

HANDBOOK 3

# Designing and intermediating professional mobility experiences for live art workers

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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

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.

There is a lot of literature in Europe that has highlighted the relevance of mobility and its impact on the professional and creative development of artists and culture professionals. Indeed, cultural mobility – the practice of travelling or moving abroad for cultural, professional and social reasons – could be a gratifying part of an arts worker’s professional development, with its capacity to both influence all parts of professional practice and bring unexpected results. Undertaking a mobility experience helps participants embrace diversity and test approaches outside a familiar environment. In order to maximise the experience, mobility needs intermediaries who facilitate participants’ experiences in an inclusive and accessible way. These intermediaries can be travellers or hosts who provide access to new professionals, stakeholders and markets, taking care of mitigating possible cultural, social and physical barriers.

In this regard, the role of the intermediary or facilitator is crucial for the quality and success of the mobility experience for everyone involved. This handbook, therefore, aims at raising questions in order to see mobility from a different angle and contributing to the enhancement of sustainable, accessible and inclusive mobility experiences.

## Contextualising cultural mobility

During the last 15 years, the international mobility of culture professionals and artists significantly increased, due to a combination of exogenous and endogenous conditions. Overall, evidence reveals the impact of transnational cooperation and mobility on the professional development of the cultural and creative labour force, as well as the effectiveness of mobility as a strategy to discover new connections or reinforce existing ones. Moreover, the increasing density of international mobility opportunities and facilities has positively impacted art workers' capacity to travel, especially inside the European area.

This possibly influences the demand of mobility intermediaries, who lobbied the EU's agenda on cultural affairs for better mobility with evident results. Indeed, as reported in the Operational Study: Mobility Scheme for Artists and Culture Professionals in Creative Europe countries<sup>1</sup>, the international mobility of artists and culture professionals has gained significant traction during a fifteen-year-long journey in the European conversation, starting from the identification of mobility as a strategic objective in the 2007 European Agenda for Culture to the 2018 EU action I-Portunus. The political acknowledgement of both the fundamental impact of peers' mobility and transnational cooperation to the development of the cultural and creative sector, and the positive trend in relation to exploratory trips as an effective development strategy, goes hand in hand with the increasing number of programmes and organisations able to provide international mobility support and services to culture professionals. The next step needs to include access to tailor-made and flexible programmes able to answer the transversal mobility requirements of the sector. These programmes are worth the investment as cultural mobility generates economic development opportunities, visibility, opportunities to learn and take risks outside of comfort zones, and they can lead to enhanced professional networks.

At the same time, despite the establishment of numerous schemes and mobility programmes, the complexity and precariousness of the sector, combined with the still inadequate funding opportunities, reveals the necessity of putting into place relevant methodologies to effectively facilitate cultural mobility and face critical issues present in the current approaches. Moreover, the entire cultural sector, and the practice of mobility, have been severely impacted over the last two years by the pandemic, increasing the necessity of new perspectives and attention on our travel footprint and mobility habits. This situation has revealed the potential of technological tools, which could be effective and integrable in future mobility strategies.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Baltà, Y. Floch, M. Fol, M. Sert and M. Le Sourd, Operational Study: Mobility Scheme for Artists and Culture Professionals in Creative Europe Countries (Brussels: On the Move, 2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.i-portunus.eu/wp-fuut/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/OS-summary-final.pdf>

# 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

*A temporary cross-border movement, often for educational, capacity-building, networking or working purposes.*

A cultural mobility experience may have tangible or intangible outputs in the short term, and/or be part of a long-term professional development process. International mobility is a central component of the professional trajectory of artists and culture professionals. Research shows that the professional development programmes with an international focus provide one or several mobility experiences to their participants as part of the learning trajectory. Mobility is seen as a component of a given programme and supports the participant taking action and putting into practice their strategy.

## 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.

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# 2 Core values

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Core values refers to the pillars that will lead the entire conversation in this handbook. Indeed, as already emphasised in the introduction, we will navigate the entire approach to mobility design while always taking into account these areas of awareness.

In this way, we would like to propose a values-driven system which is influenced by contemporary changes in society that impact not only art workers, but the entire society. These elements, which speak to the need to be involved in world dynamics, should be taken into serious consideration when providing guidelines on the definition of effective and well-balanced mobility experiences.

## Environmental sustainability

Historically, concepts of sustainability have been articulated in response to a perceived crisis within modernist narratives about progress. Sustainability is commonly understood to require the balanced pursuit of three goods: ecological health, social equity and economic welfare. As such, they are not just environmental concepts, but ethical and political ones. The concept of sustainability is thus grounded in the ethical commitment to the well-being, not only of contemporary populations, but also of future generations.

Furthermore, in light of the current climate crisis, it is important to have a more aware approach to the organisation of mobility experiences, including questioning the need for travel, means of transportation, food options, waste habits, facility materials and all the aspects that can have an impact on the ecosystem. Exploratory trips should be designed in order to have as few harmful impacts as possible and participants should be informed of the possible effects of their choices on the local environment and communities. Before undertaking trips, participants should be involved in an awareness-raising process, as well as being informed of the ecological approach of the programme and the desired behaviour in terms of environmental sustainability. In this sense, it is also important to evaluate the concrete impacts of the sustainable practises modelled during the mobility experience and carried out by the participants after the trip.

**Digging deeper:**

*The research report [Sustainable Tourism for Development in Developing Countries<sup>2</sup>](#), written by the UNWTO, provides an overview of the areas to consider and reflect upon when organising a mobility activity.*

## Accessibility

Being international, and thus engaging in mobility, is a natural process for today's society in many professional areas. However, many social changes run counter to the development of mobility, not least of which are the rising nationalism and xenophobia, the diverse cultural approaches to religion or the different understanding of gender and sexuality. In this respect, it is worth stressing that restrictions to the mobility of artists and culture professionals may be seen as a threat to freedom of expression, and for this reason these issues must be treated as essential information to consider when organising prospecting trips, both by the organiser and the hosting institutions.

Mobility and accessibility are often considered two sides of the same coin, the former referring to how far you can go and the latter to how much you can get to. Accessibility can be viewed as the 'ability to access' and benefit from some system or entity. Therefore, it is essential to take in consideration all the conditions needed to allow artists and cultural operators to access easily, and fully live, a mobility experience. This involves providing information and making choices on the means of transportation, the food options, the accommodation and working space, and the availability of tools for special needs knowledge acquisition. At the same time, it is fundamental to provide the hosting communities with all the information needed to interact with the cultural operators, for example by providing moments open to the locals. This approach allows for the ability to design mobility experiences that are equally accessible to different needs and conditions. It involves not only being able to reactively remove possible barriers, but also embracing diversity as the starting point for accessible experiences. It means being aware of the plurality of physical and immaterial barriers, approaching mobility design from with the intention of creating a common field where diverse approaches and needs are empowered.

**Digging deeper:**

*The research report [Time to Act<sup>3</sup>](#), produced by On the Move and commissioned by the British Council, provides an extensive overview of methodologies and experiences of accessibility management in the cultural sector.*

<sup>2</sup> World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), Sustainable Tourism for Development Guidebook – Enhancing Capacities for Sustainable Tourism for Development in Developing Countries (Madrid: UNWTO, 2013), accessed 4/3/2022, <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/epdf/10.18111/9789284415496>

<sup>3</sup> 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).

## Ethics

Ethics is a concept based on well-founded standards that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness or specific virtues. In a context where the work of public and private organisations is being increasingly questioned, especially with regards to the consistency of their practice, there is a demand for new ethical standards.

Support for mobility should be aware of, and tackle, the social and economic imbalances in which networking takes place, including the inequality within and among countries. These inequalities can be tackled through tools for inclusion at all levels (such as considering the language used) and the organisers or facilitators could even act as advocates. There should be a commitment to a balanced collaboration, in consultation with beneficiaries at all stages and with a policy of transparency, especially when it comes to the use of resources.

### **Digging deeper:**

*The book [A Restless Art](#)<sup>4</sup> provides an overview on the ethical implications of community participation in the art process.*

## Relation to power - decolonisation

The practice of 'colonisation' is best known as the process by which a powerful country or a social group claims the resources of another without permission or just compensation, imposing their own practices, customs and rules. It is also a bigger cultural, psychological and economic imbalance of power, often reflected in common language; words like 'uncivilised' are used to describe non-European domains of being and knowledge, while 'modern' is used as a code to refer to Europeans. The racial hierarchy, and the imposition of a European or Western idea of progress, formed the foundation for the complex intersections of the 'colonial matrix of power'<sup>5</sup>. These imbalances can be addressed through a process of decolonisation, which examines and undoes privileges that are the result of historical events.

In this sense, the whole concept of mobility needs to be understood in relation to these dynamics, especially when it comes to mobility from the West to the rest of the world. Such mobility could be culturally linked to an old idea of exploration, where movement is associated with the exploitation of physical and, in this case, intellectual resources. It must be an organisation's priority to construct a mobility programme which will take into account, in the definition

<sup>4</sup> François Matarasso, *A Restless Art: How Participation Won, and Why It Matters* (Lisbon and London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2019).

<sup>5</sup> A. Quijano, 'Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America', *Sage Journal*, Volume: 15, Issue: 2 (2000): n.p. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580900015002005>

of the programme logistics and objectives, the relation to power of different countries, especially when it is towards a non-EU country.

**Digging deeper:**

*The article 'Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America'<sup>6</sup> provides an overview of the philosophical concepts and theories at the base of cultural colonialism.*

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

# 3 How to approach the design of a mobility experience

In this section, basing on the existing literature and on the empirical evidence previously presented, we provide information and practical suggestions on how to approach the design and facilitation of a mobility experience.

## Where do I go?

There are no specific rules for choosing where to organise the mobility experience. When selecting the destination, organisers are usually driven by a combination of questions.

- Are there existing events or specific programmes that can be connected to mobility experiences?
- Are there existing partnerships between the organisers and organisations located in the country and/or area where the mobility would be planned?
- Is the mobility part of a specific project or is it a stand-alone experience?
- Are there possible restrictions on visiting the country, caused by specific events such as terrorism, war, natural disaster or, recently, the pandemic?
- Is there enough information about the place selected?
- Is it a new mobility programme or does the organiser already have experience?
- Is the country easily accessible by more sustainable transport?

When selecting a destination for a mobility experience, it is important to organise information about the local context and share it with future participants and with everyone involved in the programme. Making information accessible is a fundamental component of an inclusive and successful mobility experience, ensuring that everyone is prepared for, and aligned with, the local voices and habits, economy, politics and so on.

### **Are there existing events or specific programmes that can be connected to mobility experiences?**

Organisers tend to leverage the existence of key events, such as festivals, fairs or conferences, in order to link a mobility plan to the event through complementary activities -visiting the local cultural venues and organisations, meeting local artists and so on. This approach can attract participants already interested in the event itself, as well as facilitate the creation of economic

relations with other organisations. Moreover, these events bring together resources, people and competences, so they can be useful for accelerating networking and new professional relationships. At the same time, the risk is that a huge fair or festival could absorb energies and attention, restricting the possibility of diversifying the programme and involving actors from the local context.

**Are there existing partnerships between the organisers and the organisations located in the country and/or area where the mobility would be planned?**

When selecting a place, organisers should consider if it represents an opportunity for both the participants and the organisation. Indeed, designing mobility could be a chance to establish new professional relationships, learning practices and modalities for the organisers themselves. In this way, it is recommendable to find peer organisations that could be facilitators and partners, especially if it is the first mobility experience organised in that specific country. At the same time, creating new relationships and planning new programmes is usually more time consuming and produces more uncertainty than partnering with already known organisations.

**Is the mobility part of a specific project or is it a stand-alone experience?**

A mobility experience could be part of a project where mobility represents one of the components or modules of the project. This is the case, for example, in some European programmes, such as Erasmus+, where mobility could be an important phase of a wider learning process. In other cases, mobility is a stand-alone activity, offered by an organisation from among its portfolio of services and projects. There might not be obvious differences between the two types of mobility, except that being part of a project could influence some of the characteristics of the mobility. For example, the fact that participants are part of either a predetermined group or an ongoing project could impact the overall learning experience of the participants.

In addition, in the case of a project's mobility, the choice of the destination could be determined by several additional factors, such as the origin of the organisations involved in the project or the relevance of specific contents, which have been identified during the project and its mobility experiences.

**Are there possible restrictions on visiting the country, caused by specific events such as terrorism, war, natural disaster or, recently, the pandemic?**

Organisers should be aware of, and informed about, the possible risks connected with a specific country. As in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which many governments are rapidly changing the rules of access into the country, other limitations should be taken into consideration when choosing the destination of the mobility programme, such as war or terrorism. It is highly recommended to check the latest updates from the following sources:

- the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation in your own country;
- Re-Open EU, a specific website of the European Union dedicated to monitoring the overall COVID-19 situation in the European Union;
- specific local websites and sources in the destination country.



**Is there enough information about the place selected?**

When selecting a destination for a mobility programme, the organiser should take into consideration the quality and quantity of information available. Even if it seems easy nowadays to obtain qualitative information about a country or a city, it is not always possible to source all the information by only researching digitally about a specific sector or human context and its voices. Once again, it is essential to establish meaningful connections with local organisations in order to collaboratively design information packages for everyone involved (participants, locals and organisations).

**Is it a new mobility programme or does the organiser already have experience?**

Some organisers strategically operate mobility activities in a specific area of the world, while others tend to propose new kinds of experiences. In the first case, the organiser could focus all its activities, and therefore the mobility, on just one specific cultural and social context. In this case, mobility could be a recurring experience that keeps the same characteristics and programme from one experience to the other, or it could vary but still maintain a focus on the area and/or region of interest of the organisation. In the other case, the organiser could focus on various destinations. From the organisation's perspective, what drastically changes in the two scenarios is principally the ability to always guarantee qualitative, inclusive and accessible mobility experiences, which, in the second case, could be more time-consuming and risky, especially if it's the first time in a specific country. Moreover, a world-wide approach to mobility often implies a relevant network of partners around the world and it could generate an economic barrier for some organisations, especially for long-distance destinations. At the same time, a mono-area approach might prove confining and overly specific, although it has the advantage of more easily generating long-term relationships with the local partners.

**Is the country easily accessible by more sustainable transportation?**

When choosing a destination, the environmental impact of mobility (in terms of pollution and the ecological footprint) should be taken into account. As such, organisers should carefully balance the choice of the area and/or region of the mobility with the choice of the transportation required to reach that area and/or region, taking into consideration the fact that aviation is generally the most polluting means of travel and that it should be avoided when possible. More sustainable means of travel, such as trains, should be given priority.

**Digging deeper:**

*For further considerations, we recommend reading the [European Aviation Environmental Report<sup>7</sup>](#), produced by the European Environment Agency, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and Eurocontrol.*

<sup>7</sup> European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), European Environment Agency (EEA) and Eurocontrol, European Aviation Environmental Report 2019 (EASA, EEA and Eurocontrol, 2019), accessed 4/3/2022, <https://www.easa.europa.eu/eaer>

## Am I stepping into participants' and local communities' shoes?

This section aims at highlighting the role of the organiser as an important factor for achieving the success of the mobility experience.

### **The role of the facilitator**

Organising mobility goes beyond the organisation of the logistics, which is important yet not unique. Organisers, in fact, should operate as facilitators, by creating a valuable environment where all the stakeholders – participants and the local communities, organisations and artists – feel comfortable, understood and enabled. The role of the facilitator is fundamental and it can radically influence the success of the mobility experience. Those undertaking this role need information, operational skills and the ability to take into consideration everyone's perspectives. In this section, we would like to share an approach – a questioning point of view – rather than a toolbox.

### **Do I know who is participating to the mobility programme?**

As previously stated, in this handbook we are interested in delving into the topics related to mobility for arts workers. Before exploring all the relevant aspects to take into consideration for mobility participation, we should remember that travelling is an essential component of arts workers' creative and professional development, as explored in several studies on cultural mobility, especially in Europe. Mobility gives arts workers the possibility to investigate new contexts, take inspiration from new practices and interact with other creative peers and communities. Additional arguments for mobility include the need to establish and maintain professional relationships, as well as the potential to access international visibility and recognition. Nowadays there is an extensive recognition of the impact of mobility on the human and professional development of arts workers, and it is seen as an integrated and essential element of the value chain. Mobility is especially relevant for education and training, creation, production, dissemination and distribution, documentation and media creation, and art critique and preservation.<sup>8</sup>

According to recent Eurostat data<sup>9</sup>, potential cultural and creative beneficiaries in the European Union bear the following characteristics:

- most of them have a tertiary education (around 60%), compared with 34% of the total European employment market;
- a total of 46% of the culture professionals are women;
- more than other sectors, beneficiaries are aged between 15 and 29;
- many of them are self-employed, more than double the overall employment.

<sup>8</sup> European Agenda for Culture, Report on Building a Strong Framework for Artists' Mobility, five key principals (Brussels: European Union, 2012). Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/reports/artist-mobility-report\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/reports/artist-mobility-report_en.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Original data can be found at 'Database', Eurostat, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

**Are the participants' needs fully embraced?**

The characteristics described by the Eurostat data provide a starting point for better understanding the needs of mobility participants.

Exploring this information further, the fact that arts workers are largely self-employed means that they could be inclined to more flexible programmes and experiences where networking moments are prevalent. At the same time, organisers should take into consideration the economic precarity of many arts workers, who might prefer shorter mobility experiences. This would require the organisers to maximise the effectiveness of the trip in order to generate a positive impact for beneficiaries in a restricted period of time. Nevertheless, the duration of a single mobility experience should be compatible with the formation of ongoing interactions and longer-lasting relationships. This is a relevant factor in the development of sustainable and durable professional collaborations and opportunities.

Taking into consideration the diverse needs of the participants, it is once again fundamental to design mobilities using an approach that includes a process of openness and constant feedback. Of course, it could be useful to prepare a questionnaire and/or a group interview before the beginning of the mobility experience in order to get information about:

- dietary needs;
- disability needs;
- specific sanitary needs;
- language needs;
- specific requests.

It is important to take into consideration the fact that specific information requires specific approaches; this means that questionnaires are preferable when collecting punctual information, while other approaches need to be established through a more intimate modality. This is the case when dealing with any form of cultural division or discrimination, a possible occurrence that needs to be taken into account when planning a mobility experience in which cultural value systems and habits could be radically different. That's why it is recommended to be proactive and aware of possible needs of everyone involved when designing and implementing the trip. It could be useful to incorporate these elements during mobility specific feedback sessions or listening sessions.

**Am I facilitating an equally accessible environment between participants and the local context?**

Mobility could be considered the encounter of experiences, cultures and practises, thus it should not be 'frontal', but rather a moment of 'embeddedness' among all the participants and stakeholders.

This perspective allows us to move from a participant-oriented approach, to an embedding approach, where the mobility is intended as a combination of different people, stakeholders, needs and cultures, all equally important.

Using this approach, the organiser might be able to disrupt any colonialist attitudes or biases when designing the mobility and facilitating the travel. In order to do so, we should always ask to ourselves a number of questions.

- Am I really giving space to every actor involved?
- Am I creating a space of discussion between peers?
- What can I do if I recognise a colonialist approach in some of the participants?

It could be useful to share some basic rules with all the stakeholders, both before and during the mobility. These rules might remind everyone to have an open, proactive and learning-oriented approach, that encourages participants to have a constructive, rather than judgmental, modality towards others. The facilitator can help all the stakeholders involved, creating physical spaces for discussion during the mobility experience (for example at the end of every visit or meeting with local partners).

### **Digging deeper:**

*For further considerations, we recommend reading the Operational Study: Mobility Scheme for Artists and Culture Professionals in Creative Europe countries<sup>10</sup>.*

## Do I understand everyone's purpose for mobility?

Engaging with an experience of mobility could be worthy and satisfying from different points of view, as we have previously seen. The reason why an arts worker chooses to embark on an international trip varies in relation to the tip's purpose; it could be for developing new professional relationships or for exporting a specific project or content. Understanding participants' purposes is crucial for organisers, as it provides the foundation to design an effective mobility experience.

Designing and then curating a mobility programme should be the result of a balance between the mobility purpose of the participants, the organiser's purpose and the local stakeholders' goals. Once again, it implies the ability of the facilitator to understand all these purposes.

Which kind of purposes can the facilitator encounter? The participants' mobility purpose can be described through the clusters outlined below.

### **Skills enhancement and creative development**

During mobility, the organiser should prepare moments when participants can get in contact with notable artistic and creative experiences and have

<sup>10</sup> J. Baltà, Y. Floch, M. Føl, M. Sert and M. Le Sourd, Operational Study: Mobility Scheme for Artists and Culture Professionals in Creative Europe Countries (Brussels: Goethe-Institut, 2019), accessed 4/3/2022, <https://www.i-portunus.eu/wp-fuut/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/OS-final.pdf>

the possibility to incorporate local practices and forms into their practice, for example through art residencies programmes.

### **Networking opportunities**

Networking opportunities represent the most common reason for travelling internationally. It could happen in different ways, such as through dedicated events, like as fairs or festivals, or through dedicated programmes where the organiser curates moments of sharing between the participants and local artists, organisations, institutions and collectives.

Curating networking opportunities means taking care of several elements. As always, it is important to bear in mind some key questions.

- Which kind of local peers could be of interest for the participants, in terms of practices, research, disciplines and approaches?
- Are there already networking opportunities organised in that period?
- Is there a possibility of cultural misunderstanding between participants and local fellows? If yes, how can it be mitigated?

It could happen that networking mobility experiences are directly coordinated by the same organisations responsible for the networking events. If this is not the case, organisers should be able to guarantee dedicated moments for networking, facilitating connections among peers and ensuring accessibility to the networking events, as well as providing relevant information on the stakeholders' typology – from local cultural players to cooperation platforms, policymakers and commercial organisations.

Therefore, it could be relevant to offer a networking experience where all the stakeholders can provide a multifaceted perspective on, for example, engaging with different kinds of organisations (from large institutions to small cultural centres).

### **Collaborative projects**

Collaboration experiences aim at fostering participants' ability to cooperate with others, regardless of their professional expertise, socio-cultural background and geographical origin. For that reason, mobility programmes should emphasise the value of building relationships among participants, the possibility of finding common ground for cooperation and, eventually, the co-creation, co-production and co-design of a project. It means facilitating sessions of mutual understanding and bridging possible cultural differences that can emerge while collaborating. Organisers should know how to facilitate collaborative processes, negotiate differences and deal with possible risks of collaborating between diverse practices, such as the language and cultural gap among collaborators.

### **Research and study**

Research experiences are usually motivated by the need to learn from a specific context, observe practises and research experiences. In this case, organisers need to curate mobility in order to prioritise the connection between the participants and those collectives, companies and artists that reflect

important local cultural and artistic trends. More than other clusters, it is important to know in advance the research purposes of participants, in order to orient them towards the right information. At the same time, research mobility programmes could incorporate artistic research and development, in which case organisers should favour residency programmes and activities that can provide an opportunity for collective development in relation to foreign practices and knowledge. In this case, it is preferable to facilitate the connection with noteworthy artistic organisations and works, in order to provide a high-quality experience.

### **Export strategies**

Export strategies refers to those experiences of mobility dedicated to tour specific cultural content, products, programmes, performances or artworks to other contexts and audiences. In this case, touring mainly concerns the organiser's ability to help arts workers export their works, to provide production facilities, and to be an intermediary with local stakeholders, institutions and venues.

## What logistics and procedures do I need to do?

During the organisation of a mobility experience, facilitators need to take care of some specific needs and procedures relating to inclusivity, accessibility and quality of the experience, which could improve the quality of the mobility. There isn't any specific process to follow, rather a set of details to keep in mind.

### **Is it a solo visit or a group visit?**

A mobility experience could be a stand-alone activity or a group practice, depending on the purpose of the organiser and the kind of experience they would like to offer. Choosing one modality or the other affects the design and the logistics of the trip. A solo visit is easily adaptable to the specific needs of an art worker, while a group experience might be led by the organiser using an already established programme structure. Flexibility is not the only characteristic to take into consideration when deciding on the number of participants. Indeed, a solo visit could be less expensive in absolute terms, but more onerous in relative terms, since fixed and recurring costs, such as the cost of facilitation itself, cannot be shared between participants.

In contrast to solo visits, a group experience might need more facilitation, especially in terms of creating a positive group dynamic. Therefore, for groups who don't know each other beforehand, it might be useful to organise pre-departure meetings in order to allow all the participants to meet each other and to consider the design of the mobility programme with the organiser.

### **Is there an application process?**

Not all mobility experiences need an application process. It really depends on the format and the purpose of the trip. An application process can filter

participants and might allow organisers to collect fundamental information about them and their projects and/or objectives in relation to the mobility experience. This would eventually support a more accurate design and evaluation process of the mobility. On the other hand, some mobilities do not need an application process since they are, for example, part of a project where participants are already defined. Moreover, a solo visit could be an initiative of the participant themselves.

In the case of the selection process, it is always important to be transparent on the criteria used in order to guarantee equity and inclusion.

### **How to design the mobility programme?**

The mobility programme takes into consideration many of the features, attributes and tensions previously addressed. It is the result of the organiser's mediation between the needs and the characteristics of the stakeholders involved.

The programme design depends on the objectives of the organisers and the participants, on the availability of time and financial resources, on the modality (solo visit or group experience, part of a project or an isolated experience) and on the local contexts and the specific needs.

The programme is shared, usually virtually, before the official beginning of the mobility phase and it could be combined with the context profile guides (see the handbook *Establishing a context profile*).

As previously mentioned, the organiser might decide to open the process of programme design to the participants, through pre-departure meetings. These meetings could be organised virtually or physically, depending on the origin of the participants.

### **What is the chain of responsibility and safety?**

Generally, during a mobility experience every participant is responsible for his, her or their own behaviour and activity. However, organisers are responsible for the success of the experience itself and for guaranteeing the safety of each component. This can be ensured through rules or through practices that might be adapted to the specific needs of the mobility. As such, it might be useful to agree with participants on a code of conduct to be implemented and respect during the trip. Moreover, every decision and/or change regarding the programme should be first communicated and decided upon with all the stakeholders involved. We recommend that organisers have a specific procedure to follow in case of emergency, as well as a list of local emergency numbers, shared in advance with all the participants.

Finally, it might be useful to take notes of all the main activities and significant information. This will enable organisations to track processes and rely on consistent documentation.



**What is the follow up?**

Organisers can also decide to design follow-up activities, with the support of virtual environments, where participants and stakeholders of the programme can continue to interact with each other. A follow-up programme could facilitate P2P connections and provide organisations with an easily accessible environment for further evaluations. At the same time, organisers should take into consideration that follow-up activities and community engagement practices are usually time-consuming. The duration depends on the type of follow-up activities and the process can last from two weeks to two years.

**What are the logistic and accessibility needs?**

Organisers should give participants a detailed guide to accessibility, which include reporting local physical facilities, best routes, cultural facilities and any other important information. When designing the mobility experience, accessibility costs (both in terms of budget and time) should be taken into consideration. Organisers should find the right balance among all these elements, guaranteeing the accessibility conditions promised.

Alongside physical accessibility, organisers might provide equal access to content and experiences. Nowadays, this goal could be supported by digital devices and technology, for example through immediate translations or activating content explanations with QR codes.

Finally, organisers need to take into consideration the cultural and social background of every participant, their identities and the possibility of being target of exclusion, racism, sexism and any other type of discrimination or abuse.

**What documentation and booking requirements are there?**

Organisers should bear in mind that some countries, places or venues could require specific documents, such as visas or personal information. This information should be gathered in good time and organisations might offer to help participants with applications or with the preparation of required material.

The same approach should be taken with regards to bookings and tickets. Organisers can decide if they will directly reserve tickets for transportation, accommodation and events, or if they will leave the responsibility with the participants. In either case, they should provide exhaustive information so that the participants are prepared.



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# 4 Evaluation

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Beyond specific methodologies, we recommend designing a flexible, clear structure that maintains the correlation between organisational and participant objectives and that tracks the impact of the mobility experience on both the arts workers and the local context.

The evaluation of the mobility experience needs to be designed before the trip and it needs to include a clear definition of the objectives that both the organisation and the participants would like to achieve. In this regard, it might be useful to collect expectations from participants and to design a clear evaluation framework. The latter usually starts with the organisers' purpose, meaning the value they intend to generate by offering and facilitating mobility. Then, based on the information collected by the participants, the objectives, activities and outcomes will be adjusted in order to have a defined and detailed impact structure.

Consequently, organisers need to collect data during and after the mobility experience in order to evaluate both their implementation of the programme and whether the experience has been valuable for the participants and the local stakeholders.

We recommend using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, as well as repeating the collection right after the trip and/or experience and again between six months to two years later (balancing the need of collecting data with the time and resources available). In this way, the organiser might have the possibility to evaluate possible changes in the professional and human development of the participants and evaluate whether this was due to the mobility experience. Tools such as Likert scales can be used to give a quantitative weight to qualitative values.

The evaluation process is important, since a proper framework will give the possibility to keep adjusting the mobility programmes based on feedback and needs. At the same time, it is important to maintain clear communication with the participants regarding the scope of the evaluation process and how their data will be used and when. Participants need to be involved in the process of evaluation not just as producers of data, but as fundamental collaborators for the development of better mobility experiences for arts workers.

**Discussion points:**

*What value do you want to generate to participants by offering this mobility experience?*

*What value do you want to create for your organisation?*

*Are you creating the right mobility experience for the right target group?*

*Which kind of tool is the best for gathering reliable and valid data?*

*How will you involve participants in the entire evaluation process?*

# 5 virtuality

The rise of digital 'travel' during the pandemic, as a consequence of both the improvement of mobile and digital technologies and the forced immobility of the last two years, provides the opportunity to integrate mobility experiences with ongoing moments of contact, through virtual connections, live streaming events and remote collaborations. The use of digital tools is radically transforming the way mobility can be programmed and participated in, both in terms of reducing the environmental footprint and supporting longer experiences of remote collaboration. In this area, interesting experiments have been done during the pandemic, such as designing a virtual residency, undertaking virtual reality exploratory trips and, of course, remote project management in the mid- to long-term.

Virtual environments can be supportive, especially during the activities preceding and following the trip, allowing the organisers and facilitators to share feedback, information and documents.

## **Discussion points:**

*Are there any examples of good practice in the use of digital tools that could be adapted to your project?*

*Is it appropriate to integrate a virtual mobility experience for your programme's target group and context?*

*Are there any issues of access that need to be considered?*

*Do you have enough information to design and/or choose the right digital tools for your target group and mobility experience?*

# 6 Timeframe

Just as important as the recognition and definition of the mobility's goal, a clear identification and awareness of the mobility phases is crucial for everyone to understand how their self-development will be achieved. In this sense, providing a clear programme and the right informative material to the participants can overcome the lack of knowledge of the local context and the possible cultural obstacles that one could encounter.

We recommend that a clear programme of phases and locations be distributed prior to the mobility experience, and in parallel with the definition of objectives, so that the participants have time to digest the information and come with questions in relation to its contents (which could include downloadable guides, online articles, videos, contact lists and more).

**Discussion points:**

*What kind of information do you need to include in the programme outline to address possible cultural obstacles?*

*Can you provide an adequate level of experience in the allocated time?*

*Have you provided enough information regarding the timeframe and how it is allocated?*

# 7 Human and financial resources

Talking about resources in the artistic sector, both human and financial, is often a challenge because of the lack of skills, and yet these discussions are necessary for most arts workers.

When organising a mobility trip, decisions about funding are made immediately after defining the reasons for the trip. The European Commission, through the Creative Europe Programme, Erasmus+ or I-Portunus, offers a large variety of mobility resources for artists and culture professionals to help with this process. There are also private intermediary organisations that support the Commission's scope of cooperation and fruitful exchange between creators from diverse cultural backgrounds and artistic traditions.

However, what has emerged from the research that we conducted is that the extent of the financial and human resources of these types of mobility programmes is very limited.

When exchanging with stakeholders, they often point out two important elements.

- The budget dedicated to resources is usually small and mainly dedicated to cover the logistic expenses, such as touring, travel and food, and there is very rarely a budget for production. The result is not only a big expense to be borne by the artists, but also the enduring legacy of this romantic and colonial idea of a mobility trip as an exotic experience and not as a structured, formative experience.
- Organisations do not always have the capacity, in terms of human and financial resources, to support artists once they are back from a mobility experience. Updating professional information beyond the timeframe of the professional development programme or the mobility experience, and deciding what is next, is an activity in itself that requires time and skill, and this should be integrated in a longer-term support scheme.

When setting up a mobility experience or scheme, we recommend that those involved reflect carefully on the long-term ambition of the programme; this is not so much in terms of activities, but rather in terms of integrating the mobility experience within a lifelong development process and not as an isolated experience. In addition, we suggest that organisations adapt budgets in order to guarantee better resources, and as a result more sustainability.

**Discussion points:**

- How will you integrate the mobility experience within an ongoing professional development process?*
- Are you allocating adequate human and financial resources to the project?*
- What are some of the mobility information points (from both EU-funded and private organisations) that can help you manage your resources?*
- In what ways could you make your financial model more sustainable?*
- What kind of long-term sustainability plan are you considering for the mobility experience?*

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