HANDBOOK 1

Designing professional development programmes with an international focus for live art workers

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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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Table of contents

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 internalisation 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.

Learning
TRAJECTORIES

Introduction

This handbook is intended as a resource for any organisation that wishes to develop a professional development programme with the aim of helping live art workers to broaden their thinking, practises and networks beyond national borders.

Our goal is to help you focus on the process involved in designing – or redesigning – the best possible framework for individuals to experience creative, relational and business growth in an international context. Our hope is that this 'cookbook' will be something that you can refer to repeatedly over the course of your own design process; that it will help you and your collaborators to guide your thinking and to ask yourselves pertinent questions.

It is founded on extensive research about existing programmes in various countries and includes a selection of relevant examples. However, our aim is not to look backwards at what has already been done, but to help you look forward and build what's to come.

1 Terminology and roles

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

Live art workers

In the term live art, we include traditional performing arts disciplines (theatre, dance, circus, puppetry and music) as well as contemporary practitioners that are, as the Live Art Development Agency puts it, 'exploring the possibilities of the live event and the ways we can experience it' [1]. In the term art workers, we mean to insist upon and make visible the many types of skilled labour (creative, technical, administrative and managerial) necessary for cultural production.

Internationalisation

We think of what it means to internationalise one's network, creative activities, and potential sources of financial support in the broadest possible way. This means going beyond thinking about export strategies for expanding the potential markets for one's work. It may include: mutually beneficial collaborations; residencies; training; visible and meaningful acts of solidarity; and economic, environmental and mobility justice [2]. It involves the creation of, and participation in, online spaces, as well as the physical crossing of national borders.

Professional development programmes

We have chosen to use the term **professional development**, which places the focus on desired outcomes, as opposed to terms like mentoring or coaching, which describe particular kinds of relationships. By programmes, we mean a series of events that take place over an extended amount of time (often a minimum of several months), as opposed to shorter-term happenings such as seminars, workshops or intensives.

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[1] 'What is live art', Live Art Development Agency, https://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/about-lada/what-is-live-art/
[2] To read more about mobility justice see Mimi Sheller, Mobility Justice: The Politics of Movement in an Age of Extremes (London: Verso Books, 2018).

> *Discussion points:*
> *What, precisely, does the term 'professional development' mean to you, in your*
> *context?*

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.

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.

2 Core values

In researching and thinking about international professional development for live art workers, we have identified three core values that we see as instrumental in providing a broad foundation across all types of programme design considerations: emotional labour, deceleration, and permission to experiment.

Emotional labour

Seth Godin defines emotional labour as 'the work of engaging with others in a way that leads to the best long-term outcome'[3]. It is how you choose to show up in any given situation. It can be difficult because it requires maturity, self-awareness, vulnerability, active listening, trust and open communication.

> *Discussion points:*
> *How do you define or think about the word growth? Is this a 'neutral' or a loaded term for you? Why? What other word(s) might you use to substitute it?*

Many of us might tend to think of development, growth and expansion as positives but they often involve taking risks, leaving one's comfort zone, doing things for the first time and grappling with uncertainty. These are actions that, while they can be exciting, for many of us can also bring up feelings of resistance, self-judgement, anxiety and fear.

Working through the complex (and sometimes contradictory or difficult) emotions that accompany the professional development process requires a safe space[4] in which people can learn to honestly articulate their observations, worries, needs and desires.

Deceleration

Situations of financial precarity that force live art workers to endure an often-unsustainable pace of work are common in the live arts sector (and in the creative industries at large). For many, a professional development programme is a rare opportunity to slow down and switch gears, to expand their view beyond the immediate needs of specific projects and towards medium-term goals and big picture thinking.

Actively reflecting on experiences, integrating feedback, strategizing for the long-term and exploring new possibilities all require a significant investment of one's time and mental space.

Permission to experiment

The various contexts (political, economic, sanitary, ecological, etc.) that the live art sector as a whole must navigate as part of its work are in a constant flux and appear to be evolving ever more rapidly. This increasingly means operating without a map to test out new ideas or approaches that may or may not be successful.

The permission to experiment is an important component of iterative design. This methodology positions failures and setbacks – in addition to successes – as vital information for a living project that is regularly being adjusted and improved upon.

" *'In the act of mentoring, there is a major responsibility to enrich the professional context and allow questions to arise without always answering them in the now. Questions should be planted, to mature a process of natural growth, where the answers depend on context and challenges.[5]'*

Lene Bang Henningsen

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3 'Emotional labor', Seth Godin, last modified 18 May 2017, https://seths.blog/2017/05/emotional-labor/
4 A safe space is '[a]n environment in which a person can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm'. Dictionary entry in Oxford Languages.
5 Lene Bang Henningsen in Judith Staines, Joining the Dots // Bridging the Gap(s): A Reflection on the European Project In Situ Act 2016-2020) (Brussels: On the Move, 2020), 3.

3 A note about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic

An OECD report from September 2020 highlighted what many live art workers already knew from personal experience, that the 'cultural and creative sectors are...among the hardest hit by the [coronavirus] pandemic'[6], with venue-based activities (at museums, performing arts and live music venues, festivals and cinemas) most affected.

It is widely predicted that the resulting economic, social and, in many places, political crises will strongly impact the cultural sector as a whole – and live art workers in particular – for years to come. In addition, our planet is now in a state of permanent climate emergency[7] and emerging technologies are disrupting business models[8], democratic discourse, education, communities, and individual values and identities worldwide.

What does it mean to develop and sustain a professional practice as a live art worker in such a volatile context? How can internationalising certain aspects of live art work be used to further support the sector as a whole?

We cannot answer these questions for you. But we hope that in the pages ahead you will find inspiration, food for thought and a helpful framework for designing and building the best possible, internationally minded programme to help live art workers develop as professionals, despite the immense challenges.

6 OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19) Culture shock: COVID-19 and the cultural and creative sectors', OECD, last modified 7 September 2020, https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/culture-shock-covid-19-and-the-cultural-and-creative-sectors-08da9e0e/#boxsection-d1e8453
7 David Wallace-Wells, 'How to Live in a Climate "Permanent Emergency"', New York, 1 July, 2021, https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/07/how-to-live-in-a-climate-permanent-emergency.html
8 Philip Boucher, Naja Bentzen, Tania Laţici, Tambiama Madiega, Leopold Schmertzing and Marcin Szczepański, Disruption by technology Impacts on politics, economics and society (Brussels: European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2020/652079/EPRS_IDA(2020)652079_EN.pdf

4 Design considerations

Roles

Our research on existing professional development programmes highlights what is perhaps one of the most crucial foundations for a positive experience: clear understanding of and communication about the roles of, and expectations for, all involved. This includes being aware of existing or potential power dynamics, anticipating possible hurdles or points of friction, and putting in the effort to understand and empathise with differing perspectives and experiences.

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 on their own terms. 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.

'There is a strong correlation between clarity of purpose and clarity of role expectations between mentor and mentee and the delivery of successful outcomes for both parties.'[9]

Prof. David Clutterbuck

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[9] Prof. David Clutterbuck, Designing and Sustaining a Mentoring Programme (Burnham: Clutterbuck, 2005).

Facilitator: Someone who partakes in a professional development programme in order 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 are able to 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.

'Thomas Schaupp...helped me to define what I am interested in and busy with as an artist through incessant questioning. He did not accept unclear answers and I learned to clarify things for myself as a result. He is a freelance dramaturg and is younger than me...Through constructive critique, observation, and questions, he helped me anchor my artistic practice within a specific context.' [10]

Isaac Spencer

Participant: Someone who partakes in a professional development programme in order 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.

'Reviewing the comments on mentoring from artists for the IN SITU ACT Hot Houses and Ateliers, it seems that...[e]xchanges with other artists (peer group feedback) have been particularly valuable.' [11]

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[10] Anne-Sofie Ericson, Anna Grip, Hanna Hedman, Albin Hillervik, Emelie Johansson, Peter Mills, Lisa Nyberg, Bodil Persson, Isaac Spencer and Rachel Tes, Mentorship Toolbox for Artists (Milvus Artistic Research Center & SITE Stockholm, 2019), 10.
[11] Staines, Joining the Dots, 17.

Sourcing and selecting

Sourcing and selecting the facilitators and participants of a professional development programme are pivotal parts of the process. These steps represent the first opportunities for an organiser to make sure that all who will be involved have a clear understanding about key aspects and expectations.

Approaches To Sourcing Potential Participants And Facilitators
Approaches can include the following:

- an open call for people to apply to be participants or facilitators
- asking the organiser's arts community to nominate people who they think could benefit from a professional development program or who would be good mentors
- privately inviting pre-selected members of the organiser's arts community to be a participant or a facilitator.

An application process should allow organisers to assess availability, anticipate logistical hurdles (such as those related to travel and calendar conflicts), and gauge the motivations of potential participants and facilitators. It can also be a helpful first step for participants, in that it requires them to focus on presenting specific needs, desires and goals to others, even if they will certainly change over time.

Approaches To Selecting Participants And Facilitators
Often, organisers and their collaborators act as unilateral decision-makers with regards to the final selection of participants and facilitators. But including one or both of these constituents in the decision-making process, although perhaps more time-consuming, can be a way to democratise the process and prepare all involved for dialogue and ownership. According to the 2005 Mentoring Development Project in Ireland, 'the happiest arrangements seemed to be where the mentee had some degree of participation in selecting their mentor'[12].

Formats and approaches

Top-down or bottom-up (or a mix?)
A top-down format involves a more traditional relationship between the organiser and participants. The organiser identifies (what they perceive to be) the needs of the live art workers in their purview and designs a rigidly structured, pre-planned programme.

A bottom-up format is more concerned with checking the organiser's assumptions by explicitly and repeatedly assessing the professional development needs of live art workers in real time. A certain level of adaptability

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[12] Valerie Bistany, The Mentoring Development Project: An Action Research Project towards a Best Practice Model of Arts Mentoring in an All-Ireland Context (Dublin: the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Arts, 2006), 15,
https://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/MDP%20Abridged%20Report.pdf

(particularly with regards to content and choice of facilitators) is built into the structure of the programme, allowing for a higher degree of responsiveness to changing conditions and new information.

Individual or collective (or a mix?)

An individual approach focuses on the specificities of each participant, by creating interventions, formats and connections tailor-made to their unique needs. The relationships between participants and facilitators may be more intense in nature, with limited possibilities for peer-to-peer exchanges.

A collective approach centres the creation of community and being part of a group as a vital aspect of the professional development experience, and often involves each facilitator working with a number of participants. This approach can be challenging for a highly heterogeneous cohort, in which outliers may feel the need to sublimate their personal needs in order to serve the majority of participants.

Our research indicates that many of the most successful existing professional development programmes use a blend of the above formats and approaches to balance a variety of (sometimes conflicting) needs.

Timeframes

True professional development doesn't happen in the span of a few days or weeks, it takes time! The 'sweet spot' for allowing participants to experience a sense of growth seems to be between six months and one year.

The 2005 Mentoring Development Project in Ireland found that 'nine months, running parallel to the academic year, was the preferred choice for most participants', and that, in their case, 'less than six months [was] not recommended'[13]. In addition, there was a consensus among participants that 'the summer time was not conducive to this kind of intensive engagement' and that 'breathing space between meetings'[14] was vital to integrating new information. Professional development programmes that run for more than one year will often have to contend with unanticipated 'life events' (such as pregnancy and parental leave or a move) that can compromise the availability and commitment of participants.

Participating in a professional development programme involves an experiential arc and it is important to acknowledge and ritualise the stages of beginning, middle and end, preferably with **all-group, day-long, in-person events.**

'ideally, participants would have preferred a full day to allow for greater unstructured time together to debrief, network and, perhaps, to collaborate.'[15]

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[13] Ibid., 60.
[14] Ibid., 45.
[15] Ibid., 55.

Beginning: induction

An induction event is key to establishing relationships between and amongst participants and facilitators. It is also an opportunity for organisers to set the tone for how, and the extent to which, they will be involved going forward. Emphasis should be placed on getting to know each other, setting expectations and respecting confidentiality with regards to sensitive information. You may also wish to talk explicitly about power relations, as well as the possible avenues that participants and facilitators can take if they are feeling uncomfortable with a given situation. Whether an organiser, facilitator or participant, each person should be expected to present her/him/themself to the group and to speak on a high-level about the motivations, intentions and purpose for getting involved in the programme.

An induction event should also provide a separate moment for the participants to begin to shape the direction they wish to give to their experience in the professional development programme. This might involve one-on-one exchanges with facilitators and/or time set aside for expressing current aspirational and concrete goals through writing.

Organisers should think about the documents that they which wish to prepare and present during an induction event, which may include the following:

- guidelines with regards to the roles and responsibilities of participants and facilitators

- a list of answers to some key questions that might arise for participants and/or facilitators during the course of the programme

- a schedule of key programme events

- a sheet with the contact information of all participants and facilitators

- a periodic feedback form (more about this in section 8 on documentation and evaluation).

Middle(s): checking-in

At or around the mid-way point of a professional development programme, it is strongly recommended to plan a specific check-in moment with both participants and facilitators. Are all parties involved still fully engaged in the programme and able to re-engage after each pause? Have there been any significant personal or professional changes that might hinder or alter prior commitments? What components of the remaining programme need to adapt to shifting individual and/or macro-circumstances?
Everyone present should have the opportunity, both formally and informally, to exchange about the key aspects of his or her experience so far.

End: providing a sense of closure

Formalising the end of a programme is key to providing a sense of closure and a sense of 'what's next' for all involved. It provides a moment for both participants and facilitators to reflect on what they've learned and to share it with the group. Without neglecting a discussion on what could have been done better, it's certainly a time to celebrate wins and successes, no matter how seemingly small.

In preparation for this group meeting, consider asking participants (with the help of facilitators) how they plan to manage their professional development on their own going forward. Have participants felt supported in achieving (some of) what they set out to do at the start of the programme?

Topics

Creative development
While many of the proposed topics below focus more on the business side of live art work, creative development can, and often should, be included as part of a professional development programme A creatively focused programme isn't concentrated on technical skills, but rather on helping participants to articulate their artistic ideas, to develop concepts, to experiment with new mediums and forms, to interrogate and situate their practice within specific contexts, and to clarify how they want their work to evolve going forward.

Business development
The following is a (non-exhaustive) list of potential topics in relation to the business development of live art workers in an international context. Topics may be explored formally in workshops settings, or more informally in one-on-one exchanges with facilitators.

- **Marketing, branding, & communication** How should a live art worker approach presenting what they do to both professional and general audiences? What does it mean to build a brand as a live art worker? What are the best strategies and tools for planning, publishing and evaluating different types of communication? What language(s) should a live art worker be communicating in and why?

- **Networking opportunities** What kinds of formally structured organisations can a live art worker connect to in order to expand her/his/their international network? How can a live art worker identify other kinds of opportunities for connecting with professionals from other countries?

- **Export strategies** What are the advantages of participating in an international fair, market or showcase? How does one go about finding partners in other countries when building a tour?

- **Internal (re)structuring** For live art workers that function as part of a company, collective or group: which specific competencies and skills need to be developed in order to operate on an international level? Do current roles need to shift, or additional people brought on, to actively handle the work necessary for broadening the scope of activities to an international level?

- **Collaborative projects** What are the advantages and potential hurdles to medium and long-term cooperation with organisations from outside one's country of operation? How can a live art worker initiate or participate in an EU-funded project for the first time?

- **Working conditions & legalities** What are some of the important legal regulations to be aware of in other countries? How can an understanding of the differing status and working conditions of art workers in other

contexts inform one's approach to internationalisation? What resources are available for someone facing a situation of power abuse or (sexual) harassment while working abroad?

Discussion points:
Ethical issues can be both a topic and a lens; a starting point from which all other topics can be viewed. What other questions might you add here, under this heading? How would adopting them as a lens inform the content of your professional development programme?

- **Ethical issues** How can live art workers take into consideration the environmental impacts of international travel? Why should live art workers living in rich countries be concerned with economic and mobility justice? What does it look like to take into careful consideration existing geopolitical power dynamics when thinking about developing internationally?

Digging deeper:
The 2022 Shift Culture report #MeToo in the Arts: From Call-Outs to Structural Change [16] provides research-informed recommendations for network organisations on combating sexual harassment and power abuse in the European cultural sector.

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[16] Marta Keil and Katie Kheriji-Watts, Gender and Power Relations #MeToo in the Arts: From Call-Outs to Structural Change (Shift Culture, November 2021).

Virtuality and physicality

As is the case with many other sectors of the economy and civic life, the coronavirus pandemic has (for better or for worse) encouraged the arts and culture sectors to experiment with the use of digital tools, especially when and where in-person gatherings pose a substantial public health risk. Through the creation of online spaces, live art workers are reinventing what it means to network, collaborate, and develop and produce events in an era when cross-border mobility can be an insurmountable hurdle.

Connecting through digital tools is a great way to increase programme accessibility, lower costs and reduce environmental impact. If and when you choose to use them, however, it is worth considering how will you also provide a space for participants to both reflect on the uses of online spaces in an international context and interrogate the (often hidden) meanings and assumptions that accompany their use.

As you may already know from experience, virtual spaces alone are rarely an adequate substitute for the intimacy and spontaneity of in-person gatherings, nor can they replace the absorption of context that accompanies 'traditional' travel. According to the Australia Council for the Arts, '[m]entees in the arts overwhelmingly feel that mentoring works best if it is face-to-face'[17] and the Mentoring Development Project in Ireland found that 'face-to-face meetings were by far the most effective form of contact between mentor and mentee'[18].

If and when participants and facilitators do travel locally, nationally and/or internationally, what kinds of logistical, administrative and financial resources will be made available to them? This is a particularly important concern for independent workers. Will accommodations be made for (often slower and, sometimes, more expensive) ways of travelling that reduce the emissions that contribute to global warming?

Accessibility, inclusion and diversity

Increasing access to professional development programmes for live art workers from a wide variety of backgrounds, identities and abilities is one important way to increase and solidify the diversity of the sector as a whole.

How will you plan to include live art workers whose aesthetic practices, approaches to business and views of the (art) world are influenced by personal experiences of racism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, sexism, ableism, ageism, and/or discrimination because of their class, religion or parenthood status? How will you work to both invite and ensure parity of access to your

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[17] Australia Council for the Arts and AltusQ, Australia Council for the Arts Guide to Mentoring (Sydney: Australia Council for the Arts, 2016), 20, https://australiacouncil.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/aca_guide-to-mentoring_2016_f-584f4208ee372-1.pdf.
[18] Bistany, The Mentoring Development Project, 48. https://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/MDP%20Abridged%20Report.pdf

programme and its outcomes for participants who identify as coming from oppressed communities or marginalised identities? How will you accommodate participants and facilitators who are blind? Who are deaf or hard-of-hearing? Who use a wheelchair? Who don't speak English? Who are neurodiverse?

Digging deeper:
On the Move's 2021 Time to Act report[19] for Europe Beyond Access cites a variety of guides, published during the last decade, that offer practical information on how to increase accessibility and inclusion, particularly for professional artists with disabilities.

The website of the European project Shift Culture[20] also includes a list of resources that provide guidelines on improving inclusion and accessibility.

Documentation and evaluation

Given its non-linear nature, assessing personal and professional growth in the context of a formal programme requires foresight and planning. In particular, it asks (once again!) for clarity on the part of an organiser: what would you like to know and how will you collect and process the information that you seek?

The point of documentation is to gather quantitative and qualitative data that allows organisers – as well as facilitators and participants, to a certain extent – to evaluate if and how they have achieved certain goals (or, perhaps, where and why they have failed).
Soliciting feedback from participants and facilitators should be considered an integral part of a professional development programme, in all stages of the process. The Mentoring Development Project in Ireland, for example, provided a periodic feedback form (a simple A4 evaluation sheet) to all participants and facilitators at their programme's induction event, with both multiple choice and open-ended questions, which they expected everyone to fill out and returned to the organiser after each key meeting.

Other possibilities for gathering information throughout your programme's timeline include:

- individual entry, mid-term and exit interviews with some or all of the participants and/or facilitators
- group evaluation sessions that emphasise collective discussion
- participant workbooks (regularly filled out) that focus on the process of participants' professional development
- facilitator records with their planning and notes.

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19 On the Move (Jordi Baltà, Yohann Floch and John Ellingsworth), Time to Act: How Lack of Knowledge in the Cultural Sector Creates Barriers for Disabled Artists and Audiences (British Council and On the Move, 2021).
20 'Inclusion', Shift Culture, accessed 4/3/2022, https://shift-culture.eu/inclusion-accessibility-cultural-organisation

Regardless of your chosen methods, it is essential to provide clear guidelines and structures for gathering and recording information.

It is also important to keep in mind that documentation for the purposes of evaluation is not the same thing as communication, which is the exclusive responsibility of the organiser. Participants and facilitators should have confidence that the organisers will use **private and/or confidential information** for internal purposes only. If and when feedback gathered from participants and facilitators is used for public dissemination, it is vital to receive prior, explicit consent from the people involved.

In addition, 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 platforms and products owned by Google and Facebook.

Finally, in thinking about evaluation, it is important to remember that professional development outcomes have the potential to extend well beyond the life of the programme itself. Do you plan to contact participants and/or facilitators for further feedback six months/a year/two years after the programme has formally finished? How do you expect the information gathered to enrich your evaluation and inform the actions you take going forward?

'the Mentoring scheme managers'…reported resistance from some mentees to feeding back publicly on a process which many had experienced as private and confidential'.[21]

Digging deeper:

IETM's 2017 Handbook how to Assess your Artistic Organisation[22] is an accessible guide for the evaluation of cultural projects.
On the Move's 2018 toolkit The Evaluation Journey[23] provides practical advice for developing approaches that go beyond economic frameworks when thinking about value.
The European Network of Cultural Centres' working group on Ethical Digitalisation[24] works on defining an ethical, inclusive and transparent approach to digital tools for cultural operators.

21 Ann DeVlieg and Judith Staines, Fertile Ground: an evaluation of keðja 2012-2015 (Copenhagen: keðja, 2015), 66.
22 Vassilka Shishkova, Look, I'm Priceless: Handbook on How to Assess your Artistic Organisation (Brussels: IETM, 2017).
23 Dagna Gmitrowicz and Marie Le Sourd, The Evaluation Journey: A Toolkit for Cultural Operators (Brussels: ENCC, March 2018).
24 'Working Group: Ethical Digitalization', ENCC, accessed 4/3/2022, https://encc.eu/activities/projects/working-group-ethical-digitalization

Money

Although budget creation and management is a vital cornerstone of professional projects in the live arts, talking openly about money remains a taboo for many culture workers. In a context of financial hardship and economic precarity for an increasing number of live art workers, the question of compensation for one's time must be considered carefully, especially considering each individual's employment status and stability.

For facilitators, compensation should take into account travel, presence at various events and meetings, and preparation, as well as time spent on documentation and evaluation. The question of **compensation as it relates to participants** is perhaps a more difficult one, and answers to it will vary across contexts. We would like to suggest that independent live art workers who have little or no structural support for their activities should also be considered for compensation for their investment in the programme, in the same way as facilitators.

This being said, certain business models behind existing professional development programmes do include the financial contribution of participants, although this effectively limits access to those who have the means to pay. Beyond public funding or private support (at the local, national or extra-national level), collaboration and the pooling of resources amongst organisations with similar aims towards the international professional development of live arts workers in their regions is often an effective way to share costs and expand potential outcomes and opportunities.

'One mentee commented that the project had been a lot of work and would have appreciated if it would have been financially compensated.'[25]

Digging deeper:
On the Move's website[26] *offers up to date information on funding international mobility for arts workers.*

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25 Ibid.
26 On the Move, accessed 4/3/2022, https://on-the-move.org

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