

HANDBOOK 2

Establishing country resources and documentation for live art programmes

trajectories.eu



Learning Trajectories – Advancing European performing arts mentoring programmes – is an ERASMUS+ funded project, coordinated by EUNIA (Sweden), in collaboration with FACE - Fresh Arts Coalition Europe (France), Matera Hub (Italy) and On the Move (Belgium).

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About the Learning Trajectories project

Learning Trajectories is a project funded by Erasmus+, coordinated by EUNIA (Sweden) in collaboration with FACE – Fresh Arts Coalition Europe (France), MateraHub (Italy) and On the Move (Belgium).

Learning Trajectories aims to investigate ways to best design and implement mentoring programmes supporting the international career development of live arts professionals.

The partners' objectives are, on the one hand, to highlight best practices and examples of mentoring programmes developed, supported or facilitated by intermediary organisations or funding organisations, and on the other hand to advance the quality of mentoring programmes that support the internationalisation of the European performing arts sector.

Indeed, nowadays it is generally recognised that internationalisation can benefit the overall performing arts sector in terms of enhancement of artistic, economic and human relations, impacting both the career of the individual art worker and the wellbeing of the entire sector. However, there is still a knowledge gap among organisations and professionals with regards to methods, approaches and practices. Key challenges include how to organise and implement these schemes, how to deal with specific needs and circumstances, how to properly facilitate programmes and what the hosting context is during the internationalisation experience.

In addition, the COVID-19 crisis has made it even more imperative to rethink internationalisation processes, given its impact on mobility and on the finances of performing arts institutions and organisations.

For all these reasons, Learning Trajectories believes that researching and providing specific and practical information on how to operate internationally, developing key skills and strengthening networks will contribute to the recovery and survival of the culture sector in Europe.

This project has been articulated around three main areas of investigation and experimentation.

- How can the access to key resources and relevant professional information from other countries and markets, different cultural spaces and ecosystems be facilitated?
- Which mentoring methodologies and tools can be used and further developed to support culture professionals in their internationalisation journey?
- How can curated mobility experiences and prospecting trips for live art stakeholders be organised, from preparation to implementation and follow-ups?

The partners collaborate to:

- design three guides/online practical toolkits to 1) help live art professionals and organisations to initiate and further develop international mentoring programmes, 2) propose ways for the performing arts sector to be better equipped to engage in a new context (country, region, sector, etc.) and 3) strengthen the capacity of intermediary organisations to support the overall prospecting process;
- provide opportunities to share and exchange best practices (both internally and externally), to engage in professional development for all staff members and to develop a more dynamic and timely professional setting where the challenges of today can be addressed, both in each partner organisation's context as well as on a European level;
- develop improved and accessible working methodologies to encourage international prospecting as a solid strategy to be embedded in mentoring schemes, while working together to increase the arts and culture sector's capacity and ability to operate internationally, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis.

Deliverable purpose and scope

The purpose of this document is to understand what mobility generates for arts workers, hosting organisations, communities and professionals, which terminologies and approaches are recommended in order to accurately embrace differences, inclusion and sustainability, and how to support organisations in the design of mobility experiences that includes these dimensions.

In addition, the document aims to empower organisations and arts workers to see mobility as a viable part of their programmes in the future.

Target audience

This document is targeted primarily at live art workers and organisations, as well as arts workers more broadly. Specifically, it is aimed at:

- trainers and mentors of intermediary organisations providing expertise to cultural managers, producers and artists who seek to operate internationally but who still lack the tools and methodologies to do so;
- cultural managers, producers and artists seeking to develop their capacity to operate in a European or international context and who currently have limited experience or who need to strategize their approach in a better way;
- European networks and platforms that support the international capacity of their members to operate in a European or international context and that have limited experiences or a need to strategize their approach in a better way.

Introduction

The COVID-19 crisis has dealt a massive blow to the sector and its financial fallout will have repercussions for the sector for many years to come. International mobility, as a central component of the professional trajectory of artists and culture professionals, has been heavily impacted. Learning Trajectories aims at providing innovative methodologies on how to operate internationally, develop key skills and strengthen networks, while also contributing to the recovery of the culture sector in Europe.

In general, artists and culture professionals have trouble discovering distant markets, investigating the reality of foreign contexts, becoming familiar with the cultural and creative industry stakeholders that they could establish partnership with or understanding the legislative environment of another country or region (such as administrative procedures, visa or tax regulations). It is quite difficult, in particular for professionals with limited international experience, to fully grasp the cultural and entrepreneurial realities abroad, and to access dedicated support for their international projects.

This handbook seeks to provide some concrete advice and discussion points to international development programme organisers on how to create and circulate meaningful resources to participants to help them prepare for their mobility experience. This handbook gives step-by-step guidance to help establish relevant documentation as part of the support material provided to participants and addresses critical points that should not be overlooked.

1 Terminology and roles

This section refers to the essential terms and roles we are going to use during this handbook.

Organiser

A person or an organisation that plans and executes a professional development programme.

The primary role of the third-party organiser of a professional development programme is to create a structured space in which participants and facilitators are set up for success. The organiser must be able to repeatedly communicate clearly about all aspects of the programme and to model, through action, the values that are the driving force behind its initiatives. In many cases, the strength of an organiser's public image can lend prestige and visibility to individuals who may be less well known in their professional sector. Organisers need to be aware that they are part of a wider ecology in which they apply for funding, contract freelancers and are involved in day-to-day implementation activities. This means that they do not always have the distance or objectivity to neutrally assess the field.

Facilitator

Someone who partakes in a professional development programme to facilitate the creative, relational and/or business growth of another person.

On the most basic level, facilitators help participants to identify, articulate and move towards specific goals, often by sharing their perspective, knowledge and contacts, and sometimes by acting as mentors. They are focused on the needs of the participants and can be flexible and adapt as those needs evolve over time. They are empathetic and curious and, ideally, have the ability to ask questions that prompt reflection. They are honest about their own experiences, they respectfully allow room for difference and disagreement, and they can be trusted with sensitive or confidential information. It should not be assumed that facilitators need to be older than participants. Particular attention should be given to potential conflicts of interest or competition between facilitators and participants.

Participant

Someone who partakes in a professional development programme to grow his or her network, business and/or creative practice.

As mature, adult professionals, participants should be encouraged to hold themselves responsible for driving their own professional development and to act accordingly. Within the framework of a programme, participants can – and often do – learn just as much from exchanging with each other as they do from facilitators.

Participants who are freelancers or who work within small, independent companies can face particular challenges, including a high turnover of administrative support and a potentially limited bandwidth for reflection. For some live art workers, collaboration is an integral part of their practice and they have chosen to work primarily within a duo or as part of a larger, non-hierarchical collective. Organisers would do well to consider in advance if, and how, they plan to accommodate participants with distinct ways of working, needs and challenges.

Cultural mobility experience

Cultural exposure is the experiences related to a region that aid in developing a familiarity or understanding of the norms, values and beliefs of that region.

Cultural exposure entails opportunities for live art workers to be in contact with another context in another country through dedicated resources, experiences that can be organised for groups or individuals (such as professional visits, encounters and conversations) and follow-ups (to start a project, strengthen ideas or confirm touring).

Evaluation

Evaluation is the determination of the value, use, importance and significance of elements put into place, using a set of relevant and agreed criteria. The primary purpose of evaluation, in addition to gaining insight into prior or existing initiatives, is to enable reflection and assist in the identification of future change.

Evaluation is seen as a process to assess, constantly improve and better communicate the programme. With adequate tools and methodologies (that do not need to be complex, but consistent and adapted), evaluation is embedded in the programme before its inception until the end. With effective evaluation, the organiser can adapt to change and can have the capacity to meet the needs of the participants and the facilitators.

Context profile

Resources presenting a foreign context that will help participants and live art workers discover, understand and connect with another art scene.

This handbook uses 'context profile' as an overarching term for different types of content provided to participants to better understand the reality of the territory they want to investigate. Our research identified different terms (info sheets, market profiles, country profiles, mappings, etc.) used according to professional development programmes and countries, but also according to the profile of the organiser – ranging from European cultural network to public mobility funder and other intermediary organisations.

Research shows that the professional development programmes with an international focus provide one or more mobility experiences to their participants as part of the learning trajectory. Mobility is a component of the programme and supports participants in translating their plans into action. To prepare for this mobility, the context profile provides information in relation to a particular country or a macro-region; a short-cut to access consolidated information on another cultural context.

The organiser is in charge of gathering and circulating relevant information to participants. The information can be cross-sectoral; for example, giving an overview of the situation in several creative fields – like cinema, visual arts, heritage or performing arts – in a given country. It can also be thematic, such as focusing on disability arts or international mobility. Finally, it can be sectoral and focus on a particular discipline, like theatre, dance, circus or music.

Discussion points:

- What key terms would you chose and how you would define them?*
- How far do you let users challenge or agree with your terminology?*
- How do you avoid blanket terms or buzzwords in your documents?*

2 Values

Many organisers from the cultural field operate from a value-driven perspective and try to translate their core values into working principles and methodologies. In relation to establishing resources and presenting information about a foreign context, there are four values that are usually at the centre of their work.

Freedom of artistic expression

The diversity of cultural traditions and political regimes around the world should encourage organisers to have an honest look at the situation of arts professionals and how democratic values actually manifest in each local context. The different standards between countries with regards to human rights should be raised. It is particularly important to address what is too often considered as shared principles in relation to censorship, freedom of expression (of artists or the press), gender inequality, restricted cross-border mobility and other key issues. We should make this information available to participants to raise their awareness about local difficulties and allow them to reflect upon, position themselves and act accordingly.

Intercultural dialogue

The world is increasingly interconnected, but it does not mean that individuals and societies really live together; peace is more than the absence of war, it is living together with our differences. Today there is more information, technology and knowledge available than ever before, but in this new, turbulent globalised landscape we still need to work for universal respect for justice and human rights, on which coexistence depends. It has become more crucial than ever to promote and disseminate values, attitudes and behaviours conducive to dialogue, non-violence and the rapprochement of cultures in line with the principles of the UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which states that:

In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace. Thus defined, cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity.

Indissociable from a democratic framework, cultural pluralism is conducive to cultural exchange and to the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life.¹

Balanced power relations

Perspectives from wealthy and privileged Europe tend to adopt a particular approach regarding international relations and there is a need to challenge assumptions in terms of both industry and societal conversations. The discrepancies between education or cultural infrastructures, policies and funding, among others, should be properly addressed. This is particularly relevant when presenting key information about a foreign ecosystem, for example when describing the status of live workers, their wages and contracts. Moreover, issues related to North-South imbalances or post-colonial relations should be tackled, whenever relevant, as they might shed light on more complex issues and encourage more contextualised approaches. Finally, a more balanced approach can be taken by implementing co-design or co-curation working methods, in which stakeholders from a foreign context can actively participate in the elaboration (through dialogue, consultation, feedback sessions or direct authorship) of context profiles. Local stakeholders should not be left out.

Accessibility and inclusion

These very key values are often reduced to 'boxes' to tick while developing programmes or projects. However, they could, or even should, be addressed as part of process.

Organisers, but also facilitators and participants, should be provided with the support (including financial support for the organisers), the knowledge and the adequate resources to reach out to live art workers' communities that have an untapped potential for international development. This could include live art workers with disabilities, those from LGBT+ groups, those from minority groups and those outside bigger cultural hubs.

Discussion points: *What are the values you address in your context profiles? Do your participants need to be proficient in English or tech savvy to access your documentation? Do the context profiles challenge norms and assumptions?*

¹ Article 2 of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2 November 2001), available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/435cbcd64.html> [accessed 28 February 2022].

3 Access to professional cultural information

The organiser usually navigates between a neutral approach, aiming at presenting some information in the most objective way, and a more subjective approach, which seeks to inspire and provide insights into aesthetics, sectoral dynamics or public debates.

The neutral approach is usually adopted regarding information related to the following aspects:

- short presentation of the country (basic facts, description of society, etc.)
- legal framework
- cultural policies, strategies and funding schemes/institutions
- administrative and fiscal information (tax, visa, intellectual property, etc.)
- mapping of residency centres, venues, festivals and fairs/showcases
- education and training opportunities
- mapping of advocacy bodies, unions, federations and local networks
- mapping of information centres and portals
- mapping of agents and representatives
- stakeholders involved in European cooperation projects, networks and platforms
- official sources of information.

The subjective approach is usually adopted towards information related to the following elements:

- recent sectoral/aesthetic developments
- artistic curation and programming
- portraits of artists and companies
- interviews of stakeholders on realities, challenges and perspectives
- current societal issues and political debates
- recent resources of interest (case studies, guides, portals, etc.).

Objective versus subjective information

Many organisers value the inclusion of subjective information in their documentation, as they consider that the human dimension, or peer-to-peer element, supports the concrete understanding of a foreign cultural space. As observed in the Annotated Bibliography, context profiles amplify different voices and recognised professionals. The organiser should leave room in their documentation for authors (in the broad sense) to deliver their perspective on their own territory and/or artistic field. Key professionals should then be invited to share their knowledge and insights about the situation in their 'reality' in order to better contextualise the information presented. Moreover, the organiser should select professionals who have solid international experience, as they will be more capable of translating (or making more accessible) the specificities of the local performing arts ecosystem and values for international audiences.

When included in the context profile, these independent voices bring a more nuanced approach, challenging the official information or adopting a more critical perspective, to more accurately portray the opportunities and challenges of a given context. These professionals may highlight issues such as censorship, freedom of artistic expression, diversity of the population, diversity of cultural expressions or human rights more generally. They can also point out challenges connected to cultural and religious traditions, historical interdependencies, conflicts or political frictions. Often, they also use feedback from local stakeholders to provide alternative perspectives on the ambitions, investments or impacts of official policies.

Approaches towards sourcing information

The organisers are usually in a position to assess the quality of the professional information, but they should not hesitate to solicit feedback from facilitators and specialists based in the territories to be presented. Calling upon the expertise of professionals based in the territory in focus will ensure the accuracy and reliability of the documentation produced.

However, the participants should not be excluded from the preparation process:

- organisers should collect the knowledge and input from practitioners, as they have international experience and contacts;
- organisers should adopt a co-design process to include end users in the development phase and ensure a high level of relevance;
- organisers should not hesitate to call upon the expertise of artists, collectives and companies based in foreign territories, thereby contributing to the recognition of the expertise of these practitioners.

The organisers can draw from many sources of information – research shows that organisers are information providers and have valuable resources already – however, this handbook encourages organisers to use a variety of sources to ensure consistency as well as a good level of detail. Additionally, work is more effective when there is a continuous information monitoring process in place, instead of developing one-off initiatives. Usual sources are:

- ministries in charge of cultural affairs and education (centralised and decentralised administrations);
- national agencies (funding bodies, copyright collective societies, etc.);
- regional agencies (funding bodies, development agencies, etc.);
- private foundations;
- advocacy bodies, unions and federations of professionals;
- networks (regional, national or European networks, as well as sectoral platforms);
- stakeholders, including residency centres, venues, festivals and fairs/showcases, grassroots initiatives, information centres and portals.

Generic versus tailor-made information

Relevance is one of the core issues when developing context profiles, as organisers wish to serve and prepare their community as comprehensively as possible. Organisers should try to balance transversal and generic information with topic-based or sector-specific content.

The generic information should help tackle structural issues in order to outline the relevant cultural context. This can include cultural policies and support schemes, key institutions and the structure of the culture field. The primary purpose is to make public data accessible, using methodologies and typologies of information that allow for comparison between countries, regions or creative sectors.

However, organisers should try to adopt a focused and tailor-made approach, and use context profiles to highlight the situation of an artistic discipline in a given country. This would include outlining the level of artistic development present, giving voice to prominent stakeholders, and putting forward recent initiatives and perspectives, rather than trying to make an exhaustive overview.

Beyond the core factual elements that have been highlighted above, the thematic or sectoral briefings allow for customised information and don't hide the local and/or national challenges, pressures, opportunities and dilemmas.

Moreover, organisers should keep in mind the cross-sectoral activities that many live art workers conduct throughout the year. Some cultural spaces have developed robust relationships with other sectors, such as science (implementing environmental and biodiversity actions), urban planning and rural/city development, education and research. Context profiles should try to

give examples of such initiatives through interviews, case studies and other documentation.

The tailor-made approach implies that organisers research the specific needs of the participants in order to be able to design the most interesting context profiles. Hence the organisers should put into place a simple mechanism to gather this information from end users. This can be done during the diagnostic phase of the professional development programme or through other user-friendly online and offline tools.

Discussion points:

How do you select the independent 'voices' who are providing a picture of the local cultural landscape?

Who is not included and why?

What is the added value of your context profile compared to existing information?

4 Formats

Context profiles can take different forms and be a live exchange (individual or collective), written material (downloadable document, online article, contact list, brochures, etc.) or audio-visual material (video, podcast, etc.). Organisers should determine what is the best format for their participants, assessing the aspects outlined below.

Is the information accessible to the public or just to participants?

This is probably the most crucial question to answer as it will impact the content and accessibility features, as well as the tone of the documentation. A public circulation of the context profile, whatever format is used, greatly influences the way the information is provided and the way it will be received. Organisers need to be aware that a public circulation will inevitably have positive and negative consequences; for example, tailor-made aspects could be less developed, whereas the visibility of local stakeholders could be disproportionately emphasised. Organisers need to be aware that a context profile can validate or give recognition to the professionals involved and the cultural organisations that are mentioned, but it can also make the ones not appearing less visible. In brief, the published documentation could have concrete impacts on the territory described.

Is the information subject to rapid changes?

What proportion of general and long-term information will be presented? What are the transversal and general elements that are less susceptible to change in the short term? The organisers should be able to distinguish contextual information (for example, cultural policies or legal frameworks) from topical ones (such as a portrait of curators or a summary of recent debates).

Does the format take into account the time frame of the information?

What information can be given as an online article and what information can be printed in a brochure? How often does the chosen format (live exchange, written or audio-visual material) allow you to update the information? Research reveals that organisers adopt, to a large extent, a one-to-one conversation between a facilitator (an international expert) and a participant (an artist or sometimes a collective accompanied by their administrative and support staff). The sources of extra information (usually facilitating connections with other stakeholders, links pointing out concrete opportunities or links to specific information mentioned in the live conversation) are sent after the one-to-one exchange. Therefore, it is important that organisers take into consideration these ongoing exchanges when deciding the format of the information.

How detailed does it need to be?

How extensive should the descriptions be? The more details that are provided, the faster the information could become outdated. However, a good level of detail reinforces the usefulness and relevance of the context profile. Another consideration is to decide to what extent the documentation should be tailor-made. Research shows that it is necessary to contextualise the information provided and that the more thematic or sectoral the approach is, the more relevant, accurate and usable the information is for participants. The contextualisation is best performed when the documentation opens the door to individual 'voices'; to the insights of experienced professionals with strong intercultural competences that are able to interpret the general information and make it accessible to participants, as well as artists and culture professionals in general.

Is it accessible?

Are the participants of your professional development programme your primary target group or do you produce materials that can be used beyond this first circle of users? Will the resources produced be circulated broadly beyond the organisers' territory, or at macro-regional, European or international level? The distribution of the context profile will help determine, for example, the language(s) of the material or whether they are publicly accessible or not. Research shows that many organisers provide contextual guidance through live exchanges with experts from different countries who were able to give details on several issues. However, these exchanges are rarely documented, and most of the expertise shared is not aggregated and circulated to a broader circle of artists and culture professionals, limiting the number of people who have access to the materials. Studies have shown that resources available to live arts professionals are not available in several formats; videos that don't use captions or translation

features, or online and offline text that is not suitable for visually impaired readers. Therefore, organisers should adopt inclusive standards when developing their context profiles and choose formats and (digital) tools that allow for wide access to professional information.

Which digital tools do you need?

Which digital tools and applications are you, your participants and the broader circle of end users comfortable with? What level of investment and sophistication can organisers commit to? Research demonstrates the importance of being aware of the digital capabilities of target groups and adopting user-friendly approaches, like choosing pre-existing applications and the most used software in order to avoid digital obstacles and to lower financial investment. Digital context profiles have greater challenges with regards to access (see above), but they also contribute to more inclusive practices (see section below) and address the issue of information obsolescence, since they can be updated as required.

Whether the digital dimension is fully explored or not, organisers should adopt fair standards when developing context profiles. For example, when using pre-existing materials organisers should source adequate information and manage copyright and authorship requirements.

Discussion points:

How do you include non-arts related information, drawing a broader political, social, economic picture?

Are your context profiles non-exhaustive and how do you deal with omissions?

How far can your documentation be instrumentalised by other parties?

5 Information according to the purposes of the mobility experience

As explored in the Handbook for designing professional development programmes with an international focus for live art workers, the focus of programmes and typologies of mobility experiences also depends on the project's participants, and therefore the context profile should encompass different viewpoints.

The documentation should mirror the needs of the participants and/or other artists and culture professionals participating in professional development programmes. Research shows that building the needs of participants into context profiles is sometimes overlooked by organisers, and we will see later that important information is often shared after and not prior to the mobility experience itself.

In terms of providing information, organisers should delve into specific content according to the purposes of the mobility experience or prospecting trip, and they should include relevant examples and case studies.

Creative development

Organisers should include: a short historical overview of the art form(s); past and current artistic trends as well as key points in the development of the field; an overview of artists, collectives and companies; a review of remarkable artistic works; and a summary of creative collaboration opportunities (from artist-in-residence programmes to international co-production funding).

Business development

Here the focus is more to equip participants with practical tools to assess their capacities to operate at an international level, as well as providing them with the structural milestones required to build competence and knowledge. On an operational level, the context profile is expected to present the specific working conditions in a given foreign context (these can include visa and administrative issues, contracting practices, fiscal information, salaries and fees ranges, freight and customs).

Marketing, branding and communication

In this area context profiles should have a clear presentation of the expectations from stakeholders in a foreign territory. Topics can include social media use, artistic dossiers, the use of press clips and technical riders. Moreover, the context profile should reflect the standards and approaches towards audience development, especially as they apply to targeting specific groups (youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, local communities, etc.).

Networking opportunities

Beyond the information mentioned in the business development point above, organisers should present more market-oriented information in which organisers highlight fairs, showcases and sector specific networking opportunities (often found at festivals) where artists and culture professionals can connect with industry stakeholders. These networking spaces (online and offline) can be set up by unions, federations and regional or national networks. In context profiles organisers should also consider including significant European events, be it an annual international conference or a large-scale gathering proposed during a Member State's European Presidency.

Export strategies

When focusing on export strategies, organisers should adopt a clear sectoral approach, as it will help to more accurately address the needs of artists and culture professionals. Beyond the marketing, branding and communication point above, it is necessary to present the export policies and support schemes in place in the country of departure. Travel grants and other market development grants from public and private sources should be presented, as well as the incoming and outgoing mobility practices in a given territory. Research shows that on the one hand formal international cultural relations and cultural diplomacy perspectives are rarely addressed in context profiles, and on the other that grassroots players do not always understand the support schemes in place in their own country of work. Therefore, the organisers should provide clear information about existing strategies, especially when a dedicated public body has a mandate to carry out international relations programmes (such as the Goethe Institut or the Institut français).

Collaborative projects

Here, context profiles should help identify the local, regional and national cultural players involved in EU-funded initiatives, from cooperation projects to platforms and networks. The involvement of local stakeholders can suggest ways and opportunities to connect in order to foster genuine exchange with foreign entities. Another option is to take a cross-sectoral perspective, which is generally more open to amateur practices and which can reveal links with formal education and other socio-economic fields.

Ethical issues

As mentioned above, the context profile can have a more political perspective, inviting independent voices to reflect upon the struggles of the local scene, public debates or controversies. Moreover, the documentation should address practitioners' growing concerns on ethical issues, such as gender equality, diversity, inclusion, access, democracy, fairness and solidarity. However, these notions should be addressed while keeping in mind that these values and principles are not equally shared within Europe or with the rest of the world. The organisers, facilitators and participants will have to take into careful consideration existing geopolitical power dynamics, environmental impacts of international travel, and economic and mobility justice at global level when thinking about developing internationally.

Additionally, in order for organisers to be more inclusive, they need to be sure to target their material to a wide variety of backgrounds, identities and abilities; this approach should contribute to the increase and the solidification of the diversity of the culture field. People in charge of collecting and arranging the information in a context profile should keep in mind the diverse experiences of those who will receive the information, some of whom may have been victims of various oppressions and marginalisation mechanisms. This could include people who have had personal experiences of racism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, sexism, ableism, ageism and/or discrimination because of their class, religion or parenthood status. Organisations should make sure the end users who contribute to the design of these context profiles represent a wide range of identities and experiences so that they can address the diverse needs of different communities.

Discussion points:

- Do your context profiles help to foster a more ethical professional practice?*
- Do your context profiles consider different ways of working in the live arts industry?*
- How do you think the information will be received?*
- How do your values also inform the way you prepare participants for mobility experiences?*

During our research, we could observe that most of the material (for example, the downloadable guides, online articles, videos or contact lists) were prepared and published by organisers after a curated mobility experience was proposed to participants. Hence, the majority of context profiles adopted a public, post-visit report perspective that both recalled the international trip and aimed to crystallise and circulate the knowledge accumulated during the course of the experience. This raises the concern that the participants might not have been prepared for the original mobility experience, and we would not encourage such practice. However, these documents, published for free and in English, were then actively distributed to the cultural field at large, allowing for future programmes to learn from the experience.

We recommend that a country profile is distributed prior to a mobility experience, as the participants have to take time to digest the information and prepare questions in relation to its contents. Organisers should keep in mind that other (sectoral and tailor-made) information will complement the initial document, both in the preparation phase of a prospective trip as well as during its implementation. Therefore, the context profile should not be too extensive and should provide more of an overview to the local cultural context.

Discussion points:

- How does the public circulation of your context profile affect the mentoring of participants?*
- If a public post-visit approach is selected, how much input can participants give in the document?*
- What will the impacts of your context profile be on the context itself after it is published?*
- Does your context profile need to be attached to a mobility experience?*

6 Timeframes

Soliciting feedback from participants and end users should be considered an integral part of establishing or updating a context profile. In order to improve their quality and monitor their impact, we suggest that organisers put in place evaluation and feedback mechanisms. To do so, we recommend that you have a clear idea of what you want to know, who would be providing you with the information and when, and how you will process it.

Collecting such information can be done at different stages:

- when designing the context profile itself, for example by collecting the input of end users and various representatives (such as disabled live workers);
- prior to the mobility experience, for example by collecting feedback and suggestions from participants regarding the missing resources and/or topics not covered by the documentation;
- during the mobility, for example by gathering insights from participants in order to compare and contrast the documentation with the live experience;
- after the mobility experience to evaluate the relevance, accuracy and use of the documentation;
- throughout the process by reaching out to stakeholders from the context to continually take onboard their knowledge and experience.

This evaluation allows you to assess the contents (such as the balance between objective and subjective information, or the balance between general and sector-specific, tailor-made information), the formats (live exchange, digital material, etc.) and their uses.

Many methods can be used but it is essential that organisers provide clear guidance and a well-defined structure to potential respondents. The most common tools are:

- individual interviews with participants and/or end users;
- group evaluation sessions that emphasise collective discussion;
- online and/or offline questionnaires with both multiple choice and open-ended questions.

7 Evaluation and feedback

The target groups may differ significantly depending on the main focus of the context profiles, their shape and their expected circulation. For example, you might want to distinguish the first circle of participants travelling to a foreign country as part of your professional development programme from the live art workers from across the world who access the documentation afterwards. For the latter, organisers might be interested in the volume of downloads, the posts on social media or other such metrics.

Independently of the scope and scale of the evaluation and feedback processes foreseen, participants and end users should have confidence that the organisers will use private and/or confidential information for internal purposes only. Moreover, we suggest that you consider using digital tools that are produced and maintained by companies with a demonstrated commitment to data privacy and security. This may mean allocating a portion of your time and budget to research alternatives to mainstreamed platforms and products. If and when feedback gathered from participants and end users is used for public dissemination, it is vital to receive prior and explicit consent from the people involved.

Discussion points:

- Does your context profile give visibility and recognition to local organisations, and if so, which ones?*
- How do you share your learnings, takeaways and ‘failures’?*
- How does your evaluation help balance expectations from organisers, facilitators, participants and local stakeholders?*

8 Human and financial resources

The context profiles are highly complementary to other training features and support material created in the framework of an international professional development programme. We recommend that both facilitators and organisers consider them as part of their toolbox and that they propose them systematically. However, the research that we conducted shows that there are very limited human and financial means available to work on resources.

When consulting with stakeholders, they often point out three important elements, outlined here.

- Organisers do not always have the in-house expertise to establish such context profiles as their team members rarely have robust international experience or intercultural competences. They usually call upon the services of external experts and facilitators who will provide key information of foreign territories.
- The budget dedicated to resources is usually small, when it exists at all, and it rarely allows for organisers to create new material or contract the services of translators, editors, graphic designers, video makers, webmasters or writers. Such costs are not embedded in the initial financial framework and funders do not always understand the value of such features.
- The very nature of context profiles, whatever their focus, is to coherently present information that will at some point be outdated. It is understood that updating information beyond the time frame of the professional development programme or mobility experience is an activity that requires human and financial resources. Organisers are often reluctant to start such information provision knowing that they could face difficulties in maintaining such an offer because of lack of funding or manpower. They also admit that they do not have the time to work on developing resources (either as a once-off project or across the year).

When embarking on the information provision journey, we recommend organisers to reflect on their capacities and to choose formats and tools that will require low investment and maintenance. Working on more accessible and inclusive materials also encourages the cultural field to return to the fundamentals of good design and communication (such as ease of use, accessibility and live exchange). Moreover, there are many digital tools and applications available that facilitate the design, circulation, evaluation and revision of content.

Finally, research shows that organisers try to find solutions to the lack of resources, such as gathering information at a macro-regional level (for example, in South-East Asia or Northern Africa) or joining forces with other intermediary organisations to share expertise and investment (for example, building a network of country experts or market correspondents able to deliver, on demand, a live presentation of a given context).

Discussion points:

- Do you have a budget to deliver and regularly update your context profiles?*
- When designing a context profile, what do you spend your money on and are all contributors paid?*
- Does your expenditure reflect your values?*

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