ‘Europe must recognise and harness culture’s potential to confront pressing issues including the technological shifts and the digital transition’, especially the “impact of artificial intelligence” (European Commission, 2025). TEH contributes to the ongoing work at by bringing in the perspective of using AI and other digital tools on daily cultural work, highlighting the potentials, ethical concerns and practical challenges. First outcomes of the TEH work are in the Common Spaces report TEH & Digital Shifts in the report at hand provide valuable contributions to the inform the Key actions of the cultural compass, namely the development of an AI strategy for the cultural and creative sectors and the creation of a new EU Cultural Data Hub - a centralised mechanism to collect, pool and share cultural data across member states, enabling better monitoring, policy-making and cross-sectoral analysis.

This document was produced through the application of a structured policy extraction methodology developed within the focus points of the Common Spaces project. Through this methodology, complex discussions and member contributions are transformed into clear, actionable policy insights for local, national, and EU-level advocacy. The methodology draws on the collective intelligence of TEH by employing a shared analytical template that focuses on five key dimensions: key issues discussed; barriers experienced; ideas for change and proposed solutions; actions and stakeholders involved; and the governance level

responsible for implementation. Insights were systematically collected through facilitated sessions and workshops across four thematic areas, structured notetaking, post-session written inputs, moderated discussions, and additional materials shared by the network. The data was then systematised and synthesised. By consolidating the findings into four overarching policy areas:

- digital transformation,*
- inner work and outer shifts,*
- building an actionable advocacy roadmap,*
- and ecological and decolonial perspectives,*

the methodology ensures comparability, clarifies the basis for advocacy messaging, and facilitates targeted policy engagement across multiple governance levels.

Our warm thanks go to you who helped us document selected sessions supporting our TEH advocacy and policy input with the diverse voices and rich knowledge and experience within our network.

TEH Coordination Office team

Introduction: Kaņepes Kultūras centrs welcomes TEH in Riga

The TEH Camp Meeting 101 hosted by by Kaņepes Kultūras centrs in Riga, was opened at the beautiful Riga Cirks (Circus), an architectural gem with a 135-year history in central Riga. Recently renovated, the venue presents an example of how heritage, contemporary performance and technology jointly direct future uses. During the opening, Laima Geikina the Deputy of Riga Municipality, announced in her speech a cultural budget increase of ten million Euro for the city of Riga, a major cultural political success. During the opening session spoke also Kaspars Kondratjuks and Davis Kanepe being the hosts TEH100, Agnese Lace (Ministry of Culture, Latvia), Frido Hinde (President of TEH at the time), and Mieke Renders (Managing Director of TEH).

TEH100 Camp Meeting opening panel

“How human can we be?” asked Mieke in her opening speech and set the scene reminding meeting attendees to stay attentive to the relationships between us and roles AI came to play. It is there to assist us and not lead us away from our abilities as humans. It forces us to pause and rethink; how do we want to be together? Reminding us of what it means to be human, being together in space, she reflected on what it means to lead in today's world:

“Leadership today is no longer just about vision and decisions, it’s about keeping up with digital change, with AI, with the speed of everything, and whilst doing that, still staying grounded in what makes us human.”

Key messages to take with us from her speech are:

- **Culture is not a luxury, its survival!**
Cultural spaces are vital for social resilience, belonging, and democratic life, especially in times of crisis, technological acceleration, and social fragmentation.
- **Human connection must remain at the core of digital transformation**
Digital tools and AI should be shaped to support creativity, empathy, memory, and attention, not replace or erode them. Policy must safeguard the human dimensions of cultural work.
- **Protect the irreplaceable value of being together**
Physical gatherings, shared spaces, and moments of co-presence are not optional or outdated. They nourish attention, memory, and belonging in ways no screen can replicate. Cultural policy must defend the right to meet, to linger, and to connect in real space.
- **Cultural spaces regenerate cities by regenerating relationships**
The true impact of cultural centres lies not only in buildings or outputs,

but in the social bonds, trust, and collective imagination they foster across communities.

- **Leadership and policy must allow slowness, reflection, and care**

In a world driven by speed and efficiency, culture defends attention, memory, and meaningful participation. Policies should value processes that allow time to reflect, connect, and belong—including the right to remain partially analogue.

The remainder of this report is structured around the key policy objectives with a specific interest in

- the #1 Digital Transformations and human technological relations. Here, questions like which tools do best assist cultural work are addressed. In the second part,
- #2 Ways of Seeing, Inner Work and Outer Shifts sessions specifically explored our human qualities, such as the qualities of relations we built communities on, our abilities to sense atmospheres and other forms of quiet data and their role in transformative processes. Thirdly,
- #3 features the results of the ongoing TEH Advocacy work, and a tentative roadmap. A last section expands on
- #4 Environmental Thinking & Decolonising Ecological Perspectives and other aspects illustrating and deepening the role Culture carries for the planet.

The session formats and contents vary as much as our styles of facilitation, which is not only visible in the many reports from the sessions we received, but in the shape of the report. In our efforts to make it coherent and informative, we hope it is useful for you and appreciate ongoing feedback to improve the future reports.

And finally, at the end of the report, you find a list of resources that have been shared in the context of the meeting sessions or the meeting.

#1 Digital transformation

The first policy objective and main theme of the Camp Meeting in Riga was the digital transformation and questions such as: which digital tools, platforms, and data-collection methods should we adopt or common? How can we govern them ethically, affordably, and strategically? Through the sessions we deepened our knowledge on the use of digital tools, techniques and platforms to both produce and organise data, while reflect on our needs and how these are enabled or hindered by the tools we use.

1.1. Session “Digital Tools that actually work” (Lauma Gailite + Riga Tech Girls)

“Make technology work for you – not the other way around”. This session had the format of a presentation, was facilitated by **Lauma Gailite** (in collaboration with [Riga Tech Girls](#)). Lauma has project management experience from working in international companies across Europe and diverse industries including culture and film, NGO’s, cross-industry and start-ups. This session provided navigation and ease the experience of overwhelm in a world of digital platforms to choose tools that truly fit the needs of cultural and community organizations.

“The digital transformation is about human practices and interactions with digital tools, “any tool will still be operated by people, and that’s the weak spot”

Lauma Gailite

Presented digital tools and ways of working

- **Notion:** Team collaboration and knowledge management tool, allowing editable live documents, GDPR-compliant sharing, and team-oriented views.
- **Canva Whiteboards:** Design and visual collaboration platform, integrating creative and planning workflows.
- **Loom:** Screen-recording and explanatory video tool for asynchronous communication and onboarding.

Needs, gaps and difficulties identified

- Human buy-in is critical; tools fail without motivation or understanding of benefits.
- Tool overload—multiple platforms fragment workflows; consolidation helps.
- Budget constraints in non-profit contexts demand creative, free-first solutions.
- GDPR and data ethics require controlled access and transparent sharing.
- Digital sustainability—tools evolve or disappear; adaptability is essential.
- Manual workloads and burnout can be reduced with automation and integration.

Session insights and recommendations for TEH members

- Start with a real problem before choosing a tool.
- Create a 'one true source of information' to centralize and link data.
- Adopt automation to reduce repetitive admin work.
- Encourage digital reuse and adaptable templates.

- Build ethical, human-centered digital strategies emphasizing accessibility and simplicity.
- Focus on how information flows — create a clear process for who inputs, edits, and retrieves data.
- Choose tools that adapt to human comfort and cognitive habits, not the other way around.
- Recognize the hidden costs of “free” tools — data, time, or attention — as part of ethical governance.

Key session insights

- The **emphasis on human behaviour over technology** — “any tool will still be operated by people, and that’s the weak spot.”
- The **empowering message**: small organizations *can* achieve digital maturity with no-code tools.
- The **twist**: we should think of the digital strategy not as IT work, but as **collaborative cultural practice**.
- Examples like **Paraoctographia** (a creative reuse of an abandoned building) show how digital tools support physical community projects.

Key recommendations for those going through digital transformation

- **Needs first: adopt tools that serve your workflow**, not the other way around.
- **Invest time in buy-in**: Train, explain, and co-create systems with your team, they are the ones who will work with it.
- **Centralize data** in adaptable platforms (Notion, Airtable) with clear permissions.
- **Automate repetitive communication** with simple triggers (forms, reminders).
- **Use visual collaboration** tools (Miro, Canva) for collective creativity.
- **Document knowledge openly**—use link-based sharing instead of static files.

1.2. Session “From idea to action: working with AI” (Kristaps Cirulis)

The presence of AI in our everyday lives is difficult to ignore and presents excitement for some and a bag of mixed feelings for others. To remove some of the worries and uncertainties, this practical session, facilitated by Kristaps Cirulis, explored how AI can amplify creative, cultural and advocacy work. Live demonstrations and real examples showed how an idea can grow from first ideas to working solution using today’s AI tools – step by step, and with a human touch. Participants were invited to provide critical input to the live session.

Key session insights

To use AI meaningfully, like other digital tools mentioned, choose the tool that is best suited for your purpose. We as humans define the problem and chose the tools to solve it. Tips to use an AI efficiently: A key aspect of using AI is learning how to frame prompts. To get useful and accurate results from AI, you need to provide:

- Context, Specificity, Intent, and Format. The data AI uses to generate results is based mostly on human input.
- Hunch: A free tool for building workflows that can be embedded in your workplace.
- Flora: An AI tool for visual content creation.
- Some AI tools are designed specifically for coding, reducing the need for manual programming.
- Runway: facilitates creative expression with AI.

AI is a powerful tool for creatives to explore a wide range of formats, directions, and ideas. It allows you to spread your voice and creativity more broadly without limitations; your imagination is the only limit. Most importantly, focus on your own unique strengths and creativity as human beings!

1.3. Session “Digital placemaking” (Jurga Kupstyte)

How can cultural centres ethically and meaningfully integrate digital practices without losing human and spatial connections? This active participatory session facilitated by Jurga Kupstyte explored the intersection of digitalization and place-based cultural work and the tensions and opportunities within, especially between digital engagement and placemaking. The workshop was organized according to a people-processes-places-framework. Participants reflected on how digital communication tools shape their connections with communities, how algorithms and extractive platforms influence outreach, and how to maintain authentic, local relationships in a fast-changing media landscape. Most importantly, Jurga emphasized the potential of TEH to provide a network-level infrastructure enabling shared data analysis capacity, common evaluation frameworks, and collective platform strategies. You find the whole editorial to the workshop [here](#).

Needs, gaps and difficulties identified:

- Algorithmic dependence and extractive platforms: paid ads reduce organic reach, creating dependency on continuous spending
- Tool proliferation creates cognitive overload and decision paralysis
- "Closeted data" phenomenon: organizations accumulate data across platforms but neither delete, organize, nor analyze it
- Audience fragmentation: organizations claim audiences are spread across different platforms but often assume rather than research where audiences actually are
- Internal resistance and digital competence gaps create organizational bottlenecks

- Limited evaluation capacity to track audience origin or platform effectiveness
- Emotional and ethical fatigue from constant posting and engagement pressure
- Processes dimension received the most confusion (red dots), indicating lack of dedicated expertise for managing operational systems

Key insights and policy recommendations

- Organizations already resist digital solutionism—the need is for infrastructure support, not just digital skills training
- Cultural centres don't need to learn "digital placemaking" as a separate discipline—they need infrastructure gaps filled that individual organizations cannot address alone
- Ask, don't assume: actively research audience habits and feedback rather than relying on assumptions
- Combine analog and digital communication: newsletters, posters, in-person word-of-mouth alongside online media
- Align digital strategies with organizational values; avoid outreach that misrepresents or dilutes the mission
- Explore ethical or decentralized alternatives to major platforms
- Prioritize depth (local, regular participants) over breadth (online numbers)
- Use social media strategically, avoid algorithmic dependency, focus on authentic engagement

Session's other findings

Participants unanimously chose "50 new neighbours" over "500 new viewers," demonstrating that cultural centres prioritize community relationships over digital

metrics. One participant articulated the conceptual challenge: "digital placemaking feels like a contradiction in terms" when placemaking relies on embodied presence and human connection. Despite scepticism about digital platforms, participants acknowledged the need for strategic digital adaptation. The emotional toll of maintaining digital presence was repeatedly mentioned, as was the feeling of being trapped by platform rules.

Policy relevance for TEH network

- TEH should provide shared capacity that individual centres cannot afford—data analysis expertise, common evaluation frameworks, and collective platform strategies
- Resistance to digital solutionism: Validation that cultural centers can refuse platform demands that compromise organizational values
- Digital communication as emotional labor: Recognition that sustainable approaches require acknowledgment of the cognitive and emotional burden
- Peer learning and documentation: Support for sharing what actually works based on real outcomes rather than digital marketing promises
- Experimentation with ethical alternatives: Support for hybrid analog-digital strategies and alternatives to extractive platforms

1.4. Session “Infrastructuring TEH Knowledge” (Marthe Nehl)

“To build a strong supportive structure of Exchange and Learning” was the first objective in the network plan developed 2012 and onwards (TEH Annual Report,

2013). The workshop session “Infrastructuring TEH Knowledge” was facilitated by Marthe Nehl, in her capacity as researcher in the Common Spaces project. Knowledge is a resource and how it is best taken care of and exchanged is and has been a central question at the hearts of many meetings since 1983. The workshop addressed this main function of TEH: the exchange of knowledge between members in an effective and meaningful way. As a first step, workshop participants reflected on past practices, their experiences, and shared current needs. The outcome of the workshop are ideas to improve how, when and where we share, and how we store and disseminate what we know to keep the network strong.

The workshop was built on the “infrastructural perspective” which means starting with people, their practices and their needs, and treating their everyday ways of working as the real infrastructure—rather than focusing only on formal systems or tools. A workshop participant with long experience and different perspectives within the network and its governance shared:

“I think we need to trust the process; you will always have the feeling of not doing enough. This is how the collective intelligence works, is not constant. [...] Beside the process, we should also consider the methods of communication, principles and values. Safeguard that everyone involved can share and is not gatekept.”

(Workshop participant)

Infrastructuring, not infrastructure is the idea that no infrastructure is just out there, ready to be used, but comes into being through relational practices of people, and what is actually being done. Through a roundtable we gathered insiders and reflected together on how e.g. the will to engage and contribute (but not always knowing how) from new members, can be combined with the experience of older members, who might not always know how valuable they are to new members. So

how can the need for a continuity of knowledge sharing be combined with the need for human connection and exchange?

Questions & suggestions raised by participants:

- Why we share determines how we share – should we have a little value-based manifesto?
- AI can take notes and sort them for us – do we want quality, or quantity?
- We can organise notetaking collectively, but what happens with the notes?
- School people in facilitation and gathering knowledge collectively
- “I’d like to leave a meeting with a clear to-do list”
- (How) Can notetaking be meaningfully integrated in processes that connect members?

Key recommendations

- Treat Knowledge as a Living Commons, not a Static Archive
- TEH’s knowledge is created through people meeting, sharing, and working together: through relational practices (facilitation, peer exchange, mentoring) as core infrastructure, not as optional extras. It is already happening, as is reflection on the process. Members are interested in assisting in the process, when given opportunities and instructions to do so.
- Next step: Pilot formats where knowledge sharing is designed as a collective process, with clear roles, shared responsibility.
- Make Access and Care Core Principles of Knowledge Infrastructure
- How we share knowledge reflects our values. To avoid gatekeeping and overload of office staff, TEH needs clear principles for inclusion, care, and continuity, ensuring new members can contribute and experienced members are recognised as key knowledge holders.

- Next step: Co-create a short, value-based manifesto for knowledge sharing that guides communication, documentation, and participation across the network.
- Use Technology to Support Connection, not Replace It
- AI and digital tools can help with notetaking and sorting, but they must serve meaningful exchange, reflection, and action, not just efficiency. The goal is not more data, but better understanding and clearer collective direction.
- Next step: Test approaches where collective notetaking, facilitation, and AI-supported synthesis led to shared insights and concrete to-do lists, and evaluate those.

1.5. Session “An audio document of the event” (Michael Holland)

Michael Holland works with sound recording for [NTS Radio](#). He recorded beautiful conversations and helped us capture a few session insights but more importantly what happens at meetings in between sessions, when people meet and exchange and introduce ideas and themselves to one another, inspiring and be inspired. Listen to the radio program [here](#).

2 Attitudes – Ways of seeing: Inner work and Outer shifts + how people/communities face transformation

While the first theme explored the range of digital tools and how they might serve us in everyday life, this second policy objective centres our uniquely human abilities. Under the heading Attitudes we explored our ways of seeing and focussed on our inner selves and the work necessary to cope with face outer shifts. Here, we paid attention to “quiet data” and gathered reflections on our ways of working, paying attention to the hidden dynamics and discover strengths in facing transformations together.

2.1. Session: “Slow Networking” (Hanna Olsson)

Aiming to reflect on our ways of working, paying attention to hidden dynamics the workshop facilitated by **Hanna Olsson** foregrounded strengths we have when facing transformations together. Especially, it explored what happens when we slow down, listen to our bodies, and let relationships and what they need set the rhythm, rather than being ‘productive’. Below is a summary of the “small but meaningful” steps and **actions that matter for working together through transformations:**

Room for serendipity by bringing back the “Marketplace”

TEH meetings have previously included the **marketplace / open, self organized space** as an unprogrammed dedicated moment in meetings where members bring ideas, topics, questions, or experiments and things can emerge. Workshop participants mentioned the Fengersfors *borders* project and the *Tiny Spaces Residency* with Communitism as successful products of this meeting format.

Awareness of Body and Mind

If we feel overwhelmed, tired, or disconnected, outer work (partnerships, projects, advocacy) cannot flourish. Meetings and how we experience them shape our ability to engage. Future meetings should balance **human needs** with agendas and include scheduled breaks and physical space allowing the body and mind to rest. But also, the daily work in the centers is burdensome for members due to high **maintenance** tasks. This not only limits creativity and the capacity to welcome new partnerships, but comes with feeling overwhelmed, creates burnout, and ultimately shrinks the space for community connection.

Anchoring body and mind in local space *What did participants mean? How would this look like?* Feeling anchored, arriving in the here and now connects body and mind and creates the conditions for a meaningful meeting where an “inner flow” (calm, presence) supports “outer flow” (collaboration, ideas).

There is a **genuine FOMO**, and not attending comes with a feeling of stress to miss out. Informative **meeting notes** could help to stay connected without attending every meeting. Members could rotate attendance depending on people's time and energy, but also the resources of a center.

Take-aways - towards a “resource bank”:

- **Body-mind-centered meeting design** + rest spaces within meetings
- Local anchoring on the first day
- **Open space sessions** (“Marketplace”) are not optional extras participants voiced them as essential infrastructure for emerging needs and thoughts
- Smaller groups for deeper connection
- **Slow travel** together by train or boat journeys present a more **sustainable way** of travelling and should become part of the network culture

- Let more staff take part (rotate who gets to go to a meeting) & clear note sharing to keep everyone updated and included

2.2. Workshop: “The forgotten Data Lab – CTM” (Ceyda Berk-Söderblom, Laura Camacho Salgado, Israel Aloni)

The Cultural Transformation Movement (CTM) project led by **Ceyda Berk-Söderblom** organised two sessions to explore how cultural organisations may reshape their ways of seeing, collaboration, and community engagement. *Through The Forgotten Data Lab* facilitated by **Laura Salgado Camacho** and the *Knowledge Roundtable on Transformative Creations* facilitated by **Israel Aloni**, participants investigated how subtle relational forms of knowledge shape cultural work and how artistic practices can respond to marginalisation, displacement, and lived experience of inequality.

Both sessions proved that transformation in the cultural sector is driven not by tools but by perception—that is, acknowledging silent data, questioning institutional habits, and welcoming community-led methodologies and aesthetics. Combined, they demonstrated how cultural organisations can nurture deeper relational practices, ethical responsibility, and more inclusive modes of creation.

Introduction

The two sessions, *The Forgotten Data Lab* and the *Knowledge Roundtable on Transformative Creations*, approached the question of cultural transformation from very different starting points, yet ultimately arrived at the same root issue: one that requires a shift in how cultural workers see, sense, and interpret the world around them.

The Forgotten Data Lab invited participants to revise what counts as data, extending it beyond numerical indicators into subtle, relational, and historic forms of knowledge. Through exercises of stillness, close observation, and visual mapping, participants confronted the invisible and often overlooked signals that shape cultural work—what the session named quiet data.

The Knowledge Roundtable extended this reflection to artistic creation, focusing on processes that respond to or emerge from communities facing marginalisation, discrimination, displacement, or war. Artists/Agents of Change and Centres of Change shared how their practices draw from lived realities to propose methods and aesthetics challenging the normative within institutions. Both sessions illustrated that any meaningful transformation has to start with inner work—shifts in perception, humility, and positionality—before it manifests as outer changes in structures, practices, or policies.

About Working Together

The sessions revealed how collaboration in cultural contexts often falters—not through lack of commitment—but through the limits of perception. In The Forgotten Data Lab, it became clear that to sit in close silence and observe another person evokes immediate discomfort and resistance. Participants remarked on how seldom they take time to really see one another, how seldom attention is paid to body language, hesitations, pauses, or quality of presence. This moment of stillness made visible the depth of relational information—quiet data—usually invisible within institutions. It underlined that data is not neutral, but influenced by positionality, personal biography, and power, and that collaboration involves a sensitivity to these in order to avoid misinterpretation or injury.

Similarly, at the Roundtable, the presentations from Centres of Change illustrated how collaboration transforms when communities define the terms of

engagement. Mira Bryssinck's project emphasised the need for disability narratives authored by those who live them, rather than mediated through institutional perspectives. Izolyatsia's work with artists serving in the Ukrainian army or refugees in Paris demonstrated how artistic practice becomes an instrument of care and survival, and how organisations must adjust their frameworks to realities shaped by trauma and war. Zō Centro Culture Contemporanee's co-creation processes with underrepresented communities in Sicily further demonstrated how leadership structures shift when lived knowledge is acknowledged as expertise. In each case, working together required redistributing power, recognising community autonomy, and embracing unfamiliar methods and aesthetics.

Across the two sessions, participants faced a number of structural barriers that get in the way of collaboration: inflexible reporting requirements, inaccessible physical spaces, inherited colonial assumptions in data practices, and institutional pressures that prioritise measurable outputs over relational impact. Many spoke to estimating numbers or collecting data solely to please funders, acknowledging a separation between what is collected and what is meaningful. This brought up a number of ethical responsibilities for cultural organisations: what should be measured, whose stories are recorded or forgotten, and how communities might be protected from potential misuse of information.

The Roundtable went a step further in its provocation: for ongoing marginalisation to cease, institutions must sometimes "cause harm"-not to people, but to harmful systems. That is to say, by forcing a break with established norms, contesting extractive practices, and embracing discomfort within transformation. Collaboration is, then, not only relational but also political; it needs both care and courage.

Afterwards, participants started to see the inside of their organisations with more criticality. The Forgotten Data Lab showed how space itself speaks power: through the staircase that restricted access to the Tiger Room, the intense proximity of the seating, and the empty chair placed at the hub of the circle, a symbol of those unseen and unheard within the institutional archive. It became clear to participants that structures within organisations often reproduce invisibility through the privileging of that which is recorded, counted, and archived, while marginalising those experiences that fall outside of standard metrics. Emotional signals, silences, changing dynamics, and relational tensions, those very elements which characterise cultural work, often remain unrecorded.

The Roundtable broadened this internal reflection by revealing a depth of knowledge rooted in community contexts. Artistic creation with disabled artists, migrants, and communities in conflict zones showed how lived experience reshapes method, concept, context, and aesthetics. Woodcut as a medium for shared memory in Brunnenpassage's work, community-led curation processes in Sicily, and art as radical care in the Ukrainian context all demonstrated that the communities often positioned as "outside" of the organisation are, in fact, central knowledge holders. Participants came to understand that transformation requires organisations not simply to invite communities into existing frameworks but to allow community knowledge to transform those frameworks from within.

In both sessions, the boundary between inside and outside emerged as porous and political. Forgotten data parallels forgotten communities: what is not collected is not seen; what is not seen does not influence decisions. Participants left with a sharpened awareness that organisational practices determine whose knowledge is legitimised, whose stories shape programs, and whose experiences remain peripheral. This new way of seeing calls for a redefinition of institutional

roles: from gatekeepers of knowledge to facilitators of community-led interpretation and meaning making.

Policy Implications: Attitudes - The Foundation of Transformation

The two sessions put together, however, make clear that policies for transformation cannot focus on tools, metrics, and procedural reforms alone. Transformation requires shifts in attitudes—ways of seeing that enable ethical, relational, and community-led practice. Inner reflection, sensory awareness, and a willingness to reconsider positionality lay at the heart of any outer change in organisational behaviour, collaboration, and community engagement. What both The Forgotten Data Lab and the Knowledge Roundtable made clear is that transformation has to do fundamentally with perception: what we notice, whose knowledge we value, and how we relate to those whose experiences differ from our own.

Policy recommendations

Make quiet data and relational knowledge part of policy design:

- Recognise emotional, sensory, and relational signals as valid forms of data in particular when quantitative information is not enough, or it distorts information.
- Allow for reflective, narrative, and observational formats that can capture subtle shifts, hesitations, atmospheres, or absences, those elements central to cultural work but invisible in standard reporting.
- Require slow, presence-based practices—deep listening, reflective pauses, attentive observation—as integral to the development of a project.

Mandate ethical, minimal, and community-controlled data practices:

- Communities co-decide what data is collected, for what purpose, and for how long, taking into consideration the risks linked to political and social contexts.
- Avoid gathering personal information that is superfluous or exposes individuals or groups to surveillance or other harms.
- Embed awareness of data colonialism, historic bias, and extractive practices into policy standards for evaluation and monitoring.

Reconsider organisational spaces and structures:

- Treat accessibility—physical, digital, sensory, and emotional—as a structural requirement of participation, not a discretionary enhancement.
- Consider spatial design—lighting, proximity, seating, and movement routes—as integral to safety, autonomy, and inclusion.
- Perform accessibility and atmosphere assessments in advance of the collaborative process.

Protect and institutionalise inner-work processes:

- Allocate protected time and adequate resources for reflection on positionality, bias, personal histories, and the power dynamics shaping cultural work.
- Encourage teams to reflect on how their own habits, assumptions, or institutional norms reproduce exclusion, even unintentionally.
- Consider inner work as core to good practice, rather than an addition or extra training.

Embed community-led method, concept, context, and aesthetic frameworks:

- Ensure that communities shape the methodological, conceptual, contextual, and aesthetic dimensions of work, rather than just the content.

- Validate lived experience as a knowledge system that needs to inform creation processes and organisational decisions.
- Use the Roundtable's four-lens structure-method, concept, context, and aesthetics-as an organising principle for co-creation, which ensures shared power and valued perspectives.

Allow play, non-linearity, and experimentation in transformative work:

- Recognise that creativity, curiosity, and play are not distractions but essential tools for expanding perception and enabling new pathways of collaboration.
- Encourage unpredictable or emergent processes that reflect the complexity of community realities.
- Protect experimental phases for methodological legitimacy, rather than by insisting on immediate clarity or linearity.

Support the disruption of destructive systems

- Encourage organisations to interrogate the very evaluation systems, reporting structures, and institutional norms that perpetuate inequities or silence nuanced realities.
- Confirm the Roundtable's understanding that "harm" should be directed at unjust structures, not people, recognising that to change embedded systems is necessarily to disrupt previously established ways of working.

This policy paper is prepared by Ceyda Berk-Söderblom (Senior Project Manager & Researcher at Trans Europe Halles; CTM Lead), based on the session reports:

- Camacho Salgado, Laura. (2025). Reflection Workshop #6: The Forgotten Data Lab. Cultural Transformation Movement Project.
- Aloni, Israel (2025). Knowledge Roundtable #3: Transformative Creations. Cultural Transformation Movement Project.

2.3. Session “Work that reconnects: practices for collective wellbeing” (Liene Jurgelane)

“It was easy for me to pay attention to others in listening or looking into eyes. But it was surprisingly difficult and scary to be so seen, so visible. I am leaving with the question why? Why is it so uncomfortable and what could change in the world if we all felt more visible every day?” (Participant’s reflection)

This workshop *The Work That Reconnects*, introduced a group-based practice designed to support resilience, clarity, and collective action in times of uncertainty and crisis. Facilitated by **Liene Jurgelane**, the session invited participants to explore the relationship between inner experience and outward action in cultural work. Through guided embodied practices, participants engaged with emotions arising from ecological, social, and political change. The session invited to understanding our role within a broader web of life and sensibilised collective responsibility. Offering a space of deep listening, the workshop gave room to inner awareness, strengthening connection, agency, and meaningful engagement. The session nurtured *active hope*, a practice rooted in care, courage, and commitment as essential infrastructure for sustained cultural practice.

“Something cracked open, there wasn’t enough time, but I’m sure the crack will widen now.”

“[A]t the end of the day, what matters the most is to remember that we are all humans. I believe that if we truly looked in each other’s eyes, we could never be able to harm each other.”

"I am leaving with a beautiful question of how to restore the connection that is longing?" (Participant's reflections)

Policy recommendations

To mobilise emotional, reflective human practices, policies could be informed by:

- **Care-based practices as part of cultural and climate action:** Public funding frameworks should explicitly support facilitated reflection, emotional resilience, and collective care practices within cultural, social, and environmental programmes. Inner work strengthens the long-term capacity of cultural workers to operate in contexts of crisis and uncertainty, enabling more sustainable engagement and preventing burnout. Such practices should be recognised as legitimate and necessary components of transformation, not as ancillary activities.
-
- **Supporting collective and relational forms of agency:** Cultural policies should move beyond individualised, output-driven models and instead prioritise collective processes, long-term collaboration, and relational infrastructures. Humans act as interconnected beings embedded in communities and ecosystems; policy instruments should therefore support formats that foster trust, shared meaning, and collective intelligence as foundations for lasting cultural and societal change.
- **Integrate Diverse Forms of Knowledge into Policy Development and Implementation:** Policymaking should acknowledge emotional, embodied, artistic, and experiential knowledge as valuable forms of expertise alongside technical and scientific knowledge. Cultural practitioners and facilitators should be included as contributors to policy processes, not only as

implementers or communicators. This broader knowledge base enables more inclusive, ethical, and adaptive responses to complex ecological and social challenges.

This workshop underscored that *inner work is not separate from structural change*. By cultivating awareness, connection, and active hope, cultural workers strengthen their capacity to contribute to ecological and social transformation. Policies that recognise and support these inner dimensions will enable more grounded, resilient, and meaningful outer shifts.

3 Expanding Environmental Thinking & Decolonising Ecological Perspectives

Our last recurring theme and policy objective concerns our entanglements with the environment. Through our sessions, we gained knowledge and understanding on how our practices are bound up with ecological processes and heritage, how we can find independence through for example becoming a driver in energy transitions. Together, the sessions allowed us to develop perspectives for future action, driving the ecological transformation.

3.1. Co-PED: “Turning Energy Challenges into Opportunities: Cultural Spaces in Action” (Ceyda Berk-Söderblom)

Cultural spaces reimagining energy transition

At the TEH#100 Camp Meeting in Riga, the Community-based cultural and social centers as incubators for Positive Energy Districts (Co-PED) project organised the session "Turning energy challenges into opportunities: cultural spaces in action." The session focused on the diverse ways cultural and social centers throughout Europe—many of them situated in converted industrial or civic buildings—are responding to extraordinary energy pressures while positioning themselves as catalysts for the local energy transition. This showed that cultural centres are much more than consumers of energy: they are civic anchors capable of engaging residents, convening stakeholders, and making the energy transition socially meaningful. Based on inputs from the four Co-PED Urban Living Labs, La Friche la Belle de Mai (France), BASIS Vinschgau Venosta (Italy), Ifö Center (Sweden), and Die Bäckerei (Austria), participants discussed how, in practice,

cultural infrastructures, community engagement, and renewable energy systems reinforce each other.

Cultural centres as civic engines in the energy transition

A shared insight emerged from across the Co-PED pilot sites: cultural centres act as civic engines capable of connecting technical energy solutions with the social, behavioural, and cultural dimensions required for transformation. Their networks of trust, open doors, and community-facing missions grant them the position of mediator between residents, municipalities, and energy experts.

While facing increasingly extreme heat, growing energy costs, and social vulnerability, ecological reorientation became a matter of survival at La Friche la Belle de Mai. Its collaboration with Massilia Sun System and its pathway to reimagining spatial and seasonal programming illustrate the necessary adaptation of cultural practices to a future under climate constraint.

It was demonstrated by BASIS Vinschgau Venosta that even rural and mountainous regions may take the lead with regard to cooperative energy models. Its cross-municipality REC, integration of solar with wood-chip heating, and its mediating role between local politics and the needs of the community highlight how distributed territories may anchor resilient decentralised energy systems.

The Ifö Center is such a case: a huge post-industrial site in rural Sweden that showed how cultural centres often bear disproportionate energy burdens, but also how community ownership and repurposed industrial infrastructure can turn vulnerability into opportunity.

Die Bäckerei Kulturbackstube illustrated the conditions under which cultural centres can become proactive energy citizens, thanks to very favourable regulatory conditions. In particular, the formation of RECs, a civic energy platform, and creative participation formats demonstrated how cultural actors make transitions tangible and democratic.

In all three cases, cultural centres proved to be soft infrastructure—not merely places of artistic production but also important nodes of social resilience and public mobilisation.

Shifting energy mindsets: insights from the network

Discussion after the presentations elucidated how cultural centres bring about a change in thinking about energy, transitioning communities from being passive consumers to active players. Participants emphasized that the transition in energy would need not just technological upgrading but also behavioural and cultural adjustment. Practical points of entry identified include reducing energy demand, seasonally adjusting programming, consolidating usage of space, and improving insulation.

The regulatory gap in Europe is a central barrier. More than 2,000 energy communities in Austria contrast with the very limited options available in other countries and shape directly what cultural centres can achieve. It underlines a call for harmonised legal frameworks that would allow cultural participation in energy communities.

Participants also pointed out the stabilising function of cultural centres, especially in climate-stressed urban quarters, depopulating rural areas, and post-

industrial zones. They provide continuity, trust, and social cohesion, qualities essential for energy democracy.

La Friche's ecological redirection process brought up a provocative question: Which cultural activities can continue in a climate-changed world, and which must be fundamentally transformed? The session made clear that the transformation of culture and energy transformation should go hand in hand, not separately.

Policy recommendations for culture-led energy transformation

Recognising cultural centres as energy transition actors' Cultural centres should be included in EU and national climate and energy frameworks as formal implementers: Climate City Contracts, New European Bauhaus programmes, DUT PED initiatives, and REC incentive mechanisms.

Harmonise energy-community legislation across member states Austria gives an example: simplified administrative procedures, set compensation rules, support in the feasibility stage, and easy access pathways to form RECs afford cultural centres an opportunity for active participation. These should be the standards across the EU.

Enable hybrid cultural-energy cooperatives Legal frameworks that enable cultural centres to co-own solar assets and sell locally produced energy can provide long-term economic resilience through surplus generation, guaranteeing energy sovereignty.

Fund cultural mediation and behavioural engagement, public engagement formats, solar-powered events, participatory games, storytelling projects,

children's workshops, are playing a decisive role in shifting behaviour. Climate and energy policies should devote special funds to mediation methods inspired by the cultural sphere.

Support ecological redirection in cultural infrastructures Besides retrofitting buildings, cultural centres need support to redesign programming, spatial usage, and seasonal activities in concert with climatic constraints. Ecological reorientation ought to be made eligible for structural funding.

Strengthen rural and post-industrial energy models Rural ULLs and post-industrial cultural sites boast specific assets, such as large roofs, cooperating traditions, and former industrial networks, that can be mobilised in the development of robust distributed energy systems. Therefore, policy should give priority to these territories.

Conclusion

The session "Turning energy challenges into opportunities: cultural spaces in action" highlighted that cultural centres are indispensable actors in the energy transition. Their embeddedness, trust, and participatory cultures give them a unique position to bridge technical energy solutions with everyday community realities. They mobilise residents, prototype democratic governance models, and activate energy citizenship. The policy message is clear: Without cultural infrastructures at their core, the energy transitions in Europe will remain technically correct but socially incomplete.

3.2. Session of TEH Sustainable Buildings Hub (NEST): “Building together the NEST: Network of ecological and social transitions” (Leonardo Delmonte, Hugo Thers)

N.E.S.T. – Network of Ecological and Social Transitions – is a creative research hub/thematic working group within TEH exploring ecological thinking, relationships with place, and collective learning through walks, workshops, and site-based artistic practice. Both sessions were facilitated by Leonardo Delmonte (Wunderkammer) and Hugo Thers (Associazione Oltre).

The session was focused on rethinking sustainability in cultural centres, not just the sustainability of the buildings themselves but also a broader ecological and social approach. It touched among other things upon:

- **Integration of sustainability** into the content and activities of cultural centres, not only the infrastructure.
- **Cultural centres as spaces for collective transformation**, imagination, and experimentation (described metaphorically as “compost areas” for regenerating ideas and practices).
- Recognizing the **political and biopolitical dimensions of ecological and social work** (how bodies, space, technology, and urban environments are negotiated).
- Promoting empathy for humans and non-humans and awareness in interacting with nature.

Shift in the vision of sustainability

Thinking of buildings sustainability in the long term includes working not only on energy efficiency and structural aspects but also on the broader implications of maintenance, such as entangling these spaces with the community, fostering

dimensional care, and reflecting on the roles of our hearts and cultural processes in maintaining these centres. Overall, the discussion emphasized the need to embrace a more ecological mindset and considers social, cultural, and relational dimensions alongside the technical ones.

Sustainability must entangle social and ecological levels, considering all forms of life, and shift from a human-centred to an interspecies approach. Sustainability is also political and biopolitical. It involves reflecting how our bodies, actions, and spaces are regulated, and how cultural centres can navigate these dimensions to support sustainable and inclusive practices. Lastly, the perspective of cultural spaces as “compost areas” allows problems and challenges to be regenerated creatively. This metaphor reminds us to embrace complexity and generate new ideas and practices rather than oversimplifying. In short, the session was about reframing sustainability in cultural centres to integrate ecological, social, and political dimensions, using both practical tools (maintenance, energy, structures) and conceptual practices (co-creation, empathy, regenerative thinking).

3.3. Workshop: “We are the Flood / Ri-Ver – another look at culture and the city” (Kitti Baracsi)

Kitti Baracsi is a curator and critical educator, creative learning director and co-founder of [Criar Cidade Cooperative](#). At the intersection of art, pedagogy and urban research, her work aims to create spaces for collective learning to tackle urban inequalities.

What happens if we explore our cities from the perspective of a river? How does it allow us to think differently about ecological, social and cultural issues? The itinerant project RiVER – another look at the city co-creates a multimodal glossary

about the city, seen by the river, in the form of creative dialogues, workshops and public space interventions. The project is part of the larger initiative [periferias dibujadas](#), an art-based observatory of urban transformations.

The workshop invited participants to reflections and collective creative activities and movement, including their memories of rivers, current relationship to a river nearby, and in a second step explore what their city would look like from the perspective of the river. Participants made drawing from the perspective of the river and gave this a name:

“Indigesto” (indigestion in English) – A gesture symbolizing the difficulty of digesting something; "Inde" as in independent. And gesture for the gesto.

“Relief” – Associated with falling water that can create destruction, when flowing water falls as a waterfall the steady flow is broken, built-up pressure is being released.

“Connection” – If the river were a living being, it would want people to constantly move through it: transporting, swimming, connecting.

“Openness” – As a river, there’s a desire for freedom, near the river, re open for new ideas, new project, without limits, expand this wildness of river, for them to not feel limited

“Confusion” – The river feels unclear about how humans interact with it: there’s a mix of categories (transport, trash, enjoyment) but no clear vision of what people want from the river. Also, a confusion between people who want to protect it, who want to work with it, people who want to make it more efficient without thinking about their possible end

“Inspiration, connection, pleasure” – Represented by islands and bridges, the river connects people from one side to another

“Claustrophobica”– People talk about the river’s name but don’t see it in the city. There’s no clear connection, and the river feels fragmented and claustrophobic. No connection in our daily life except the fact that it’s the name of the city

“Playfulness” – The river as a source of joy, energy, and positive vibes.

Key insights

Through their own immersive experience, participants recognised the importance of creating spaces through feeling and imagination to create an emotional involvement to climate issues. “We are the flood” suggested that flood is not really the water but ourselves, which shed a different light on ideas about flood protection: what if we have to give more space to rivers and restrain ourselves? Participants **rethought the relationships between cities and rivers**, and how cultural centers can rewrite these narratives. Rather than just focusing on infrastructure solutions (like drainage systems), we should think about our **collective responsibility** to the river and the environment, means Kitti. Participants reflect on the current state of cities, how rivers have been replaced by urbanization throughout history, leading to a loss of nature. Discussions of ways to **reconnect with the river through cultural activities**, accessibility to water, and by addressing ecological issues like pollution and contamination, ultimately led to questions like how we organize space, develop projects, and bring (back the memory of) rivers into the city's fabric.

3.4. Presentation: “Transforming Existing Heritage for Creative Quarters” (Olga Trebuhina and Olga Vertjajeva)

“Europe is already built”; “Existing buildings are seen as obstacles not as potentials, we need to change that paradigm” – Olga Trebuhina, urbanist and architect, Olga

Vertjajeva, spatial designer and youth leader urban folks, and Nikita Merkushin, light artist, architecture student and HouseEurope! Activist Team Latvia.

[House Europe](#) is a Europe-wide policy lab and awareness campaign advocating for legal support to make renovation of buildings the norm in Europe. Their session introduced activist work tackling the construction industry in Europe, where destruction and new construction are the norm, despite vast environmental, social and ecological impacts and consequences. 36% of the CO2 emissions in Europe are caused by the construction industry. The work of the policy-lab activists consists of info campaigns and [movies](#), artworks and youth work and the campaign [House Europe! Power to Renovation](#) everyone is welcome to sign to push for new laws and the protection of affordable housing in Europe.

Policy recommendations

Establish renovation as the default policy choice: EU and national frameworks should prioritise renovation and adaptive reuse across climate, housing, urban, and cultural policies, treating demolition as a last resort. This principle should be reflected in funding criteria, planning regulations, and public procurement.

Recognise cultural reuse as a public good: Cultural and creative spaces reusing existing buildings should be formally recognised as delivering public value and made eligible for long-term structural, cultural, and climate funding, rather than short-term or temporary use schemes.

Redirect incentives towards local renovation economies: Public investment should support renovation-based development that sustains local jobs, skills, and circular economies, shifting value away from extractive demolition-led models.

Protect social and cultural memory in urban development: Planning and heritage policies should account for social use, community value, and lived history, ensuring that renovation safeguards not only buildings but the relationships and practices they host.

Added Value

- **At European level:** Aligns climate, housing, labour, and cultural objectives; reduces embodied carbon; strengthens transnational knowledge exchange on reuse.
- **At local level:** Prevents displacement, stabilises cultural ecosystems, supports affordable creative spaces, and reinforces community identity.

Policy message: Without renovation-centred policies, Europe risks losing not only buildings, but the social, cultural, and ecological foundations of its cities.

Conclusion TEH100: Shift and culture towards digital transformation

4 Advocacy: building an actionable TEH advocacy roadmap

“Advocacy is a muscle that we need to train”

Christophe Knoch

At the core of this report, and the third policy objective at the Camp Meeting is the work on tailoring an advocacy roadmap to TEH’s vision and needs. An advocacy working group led by Mieke Renders and facilitated by Christophe Knoch was kicked off at the TEH99 Conference in Sofia and continued working with the discussion of cases, and practices in online-sessions in August and September, coming to a closing (yet not final) advocacy session at the TEH100 Camp meeting in Riga. This section of the report gathers the most valuable insights from the session and informs the roadmap. The probably most important learning is that good advocacy is not informed by a perfect toolkit ready to hand but continuously practiced and thus adaptable to various crises and urgencies, assisted by a roadmap for navigation, which is outlined in the workshop summary below.

4.1. Workshop: “Advocacy practices among TEH network” (Christophe Knoch, Mieke Renders)

Advocacy as (collective) practice

As TEH we are a network of cultural centres, in different contexts, with sometimes similar but also very different challenges and struggles, which both means there is no one size fits all solution (toolkit), but the strength lies in collectively practicing our skills and combined experiences to support each other when needed, and have a strong voice outwards. In this workshop,

Cornerstones of the roadmap

Advocacy must be trained, rehearsed, and embedded in daily work. Key metaphor: fractals – the same logic applies locally, regionally, nationally, European.

- TEH is a translator, amplifier and an infrastructure for joint advocacy
- Translator between local needs ↔ political language
- Amplifier of collective voice
- Infrastructure for knowledge, timing, comparison, and legitimacy

Advocacy has two legs (or layers): Prevention and emergency response

- Prevention includes:
 - Daily relationship-building
 - Data collection
 - Vocabulary framing
 - Visibility of public value
 - Cross-sector alliances (welfare, health, urbanism)

Use the power of (new) vocabulary

- Rebranding to make a stronger case and dominate debate e.g.
 - Coalition of the “free scene” in Berlin
 - Nighttime economy in Riga
- Reject misleading terms like “resilience”

Open questions for ongoing advocacy practice

A few remaining questions might not have to be resolved at once but revisited regularly as part of a shared practice.

- How prepared are we, individually and collectively, to respond to political, financial, or social change?
- Which advocacy actions are already embedded in our daily work, even if we do not name them as such, and where are the gaps in our readiness?
- How do we translate local artistic and cultural needs into language that resonates beyond the cultural sector if needed, and which terms help or hinder political dialogue?
- Who is “the other” we need to engage at any given moment, across administrations, politics, funders, audiences, or allied public sectors, and how do local demands travel across regional, national, and European levels?
- Finally, how can the network better mobilise its collective voice, while ensuring that responsibility for advocacy remains shared between members, hubs, ExCom, and the office?

Action-level recommendation: advocacy as a continuous, preventive practice

The workshop pointed clearly toward advocacy as a continuous, preventive practice rather than a reactive intervention. TEH should structurally anchor advocacy within its governance, meetings, and strategic processes, clarifying its role as a translator, amplifier, and infrastructure for knowledge exchange rather than the ‘ambulance’ to call in an emergency. Members are encouraged to integrate regular

- relationship-building (among us, and with our respective politicians at different levels)
- vocabulary work
- data collection
- political timing awareness into everyday operations (regular outreach to important political actors around us)

At network level, this requires maintaining a living knowledge base, facilitating the circulation of methods and examples across contexts, and supporting two complementary modes of action: rapid collective responses in moments of urgency, and sustained preventive work in times of stability. Through consistent practice, shared reflection, and careful translation between contexts, advocacy can be built on our collective skillset that strengthens both local action and the network as a whole.

Further readings

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This report is a collective effort including many steps. The report has been prepared by Marthe Nehl from the TEH Coordination Office for the **Common Spaces** project.

It is based on a policy extraction framework prepared by Ceyda Berk-Söderblom with invaluable contributions from the session facilitators and speakers, Ceyda Berk-Söderblom, Christophe Knoch, Mieke Renders, Leonardo Delmonte, Hugo Tiers, Kitti Baracsi, Lauma Gailite, Kristaps Cirulis, Jurga Kupstyte, Hanna Olsson, Liene Jurgelane, Laura Camacho Salgado, Israel Aloni, Olga Trebuhina, Olga Vertjajeva and support from the TEH CO Barbara Elia, Erika Haxhi, Olga Zaporozhets, Christelle Porteau, Léo Lethielleux, Thalia Giovannelli.