

At the core of change solutions at PPCM is the fact that no gap between the artistic work and communities exists. Work is not produced *for* the community, work is developed *with* the community: showing work in progress, developing young creatives, building relationships over time. Art is the tool that brings people together. This has built trust and support. It is enabling PPCM to identify and develop relevance, not waiting for the public to come to the venue, but facilitating change and making genuine links across the community.

In turn, this has made the centre a highly desirable partner for a range of other organisations and funders. PPCM has also become a highly networked organisation. It works with partners across many industries and sectors to broaden its reach and enhance its impact. This includes work with schools (including special needs schools), universities, prisons, other arts and cultural organisations, corporate companies etc.

Building a home for PPCM that was central to the community has been an essential part of the company's development. This provided visual evidence that change was occurring. They can now 'host people at our place'. There is an open-door policy and anyone can come in, any time, to use the foyer, to meet for coffee and connect with others. This took 7 years to realise, including attracting funding.

A great part of this success was and is developing the correct organisational culture. PPCM see their role as facilitators and enablers. This requires a certain type of personality and skillset. Recruitment and training practices were adapted to identify the right mix of people, including looking outside the arts, for example, to people who had previously worked in areas such as social businesses. This brought in essential skills such as financial management, as well as different perspectives, broadening the horizons of the team and inspiring new ways of thinking and working.

An interesting outcome of this cross-sectoral and cross-skill approach is that PPCM has increased its ambition. Originally when they set a target of 50% growth, it felt like the limit of their ambition until they realised that this was a tiny aim in comparison to start-up companies in the commercial sector. An international focus has also enabled them to think big - they are currently developing activities with partners in the Caribbean asking how their model of incubating and facilitating artistic experiences might enable socio-economic benefits for people there.

The vision is now to work on new growth, to be an activator of socio-economic change, creating an ecosystem that helps pay the investment back in the community. PPCM are considering alternative forms of finance to make this happen including social investment funding for a project establishing a circus school within a local high school, developing a social start-up incubator, and more.

'See the reality. Don't wait for funding cuts, search for inspiration now - try things, test things, work out what works and what doesn't, adapt your business model before any cuts happen.'

AMBASADA (Timisoara)

"You can only be relevant for a limited time – make things happen"

AMBASADA'S AIM IS TO BRING TOGETHER BOTH THE NON-PROFIT AND CREATIVE COMMUNITIES TO GENERATE NEW PROJECTS AND IMPACTFUL SOLUTIONS (WHILE DRINKING A FAIR-TRADE COFFEE!). THEIR CENTRE IN TIMISOARA HAS BECOME A CROSS-SECTORAL SPACE FOR BOTH ARTS AND NON-ARTS NGOS AND THEY FIND THAT IT IS EQUALLY INTERESTING FOR THE CORPORATE SECTOR, AS AN ALTERNATIVE SPACE FOR LEARNING AND INSPIRING EMPLOYEES, ALL THE WHILE CONNECTING TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND SOLVING ISSUES IMPORTANT TO THEM.

Ambasada's roots are in a world music festival established in 2006 by Andreea Iager-Tako and Norbert Tako. From 2010 onwards, the team began to produce other events and developed from concerts and workshops to promoting active citizenship, diversity and more. This led to formally establishing Ambasada as an independent cultural centre in 2015, under the NGO Asociația CASA PLAI.

The team behind PLAI is a community of volunteers dedicated to positive civic action and social change. The original group saw an opportunity to increase the impact of their three-day festival by creating a space that encourages collaboration between organizations and people from the local creative and non-profit community. They stepped in to deliver free access to space, support and guidance and created a platform to develop ideas and businesses in the absence of government provision.

Ambasada is now a meeting place for NGOs, freelancers, artists, musicians and social and creative entrepreneurs. It consists of a bistro, co-working space, meeting rooms, performance and rehearsal spaces and an event hall accommodating between 100 and 300 people. It offers free facilities and services, supported by income from the bistro and related commercial activities (bistro and related services 70%, corporate sponsorships 30%). The number of full-time employees is around nine but such employment is also part of Ambasada's developmental approach. For example, bistro employees are people with disabilities and young people from the foster care system. This not only provides employment opportunities, but also a framework that is safe and structured, enabling employees to develop confidence, life skills and a much-needed support network. From the outset, Ambasada was a partner in a European-funded project, the objectives of which were to create job opportunities for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. This drive to secure and sustain jobs meant that the project started with a social enterprise outlook, rather than a volunteering mindset.

A related concern is the importance for Ambasada of recognising and preserving the industrial heritage of the town. Indeed, Ambasada chose the initial location for housing their centre because of its local historical significance. It was a famous hat factory, Fabrica de pălării din Timișoara (PALTIM). At a time when many industrial buildings were being demolished, the team were driven by the need to prove that creative and social business models can preserve industrial buildings and keep them alive, providing a post-industrial use and resource.

Securing tenure and long-term financial sustainability is a key in Ambasada's plan and their biggest cost is rent. On realising that in order to become sustainable they would need to purchase a building, they embarked on the journey to raise investment and secure a permanent home. This drive has been successful and enabled them to buy an old paint factory, which also has local historical significance, and they will move in in 2019 following refurbishments.

All of this has led to Ambasada establishing itself as a significant partner in the city, taking lead roles in the bid for European Capital of Culture for 2021 and being part of developing a cultural strategy for Timisoara.

Through learning by doing, Ambasada continues to gain knowledge, which it then applies to developing their plans and strategy. They are keen to share their lessons with others and when asked what would be top tips, they have eight:

- Validate your ideas at an early stage with the community you serve.
- A personal and informal approach reaps honest answers and feedback.
- Always review where you make the most impact.
- Look for opportunities to pass over ownership to your community and don't feel as though you have to do everything. (For example, Ambasada are exploring how they might hand their flagship festival to a younger team of colleagues to ensure it stays relevant.)
- Have a process for evaluating ideas.
- Learn to say no. (In order to maintain a balance between staying true to the core mission and being sustainable in the long term, Ambasada assesses impact and relevance against income-generating potential. If the income potential is too low, then work is turned down to minimise the opportunity cost to the organisation.)
- Diversity by design: Ambasada cite 'being outsiders' as a distinct advantage and that complex networking and diversity has been a key strength in enabling an integrative approach.
- Treat money as a resource, not as a means to an end. A sound financial plan is, of course, essential but money comes and goes. Ambasada have developed their capacity to calculate financial risk and treat money as the resource needed to realise their social mission.

"You can only be relevant for a limited time – make things happen, share the ownership and be willing to pass things over".

TEPLE MISTO (Ivano-Frankivsk)

"The challenging environment that exists in Ukraine gave rise to Teple Misto"

TEPLE MISTO AIMS TO BE AN INNOVATIVE PLATFORM THAT CREATES NEW POSSIBILITIES AND DRIVES SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION, INSPIRING AND ENCOURAGING CHANGES FOR THE BETTER IN IVANO-FRANKIVSK AND WIDER UKRAINE.

Established by entrepreneur Yuriy Fylyuk in 2014, Teple Misto is a platform connecting a variety of initiatives arising from the city administration, local businesses and the community with the aim of supporting the sustainable development of Ivano-Frankivsk. This is achieved through a range of projects that build a dialogue between different stakeholders in the city. The organisation has a number of full-time and part-time employees and volunteers. The main activities include:

- Online platform management
- Project initiation and management
- Grant making for social and creative projects
- Management of Urban Space 100
- Development and management of an innovation centre

All of this combines contemporary art, new educational approaches, urbanism, 'new' economics and collaborations with international partners that opens up Ukraine to progressive and innovative development.

The challenging environment that exists in Ukraine with regard to citizens' low level of trust in their state and the lack of support for the development of civil society organisations in the country gave rise to Teple Misto. The aim behind the project is to help bridge the gap between civil society and the public administration. The vision was to create a platform that links the city administration, local businesses and community, with Teple Misto acting as catalyst and coordinator between different stakeholders. The idea is to be a research and development engine for the city, concentrating on innovation projects. As the state has no mechanism to support such a venture, the primary funding is provided by local businesses who share Teple Misto's values and vision for the sustainable development of Ivano-Frankivsk.