

C R E A
S E S
T I V E
N E T

STRONGER ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS FOR A GREATER SOCIAL IMPACT

HEARING THE VOICE OF ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS

Creative Lenses Focus Groups Report

Writtten by Prof. Giovanni Schiuma,
Dr. Daniela Carlucci, Dr. Francesco
Santarsiero, Prof. Beniamino Murgante
and Dr. Antonio Lerro

CONTENT

| | |
|--|--------------|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY..... | p. 3 |
| 1 INTRODUCTION..... | p. 7 |
| 1.1 BACKGROUND: THE PROJECT CREATIVE LENSES..... | p. 8 |
| 1.2 THE PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH METHOD | p.9 |
| 1.3 THE CREATIVE LENSES PROJECT AND PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH..... | p.9 |
| 1.4 FOCUS GROUPS & INTERVIEWS IN CREATIVE LENSES PROJECT..... | p. 10 |
| 2. FOCUS GROUPS | p. 11 |
| 2.1 ABOUT FOCUS GROUP METHOD..... | p. 11 |
| 2.2 METHODOLOGY..... | p. 12 |
| 2.3 PARTICIPANTS..... | p. 12 |
| 2.4 THE FOCUS GROUP GUIDE..... | p. 13 |
| 2.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA..... | p. 13 |
| 3. KEY FINDINGS OF THE FOCUS GROUPS..... | p. 13 |
| 3.1 THE COMPETITIVE SCENARIO: A LOOK AT POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIO- CULTURAL, AND TECHNOLOGICAL FORCES | p. 13 |
| 3.2 KEY WANTS, NEEDS, CHALLENGES & EXPECTATIONS OF ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS ABOUT BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION AND MANAGEMENT & AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT..... | p. 16 |
| 3.3 THE VALUE OF ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS TO SOCIETY..... | p. 25 |
| 3.4 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE..... | p. 26 |
| 3.5 COSTS AND INCOMES ISSUES..... | p. 27 |
| 4. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OPEN SESSIONS: MAIN INSIGHTS..... | p. 29 |
| 5. CONCLUSIONS..... | p. 31 |
| 6. REFERENCES..... | p. 34 |
| 7. APPENDIX | p. 35 |
| 7.1 FOCUS GROUPS FEEDBACK: KEY RESULTS..... | p. 35 |
| 7.2 FOCUS GROUPS GUIDE..... | p. 37 |
| 7.3 FOCUS GROUPS FEEDBACK FORM..... | p. 42 |



**STRONGER ARTS
AND CULTURAL
ORGANISATIONS
FOR A GREATER
SOCIAL IMPACT**



Creative Lenses is a four-year project, running from 2015 to 2019, that seeks to make arts and cultural organisations more resilient and sustainable by improving their business models and developing their long-term strategic and innovation capacities. To find out more about Creative Lenses and its publications, visit www.creativelenses.eu

Creative Lenses is a project co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union. The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many arts and cultural organisations (ACOs) around Europe are trying to find new ways to survive and grow up in times of changed and reduced financing sources for culture. The emergent challenge for ACOs is: *how elaborating and developing viable business models and financial sustainability without compromising artistic integrity, mission and values?*

"Creative Lenses" is a four-year EU-funded project aimed to strengthening and developing the business capacity and the sustainability of the European cultural and creative players, in order to enable them to better deliver innovative, exciting and relevant arts and cultural programmes and deepening the relationships with current and new audiences alike.

In the framework of this project, a research on field was implemented to explore what are the needs, wants, expectations and challenges of the ACOs in finding new or more effective ways to survive and thrive. In particular, seven Focus Groups (FGs) plus one Focus Group meeting (FGM) were undertaken around Europe to gather, combine and generate perspectives about the investigated subjects.

Creative Lenses project's partners organised, recruited, and facilitated the FGs. A Focus Group guide was prepared to help the discussion in the FGs. FGs were organised into several issues as follows:

- i) perception of the competitive scenario from ACOs according to the PEST frame including political, economic, socio-cultural, and technological forces;
- ii) key wants, needs, challenges and expectations of ACOs in the new business landscape, with a specific focus on business model management and audience development;
- iii) the value of ACOs to society and especially to their stakeholders;
- iv) organisational development and change of ACOs;
- v) key issues about costs and incomes management.

Focusing on the insights about the practical challenges as well as on the wants/needs that ACOs feel and face in their daily life, a number of themes emerged from the research on field.

ACOs recognize different difficulties in achieving funding, and there is an acceptance that gaining financial resilience and sustainability can no longer be put off.

At the same time, a number of organisations see opportunities in the new socio-economic scenario, and are already adapting their business models as a result. Nevertheless, the challenges to face and the areas of change and improvement for ACOs are numerous and various as emerged in the FGs. They can be summarized as follows.

- ✓ **Retaining audience and reinforcing relationships with users:** All the FG participants showed a common wish to retain their audience. They are aware that, due to the new challenges in the evolving environment, retaining current audience is critical to survive. Retaining audience is becoming particularly challenging for those ACOs that seem to be forced to move their venues, mainly due to the increasing costs of rents. This is especially the case of the ACOs operating in big cities such London; but there are similar situations also in other smaller contexts. In London it is occurring a huge estate development and regeneration that is forcing a lot of ACOs to leave their venues due to the high cost of rent. This represents a relevant challenge for the organisations, which are convinced that commercial/property developers are in practice devaluing culture. Therefore, retaining audience is then perceived as crucial, especially against the relocation of venues;
- ✓ **Diversifying audience:** All the participants acknowledged the importance of diversifying audiences. They want diversifying the current audience mix; converting people who are inclined to attend into real attendees; getting current audience members to attend more frequently, getting new customers/users. Diversification is a matter of sustainability. It engages also issues related to current social phenomena (e.g. shifting of demographics of the population, immigrants, millennials) or contingent needs (change of location). On the other hand, ACOS consider hard to position them in this segmented and changing

society. In this regard, an important perceived issue is whether to focus on specific products and target audience groups, or to be as diverse as possible;

- ✓ **Engaging audience:** FG participants declared a common need to engage more and more audience and users. This is basically aimed to create loyalty among customers/users. ACOs are aware that the ongoing economic crisis has dramatically changed the environment in which they work and live. Governments' austerity has resulted in limited funds for arts and culture. Unprecedented demographic transitions and changes (ageing population, changing in the family structures, migration, etc.); and the rapidly evolving digital shift which influences people's behavior, desires and cultural consumption habits (see e.g. millennials) represent big challenges to face. For ACOs, building diverse and new audiences is crucial. However, they need also deepening relationships with existing audiences - enhancing their experience of the cultural event and/or encouraging them to discover more complex art forms, and fostering loyalty to organisation and return visits. They want to build virtuous mechanisms of co-creation between artist/cultural sector and the audience;
- ✓ **Gaining and educating new audience:** From the FGs, a common need of gaining and educating new audience emerged. Several participants underlined that, currently, education system does not provide people enough skills/knowledge they need to appreciate works of culture/arts and, as a consequence, ACOs can play an active role to overcome this weakness. Working with the education system represents a unique opportunity to cultivating new demand;
- ✓ **Exploiting emerging social trends:** Radicalization and "islamophobia" are increasing. In the FGs it arose that these negative trends can represent an opportunity. ACOs want to support minorities against hostility by engaging the new communities in programming new activities;
- ✓ **Increasing partnerships:** FGs participants agreed that is fundamental increasing the partnerships with commercial sector. Especially, they want to reinforce their cooperation with touristic companies and commercial sectors. Additionally, from the FGs, a common want regarding the increase of quality and quantity of cultural exchanges with other ACOs at local/national and international level emerged;
- ✓ **Reinforcing the relationships with public institutions:** ACOs showed the need for more support by public institutions as well as the want to reinforce their relationships with them. Especially, ACOs feel extremely important to reinforce their image in society and getting more recognition for their civic role;
- ✓ **Strengthening more and more the relationships with the community:** ACOs want to be more and more connected to the community and to improve their image at social level. They want to strengthen their position by connecting to other domains like healthcare, welfare and education;
- ✓ **Upscaling cultural values to the wider public:** ACOs perceive the building of trust and open dialogues with civil society as well as the constitution of cultural policy concept as vital to survive;
- ✓ **Reinforcing partnerships in education:** FGs participants reported a common want to achieve stronger civic engagement with a specific focus on education and training. They want elaborating and developing more activities, products and services aimed to better link the world of the arts/culture and the world of the education and training;
- ✓ **Increasing cooperation with other ACOs:** A further feature was observed to be a common want of ACOs, i.e. sharing services/resources with other ACOs (especially in marketing area). This practice was viewed as an opportunity also in connection to the chance of reducing costs. Certain organisations are also exploring the option of sharing spaces and venues to reduce operational costs;
- ✓ **Getting internationalization and international recognition:** FGs participants reported a common want, i.e. increasing their level of internationalization in terms of collaborations/partnerships/image/brand;
- ✓ **Strengthening and improving image:** In the longer term, "be respected" and improving image of cultural players in the eyes of society represent a shared need among ACOs;
- ✓ **Assessing the quality and the effectiveness of the activities:** There is a relevant want to provide evidences of the effectiveness of arts and cultural activities to external stakeholders. Especially, participants stated that it is more and more important to provide impacts for funds. More generally, proving the positive impact of arts and cultural activities on society is perceived important also to

- create trust instead of suspiciousness (especially in case of sponsorships). Despite the acknowledgement of the importance of proving and evaluating impacts, ACOs perceive the development of measures of impact as very challenging;
- ✓ **Diversifying incomes streams and independency from public funding:** The economic downfall has meant major cuts in arts and culture funding on both national and local levels, but ACOs do not consider this a purely negative thing. FGs participants stated that in medium-long term, they want to diversify their incomes streams, and to reach financial self sustainability. Several of them stressed: *"greater financial resilience or death"*;
 - ✓ **Preserving the quality of product/service against private funding:** Despite the wide acknowledgement of the importance of capturing private funding and becoming more and more independent from public financial support, participants showed the want to preserve the quality and the autonomy of development of their products/services. There is an increasing pressure to proof the value of arts and cultural initiatives in quantitative figures. However, this can endanger to some extent the core (intrinsic) values of culture. Arts and culture are described more and more in terms of economic and material value, therefore ACOs need to take care that the intrinsic artistic value and social value of arts are being recognized as well;
 - ✓ **Enhancing people management:** Several participants declared the need to increase their own team in terms of quality and quantity as well as to have skilled employees in finance, marketing and account. Furthermore, several participants stated that there is a daily running with small multitasking team and high pressure. This underpins a number of challenges such as solving personal sustainability, work overload and avoiding "burnout" syndrome. Additionally, there is a prevalent want to invest in training on digital leadership, finance, marketing, business planning, fund raising, sustainability of the projects;
 - ✓ **Adopting more effective organizational structure:** ACOs want to create organizational structures more effective, e.g. functional structure (to overcome the current and common "factotum" role of their people, overload of work, inefficiency);
 - ✓ **Increasingly involving artists as co-organisers and co-curators:** ACOs showed the need to change the public perception of the "artist" and at the same time to make a stronger reputation of their organizations among artists. They also believe that it is really important involving artists as co-organisers, co-curators in the arts and cultural initiative. Artists "should be part of the engine";
 - ✓ **Program Planning:** FGs participants reported a common want of improving their program planning. In particular, in their opinion, the schedule should be able to advance up to one year. However, the same participants affirmed that it seems very hard to achieve this target;
 - ✓ **Facing the problems of renting:** Several participants reported a common need: new lease and affordable rent;
 - ✓ **Exploiting digital technologies:** All the participants perceived digitalization as necessary. However, a lot of them were skeptical about a massive digitalization. They would like to better understand *"How intersect digital ecosystem and social ecosystem (real world)"*. More widely, ACOs sustain that the technological developments can help them to become more sustainable. However, the efficient exploitation is not obvious. From a marketing perspective, for example, as outlined in a focus group – *"the increasing amount of (online) tools and channels makes it harder to decide the ingredients of a marketing mix. This creates a less strategic and more go with the flow way of working: trying out new applications and networks and stick with the ones that are gaining positive results"*;
 - ✓ **Developing a clear and codified strategy:** Becoming sustainable requires that the short-term orientation has to be replaced by a more long-term view. This calls for a clear strategy and clearly defined strategic objective. Generally, the priorities of stakeholders are different and often conflicting. Formulating a clear strategy dealing with how creating value for each stakeholder is crucial to guarantee sustainability over time.

In summary, in the last decades, political, social and economic changes have generated new challenges and new demands on arts and culture organizations. In the light of this, the sector has to develop new and more effective responses in order to remain healthy, flexible and able to maximize the delivery of public impact and value. ACOs have to reinforce their adaptive capacities to successfully facing several complex issues such as generational and demographic transformations, changes in public participation and funding, evolution in technological access to the arts, new ways of resource development and exploitation, etc.

Certainly, developing adaptive capacities is not effortless but, as Jerry Sternin (2003), co-author of the book "The Power of Positive Deviance", wrote: *"It is easier to act your way into a new way of thinking, than think your way into a new way of acting"* (p. 38) or in other terms it is easier to change behavior by practicing it rather than knowing about it.

INTRODUCTION

“Creative Lenses” is a EU-funded project aimed to strengthening and developing the business capacity and sustainability of European cultural and creative players, enabling them to better deliver innovative, exciting and relevant arts and cultural programmes and deepening the relationship with current and new audiences alike.

In the framework of this project, a research on-field was implemented to explore what are the needs, wants, expectations and challenges of ACOs in finding new or more effective ways to survive and thrive. In particular, seven Focus Groups (FGs) plus one Focus Group meeting (FGM) were undertaken around Europe to gather, combine and generate perspectives about the investigated subjects. Project partners organised, recruited and facilitated the FGs. Additionally to the FGs, some project partners organised an open Stakeholders' Engagement Session (SES) aimed to discuss with some of their key-stakeholders – e.g. national, regional or local culture funders and further stakeholders from other not arts based sectors, public officer, city authorities, business people, investors, etc. – the main findings emerging from the FGs, and to create a first important chance both of benchmarking between organisations and stakeholders and of presenting the project Creative Lenses as a whole.

FGs were organized into several areas of discussion: *i)* perception of the competitive scenario according to the PEST frame including political, economic, socio-cultural, and technological forces; *ii)* key wants, needs, challenges and expectations of ACOs in the new business landscape, with a specific focus on business model management and audience development; *iii)* the value of arts and cultural organisations to the society and in particular to their stakeholders; *iv)* organisational development and change of ACOs; *v)* key issues of costs and incomes management.

This report summarizes the main insights gathered in the FGs and SESs, by setting out the key themes that have emerged and making some recommendations. Additionally, it presents some creative maps summarizing the main needs, wants, expectations and challenges of arts and cultural players in relation to business model innovation and management and audience development as arisen from the research field. A brief overview of the follow-up of the FGs concludes the report.

1.1 BACKGROUND: THE PROJECT “CREATIVE LENSES”

“Creative Lenses” is a unique large cooperation project funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Commission, dedicated to strengthening and developing the business capacity and sustainability of European cultural and creative players, enabling them to better deliver innovative, exciting and relevant arts and cultural programmes and deepening the relationships with current and new audiences alike.

Many cultural organisations and artists around Europe struggle to find new ways to survive and develop in times of changing and declining financing supports for culture. The key objective of “Creative Lenses” is to research, devise and test new business and management models for the sector that can be replicated and then used by a wide range of arts and cultural players throughout Europe.

During 4 years, a unique partnership of 13 cultural centres, universities, city authorities, networks and cultural agencies will research and test new business models together with a wide range of cultural players throughout Europe. The project is divided into three phases (Figure 1).

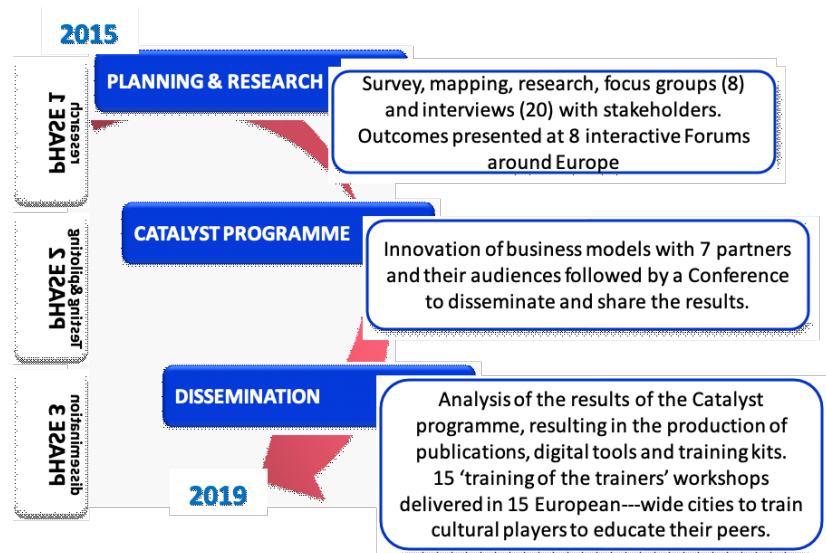


Figure 1- The phases of the Creative Lenses project

Dissemination of the project will also be delivered through online communication, a book, a media campaign and a closing project conference.

It is hoped that the involvement of policy makers and stakeholders together with the dissemination of the project's results, will have an impact on funding schemes and policy development at local, regional, national and European levels. Most importantly, "Creative Lenses" will contribute to a more sustainable, confident and effective cultural sector and the desired result is the building of capacity within society through cultural development into the future.

1.2 THE PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH METHOD

Participatory research has gained increasing importance as a research strategy within qualitative social research (Bergold, 2007; Bergold and Thomas, 2010).

Participatory research methods are characterized by planning and conducting the research process with those people whose life world and meaningful actions are under study (Bergold and Thomas, 2012). Consequently, this means that the aim of the inquiry and the research questions develop considering two perspectives—the one related to science and the one related to practice. In the best case, both sides benefit from the research process.

Participatory research is a very demanding process (Arnstein, 1969). However, it is a methodology that argues in favor of the possibility, the significance, and the usefulness of involving research partners in the knowledge production process (Bergold and Thomas, 2012).

There are several approaches to the participatory research, such as, for example, participatory action research (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005), cooperative inquiry (Heron, 1996), participatory rural appraisal, participatory learning and action, and participatory learning research (an overview of the approaches is provided in Chambers, 2008).

The common aim of these participatory research approaches is to change social reality on the basis of insights into everyday practices that are obtained by means, collaborative research on the part of scientists,

practitioners, service users, etc. (Bergold and Thomas, 2010). Two procedures appear to be applied very frequently in participatory research, namely interviews and focus groups. The interviews conducted within the framework of participatory research are normally semistructured—a type frequently used in qualitative research. The second instrument, the focus group, stands for a lot of different procedures. The common feature is that the focus group participants have the opportunity to enter into conversation with each other in a safe setting and to deal with several aspects of the project (Bergold and Thomas, 2010).

1.3 THE CREATIVE LENSES PROJECT AND THE PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

The “Creative Lenses” project develops according to the participatory research approach. In fact, all the ACOs partners of the project participate actively to the research process as actors whose life and action are under study. Most importantly, all the “Creative Lenses” participants analyse and reflect on knowledge generated by the project, in order to obtain useful and reliable findings. Participatory research involves inquiry, but also action. In the “Creative Lenses” project, partners not only discuss and share their problems, they also reflect on possible solutions to them and possible actions which need to be taken.

From a procedure viewpoint, to date the “Creative Lenses” project has included both interviews and focus groups which were carried out in several ACOs across Europe.

The “Creative Lenses” project develops according to participatory research approach. Project partners have control over the research agenda, the process and actions.....Participatory research involves inquiry, but also action. In the “Creative Lenses” project, partners not only discuss and share their problems, they also reflect on possible solutions to them and actions which need to be taken.

1.4 FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS IN THE CREATIVE LENSES PROJECT

In the “Creative Lenses” project, the choice of implementing FG is mainly explained by the participatory and exploratory nature of the research. Basically, the FGs allowed to gain a better understanding about the challenges, needs, wants and expectations of ACOs in relation to business model innovation and management as well as to audience development. Additionally, the FGs went beyond the mere research investigation purposes. In fact, FGs offered participants an opportunity to get or to better know each other and to create a constructive chance of networking. In fact, they represented learning and knowledge sharing experience for local partners, who “recruited” the focus group participants, collaborated to the facilitation of the focus group, and activated a networking opportunity.

Focus group method was also useful to provide useful insights to design the Business Model Survey¹ foreseen by the project. It indeed enriched the initial researchers plan by bringing up a new set of relevant dimensions in the domain, with the respondent words that better describe their worlds and references. This is important to reduce misinterpreting the survey questions. The interviews were aimed basically to identify the main characteristics of current business models of the cultural organizations and approaches to audience development. Individual interviews helped to enhance the data richness of the FGs. Moreover, the integration of FG and individual interview data allowed to identify convergence of the main characteristics of the investigated subjects across FG and individual interviews, which enhanced the trustworthiness of the findings.

¹ The purpose of this international survey is to understand and collect feedback about the management and the innovation practices of business models of arts and cultural organisations.

2. FOCUS GROUPS

2.1 ABOUT FOCUS GROUP METHOD

A focus group is a *"qualitative data collection method in which one or two researchers and several participants meet as a group to discuss a given research topic"* (Mack et al., 2005, p. 51). In social sciences, focus groups are mainly used as qualitative method to explore people's experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns (Kitzinger, 1994; 2005). They can be used at different phases of a research, either at the beginning of an inquiry, or at the end to enrich or interpret information gathered by other research means, approaches and methods.

Krueger and Casey (2000) define a focus group as *"a carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment"* (p. 5). Compared to interview techniques, focus groups represent a research method which allows researcher to take a less dominating role. This to some extent motivated the wide diffusion of this method in social science. Certainly, focus groups present some disadvantages (Drayton et al., 1989; Krueger, 1988). For example, the groups tend to suffer from "volunteer bias". Moreover, the extra freedom given to the participants can mean that the researcher can have less control of the discussion. Another disadvantage is the reciprocal influence of participants, e.g. the group could be dominated by more talkative members. Additionally, the method is criticised for not using a representative sample. This makes the generalisation of the results to the population difficult. The qualitative style of the method can make difficult to analyse the data collected and validate any conclusions (Drayton et al., 1989; Krueger, 1988).

However, focus groups have also several advantages, also compared to standard interviewing (Drayton et al., 1989; Krueger, 1988): *"The method is particularly useful for exploring people's knowledge and experiences and can be used to examine not only what people think but how they think and why they think that way. In this sense focus groups reach the parts that other methods cannot reach"* (Kitzinger, 1995; p. 299).

During a focus groups, participants can provide mutual support in expressing feelings that are common to their group but which they consider to deviate from mainstream culture (Kitzinger, 1995). Moreover, the perceived freedom can allow participants to talk in the language used in day to day interactions. This is useful to researcher because people's knowledge and attitudes are not entirely encapsulated in reasoned responses to direct questions (Kitzinger, 1995). More generally, focus groups give researcher the opportunity to understand participants' viewpoint and problems, and allows unanticipated issues to be explored (Kitzinger, 1995).

Due to its characteristics, focus groups method is also popular with those conducting action research and those concerned to "empower" research participants because the participants can become an active part of the process of analysis (Kitzinger, 1995).

2.2 METHODOLOGY

In the "Creative Lenses" project, seven focus groups plus one focus group meeting were developed around Europe to gather, combine and generate perspectives about the challenges, the needs, wants and expectations of ACOs in relation to business model innovation and management as well as to audience development strategy definition and execution.

Project partners organized, recruited and facilitated focus groups. For each focus group, it was required to involve a suitable percentage (at least 50%) of organizations from cultural centres and performing arts. The rest of participants could be from other art-forms such as visual arts, media arts, literature and film/video. To support this qualitative research, the research team of the University of Basilicata developed a focus group guide informed by the research questions (see Appendix), including piloting questions and methodological suggestions for facilitating the team working.

Each focus group was guided by a facilitator who was briefed by one of the UNIBAS researchers. The facilitator with experience and knowledge of the cultural organizations was able to "translate" technical

questions in languages and modalities fitted with the mind-sets of the participants and to drive conversations and reporting the main insights from group activities.

A note taker was guaranteed in each focus group. After the focus group, the note taker arranged the notes and sent them to the UNIBAS research team. Focus group note-takers were responsible for taking detailed notes on what they observed and on what participants said during the focus group.

The discussion was guided using the focus group guide in order to generate common discussion topics and later facilitate comparisons across different focus groups and Countries. The guide was adapted – if necessary - to each Country's language, and also allowed for a degree of flexibility in following the development of each discussion.

This report is a distillation of the consolidated notes from the 7 focus groups discussions and 1 focus group meeting, and also reflects the synthesis discussion.

2.3. PARTICIPANTS

A total of 7 focus groups discussions plus 1 focus group meeting in Brussels were conducted encompassing 176 participants (see Figures 2-3).

Focus groups organisers

- Kaapeli (Helsinki, Finland)
- UAL & Village Underground (London, UK)
- IETM (Brussels, Belgium)
- Stanica (Slovakia)
- ODC Vyrsopeiseio (Athens, Greece)
- Creative Plot & TEH (Lund, Sweden)
- P60 (Amsterdam, Netherland)
- Manifatture Knos (Lecce, Italy)

Most of the participants (over one-third) in the focus groups and the meeting were cultural centers. Regarding performing arts, music and then dance and theater were the sectors more represented.

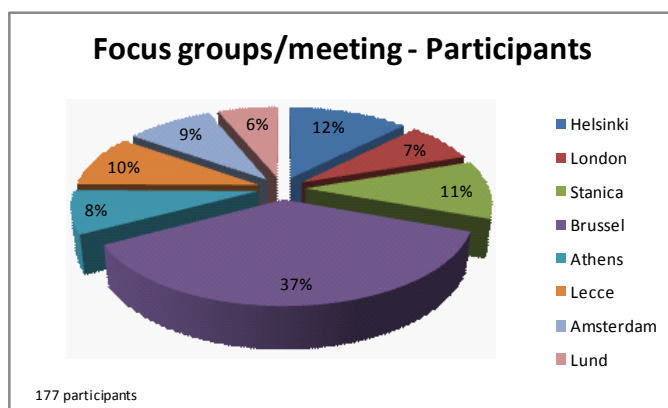


Figure 2 - Focus groups/meeting participants

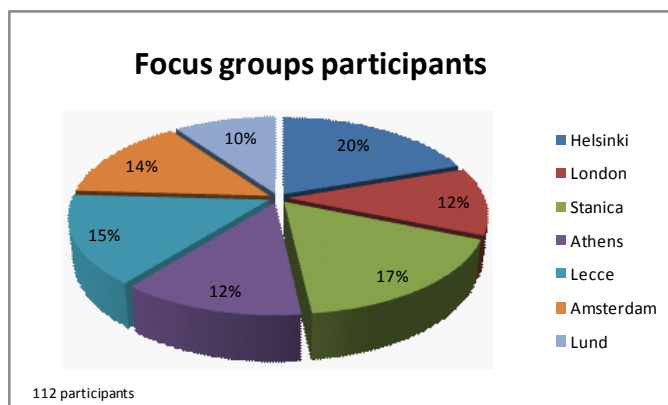


Figure 3 - Focus groups participants

2.4 THE FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

A focus group guide was designed to guarantee effective and to stimulate discussion sessions (see Appendix). The guide was designed around 4 main sections aimed to encourage and drive debate around the following topics: *i)* perception of the competitive scenario according to the PEST frame including political, economic, socio-cultural, and technological forces; *ii)* key wants, needs, challenges and expectations of arts and cultural organisations in the new business landscape, with a specific focus on business model management and audience development; *iii)* the value of arts and cultural organisations to society and in particular, to their

stakeholders; iv) organisational development and change of ACOs; v) key issues of costs and incomes management.

The part of the guide regarding the stakeholder session was designed to encourage a fruitful conversation and sharing of views and ideas on business model innovation and audience development among ACOs and their stakeholders.

2.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA

Focus groups are useful in defining issues that might otherwise remain vague, in evaluating concepts and in generating qualitative feedback regarding wants, needs, challenges and expectations of arts and cultural organizations across Europe. However, caution and judgment should be used in evaluating qualitative research findings. The participants in these focus groups represent a very small sample of the entire population of arts and cultural organizations in Europe. Therefore, the findings of this research on field cannot be generalized. However, if the limited numbers of individuals participating in qualitative research studies can be seen as a barrier to generalisation, they are balanced by the benefits that focus groups bring in terms of the depth of the analysis and through the interactive approach (Bergeaud-Blackler et al., 2010). Another possible limitation is that focus group can reduce the expression of individual points of view and be therefore a distortive factor. Group dynamics can have an impact on responses. Some respondents are reluctant to disagree with their peers, while others may provide answers that they think are desired by the facilitator (i.e., acquiescent response) (Bergeaud-Blackler et al., 2010).

Last important critique addressed to focus group method is the interference with the object studied that is the possibility given to the “facilitator” to guide the discussion in one way rather than another to obtain the desired findings (Bergeaud-Blackler et al., 2010). Therefore, although all efforts to minimize these and other limitations in designing and moderating the focus groups were done, some amount of bias happen inevitably. The reader is cautioned that the findings from these discussions cannot be statistically projected or generalized to the larger population of arts and cultural organizations across Europe.

3. KEY FINDINGS OF THE FOCUS GROUPS

FGs were carried out to explore the following main research question: *what are current needs, wants, expectations and challenges of ACOs in relation to business model innovation and management and audience development?* The research question shaped the approach and analysis of FGs. Five main areas of investigation have been considered (Figure 4).

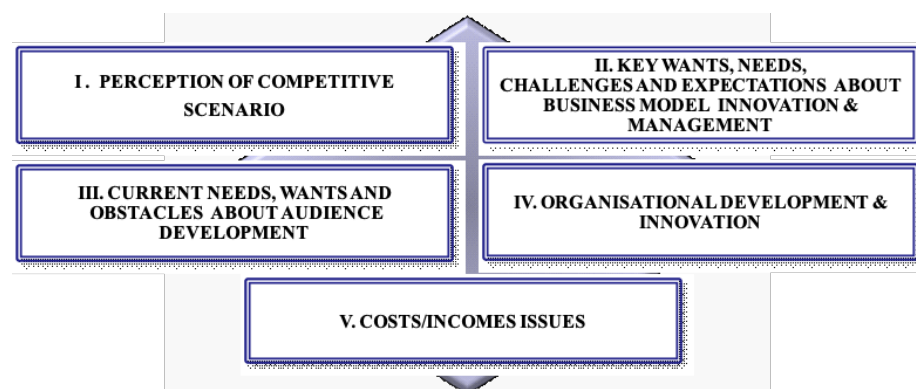


Figure 4- Areas of investigation

In the following, for each area of investigation, the main findings of focus groups activities are provided.

3.1 THE COMPETITIVE SCENARIO: A LOOK AT POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIO-CULTURAL, AND TECHNOLOGICAL FORCES

The analysis of competitive scenario was carried out around the following questions:

- ***How do ACOs perceive, experience and understand the current socio economic landscape?***
- ***What are the factors of the external environment that can have a significant influence on their current operations, growth, and long-term sustainability?***

The questions were processed by focus groups participants into a PEST frame. PEST format gives an overview of the different macro-environmental factors to be taken into consideration for understanding market growth or decline, business position, potential and direction for operations. In particular, participants responded to two basic questions:

- *What are the most important political, economic, social and technological factors affecting your contemporary activities in positive sense?*
- *What are the most important political, economic, social and technological factors affecting your contemporary activities in negative sense?*

Focus Groups showed that, when considering external circumstances/factors which influence their activities as independent cultural players, the majority of participants understand the situation ambiguously and sometimes even contradictorily. Despite that, from discussions several commonalities emerged. They are briefly summarized in Figure 5.



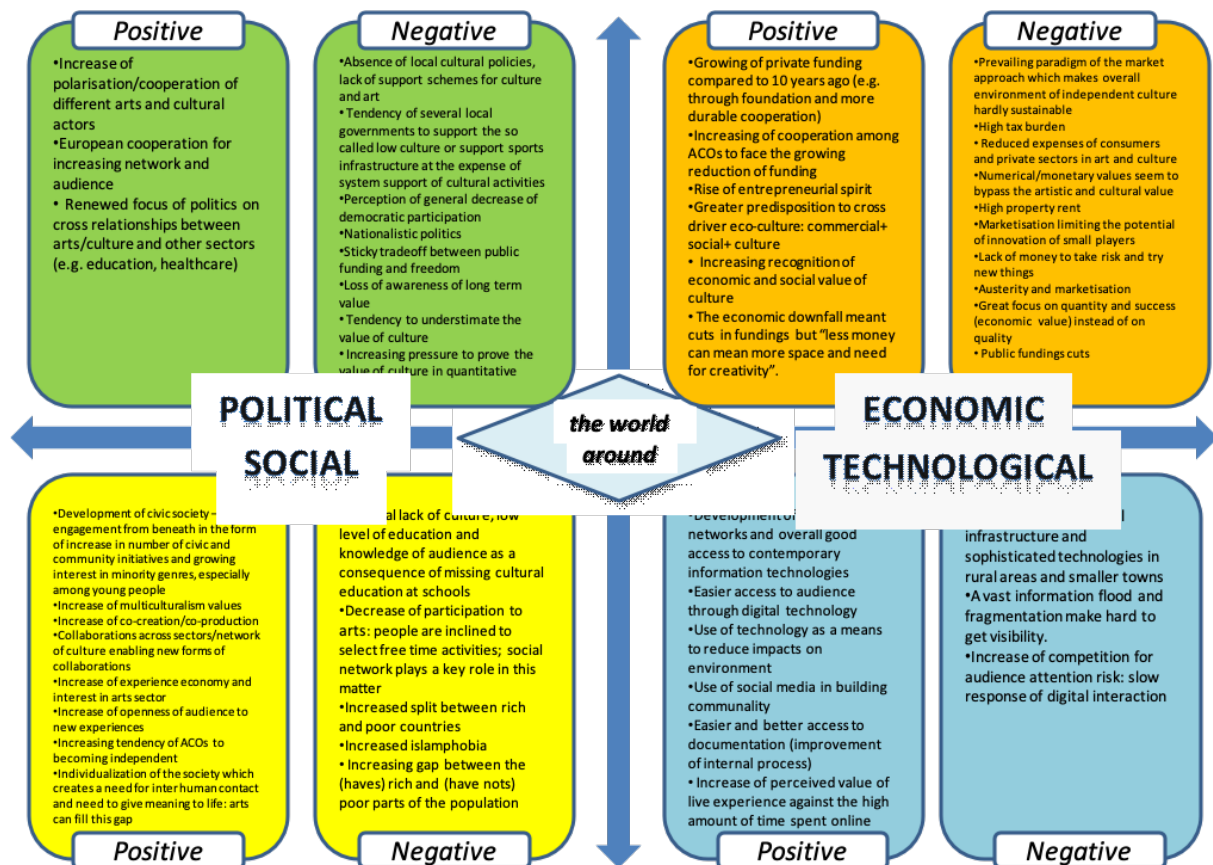


Figure 5- Most influential factors according to PEST frame

3.2 KEY WANTS, NEEDS, CHALLENGES AND EXPECTATIONS ABOUT BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION AND MANAGEMENT AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

All participants have reflected on and shared opinions/ideas and beliefs about their wants, needs, challenges and expectations about their capacity to manage their business model and to continue creating value in a sustainable way.

Sharing viewpoints and discussions found common ground around two main research questions:

- i) *How do ACOs see themselves in the short and medium/long term?*
- ii) *What are the ACOs key wants, needs, challenges and expectations about sustainable value creation?*

Some findings have some local differences, due to a variety of reasons including political, governmental, funding policies, socio-economic and cultural features. However, except some specific aspects opportunely reported, generally a common view of investigated topics from all participants is emerged.



It was clear from all the FGs that ACOs find themselves at a turning point where new ways of managing and funding arts and culture need to be explored. Reflecting on their current situation and having a look at their future vision, the participants have identified their wants, needs, challenges and expectations in different time perspectives: short, medium and long term. A huge amount of thoughts, ideas and beliefs resulted.

They concerned different aspects describing, to some extent, the manner by which ACOs create value and organize their resources for value creation. These aspects include:

- Audience/users development;
- Partnerships and stakeholders' relationships;
- Funding and financial aspects;
- Organisational resources;
- Strategy.

In the following the main insights about each aspect are presented.

AUDIENCE/USERS DEVELOPMENT

ACOs perceive audience/users development as the key activity to accomplish to survive. It is conceived not just a quantitative increase in the audience or persons participating in cultural activities, but also the types of public who are approached and involved. For ACOs audience/users development undertakes to meet the needs of existing and potential audiences and to develop on-going relationships with audiences. These relationships must be more and more intense. As emerged in a focus group *"People want to go explore and discover for themselves and not be told what to do. At the same time, they're getting more curious"*. This call for more and more chances for co creation between artist / culture sector and audience. Main results from the discussions around audience/users development are summarized in the following. They are illustrated within a short-term, medium-term and long-term frame.

Audience/users development – short term

Retaining audience & reinforce relationships with users: All the participants showed a common want to retain their audience. They are aware that due to evolving environment challenges retaining current audience

is critical to survive. Retaining audience is becoming particularly challenging for those ACOs that seem to be forced to move their venues, mainly due to the increasing rents. This is especially the case of the ACOs operating in big cities such London; but there are similar situations also in other smaller contexts (e.g. Zilina). In London is occurring a huge estate development and regeneration that is forcing a lot of ACOs to leave their venues due to the high cost of rent. One of the participants of focus group held in London said that *"in London the property market does not make the conditions right for ACOs in the city there was 300%-400% rent increase"*. This represents a huge challenge for organizations (48% of the music venues in London were lost), which are convinced that commercial/property developers are in practice devaluing culture. Retaining audience is then perceived as crucial, especially against the relocation of venues to a periphery from the city center. More generally ACOs need to reinforce the relationships with their audience. In line with Bollo's statement (2013) they are aware that knowing their own audience is fundamental in order to improve the activities planning, the quality of the offers, the communication and the marketing strategies, to verify the social impact of initiatives, to understand customer's behavior and choices and to be accountable to sponsors and stakeholders.

In the evolving environment retaining current audience is critical to survive. It has been calculated that it costs between seven and ten times as much to gain a new attendee, than it does to develop existing attendees up the customer loyal ladder (Audiences, 2010).

Exploiting emerging social trend: Radicalization and "islamphobia" are increasing. In the focus groups it arose that these negative trends can represent an opportunity. ACOs want to support minorities against hostility by engaging the new communities in programming new activities. More widely ACOs perceive that it is hard to position them in this segmented society. An important question is whether to focus on specific products and target groups, or to be as diverse as possible.

Audience/users development – medium term

Diversifying audience: All the participants acknowledged the importance of diversifying audiences. They want diversifying the current audience mix; converting people who are inclined to attend into real attendees; getting current audience members to attend more often, reaching new customers/users. Diversification is a matter of sustainability. It engages also issues related to current social phenomena (e.g. shifting demographics of the population immigrants, millennial) or contingent needs (change of location). There are two kinds of arguments for diversification: the "it is the right thing to do" argument, which is philosophically and anthropologically based (arts and culture play an important role in promoting cultural, social and economic growth). The other one is the "financial" argument, which focuses on the economic stability of the organisations.

Engaging audience: FG participants declared a common need to engage more and more audience and users. This is basically aimed to create loyalty among customers/users. ACOs are aware that the ongoing economic crisis has dramatically changed the environment in which they work and live. Government austerity measures in reaction to financial and societal tensions have resulted in limited funds for arts and culture. Unprecedented demographic transitions and changes (an ageing population, low birth rates, changing in family structures, migration phenomena); and the rapidly evolving digital shift which influences society's behavior, desires and cultural consumption habits (see e.g. millenials) represent big challenges to face.

For ACOs building diverse and new audiences is crucial. However they need also deepening relationships with existing audiences - enhancing their experience of the cultural event and/or encouraging them to discover more complex arts forms, and fostering loyalty to organisation and return visits. They want build virtuous mechanisms of co-creation between artist/cultural sector and the audience.

Retaining audience & reinforce relationships: Participants showed a common want for maintaining current audience and strengthening the relationships with their customers/users.

Audience/users development – long term

Gaining and educating new audience: From focus groups, a common need of gaining and educating new audience emerged. Several participants underlined that, currently, education system does not to give people enough skills/knowledge they need to appreciate works of culture/arts and ACOs can play an active role to overcome this weakness. Working with the education system represents a unique opportunity to cultivating new demand.

Bringing more culture into education and bringing more education into the arts and cultural organisations can serve to develop new or greater audiences (Bamford & Wimmer, 2012)

Gaining interest of wider outside public: Focus groups participants pointed out their concern and want to reach interest from a wider panel of audience/users.

Recommendations

It is clear from the responses and discussions that ACOs are committed to getting new or greater audiences and making more loyal current customers/users. In this regard the focus groups findings shine a light on several strategic, managerial and organizational insights that can be grouped into three major categories as follows.

✓ Retaining & developing audiences

ACOs need appropriate audience development strategies and tactics. A toolkit, in the form of guidelines for strategy structure and the design of proper projects and plans focused on audience development, would be useful.

ACOs feel the need to increase the level of marketing professionalism. In this regard, they must have, or have access to, the marketing knowledge and expertise necessary to develop creative marketing plans and build audiences for their work. In this perspective, they need to develop an infrastructure that enables them to access expert marketing & audience development advice and support.

✓ Expanding and engaging audiences

ACOs need to be assisted (through models, approaches, tools) in order to improve their capabilities in:

- Using market research tools and approaches to understand the audience's views on organisation and arts/cultural form;
- Identifying one or more target groups that made sense for the organisation;
- Developing a vision about how the target audience interact with the organisation (at different level of strategic objectives, internal process, financial features, relationships, etc.);
- Engaging the organisation's leaders and staff members in audience development activities;
- Identifying barriers to be removed for new users to become engaged (identifying barriers/obstacles between the organization and the targeted users, i.e. ticket pricing, the kind of offered experience, etc.).

✓ Cultivating demand

- There is a common request of creating an engaged audience and improving the image of ACOs at social level. This calls for, among other things, stronger relationships of the ACOs with the education actors, policy makers, philanthropic funders, teachers in school system, higher education, private

trainers and teaching artists, etc. This is in order to expand arts learning, give people the skills/ knowledge they need to appreciate works of culture/arts and cultivate new audience;

- There is also a need to blend audience development and social inclusion. This calls for tools and ways for the use of audience development in social inclusion initiatives.

PARTNERSHIPS & STAKEHOLDERS RELATIONSHIPS

Strengthening relationships with stakeholders² and creating effective partnerships play a key role in ACOs' organisational activities and strategic plans. Effective stakeholder's relationships are becoming more and more relevant. It implies a willingness to listen and engage; to discuss issues of interest to stakeholders; and, critically, the organisation has to be prepared to consider changing what it aims to achieve and how it operates, as a result of stakeholder engagement. At the same time, ACOs are focusing on the creation of partnerships basically aimed to optimize operations and allocation of resources, to reduce risk and uncertainty, or to acquire specific resources, knowledge, licenses, or explore new opportunities and potential markets. These partnerships can be: i) within-sector, and ii) cross-sector.

Main results from the discussions around the topic of the stakeholders relationships and partnerships are summarized in the following. They are illustrated within a short-term, medium-term and long-term frame.

Partnerships and stakeholders relationships – short term

Increasing partnerships: Focus groups participants agreed that is fundamental to increase the partnerships with the commercial sector. Especially, they want to reinforce their cooperation with touristic companies. Additionally, from focus groups, it emerged a common want regarding the increase of quality and quantity of cultural exchanges with other ACOs at local/national and international level.

Reinforcing the relationships with public institutions: ACOs showed the need for more support by public institutions as well as the want to reinforce their relationships with them. Especially ACOs feel extremely important to reinforce their image in society and getting more recognition for their civic role.

Strengthening more and more the relationships with the community: ACOs want to be more and more connected to the community and to improve their image at social level. They want to strengthen their position by connecting to other domains like healthcare, welfare and education.

Upscaling cultural values to the wider public: ACOs perceive the building of trust and open dialogues with civil society as well as the constitution of cultural policy concept as vital to survive.

Partnerships and stakeholders relationships – medium term

Building and/or reinforcing partnerships in social areas like education, welfare and healthcare.

² **Public stakeholders:** typically, public stakeholders fall into two buckets: 1) direct program beneficiaries — “appreciators and participants” — such as ticket buyers and students served through education programs; and 2) individuals and groups of people who benefit indirectly from the organization’s programs (e.g., teachers, parents and families of student participants), and therefore have a long-term stake in the organization’s success)

Institutional stakeholders, are organizations, businesses, agencies and institutions that benefit from having the arts organization remain strong and healthy (e.g. higher education).

Investor stakeholders, are individuals and organizations who provide financial support to the organization to further its mission, including individual donors, corporate supporters, philanthropic foundations, and government funders.

Artform stakeholders, are needed to produce the art, and are therefore essential to the organization’s success. Some are internal (e.g. other arts and cultural organizations, company actors, musicians, dancers, artistic directors, administrative staff — those whose livelihoods depend on the organization’s success), and others are external (e.g., composers, playwrights, peer institutions, venue landlords).

Reinforcing partnerships in education: Focus groups participants reported a common want to achieve stronger civic engagement with a specific focus on education and training. They want elaborating and developing more activities, products and services aimed to better link the world of the arts/culture and the world of the education and training (Edutainment).

Cooperations with other ACOs: A further feature was observed to be a common want, i.e. sharing services/ resources with other ACOs (especially in marketing area). This practice was viewed as an opportunity also in connection to the issues of the costs reduction. Certain organizations are also exploring the option of space/ venue sharing to reduce operational costs.

Engaging minorities: There was an acknowledgement that negative expectations related to radicalization and "islamophobia" can be transformed into opportunities. Several participants affirmed that "we must stand by the minorities".

Partnerships and stakeholders relationships – long term

Internationalization & international recognition: Focus groups participants reported a common want, i.e. increasing their level of internationalization in terms of collaborations/partnerships/image/brand.

Strengthening and improving image: In the longer term, "be respected" and improving image of cultural players in the eyes of society represent a shared need among ACOs.

Recommendations

It is clear from the responses and the discussions that ACOs are committed to wide and reinforce their stakeholders relationships as well as to build effective partnerships. In this regard, the focus groups findings shine a light on several strategic, managerial and organizational insights that can be summarized as follows.

Partnership with other ACOs: Cuts in government funding have become severe, and many sources of funding— especially government agencies — give grants for specific programs so that less is available for general operating expenses. At the same time, ACOs face a constant increasing spiral of operating costs.

Building partnerships with other organizations is conceived important for:

- expanding customer base;
- developing new sources of funding;
- cutting costs without compromising any organisation's mission or quality;
- achieving goals that they cannot achieve on their own (e.g. construction of a new venue; designing and implementing new events, etc.).

Partnership with not arts and cultural actors: There is an increasing amount of partnership with educational, health, religious, youth development, human services, recreational, and community development organizations (more generally not-for-profit organisations). While partnerships with businesses is fairly rare.

Through these cooperations ACOs attempt to broaden community awareness of their missions and services, thus increasing the public value of their activities and offerings, and business opportunities.

However, partnering is not simple. Possible challenges of collaborations include:

- i) coordination problems arising from differences in organizational size and culture (e.g., volunteer vs. professional staff);
- ii) problems of mutual respect, influence, and benefits;
- iii) strains on the administrative capacities and scarce resources of the smaller organizations from the demands of the partnership.

In the light of this, approaches and models to drive ACOs in building and valorizing their relationships are necessary.

Additionally, ACOs want to strengthen their image of cultural players in the eyes of the society. For this purpose, they have to establish strategic objectives about how they want to be seen by its "stakeholders" (e.g. donors, community, government, users, not cultural and arts organisations, etc.) and from there gets into how they need to be seen as "customers" in order to obtain financial support. And, therefore, into determining which internal processes have to excel and how the organization needs to grow in terms of products, services, processes, technology, people, culture, etc.

FUNDING AND FINANCIAL ASPECTS

Increasingly, ACOs concerned about their financial health and their ability to continue creating and presenting great arts and cultural events. ACOs across European Countries are facing - even if to a greater or lesser extent - the reduction of their government funding. Organisations have trouble in building financial reserves and often funders do not support the costs associated with grant management, which can lead to many challenges, e.g. not full cover of the costs of many projects. ACOs perceive "achieving long-term financial sustainability" as one of their top problems and are seeking effective solutions to overcome the obstacles they experience.

Main results from the discussions around funding and financial issues are summarized in the following. They are illustrated within a short-term, medium-term and long-term frame.

Funding and financial aspects - short term

Public funding: A common want among participants is about new support schemes from government; these schemes have to encourage and support the mobility among different cultural sectors. The economic downfall has meant major cuts in arts and culture funding on both national and local levels, but ACOs do not consider this a purely negative thing.

One participant in a focus group said: *"Less money can mean more space and need for creativity. A deteriorating economic environment challenges you to come to new insights and create new connections, e.g. inter sector collaboration"*

Public/private funding: All participants underlined their want and need to diversify their financing sources. In this regard, they are aware that they have to provide impacts for funds. Proving the positive impact of arts and cultural activities on society is perceived important also to create trust instead of suspiciousness (especially in case of sponsorships).

Incomes: There was a wide consensus about the want to diversify incomes streams.

Funding and financial aspects - medium term

Incomes & independency from public funding: In medium term, ACOs want to diversify their incomes streams, and to reach independency from public funding.

Assessment of the quality and the effectiveness of the activities: There is a prevalent want to provide evidences of the effectiveness of arts and cultural activities to external stakeholders. However, ACOs perceive the development of impact measures as very challenging.

Funding and financial aspects - long term

Incomes & independency from public funding: In the long term, participants want to diversify their incomes streams, and to reach financial self sustainability. Several of them stressed: "*greater financial resilience or death*".

Preserving the quality of product/service: Despite the wide acknowledgement of the importance of capturing private funding and becoming more and more independent from public financial support, participants showed the want to preserve the quality and the autonomy of development of their product/service. There's increasing pressure to proof the value of arts and cultural initiatives in quantitative figures. This can endanger to some extent the core (intrinsic) values of culture. Arts and culture are described more and more in terms of economic and material value, so ACOs need to take care that the intrinsic artistic value and social value of arts are being recognized as well.

Recommendations

It is clear from the responses and discussions that ACOs are committed mainly to:

- Diversifying incomes streams and reaching financial self sustainability;
- Preserving the quality of product/service: against private financial support and decrease of public funding;
- Providing impact for funds and obtaining long term commitment of funding.

In this regard the focus groups findings shine a light on several strategic, managerial and organizational insights that can be summarized as follows.

Evaluation vs. performance measurement/management models: ACOs want measure the "value" they create especially to gain interest of wider outside public, included investors. They want to evaluate the impacts of their activities. However currently there is not a very wide awareness about the use of models/approaches for translating an organization's strategy into a comprehensive set of performance measures able to provide information on time for day- to-day decisions.

Moreover, ACOs have to improve their capability to think about long-term strategies for sustainability and success. Especially they need knowledge, approaches, and models to:

- articulate their needs clearly when creating financial strategy and fundraising goals;
- track progress towards "sustainability" goal;
- plan for scenarios before they occur, e.g. consider what will happen if expenses exceed expectations revenue does not materialize;
- network with other organizations in order to learn from strategies that are working for other organizations.

CROWDFUNDING

Today there are hundreds of examples of successful crowdfunding campaigns in the arts and cultural sector. For ACOs, crowdfunding represents more than simply an innovative approach to income generation. It provides organisations with opportunities to: i) develop new audiences, ii) test new ways of working, iii) generate advocacy and partnerships opportunities.

The theme of crowdfunding has been explored in the *thematic focus group* organized by IETM (Brussels). Some examples to show the different possibilities and modalities of crowdfunding in Flanders have been discussed.

The theme of crowdfunding has been explored in the thematic focus group organized by IETM (Brussels). Some examples to show the different possibilities and modalities of crowdfunding in Flanders have been discussed.



The key messages emerged from discussion are:

- ✓ Crowdfunding for the arts is time-consuming and the financial return is questionable. The non-financial return is a bigger asset. In the end the crowd is more important than the funding;
- ✓ Crowdfunding is not an independent alternative to the funding of the arts, but an addition to grants;
- ✓ ACOs are preparing for a reality in which a governments try to withdraw. Form alliances that exceed the sector and create a narrative of the impact of subsidy cuts are essential. Building a buffer to absorb reducing subsidies is crucial and the instrumentation, such as crowdfunding to make that possible is a priority.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

The survival of ACOs, as of any organization, depends on resources availability and their management. These resources range from human resources (e.g. employees, artists) to technology (e.g. ICT tools, hardware and software platforms), from venues and their layout to organisational practices. The international financial crisis has made the efficient and effective deployment and allocation of organizational resources a big issue also for ACOs. On the other hand, the speed of development of technology, especially digital technology, has created new challenges and opportunities in the arts and cultural sector.

Main results from the discussions around organizational resources issues are summarized in the following. They are illustrated within a short-term, medium-term and long-term frame.

Organisational resources - short term

Human resources management: Several participants declared the need to increase their own team in terms of quality and quantity as well as to have skilled employees in finance and accounting. Furthermore, several participants stated that there is a daily running with small multitasking team and high pressure. This underpins a number of challenges such as solving personal sustainability, work overload and avoiding burn out syndrome.

Artists: ACOs showed the need to change the public perception of the “artist” and, at the same time, to make stronger reputation of their organizations among artists. They also believe that it is really important involving artists as co-organisers, co-curators in the arts and cultural initiative. Artists “should be part of the engine”.

Program planning: Focus groups participants reported a common want of improving their program planning. In particular, in their opinion, the schedule should be able to advance up to one year. However commonly it seems very hard to plan programs.

Facing problems of rent: Several participants reported a common need: new lease and affordable rent (for example in London the gentrification and the urban regeneration processes are pushing ACOs to find new cheaper spaces in suburban areas).

Digitalization: All the participants perceive digitalization as necessary. However, a lot of them were skeptical about a massive digitalization. They would like to better understand “How intersect digital ecosystem and social ecosystem (real world)”.

More widely, ACOs sustain that the technological developments can help them to become more sustainable. However, the efficient exploitation is not obvious. From a marketing perspective, for example, - as outlined in a focus group – *“the increasing amount of (online) tools and channels make it harder to decide the ingredients of a marketing mix. This creates a less strategic and more go with the flow way of working: trying out new applications and networks and stick with the ones that are gaining positive results.”*

Organisational resources – medium/long term

Human resources management: There is a prevalent want to invest in training on digital leadership, finance, marketing, business planning, fund raising, sustainability of the projects.

Sustainability of artists: ACOs need to assure sustainability, security and training for their artists.

Maintaining richness of international online community platforms.

Recommendations

It is clear from the responses and discussions that ACOs are committed to:

Improve the human resources management: there is a wide need of a continuous training of artists and cultural workers. Focusing on employees, marketing, finance, planning, digital technology but also leadership are identified as the key areas of training. Frequently, cultural workers are “factotum” (due to also the small size of organisations) but this can produce inefficiency and burnout in long period. ACOs want to guarantee to the artists and to their workers sustainability and security.

Facing rent issues: Rent remains one of the main costs to deal with. ACOs need affordable rent. That say to us: “London is growing and yet a third of its creative work space will be lost within four years” (Marcel Baettig, CEO of Bow Arts, a London NPO providing affordable *studio* space to artists and creative).

Handling digitization: ACOs believe that technology increases – and will continue to increase – access to the arts (due to mainly the possibility to greatly expand and create a more diverse audience). In some cases, technology is seen as a way to improve marketing and communication to get more seats. However the massive digitization hide some concerns: ACOs worry about the long term effect on audiences (e.g. meeting audience expectations on a limited budget, about audiences' decreasing attention spans, e.g. indistinct lines between a virtual and real experience: digital entertainment is getting closer and closer to replicating live experience, and live arts experience will struggle to compete with the former's convenience and cost).

Building organisational structure: There is a wide acknowledgement of the importance of designing more effective organizational structure, e.g. functional structure. Generally, employees work as “factotum” in ACOs. This is perceived as a weakness, especially with reference to health, motivation and job performance of the people.

STRATEGY

From the focus groups discussions is emerged that ACOs are committed to:

Networking & cooperation: ACOs perceive the building of cooperative environment between arts and commercial sectors as challenging but critical to survive.

Developing a clear and codified strategy.

Developing more and more projects that matter to the public (at national and international level): especially, there is a widespread want to move from cultural field to the “social domain”, including welfare, education, healthcare.

Building more effective organisational structure: ACOs want to create more effective organizational structure, e.g. functional structure (to overcome the current and common factotum role of workers).

3.3 THE VALUE OF ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS TO SOCIETY

Arts and cultural activities add value to the lives of individuals and to the society as a whole. They play an important role in promoting social and economic goals through local regeneration, in attracting tourists, in developing talent and innovation, in improving health and wellbeing, and in delivering essential services (England, 2014). Moreover, there are intrinsic benefits of arts and culture experiences, such as aesthetic pleasure, which are seen as private and personal (England, 2014). Participants to FGs were invited to reflect on these basic questions:

In the current business landscape what values ACOs are creating (or would like to create)? And for whom?

In terms of articulated values, it was interesting to find that in addition to creating and transmitting immanent cultural and artistic values participants also mentioned more universal values such as support of social cohesion, linking communities etc. that reach beyond standard cultural operations and prove high degree of civic engagement of those involved.

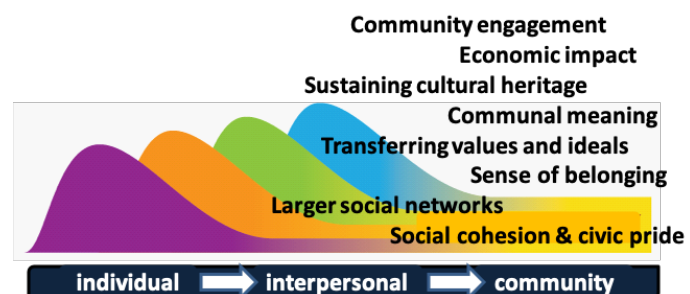


Figure 6: A snapshot of social values

Especially, participants – even if acknowledging the amount of values generated at individual and interpersonal level - cited several values related to social benefits and communal meaning (see Figure 6).

Reflecting on the recipients of values, the participants recognized the importance to better and increasingly engage all their stakeholders. Figure 7 shows a couple of stakeholders' maps produced during the focus groups identifying key stakeholders of the organization.

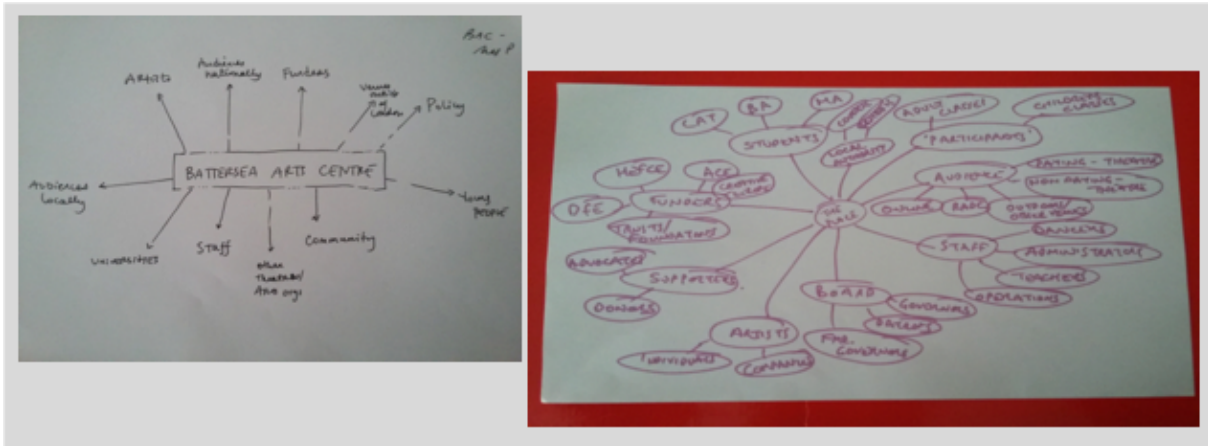


Figure 7– Some stakeholders' maps produced by participants

From discussions it emerged that, currently, some categories of stakeholders are perceived as particularly critical. Participants highlighted some concerns about how effectively approaching them and building sustainable relationships. These stakeholders are:

- **Private sponsors, business environment.** concerns: offering them anything of comparable value back and demonstrating the value created. Current legislation does not support private sponsorship;
- **High schools and universities.** concerns: developing effective strategies to attract and engage them;
- **Local authorities.** concerns: finding out a common language to reach "funding" and "non-funding" support from local authorities;
- **Young people.** concerns: developing effective strategies to enlarge and young audience (i.e. millennials) and make them more and more loyal;
- **Other cultural organizations:** concerns: finding/building a common platform.

3.4 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

ACOs are going through unprecedented changes that are increasing the need for new pathways to create value. They have to develop new responses in order to remain healthy, resilient and able to maximize the delivery of public impact and value.

Focus groups revealed that ACOs are aware of this and are inclined to change and to the improvement.

From discussions, relevant amount of *proposals for changes / improvements concerning operation, strategy and management of organizations* emerged. They mainly regard:

- creating a bigger and more varied network to get a more diverse staff;
- creating an open mind amongst staff;
- increasing staff motivation and creating commitment amongst staff and getting the right quality of people;
- more effective management of human resources, with a specific focus on training matters;
- overall strengthening of strategic and management skills;
- improvement of internal communication, especially with reference to results and expectations;
- improvement of communication with all stakeholders and especially with local community;
- creating new (not necessarily cultural) partnerships;
- finding the right balance between operation and exploration of new possibilities;
- designing a more effective organizational structure and clear division of responsibilities among people;
- achievement of a clearer vision and strategic planning;

- strengthening positions in relation to potential new stakeholders;
- improvement of communication towards new target groups of audience or media;
- keeping a strong and clear profile whilst broadening audiences and work field;
- proving the positive impact of arts and cultural activities on community/society to create trust instead of suspiciousness and provide clear proofs of impacts for funds;
- increasing of the quality of experience to customers;
- reaching a wider audience at local and international level;
- improving the capacity of achieve multi source financing.

Obviously, all proposals for changes can be related to many of the wants/needs above presented.

Unfortunately, there are several obstacles to the development/change of ACOs. Some of them can be referred to external factors (political, economic, social, technological) that influence organizations daily life and their views about future. Other factors refer to internal matters of organization.

To shed more light on internal factors hampering the change, the participants were invited to reflect on the following questions:

What are the obstacles to the development/change?

What prevents from obtaining and keeping wider audience groups?

About the *obstacles of the development/change*, participants highlighted:

- Lack of workforce, especially experts in marketing, finance and fund raising, strategy;
- Quality of technical and management know-how of staff to plan and manage innovation initiatives;
- Absence of methods to measure organizational performance and impact;
- Absence of a clear and codified strategy;
- Lack of know how in financial management;
- Distance between arts and market wants; artistic programs need to reach financial targets but this is challenging;
- Limited cooperation with other organizations on the field;
- Hectic pace of running the daily operations;
- Unstable cashflows, lack of regular and reliable cashflows;
- Decreasing of public subsidies and lack of financial sources to invest into new projects;
- Limited knowledge about EU funding opportunities.

Regarding the *obstacles and the factors preventing a wider audience* cited during the discussions, they can be basically related to the challenges above presented. Among the factors hampering the achievement of a wider audience the participants mentioned:

- The small size or lack of audience development work;
- Weak organization's profile or brand;
- The lack of long-term planning;
- Trade off, especially for young artists, between the commercialization and freedom of artistic performances;
- Limited knowledge of needs/wants of audience (especially of new potential audience);
- Limited knowledge (or lack of knowledge) about marketing approaches and tools.

3.5 COSTS & INCOMES ISSUES

In a rapidly changing world, ACOs must to be able to have the right amounts of resources, included financial resources, to implement a strategy over a continuous period of time. They cannot just meet the current and future needs if they want to achieve long-term financial sustainability. ACOs should put proper attention on how developing cash reserves, increasing funding that cover full costs, raising unrestricted revenues. Staff salaries

related to all the areas of the organisation, rents, suppliers and all expenditures related to day to day running have to be effectively managed against revenues.

In the light of the crucial importance of an effective management of costs and revenues, in the last section of the focus group, participants were invited to give details about their current main sources of revenues and about the ways they are adopting to increase them.

The participants reflected on these questions:

- ***Nowadays, what are the main two sources of revenues for your organisation?***
- ***In your opinion, what new sources of revenues should be captured?***

From the discussion it was confirmed that the wide majority of the focus groups participants depends on public sources. The second most frequently mentioned main source of revenue was income from own activities such as entrance fees and rents of own premises. Incomes from own café/restaurant also appeared among main source of revenue.

The findings of the discussion confirmed the main need of participants, i.e. achieving more balanced multi-source financing. Among proposals for new sources of revenue, they were most frequently mentioned options of i) sponsorship from private business, ii) gaining support of local government and iii) rise of income from own activities. Other chances are about getting more commercial income (rentals, collaboration with companies) and income from the social field (e.g. education). Similarly, the participants were invited to identify the current main costs and how they are trying to reduce them. For this purpose, they reflected on the following questions:

- ***Nowadays, what are the most important costs for your organisation?***
- ***How are you trying to reduce them?***

Paying staff in combination with operation and artists represents the largest portion of costs. Second biggest mentioned expenditure was rent of space and utility bills.

About the reduction of costs, there was a widely shared belief that any further reduction of expenditures is no longer possible. The only way to survive and thrive is to increase revenues.

4. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OPEN SESSIONS: MAIN INSIGHTS

Additionally to the focus groups, some project partners - based on UNIBAS advices - organised an open Stakeholders' engagement session (SES) aimed to discuss with some key stakeholders – e.g. national, regional or local culture funders and further stakeholders from other not arts based sectors, public officer, city authorities, business people, investors, etc. - the main findings emerged from the discussion developed in the focus group, and to create a first important chance both of benchmarking between organizations and their stakeholders and presenting the European project.

The organization of this session was not mandatory. Therefore, the project partners decided to organize this session on the basis on their needs and number of potential participants. The research team of UNIBAS developed a small guide - including some possible questions to stimulate the debate (see Appendix) - for supporting the organization and the development of the session.

Four project partners organized the stakeholders open session. Figure 8 shows the participation to this event.

The level of participation was satisfactory also for the stakeholder engagement session. An average of 20 people attended the session.

SES organisers

- Kaapeli (Helsinki, Finland)
- Stanica (Slovakia)
- ODC Vyrsopeiseio (Athens, Greece)
- Creative Plot &TEH (Lund, Sweden)

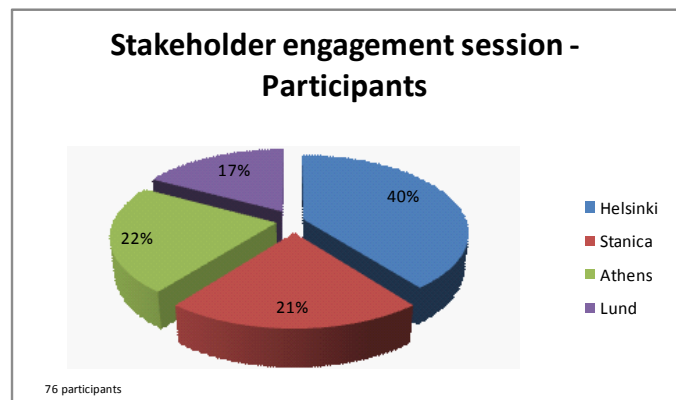


Figure 8 - Stakeholders engagement session participants

This paragraph is a distillation of the notes of the stakeholder open sessions that two project partners (i.e. Kaapeli and ODC Ensemble) sent to UNIBAS.

Photo of the stakeholders open session held in Helsinki. The head of culture, city of Helsinki, a senior executive producer, a member of board (Slush start up event) and the head of culture department, Metropolia University of Applied sciences, attended as key stakeholders the session organized by Kaapeli.



After a brief presentation of the topics discussed in the focus group in the morning, there was a debate. Several subjects were stressed, as follows.

- The Finnish education system is promoting more and more education programs based on the interdisciplinary learning.

- From the viewpoint of the city of Helsinki, the culture and arts activity need to develop itself and function better ("Non-profit does not mean having nothing"). The cultural operator should have wealth in order to survive during the difficult economical times. Therefore developing sustainable business models is essential.
- A further important aspect is that for an organization it is always important to have a clear idea about "where" to grow, for example in quality but not in quantity.

Moreover, increasingly, the activities of the cultural operators need to be "measured", "evaluated". How should we do the measurement? All the speakers agreed that there is still not a standardized method or system of measurement. This is also because if it is easy to measure economics, quality and atmosphere are difficult to measure. However, measuring is useful for better managing and gaining rich quality.

Photo of the stakeholders open session held in Athens with the Ministry for Culture, a representative of Greek Tourism Confederation (SETE), an expert of cultural communication. During the last session of the meeting, the National Contact Point for the "Creative Europe" programme joined as observer.



Several proposals emerged from the discussion, such as:

- Creation of a common calendar for activities;
- Synergies on activities that have growth at such level that can no longer be managed by a single organization;
- Co-location of organizations for lower operational costs (example: <http://www.stopaliolitriveri.gr/>);
- Sign posting among diverse cultural products;
- Identification of stakeholders/audience in diverse regions/municipalities; reconsidering the concentration in the city-center of Athens.

CONCLUSIONS

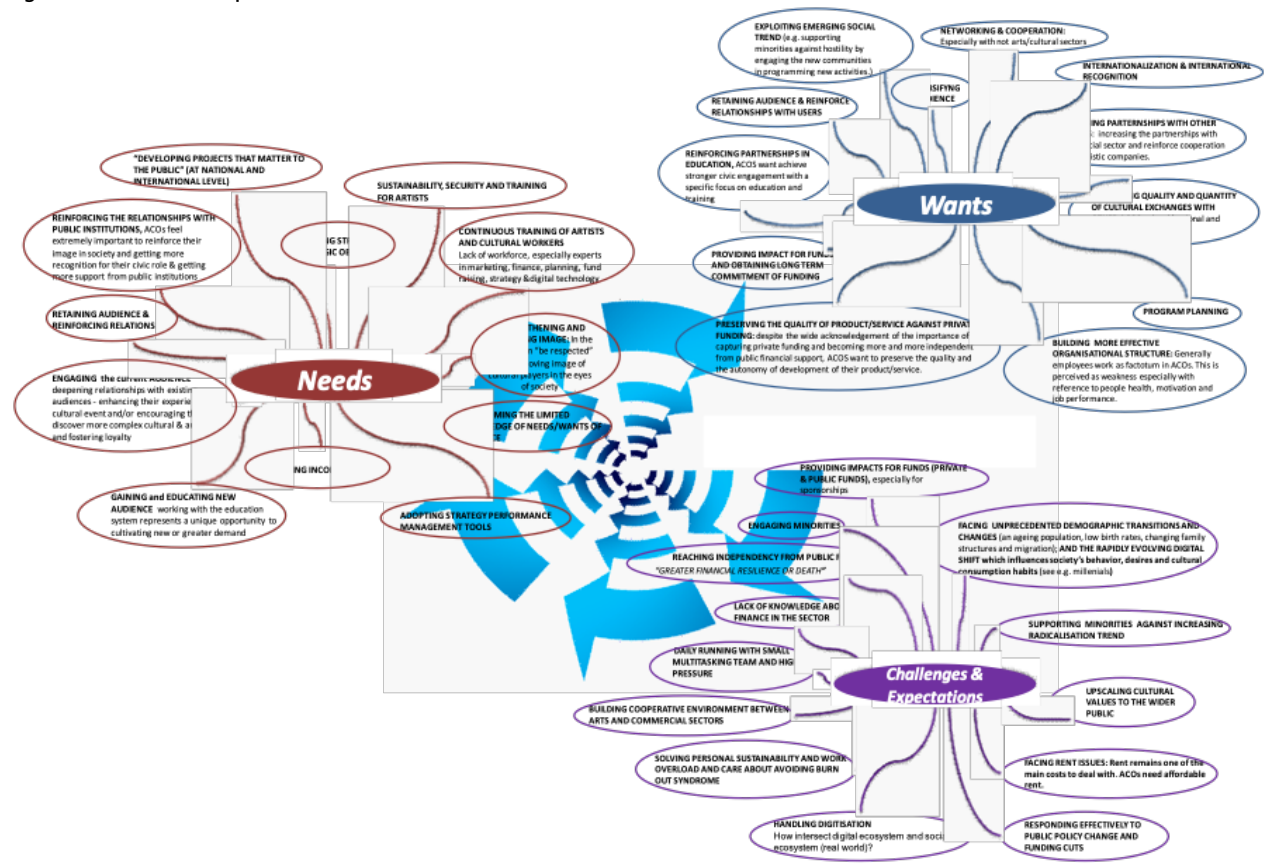
Focus groups have provided fresh insights into the practical challenges, expectations, wants and needs that ACOs feel and face in their daily life.

The overall feeling is that the value of culture is not still well understood by politics and parts of population and there is an increasing pressure to proof the value of culture, e.g. economic, social, civic, progressively more in quantitative figures.

Moreover, ACOs are greatly concerned about their financial health and their ability to continue creating and presenting great arts and cultural events. At the same time, ACOs are conscious that it is crucial to rethink their way of operating and to improve their value creation mechanisms to get sustainability. In this regard, ACOs perceive several and various needs, wants, expectations and challenges.

The following creative maps (Figure 9) summarize the key needs, wants, expectations and challenges about business model innovation and management as well as about audience development as emerged from the focus groups discussions and widely described in this report. In this regard it is interesting to point out that focus groups are a qualitative research method. The results only focus on opinions and concerns built by the participants during discussion and interactions and it is not possible to extend the results to the whole population of ACOs. However, the maps provide a fresh snapshot of needs, wants and expectations as currently perceived by a number of ACOs and contribute to enrich knowledge on the topic.

Figure 9- Creative maps



In summary, in the last decades, political, social and economic changes have generated new challenges and new demands on arts and culture organizations. In the light of this, the sector has to develop new and more effective responses in order to remain healthy, flexible and able to maximize the delivery of public impact and value. ACOs have to reinforce their adaptive capacities to successfully facing several complex issues such as generational and demographic transformations, changes in public participation and funding, evolution in technological access to the arts, new ways of resource development and exploitation, etc.

Certainly, developing adaptive capacities is not effortless but as Jerry Sternin (2003), co-author of the book "The Power of Positive Deviance", wrote: *"It is easier to act your way into a new way of thinking, than think your way into a new way of acting"* (p. 38) or in other terms it is easier to change behavior by practicing it rather than knowing about it.

REFERENCES

- Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of planners*. 35(4), 216-224.
- Audiences, NI, (2010). Putting audience development at the core of your organization. <http://culturehive.co.uk/resources/putting-audience-development-at-the-core-of-your-organisation>
- Bamford, A., & Wimmer, M. (2012). Audience building and the future Creative Europe Programme. European Expert Network on Culture (EENC) Short Report, Brussels, European Commission.
- Bergeaud-Blackler, F., Evans, A., & Zivotofsky, A. (2010). Final report consumer and consumption issues. Halal and Kosher consumers focus groups results. Dialrel Project.
- Bergold, J., & Thomas, S. (2010). Partizipative Forschung. In *Handbuch Qualitative Forschung in der Psychologie* (pp. 333-344). VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Bergold, J., & Thomas, S. (2012). Participatory research methods: A methodological approach in motion. *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung*, 191-222.
- Bergold, J. (2007). Participatory strategies in community psychology research—a short survey. In A. Boksztzanin (Ed.), *Poland welcomes community psychology: Proceedings from the 6th European Conference on Community Psychology* (pp.57-66). Opole: Opole University Press.
- Chambers, R. (2008). PRA, PLA and pluralism: Practice and theory. In Peter Reason & Hilary Bradbury (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of action research. Participative inquiry and practice* (2nd ed., pp.297-318). London: Sage.
- Drayton, J. L., Fahad, G. A., & Tynan, A. C. (1989). The focus group: A controversial research technique. *Graduate Management Research*, 4(3), 34-51.
- England, A. C. (2014). *The Value of Arts and Culture to People and Society*.
- Heron, J. (1996). *Co-operative inquiry: Research into the human condition*. Sage.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (2005). *Participatory Action Research: Communicative Action and the Public Sphere*. Sage Publications Ltd.
- Kitzinger, J. (2005) *Focus Group Research: using group dynamics to explore perceptions, experiences and understandings* Holloway I. (ed.) (2005) *Qualitative Research in Health Care* Maidenhead:Open University Press.
- Kitzinger, J. (1994). The methodology of focus groups: the importance of interaction between research participants. *Sociology of health & illness*, 16(1), 103-121.
- Kitzinger, J. (1995). 'Introducing focus groups', *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 311, pp. 299-302.
- Krueger, R. A. (1988). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Krueger, R., Casey, M.A. (2000). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research* (3rd edition). Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage.
- Mack, N., Woodsong, C., MacQueen, K. M., Guest, G., & Namey, E. (2005). *Qualitative research methods: a data collectors field guide*.
- Sternin, J. (2003). *Practice positive deviance for extraordinary social and organizational change. The Change Champion's Field Guide* New York, New York: Best Practice Publications.

APPENDIX

1. Focus groups feedback: key results
2. Focus group guide
3. Focus group feedback form

1. Feedback focus groups: key results

At the end of the focus group³ a brief questionnaire was administered to the participants in order to know their opinions/judgment about the meeting.

The analysis of the answers revealed that the focus group had a clear purpose (100% of respondents provided this answer) and investigated questions were evaluated very interesting (96,3%). Most of participants had the possibility to know the agenda beforehand (81,5%) and at the end of the focus group they thought that all items were appropriately covered (81,5%).

The only criticism revealed from participants was the punctuality of the meeting's start. In fact, the 33,3% of people affirmed that the meeting didn't start on time.

The large majority of people interviewed stated that the questions were easy to understand (92,6%). They felt involved in the discussion thanks to the ability of the facilitator (92,6%) and everyone had a chance to say his/her opinion (92,6%). A lot of people said that it was an exciting way of debating. Most of participants enjoyed discussing with other participants (81,5%) and they felt listened to (96,3%). However only the 44,5% of people stated that the time for discussion was enough.

In summary the perception of the focus groups was extremely positive. The 40,7% of participants declared that the focus group was *very good* and the 51,9% evaluated it as *good*. Finally, the meeting results were judged better than expectations for 63% of interviewees.

³ Except in Helsinki and in occasion of focus meeting in Brussels

2. FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

FOCUS GROUP AND STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT SESSION

The project Creative Lenses foresees the organization of **some Focus Groups** (FG) hosted by the project partners and basically coordinated by the research team from University of Basilicata. The organization of the Focus Groups is mandatory and is developed according to the availability and dates provided by each partner.

In the same day of the FG, the hosting partners have the faculty (**please note that this is not mandatory**), to organize, in the afternoon, **an open Stakeholders' engagement session (SES) dedicated to the involvement of their key-stakeholders** – e.g. national, regional or local culture funders and further stakeholders from other not arts based sectors, public officer, city authorities, business people, investors, etc . **The hosting partners can decide to organize this session or not, depending basically on their choices, needs and number of potential participants.**

In the following some details about the focus group and stakeholder engagement session are provided.

- **Activities:** A) Focus Group in the morning + B) Stakeholders' engagement session (SES) in the afternoon (not mandatory)
- **Timeline.** The FG will be developed approximately from 9:30 to 13:30. If organized, the SES will be developed approximately from 15:30 to 17:30.
- **Number of participants.** The FG to work requires a limited number of people and therefore **we suggest a minimum number of 6 and a maximum number of 20 participants.** Further interested people (not attending the FG due to the limited number of participants) could attend the SES in the afternoon.
- **Types of organizations to be invited.** About the types of cultural organizations/arts forms to be invited to the FG, the participants (as representatives of cultural organizations) can be from all art form areas. However it is really important to guarantee a suitable percentage (at least 50%; higher % are desirable) of organizations from cultural centres and performing arts in the FG. The rest of participants can be from other art-forms such as visual arts, media arts, literature and film/video.
- **Facilitator.** A facilitator with experience and knowledge of the cultural organizations and able to “translate” technical questions in languages and modalities fitted with the mind-sets of the participants and able to drive conversations and reporting the main insights from group activities. **The facilitator will support the organization both of the FG and the SES.**

A)

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

TIME AND RESOURCES TO BE ALLOCATED

- Timetable to manage the Focus Group: Day 1, h 09:30 – 13:30
- A facilitator with experience and knowledge of the cultural organisations and able to “translate” technical questions in languages and modalities fitted with the mind-sets of the participants and able to drive conversations and reporting the main insights from group activities.
- Experts coming from University of Basilicata
- Participants: min 6 - max 20. About the types of cultural organizations/arts forms to be invited to the FG, the participants (as representatives of cultural organizations) can be from all art form areas. However it is really important to guarantee a suitable percentage (at least 50%; higher % are desirable) of organizations from cultural centers and performing arts in the FG.

- Comfortable room and dedicated equipments [post-it; desks; posters; big sheets; colored pencils; tools to record session, cards (or badges, stickers etc) for writing participants' names on, Watch or clock, etc.]
- Refreshment

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

1. **INTRODUCTION** (15') – Plenary. Begin a quick round of introductions. Each person/organization presents its name, organization, role in the organizations.

(Time: 15' max; Way: each person/organization)

2. **FIRST TEAM WORKING: HOW WE SEE OURSELVES** (35' – TOT: 50') – **a)** Ask to all the participants/organizations to represent a cultural organisation in the current landscape through a metaphor and add to the metaphor a short sentence describing it; **b)** Plenary presentation

(Time: 10' for designing; 5' for explaining; Way: working in teams composed by 4/5 people, also belonging to different organizations)

SECTION 2. THE WORLD AROUND US

3. **SCENARIO ANALYSIS** (30' – TOT: 80') –

Plenary. **a)** Ask to all the participants/organizations how they see the world around them in order to identify some elements/facts/issues that **strongly** influence positively or negatively their present activities (to help and support reflections and thoughts, the PEST map has to be shown and provided on a big poster)

Example of questions:

- What are the most important elements/facts/issues that **strongly** influence positively your current activities? – (please point out **max 6 factors**)
- What are the most important elements/facts/issue that influence **strongly** and negatively your current activities? (please point out **max 6 factors**)

b) Invite to write elements/facts/issues on the post-it and to put them in the related space of the PEST map on the big poster;

c) Plenary discussion

(Time: 15' for working; 15' for plenary discussion; Way: each person/organization)

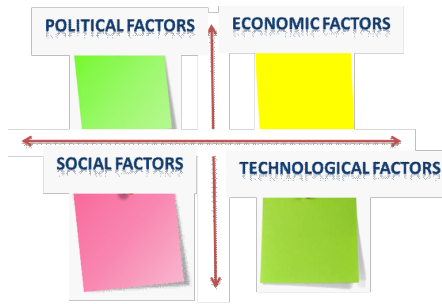


Figure 1. The PEST map

4. WANTS, NEEDS, CHALLENGES, EXPECTATIONS⁴ (30' – TOT: 110') –

Plenary. According to the main insights of the previous discussion,

- a) Ask to all the participants/organizations how they see themselves in the short and medium/long terms (time for personal reflection about their own "Future")
- b) Ask to all the participants/organizations to identify their **KEY wants, needs, challenges and expectations** (i.e. public supports, spaces for activities, funding, etc.) to reach their **future vision**
- c) Invite to write wants, needs, challenges and expectations on the post-it and to put them on a big poster; (post it have 4 different colors – max 2 key wants, 2 key needs, 2 key challenges, 2 key expectations)
- d) Plenary discussion

(Time: 15' for working; 15' for plenary discussion; Way: each person/organization)

Creative Coffee Break (11.20 – 11.40)

SECTION 3. LOOKING INSIDE

5. SECOND TEAM WORKING: WHO WE WOULD "HELP" – FOR WHOM WE ARE CREATING VALUE (40') –

- a) Ask to all the participant to first identify the problem/need that **its own organization** tries and will try to address and solve through its existence and activities;
- b) Ask to participants to identify their **own key stakeholders**. For this purpose ask to participants to:

⁴ **WANT**: is something you would like to have. It is not absolutely necessary, but it would be a good thing to have.

NEED: is **something you have to have**, something you can't do without.

EXPECTATIONS: something expected; a belief that something will happen or is likely to happen; what you believe or hope will happen in the future

CHALLENGES: a duty, or situation that is difficult because you must use a lot of effort, determination, and skill in order to be successful.

- place your organisation in the centre of a bullseye; circles of influences;
- list all stakeholders (that have any relationships or influence to the central topic)
- place them on the map around the central topic. Place more influential stakeholders close to the centre the inner rings and place less influential stakeholders further from the centre toward the outer rings.

Example of questions:

- What **the key problem/need** of your key stakeholders/customers do you solve/fulfill?
- According to your vision of development, what are the new stakeholders/customers would you like to reach?
- What are the main 2 obstacles you face to get and keep wider audience/customers/stakeholders?

d) Plenary presentation

(Time: 15' for identifying; 5' for explaining; Way: working in teams composed by 4/5 people preferably belonging to the same organization)

6. THIRD TEAM WORKING: WHAT WE WOULD DO (40' – TOT: 80') –

a) Ask to all the participants/organizations to think to its own organization and how it actually works (main activities, people, decision making processes, leadership) and then ask:

- According to your vision of development, what would you like to improve/change/purchase immediately (specific activities; people, work organization, resources, etc.) (**list max 5 issues**);
- What are the main 2 obstacles you face to get change in your organization

b) Plenary presentation

(Time: 15' for identifying; 5' for explaining; Way: working in teams composed by 4/5 people preferably belonging to the same organization)

7. REVENUE AND COSTS (20' – TOT: 100') – Plenary.

a) Ask to all the participants/organizations to identify the current main sources of revenues of **its own organization** and how they are trying to increase them;

Example of questions:

- Nowadays what are the main 2 sources of revenues for your organization?
- In your opinion what new (or alternative) sources of revenues should be captured?

b) Ask to all the participants/organizations to identify the current main costs of its own organization and how they are trying to reduce them.

Example of questions:

- *Nowadays what are the most important costs for your organisation?*
- *How are you trying to reduce them?*

(Time: 10' for working; 10' for plenary discussion; Way: each person/organization)

SECTION 4. MAIN INSIGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE FOCUS GROUP (10' – TOT: 110')

B) Stakeholders' engagement session (SES) management

The Stakeholders' engagement session (SES) is dedicated to the involvement of key-stakeholders – e.g. national, regional or local culture funders and further stakeholders from other not arts based sectors, public officer, city authorities, business people, investors, etc . Further interested people (not attending the FG due to the limited number of participants) could attend the SES.

TIME AND RESOURCES TO BE ALLOCATED

- Timetable to manage the stakeholder engagement session: Day 1, h 15:30-17:30
- A facilitator with experience and knowledge of the cultural organisations and able to “translate” technical questions in languages and modalities fitted with the mind-sets of the participants and able to drive conversations and reporting insights from focus group session.
- Experts coming from University of Basilicata
- Comfortable room

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

Brief plenary presentation of the project “Creative Lenses” to the stakeholders participating to the session

(Time: 15'; Presenter: Expert from University of Basilicata)

SECTION 2. THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Brief plenary presentation of the main insights and conclusions of the focus group to the stakeholders participating to the session. Basically the presentation will show wants/needs; challenges; expectations of participants as resulting from the focus group.

(Time: 30'; Presenter: Facilitator and 2/3 people from cultural organizations)

SECTION 3. THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE STAKEHOLDERS OF THE CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

The different stakeholders comment, discuss, analyze, criticize the point of view of the cultural organizations and propose new lines of actions and collaborations; Asks and answers with the cultural organizations.

Some possible questions to stimulate the debate:

- What are 2 key benefits provided by cultural organizations to your community/organizations?
- What should cultural organizations do better?
- What new (or improved) benefits/outcomes should cultural organizations provide to community/organizations in short-medium term?

- How can you support the growth of cultural organizations in short-medium term?
- What are the 2 most important issues to guarantee for building a “win-win” (successful) relationships with cultural organizations (from community/organizations viewpoint)?

(Time: 60'; All the stakeholders participating in the session)

SECTION 4. MAIN INSIGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE SESSION

(Time: 15'; presenter: facilitator)

3. FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK FORM



Respondent:

Organisation:

Focus Group Feedback

To improve the effectiveness and productivity of focus groups, please take a few moments to give us some feedback about the focus group you attended. Thank you in advance for your collaboration!

| How effective was the focus group, please place a tick in the appropriate box | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| Meeting started on time | | |
| Purpose was clear | | |
| Agenda was known beforehand | | |
| Attendees were focused | | |
| All items were covered or "tabled" appropriately | | |

| Beside each of the following statements, please place a tick in the appropriate box | Yes | No | Not Sure |
|---|-----|----|----------|
| The focus group was better than I expected | | | |
| The topics discussed were interesting | | | |
| The questions were easy to understand | | | |
| I enjoyed discussing the topics with the other participants | | | |
| We were given enough time for discussion | | | |
| The facilitator encouraged participation | | | |
| I got a chance to have my say | | | |
| I felt that I was listened to | | | |

Overall, the focus group was:

Very good

Good

Fair

Poor

Very poor

Was there something you think we should have discussed but didn't?

Please make suggestions about ways in which we can make focus groups more productive and useful.