

RESOURCE PAPER

International professional development programmes in the performing arts

trajectories.eu



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About the Learning Trajectories project

Running for two-years from 2020 the Erasmus+ project Learning Trajectories aimed to investigate how best to design and implement mentoring programmes that support the international career development of live arts professionals.

Today, it is widely recognised that internationalisation can have huge benefits for the performing arts sector, developing artistic, economic and human connections which support the careers of individual art workers and the well-being of the sector at large. The COVID-19 crisis has also had a huge impact on mobility and the financial health of performing arts institutions and organisations – making it more important than ever to rethink internationalisation processes.

However, there is still a lack of knowledge among organisations and professionals when it comes to methods, approaches and practices for mentoring on internationalisation. Key challenges include how to organise and implement these schemes, how to deal with a wide range of different needs and circumstances, how to properly facilitate programmes, and how to host the internationalisation experience itself.

The Learning Trajectories project aimed to highlight best practices and examples of mentoring programmes developed, supported or facilitated by intermediary organisations and funders. In the process, it aimed to improve the quality of future mentoring programmes supporting the internationalisation of the European performing arts sector.

The project itself was designed around three main areas of investigation and experimentation, formulated as a set of questions:

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

To explore these topics, the partners collaborated to:

- Design three guides / online practical toolkits to: help live art professionals and organisations initiate and further develop international mentoring programmes; propose ways for the performing arts sector to be better equipped to engage in new contexts (countries, regions, sectors, etc.); and strengthen the capacity of intermediary organisations to support the overall prospecting process.

- Provide opportunities to: share and exchange best practices (both internally and externally); engage in professional development for all staff members; and develop a more dynamic and responsive professional setting capable of addressing contemporary challenges at local and European level.
- Develop improved, accessible methodologies for embedding international prospecting as a strategy in mentoring schemes, increasing the arts and culture sector's capacity and ability to operate internationally, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis.

Introduction

This Resource Paper reflects on the research that led to the new methodological tools published during the Learning Trajectories project. Collecting insights from case studies, survey responses, interviews with stakeholders, and relevant literature, this publication covers a large variety of circumstances and countries, and explores programmes led by independent arts organisations, public bodies, and consortia active at regional, national and European levels.

In detailing our working methods and research, the goal is to provide context for our recommendations and to frame the questions we developed alongside the various stakeholders involved in professional development programmes, from organisers to facilitators to direct beneficiaries.

Since embarking on this journey in November 2020, at a time when the cultural field was still very much impacted by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been able to:

- Identify and exchange with key players that finance, offer or contribute to training opportunities for artists and cultural professionals to develop their international pathways.
- Launch an online survey to collect data from mentors/trainers and programme organisers.
- Study several programmes to compare and contrast preparation and implementation phases, as well as the documentation provided before and after the mentorship phase or any international curated mobility experience.
- Delve into existing methodological guidance and activity reports to analyse recent and current practices in our three areas of interest: designing international programmes, providing documentation, and organising visits.

The Learning Trajectories project was conceived in the pre-pandemic world, but its goal of better equipping intermediary organisations and educators is more relevant than ever. Today, the performing arts field has to navigate a host of issues. Alongside the critical work of recovery and building resilience, it must address longer term questions of how to work internationally in light of

concerns around sustainability and social justice in the mobility field. For the project partners, Learning Trajectories was a way to help professionals tackle these transversal social issues and realities, in part by offering them a space to continually reassess terminology and to reflect on their own position or status in the global performing arts field, as well as the position of the project designers.

This publication is by no means an exhaustive review of initiatives or documentation materials, and we also acknowledge the limits of making comparisons between life-long learning projects, documentation outputs, or cross-border visits, as all are intimately connected to their specific contexts and conditions. However, the information collected here has informed the design of Learning Trajectories' innovative methodologies, and helps frame the evolving needs of the European performing arts field.

The chapters of this publication mirror the three Learning Trajectories Handbooks and regularly refer to the Annotated Bibliography and the Terminology.¹ Hopefully they offer a glimpse into the rich discussions that took place among partners and with representatives of the culture field during training activities and multiplier events.

Finally, this Resource Paper aims to encourage readers, including policymakers, to reflect upon their daily practice and question their frameworks and assumptions. The various crises we are living through can give us a clearer view on our various roles and responsibilities, as well as the principles and values we stand for. As such, this publication poses important questions to ourselves and to you: How to engage in long-term cross-border cultural collaborations? How to consider 'the international' as a space to explore various forms of knowledge-building and mutual understanding, away from toxic power relations? How to nurture fairer and more accessible forms of international cooperation? How can transnational projects help to meaningfully connect international artists to local communities?

We wish you good reading!

¹ The three Learning Trajectories handbooks were produced as a resource for any organisation wishing to develop a professional development programme with the aim of helping live art workers to broaden their thinking, practices and networks beyond national borders. The accompanying Annotated Bibliography and Terminology provide an index of existing projects in this area. See: <https://www.trajectories.eu/results/>

1 Designing a professional development programme with an international focus

Definition and scope

By 'professional development programme', we mean a set of activities such as individual or collective training courses, masterclasses, coaching and mentoring sessions, or creative apprenticeship opportunities **that enable artists and other cultural workers to enhance their practice and invest in skills** that will help them build a sustainable professional pathway.

We view the moment when a person's work practice expands to the international dimension as pivotal in the trajectory of their individual career or their organisation's strategy. As an experience, it brings about new knowledge and can catalyse the development of organisational, technical, entrepreneurial and intercultural skills.

Compared to one-off thematic seminars, workshops or intensives, international professional development programmes take place over longer timespans. They encourage a reflective process within which participants can analyse their own experiences, position and actions, as well as the interconnected nodes of the cultural value chain (creation, presentation, distribution and participation) and the overall **complexity of value-driven international relations**.

Takeaways from the Learning Trajectories survey

An online survey was sent to organisers of mentoring programmes to learn more about their work. Asked if they were facilitating activities that supported artists and cultural workers to internationalise their practices, 30% of respondents indicated they were not able to do so. This group was asked to further indicate what was preventing them from exploring this area:

<i>Lack of competencies</i>	20%
Lack of resources	50%
<i>Lack of time</i>	10%
Lack of interest in international work	0%
<i>Other (please specify) *</i>	20%

* Responses here included comments that internationalisation was not part of the respondent's core mentoring activities, or that they didn't yet include it.

Despite the profile of the respondents – all of whom were involved in organising training programmes in the performing arts field, or offered coaching services to creative workers – and despite their interest in supporting the internationalisation of careers, half of these 30% indicated they didn't have the financial and human resources to develop relevant activities.

The 70% of respondents who already offered internationalisation programmes were asked to indicate which formats they use to develop participants' knowledge and skills:

Workshops, in-person or online	83%
Short courses, in-person or online	42%
<i>Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)</i>	17%
Provision of educational resources for artists / culture professionals	42%
<i>Hosting an online platform for artists / culture professionals</i>	29%
Offering desk/office help for artists / culture professionals	42%
<i>Supporting participation in markets, trade fairs or conferences</i>	29%
<i>Providing continued professional training</i>	33%
<i>External outreach based on needs</i>	17%
Mentoring or coaching programmes on specific issues	67%
<i>Provision of residency opportunities</i>	17%
<i>Other (please specify) *</i>	21%

* Respondents mostly commented here about activities that were similar to 'Hosting an online platform for artists / culture professionals' or 'Offering desk/office help for artists / culture professionals'. However, several respondents also insisted on the importance of one-to-one exchange.

Respondents indicated a mix of activities, but unsurprisingly – as we will see in the next section – the typology of activities shows a predominance of workshops and mentoring/coaching sessions, both physical and digital. It is worth noting that other online formats are not (yet?) firmly rooted in the performing arts field, and do not make a strong appearance in the survey or in the various comments collected.

When asked how, as organisers of professional development programmes, they recruited participants/beneficiaries, respondents indicated the following:

Publishing open calls for artists / culture professionals	50%
<i>Recommendations through the proposal of an internal jury</i>	12%
<i>External recommendations</i>	17%
<i>Online search</i>	21%
<i>Holding open days/sessions</i>	21%
Engaging the local community	50%
<i>Consulting recruitment agents/consultants</i>	8%
Approaching individuals	46%
Seeking recommendations from your network	50%
<i>Other (please specify) *</i>	21%

* Respondents commented that they also partnered with training centres, festivals, or established sector networks at national or European level. Some also said they had been commissioned by cultural bodies to lead training activities.

Respondents primarily select artists and other arts workers through direct contact with the creative community they are part of, serve, and speak to. The term 'selection' might not be entirely appropriate here, as respondents emphasised regular engagement with local communities and networks, and the importance of continuity in professional relationships.

Some organisers and mentors also said they were commissioned by other culture stakeholders to deliver professional development programmes, and as a result may have no control over the recruitment process.

However, half of respondents use open calls as a sourcing process, which might have positive outcomes in terms of accessibility, equity and diversity. It also helps organisers to assess the motivations of potential participants and shape their activities to specific needs, desires and goals.

Takeaways from literature

We observe that literature on mentoring in the culture field is **relatively scarce** – even scarcer when we narrow down the desk research to the performing arts field. We included the most relevant reports, guides and studies in two publications: the Annotated Bibliography and the Handbook: Designing professional development programmes.

Our research shows there are three key roles that need special attention when designing an internationalisation programme:

- **The organiser**, which is very often a cultural organisation with significant international experience (e.g. a European cultural network or regional agency), or an institution (e.g. a public funder or foundation) partnering with one of these. The organiser designs and implements all aspects of

the programme, from sourcing beneficiaries to hiring experts, securing venues, coordinating logistics, creating content, and evaluating impacts.

- **The facilitator**, which encompasses different profiles and job titles, such as field expert, peer, mentor, coach, resource person, guest speaker, etc. The facilitator contributes their knowledge, lived experience, and skills to the learning and reflective process of the artists and cultural workers participating in the programme.
- **The participant**, which refers to those who directly benefit from the programme by actively following and contributing to it. It is expected that participants, beyond the programme itself, will go further to develop their own strategies and initiatives, translate new knowledge into action, and work towards their own growth. In other words, be more than a passive learner.

Our research, especially in studying programmes, emphasises the necessity of having a clear understanding of each role's responsibilities and expectations at the various stages of a programme's implementation.

Studying the descriptions of international professional development programmes, we notice two broad approaches which in practice are often blended together:

- **The pre-determined programme:** The most common approach is for the organiser to prepare a pre-determined programme. This gives a somewhat detailed description of activities, along with a schedule or list of guest experts, to outline the needs that the programme will address and to attract potential participants. The structure gives a sense of the background behind the professional development programme, its ambitions, the organiser's expectations, and the conditions and benefits of joining it as a participant.
Organisers adopting this approach rarely talk about the methodology used to establish practitioner needs, focusing instead on the different outputs and outcomes, and the potential to gain knowledge and skills. Structured formats of this kind suit a number of different circumstances – from cyclical programmes that repeat once a year, to programmes supported by project-based funding which have to convince backers by designing their structure a long way in advance.
- **The informal, tailor-made approach:** While it is rarer, some professional development programmes do adopt a more informal, tailor-made approach in which individual needs are catered to 'in real time'. When mentoring programmes are implemented over several months, they generally take a more flexible format, particularly in relation to the contents of sessions, the choice of facilitators, and the choice of international mobility destinations when this is part of the programme. Here the organiser tends to emphasise their ability to adapt to individual needs, including those that emerge from the reflective process itself; their capacity to call in (new) resources; and their high level of responsiveness to changing conditions. The focus is on the journey more than on concrete outputs.

Factors explaining the low number of such tailor-made formats include: the high level of human and financial commitment required from the organiser and their funder(s); the demanding coordination involved for the programme and its follow-ups; the level of uncertainty in relation to outcomes and outputs within a journey that leaves space for the unknown and unexpected; and a programme timeline spanning several months. On this last point, 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'. In addition, there was a consensus among participants that 'breathing space between meetings' was vital for integrating new information.

The coronavirus pandemic has encouraged the culture sector to **adapt training opportunities to the digital realm**, with more and more professional development programmes offering a mix of physical and digital activities. Benefits of this approach can include a lower carbon footprint, increased connections with international experts based in other countries, gatherings that are both more frequent and limit the time investment of participants / acknowledge their other commitments, and increased accessibility for participants outside metropolitan areas.

However, existing reports mirror the findings of the Learning Trajectories survey in showing that in-person gatherings are overwhelmingly valued as the most effective form of exchange among participants, mentors and organisers. Australia Council for the Arts, for example, points out that 'mentees in the arts feel that mentoring works best if it is face-to-face', while 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.

Studying the topics covered by internationalisation programmes, we also observed that the largest focus is on business development. Despite the growing 'disenchantment' with globalisation, captured for instance by Errol Boon in his article 'What does cultural internationalisation mean anno 2021?', the majority of programmes continue to suggest participants should develop entrepreneurial skills in order to access overseas markets. A number of keywords recur in the programme descriptions – marketing, strategies and tools, branding and communication, pitching and showcasing, international markets, etc. – and many initiatives in the European performing arts field are squarely aimed at developing opportunities to export and work overseas.

Within this trend we can increasingly see a **paradoxical clash of expectations**. On the one hand, internationalisation becomes a kind of demand imposed on creative workers – a necessity for survival, for diversifying their income, or for accessing opportunities for training, residency, production or recognition that don't exist in their local ecosystem. On the other hand, travelling for the 'sake of prestige or an increase [in] the number of performances [is] no longer considered sufficient legitimisation for one's international ambitions' (Errol Boon, 2021), as other burning issues related to climate action, fairness in international relations, or well-being and work-life balance surface in many communities.

Takeaways from professional development programmes

When analysing international professional development programmes, we notice recurring elements in relation to formats, the criteria applied to select participants, and phases of implementation.

The most common overall approach is to offer a group of participants an **experience of collective growth**. This recognises the fact that the exchange of knowledge and lived experience between participants, and the reflections they share throughout the programme, are as important as any exchange with the facilitator(s) and can contribute both to the success of the programme and to the formation of a community of peers that might go on to play a crucial role in individual professional development. However, gathering participants with too wide a range of profiles, expectations and needs might lower their engagement and the benefits of the programme in general.

Depending on the length, resources and ambitions of the programme, an individual approach can also be proposed in which the specificities of each artist / cultural worker / organisation team member is taken into account. This approach involves custom interventions, supported by educational material and connections **tailored to unique needs**.

Again, we observe that many of the most acclaimed internationalisation programmes use a blend of the above approaches, giving participants access to a common knowledge base (in the form of educational materials, documentation, live presentations, etc.) before more deeply examining the needs of any particular participant.

Organisers generally publish open calls for participation, and a significant number of them (mostly publicly funded organisations and projects) offer programmes that are accessible free of charge. The selection of performing arts professionals is made with **criteria** encompassing aspects such as:

- Motivations for participating in the programme, including availability, aims and expectations.
- Diversity or specificity of age or years of experience in the field (when programmes target emerging professionals for example).
- Diversity or specificity of artistic fields.
- Diversity or specificity of job profiles or responsibilities in the value chain.
- Diversity or specificity of origins (European dimension in countries of work or nationalities, for example).

Organisers often state that other issues may be considered during the selection process, including ethnicity, disability, gender balance, or level of English. However, they rarely explain the selection process itself, and organisers and their collaborators often seem to act as unilateral decision makers with regards to the final selection of participants.

Most international professional development programmes have several implementation **phases**:

- An induction activity to establish relationships with and amongst participants, facilitators and organisers. Each person presents themselves and shares their motivations, intentions, and reasons for getting involved in the programme.
- Regular check-in sessions to collect feedback, adapt contents, monitor progress, or discuss difficulties.
- A final activity providing a sense of closure as well as measuring achievements, evaluating the journey, and planning the future of participants' professional development.
- Evaluation activities can be embedded at each step of the programme to reflect on mentoring sessions, guest speakers, contents of thematic sessions, mobility experiences, educational materials, internal communication, group dynamics, etc.

In the next chapters, we will detail two important elements of professional development programmes, namely context profiles and curated mobility experiences. Nevertheless, we can already notice differing practices in relation to the **inclusion of cultural visits abroad** and the management of cross-border mobility experiences:

- A number of the programmes studied invite a diverse group of participants from the same country of work to visit a foreign context, generally on the occasion of a festival or a large-scale sectoral conference. The professional trip is used to shape the contents of activities beforehand and serves as an opportunity to address concrete issues related to the main focus of the programme (e.g. market development or international outreach).
- Other programmes take place in one country and welcome a diverse group of international participants to come and follow specific on-site activities. This approach is more and more often enriched with pre- and post-event online activities.
- A handful of programmes offer a blend of the two formats, i.e. invite an international group to regularly visit foreign contexts as part of a professional development programme. The large human and financial resources necessary for successfully managing such initiatives are the reason there are so few in the cultural and educational landscape.

Regardless of the format, an international mobility experience can be a huge asset and selling point for potential participants.

Pointers for methodological development

Based on our comparative analysis of practices, we can highlight the following findings:

- The process by which participants are selected and/or the composition of the final group cannot be overlooked, and the assumptions or biases of decision-makers have to be challenged. The criteria in place have to reflect the values showcased by organisers and funders but also translate into concrete mechanisms to make sure they don't exclude the very professionals they are meant to be targeting. The **ability to apply** to a programme depends on factors such as mastery of the needed language (particularly English), having the personal or financial freedom to engage in a training programme, having received coaching on writing applications, or being able to access the call material itself (e.g. for visually impaired professionals). It is often not enough to try to put oneself in the shoes of an applicant, and organisers benefit greatly from the concrete input of target groups themselves.
- The above points also apply to the design and implementation phases of international professional development programmes, and organisers and funders must adjust resources (financial and otherwise) to ensure accessibility.
- Successful programmes invest a lot of energy in creating a **high-quality facilitator-participant relationship** that is mutually beneficial, balanced, respectful, and conducive to long-term impact.
- Time spent agreeing on terms is never wasted. Such conversations allow participants to explore respective roles and responsibilities, manage expectations of all parties, and check assumptions or (unexpressed, unclear, new) needs.
- The longer the timespan of professional development programmes, the more flexibility is needed, as the commitment of artists and organisations might be tested by emergencies or clash with new work commissions or touring opportunities. Participants may also have to deal with precarious working conditions, personal commitments (e.g. taking care of a new-born), or turnover in administrative teams, among other concerns.
- It is important to remember that professional development outcomes have the potential to extend well beyond the length of a programme to impact the future careers of participants. The blended nature of activities – flipping from on-site to digital mobility, or from conversational peer-to-peer exchange to concretely translating values into work/life decisions – can lead to rich and unexpected results. When evaluating activities, it is useful to collect feedback even long after a programme has formally come to an end.

2 Establishing country resources and documentation for internationalisation programmes

Definition and scope

We use terms like 'context profiles', 'info sheets', and 'market/sectoral mappings' to describe **forms of documentation provided before or during an international mentoring programme**. This documentation collects resources for a particular country or macro-region and helps the trainee/mentee to get to know the specific context. Documentation can encompass both written material (a downloadable pdf, online article, etc.) and audio-visual material (video, podcast, etc.).

Information provided in documentation can be focused on a particular discipline/sector, or on the contrary can be cross-sectoral, giving an overview of the situation in a given country for creative fields such as cinema, visual arts, heritage, or performing arts. It can also be thematic, for example focusing on disability arts or international mobility.

Takeaways from the Learning Trajectories survey

When asked in the survey if they were providing documentation for their participants, **only 24%** of mentoring programme organisers answered in the affirmative. When asked if this documentation was provided in the preparation stages of a prospection trip, an exploratory/research visit, or a curated mobility programme organised as part of the international mentoring programme, more than half answered positively (56%). Two-thirds confirmed they provided this guidance **prior to a mobility experience** (67%).

Respondents were also asked to indicate the formats of the guidance they offered:

<i>Downloadable material (pdf publications, info sheets, contact lists, etc.)</i>	22%
Live exchange (online discussion, phone call, meeting, etc.)	44%
<i>Audio-visual material (podcast, video)</i>	11%
<i>Other (please specify) *</i>	22%

* Respondents commented on 'networking' or suggested 'a combination of those elements'.

In the survey, **71% of respondents indicated they were not providing market profiles** or country/sectoral mappings. When asked to identify the reasons why they were not providing such documentation, this group answered:

<i>Lack of competencies</i>	16%
<i>Lack of resources</i>	32%
<i>Lack of time</i>	20%
<i>Lack of demand</i>	20%
<i>Other (please specify) *</i>	12%

* Respondents generally indicated they didn't see documentation as one of their responsibilities.

International mentoring programme organisers were also asked to indicate the key information they provided in their documentation:

Overview of policies	56%
<i>Short history of the country (basic facts, description of society, etc.)</i>	22%
<i>Recent sectoral development</i>	11%
<i>Education and training opportunities</i>	33%
<i>Artistic residency centres and programmes</i>	44%
Mapping of venues, festivals and fairs	56%
<i>Sample of artists and companies</i>	33%
<i>Mapping of agents and representatives</i>	11%
<i>Public and private funding opportunities</i>	44%
<i>Mapping of advocacy bodies, unions, federations, and local networks</i>	22%
<i>Mapping of information centres and portals</i>	22%
<i>Interviews of stakeholders</i>	33%
Case studies (events, projects, grants, cross-sectoral initiatives, etc.)	67%
<i>Administrative issues (tax, visa, intellectual property, etc.)</i>	22%
<i>Professional contact lists</i>	22%
<i>Current societal issues and political debates</i>	22%
Stakeholders involved in EU cooperation projects, networks and platforms	56%
<i>Resources (studies, guides, portals, etc.)</i>	44%
<i>Recent artistic trends, challenges and perspectives</i>	22%
<i>Other (please specify) *</i>	11%

* Respondents indicated they were preparing material but couldn't provide details yet.

As shown above, the main typologies of information are: overviews of policies; mappings of venues, festivals and fairs; case studies on local/national initiatives; and lists identifying local/national players involved in EU-funded initiatives. In the last example, lists usually include local players who participate in the activities of EU platforms and networks, but the actual information provided tends to focus more on the profile and activities of the pan-European platforms/networks themselves.

Takeaways from literature

We observe that documentation is quite rare and that there are very few market profiles or country/sectoral mappings in Europe. Learning Trajectories' Annotated Bibliography gathers the most important sources of information for the performing arts field, but not all of these are solely dedicated to mentoring artists and arts professionals.

When documentation has been produced by a **public authority**, the information tends to be cross-sectoral and provide detailed information on the policy framework of the given country. The primary purpose of such documentation is to provide public data to all stakeholders, using methodologies and typologies of information that allow comparison between countries and that support the circulation of reliable, up-to-date information.

When the documentation has been produced by an **independent organisation**, very often in the framework of an EU-funded project, the information focuses more on sectoral data. It highlights the situation of an artistic discipline in a given country, outlining the level of artistic development and recognition, giving voice to prominent stakeholders, and putting forward current initiatives and perspectives. This kind of documentation is not exhaustive and tends to take a more subjective approach. It is interesting to observe that most of the existing examples were prepared and published after – rather than before – a curated mobility experience designed for mentees, network members, or groups of professionals. Indeed, the majority of guides are written as post-visit reports. They look back on the conditions of the international trip and aim to crystallise and circulate the knowledge gained there. This approach raises the question of whether participants lack support materials and preparation before their mobility experience.

Comparison of existing market profiles, info sheets, and country/sectoral mappings allows for a more precise typology. Regarding country profiles that have been produced by public authorities and/or with a cross-sectoral perspective, we note the following **recurring elements**:

- There is a strong emphasis on legal and policy frameworks, and descriptions usually encompass general governance, main areas of action (e.g. literature, audio-visual work, or heritage and archaeology), administrative structuring with a presentation of directorates, and centralised and decentralised administrations.

- A clear overview of policy objectives and political priorities, especially in relation to citizens' engagement with arts and culture. This includes the monitoring mechanisms put in place by public authorities, and sometimes the data they gather on citizens' consumption and participation.
- The cross-sectoral perspective generally makes space for amateur practices, as well as formal education opportunities in arts and culture.
- Sometimes, these country profiles highlight major cultural institutions like national museums, significant music centres, or festivals, but pay little or no attention to independent operators.
- However, it is noticeable that budgets allocated to support infrastructure, as well as the amounts invested in sub-sectors or in the production of new work, are rarely mentioned. When they do appear, it is difficult to fully understand or assess what these budgets include.
- Moreover, the international cultural relations and cultural diplomacy perspective is rarely investigated unless directly connected to the European Union or UNESCO.
- All country profiles provided direct links to official portals with more information on the subjects they briefly presented.

We notice that information in this documentation is presented as factual and objective, but that there is often a strong discrepancy between the official discourse and the actual political or economic situation in a country.

When produced by independent operators, these cross-sectoral country profiles make space for a more nuanced presentation, challenging official information sources or adopting a more critical approach that reveals the reality of the opportunities and challenges in a given context. These profiles highlight issues like **ensorship, freedom of artistic expression, diversity of cultural expressions, diversity of the population, and human rights. They also point out challenges connected to cultural and religious traditions, historical interdependences, conflicts, or political frictions.** Sometimes they also use feedback from local stakeholders to nuance the ambitions, funding allocation, or impact of official policies.

When country briefings and support documents are produced by independent players, the information is both more focused (as they generally adopt a sectoral approach – e.g. covering circus, dance or theatre) and more subjective (as they give the floor to different 'voices'). Indeed, an immediately striking characteristic of this kind of documentation is that it has authors, with one or more experts delivering their own perspectives on their country/artistic field. Very often, key professionals are invited to share their knowledge or insights on their own 'reality' – which gives the documentation greater relevance and accuracy by drawing on their deep international experience. They shed light on the specific characteristics of the local performing arts ecosystem, outlining the main aspects of its value chain, and are able **to 'translate' this reality or make it more accessible** to foreign eyes.

Whether they focus on a specific sector like circus, dance or theatre, or on a particular topic like disability arts, several **recurring elements** are noticeable in documentation prepared by independent cultural organisations and players:

- Information is contextualised with a short historical overview of the artform(s), covering past and current artistic trends, changing levels of recognition, and steps taken towards structuring the field.
- Public policies, strategies, and support schemes / grant systems are still very important elements.
- The main purpose is to facilitate international collaboration and provide artists and culture professionals with opportunities to engage with the local scene: accessing artistic residency programmes, finding specialised information online, discovering artistic education programmes (mostly at higher level) or opportunities for foreigners, etc.
- Because of this focus (on profiling the market more than the country), many briefings present information directly linked to international mobility and cover topics such as travel grants, visas, and work permit issues, tax management, intellectual property, freight and customs, etc.
- The mapping of local/national stakeholders is more complete, very often listing festivals, production centres, agents and representatives, key sector events, etc. while including independent organisations, stakeholders located outside capitals or major metropolitan areas, and structures such as private foundations which don't depend on public funding.
- The documentation also sometimes provides an overview of advocacy initiatives and generally lists federations, unions, or information platforms operating online or offline.
- Finally, these market profiles very often present prominent artists, artistic collectives or companies, especially if their professional trajectory and international dimension helped establish their profile and gave visibility to the performing arts in their country. They also include the voices of prominent curators, programmers, artistic directors or critics (in the form of interviews or portraits).

Resources from professional development programmes

Analysing mentoring programmes from the field that have a strong international focus, we found none that directly provided documentation as such in the form of downloadable or audio-visual material. All did provide contextual guidance through live exchange with experts from different countries who were able to give details on several issues. However, these exchanges are rarely documented and it seems the expertise or knowledge shared is not recorded and circulated to the broader circle of mentees, nor to other artists and professionals that could benefit from such guidance.

Indeed, methodologies and formats for mentoring programmes relied to a large extent on one-to-one conversations between mentor (an international expert) and mentee (an artist, or sometimes a collective accompanied by their administrative and support staff). Participants are linked to sources of extra information (usually direct contacts to other stakeholders, or links pointing to concrete opportunities or specific information mentioned in the live conversation) after the one-to-one exchange.

The lack of human and financial resources was mentioned in discussions with all stakeholders: mentorship organisers rarely have the financial means to create support documents presenting different countries / foreign markets as these require external expertise, editing, and publishing costs. The material itself also needs to be regularly checked and updated with the latest information and local artistic developments. This requires continuous investment, and the costs scale with the number of countries / foreign markets documented. To partially answer the needs of trainees, mentors and mentorship organisers sometimes try to develop guidance at a larger macro-regional level (e.g. the Middle East, South East Asia, etc.) and then engage country experts or market participants who can give live presentations with a narrower focus.

Pointers for methodological development

Through our comparative analysis of approaches to providing information prior to a mentoring programme or mobility experience, we can highlight the following learnings:

- It is necessary to contextualise the information provided, and it seems that the tighter the focus on a theme or sector, the more relevant, accurate and usable the information will be for mentees.
- Contextualisation works best when documentation gives the floor to individual 'voices'. Experienced professionals with strong intercultural competence use their insights to interpret general information and make it relatable and accessible for mentees and secondary beneficiaries.
- Beyond any core factual elements, thematic or sectoral briefings provide more detailed information and don't shy from describing local or national challenges, pressures, opportunities and dilemmas.
- Documentation that embraces the human dimension of international exchange, and that takes a subjective approach, mirrors the forms of peer-to-peer exchange at the heart of all international mentoring programmes and supports a more concrete understanding of foreign cultural spaces.
- Market profiles, info sheets, and country/sectoral mappings are highly complementary to other training activities, and mentors and mentorship programme organisers should consider such material as part of their toolbox. In order to offer it systematically, they should develop the necessary competences, skills and resources to fully integrate it in their methodologies.

- Documentation is particularly relevant when it tackles political issues (e.g. struggles in the local scene, public debates, controversies). It should however keep in mind that these are constantly evolving, and when addressing European values (gender equality, diversity, accessibility, democracy, fairness, solidarity, etc.) should remember that these are not shared equally within Europe or with the rest of the world.
- The documentation and its use has to be evaluated. Beyond the quality and relevance of contents, several other factors can be assessed, including whether it is provided to beneficiaries prior to a mobility experience, whether it is publicly available, whether it has impacts on the local scene it presents (for example by giving visibility and weight to certain 'voices'), etc.

3 Designing a curated mobility experience

Definition and scope

Throughout the Learning Trajectories project, the partners kept in mind the definition of cross-border mobility proposed in the framework of the European Commission's i-Portunus pilot action (Operational Study, March 2019):

'Mobility is a central component of the professional trajectory of artists and culture professionals. Involving a temporary cross-border movement, often for educational, capacity-building, networking, or working purposes, it may have tangible or intangible outputs in the short term, and/or be part of a long-term professional development process. Mobility is a conscious process, and those involved in it, whether by directly engaging in it or by supporting it, should take into consideration its cultural, social, political, environmental, ethical and economic implications.'

In relation to professional development, the exploratory and prospective components of mobility are usually strongly emphasised, where participants visit a foreign context to discover a new cultural landscape, collaborative opportunities, and local stakeholders. 'Curated' mobility hence refers to the care that goes into preparing this experience, conceiving activities (e.g. meetings, visits, participation in events, etc.) that will significantly enrich the work trip, accelerate the learning process, and create rewarding interactions with local professionals or other mobility participants.

Takeaways from the Learning Trajectories survey

71% of professional development programme organisers said that international visits were not part of their offer. When asked to indicate the main reason why they were not providing mobility experiences to their mentees, they gave the following answers:

<i>Lack of competencies</i>	22%
<i>Lack of resources</i>	30%
<i>Lack of time</i>	17%
<i>Lack of interest</i>	4%
<i>Other (please specify) *</i>	26%

* The comments here highlight two connected elements: that organising individual or group work trips is not part of the respondent's mandate, and that this would imply extra resources that they couldn't afford.

The 29% that answered positively and that organise prospection trips abroad primarily do so around existing major sectoral events with significant networking opportunities, such as international network conferences, fairs and festivals. However, and more surprisingly, a significant proportion do propose open-ended exploratory visits with the aim of establishing new collaborations:

To international network conferences	67%
To fairs and festivals	56%
To discover a new context for developing collaborations	56%
<i>To creative hubs</i>	22%
<i>For job shadowing</i>	22%
<i>To artistic programmes</i>	22%
<i>Other (please specify)</i>	0%

Organisers arranging such international visits have accumulated significant experience, with a majority indicating that they propose between 2 and 6 trips per year, with a smaller number arranging 6+ or providing an on-demand offer:

<i>One per year</i>	11%
Between 2 and 6 per year	44%
<i>More than 6 per year</i>	22%
<i>Based on choice</i>	22%
<i>Other (please specify)</i>	0%

Finally, respondents were invited to detail what they were doing to curate the mobility experience. A variety of practices are used to enhance understanding and make sure participants get the most out of the experience, demonstrating the necessity of providing support, including after a trip ends:

<i>Providing a country profile</i>	11%
<i>Guiding participants on site</i>	22%
<i>Providing tailor-made mentoring</i>	22%
<i>Working on the legacy of the experience</i>	33%
<i>Other (please specify) *</i>	11%

* Here respondents mentioned facilitated individual/collective reflections on the learning experience.

The preparation and follow-up phases seem to be the weakest or least developed aspects, mirroring the takeaways observed in the previous chapter on designing documentation.

Takeaways from literature

There is abundant literature available on cultural mobility, particularly as the last fifteen years have seen this area gain visibility, recognition and support. The 2007 European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World, initiated by the European Commission, included specific objectives related to promoting the mobility of artists and cultural professionals and improving European coordination on issues affecting cultural mobility. This ambitious policy framework was reinforced in the 2018 New European Agenda for Culture, which was informed by the Council of Ministers (including its multiannual work plans for culture and establishing thematic working groups), the European Parliament, and ‘structured dialogue’ with civil society organisations. The mobility of cultural professionals has long been one of the specific objectives of the European Commission’s educational and cultural programmes. In the arts sector, as researcher Jordi Baltá Portalés observes, several pilot projects and major studies were undertaken, including ERICarts’ 2008 publication **Mobility Matters**, which surveyed and analysed the **range, motives and results of existing mobility incentives across Europe**.

Contributing to the diversity of guides, reports and studies dedicated to the subject, organisers have also shared the outcomes of their mobility programmes in the form of reports, testimonies and analysis that helps mobility funders build evidence-based strategies. However, very few documents focus exclusively on the ‘making’ of effective mobility experiences, the need to curate them, or the methods used by organisers to set-up successful initiatives.

When undertaken within a performing arts mentoring programme, an international trip usually involves engaging with an artistic programme – whether during a showcase or a festival – alongside visits to creation spaces, arts schools and venues, and opportunities to meet with local artists and presenters, or representatives of local and national institutions. Sometimes the trip is organised around a large-scale sectoral conference that other international visitors might attend. The trip aims to provide participants with a concrete international experience, give them a solid understanding of each region’s

context, and facilitate new connections or reinforce existing ones. Reviewing programmes, we nevertheless observe some clear **curatorial approaches** with the following characteristics:

- The vast majority of professional visits take place in major cultural hubs, mostly capital cities, and leave aside outermost regions, less accessible cultural contexts, or rural areas, somehow assuming such **destinations** would provide less knowledge and a lower number of artistic connections, meaningful encounters, or work opportunities. Hence the predominance and repeated presence of certain destinations (or hosting cities) targeted by programme organisers, leaving out many local communities.
- Because the majority of mentoring programmes focus on market development and international exporting, there is a strong **sectoral approach** when designing professional visits, whether the focus is on dance, theatre, circus, or whatever else.
- Following this point, work visits tend to be more results-oriented and evaluation methods sometimes pay attention to very concrete outcomes such as the number of new contacts made or contracts signed after a visit. Any preparation for the programme reflects this dynamic with focuses on marketing, branding, preparing trailers, dossiers, pitches, etc. **Mobility experiences that are not results-oriented** are generally less valued, even if this goes against policy goals that several public funders of mobility highlight in their support.
- Curation is closely connected to purpose and format, but generally there is **little flexibility** or space for tailor-made activities that answer participants' specific expectations or needs. Despite this, programmes are increasingly enriched with pre- and post-visit online activities, and the schedules of some programmes we researched had time slots for self-organised and social activities.
- The **impacts**, whether positive or negative, on the local cultural scene that is visited are almost never addressed in the literature we reviewed. Documentation rarely reflects on the kinds of social and economic inequalities, including inequalities within and among countries, that lie underneath any networking activity. Moreover, the impacts of curation on the local scene, and the ways it may bring external validation or recognition, are not assessed. The choice to schedule one performance over another for an international delegation, to visit this theatre and not that one, to meet a certain local professional, and so on are intertwined with power relations and may reinforce notions of exoticism or cultural colonialism.

Reviewing the existing literature on cultural mobility, we see that many transversal, global concerns are strongly addressed, particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic:

- **Environmental sustainability** is an increasingly pressing topic, with many artists and cultural professionals advocating for the adoption of greener practices. Sometimes they are already taking radical action on their own, and often they have a better grasp of the stakes of climate change than

do policymakers. They are keen to act more sustainably and manage their ecological impact, beyond its carbon footprint. However, they also feel pressure, particularly those operating independently or those who are most vulnerable, and recognise that the responsibility of responding to the environmental crisis is not shared equally among different stakeholders (wealthy countries with good cultural infrastructure vs under-developed territories which force players to export themselves, places with access to greener modes of transportation vs those with a lack of alternatives, etc.). The culture field pleads for greener mobility and a set of new practices that professional development programmes should embrace and promote, from preferring train travel to providing meat-free meals or eco-certified accommodation.

- **Mobility justice** is another growing concern, and the subject of many statements and papers. It addresses the question of 'who gets to be mobile?', highlighting the deep divide between contexts which have lots of opportunities (and resources) and those which do not. Inequality is also present for arts professionals with disabilities or special needs, or arts professionals with minority backgrounds. The field expects mobility experiences to be accessible to more diverse communities, and for the necessary measures to be put in place for them to be truly inclusive. This inclusion extends to the digital realm, where gaps and inequalities in accessing the Internet, educational and creative contents, and digital mobility mirror the challenges of physical mobility experiences.
- **Access and inclusion** is a final focus area for managers of internationalisation programmes. They are asked to take into consideration the identity and cultural and social background of each participant/beneficiary, as well as the societal structures that perpetuate exclusion, racism, colonialism, sexism, and any other type of discrimination or power abuse.

Takeaways from professional development programmes

As we touched upon already in the first chapter, a broad range of methodologies are used in relation to curated mobility experiences for artists and cultural professionals. Some adopt a strictly scheduled programme, others a more open one; some partially or totally cover mobility costs, others do not; some embed an international group visit within a larger professional development programme, others propose standalone and/or tailor-made individual trips. However, we observe there are two crucial questions to ask when analysing these international visits: **'what governance is in place?'** and **'where does the money go?'**. Echoing the transversal concerns mentioned above, these questions speak to how values translate into working methods, highlighting participants' social, economic and personal circumstances, and illuminating the realities of local ecosystems.

For group visits to foreign contexts (as visits are usually in groups), we notice some recurring elements such as:

- **Partnership** with one or more local organisations and/or professionals to help shape the international visit and draw on local knowledge. This opens the way to a more contextualised approach and often brings support in terms of production or logistics. Dialogue with local counterparts helps refine expectations and motivations and uncovers useful information. It clarifies roles and responsibilities, even if in many cases the local partners end up taking on a lot of the responsibility, visibility, and potential blame for the operation of the programme.
- **Top-down curatorial approach** where the organiser(s) and local partner(s) join forces and prepare a packed schedule which sees the visiting group jump from one activity to another. The previous knowledge of participants is very rarely taken into account, and they seldom contribute actively to the preparation of the programme or have an opportunity to bring their knowledge and contacts to co-curating the mobility experience. However, as said before, most programmes leave room for individual activities during visits.
- **Preparation time** can be quite long, as many pieces of the puzzle need to fall into place. Designing the contents of on-site meetings, scheduling visits, and securing attendance at cultural events takes a lot of time and requires a lot of work on bookings, logistics, insurance, and risk management.
- **The composition of the group** can be a factor in a programme's success – both in terms of size (with around 12 participants often mentioned by organisers as ideal) and the diversity of profiles. Several organisers pointed out that international visits allow participants to spend time with their own team members, or with colleagues from their own country who they wouldn't normally get the chance to approach, meet, or exchange with. Along with the mobility experience itself, the group dynamic can help build a sense of community.
- **The duration** of a single mobility experience should be enough to build long-term interactions and longer-lasting relationships, both within a group and with local artists and cultural professionals. We couldn't find examples of international visits, or opportunities to immerse in new cultural contexts, that exceeded 1 week. However, programmes are increasingly extended with hybrid mobility (physical and digital), particularly in the form of follow-up activities that establish a digital 'alumni network'.
- **Evaluation** is a final important element. For organisers, the evaluation of an international visit mainly focuses on organisational aspects (e.g. production and logistics, or internal communication with partners and participants) and the quality of activities proposed abroad (e.g. contents of meetings, guest speakers and experts, artistic programmes). For participants, the data collected is quite similar even if some programmes insist on immediate results in terms of exports, touring, or development

of new connections. These evaluation processes tend however to happen shortly after the visit, missing a more refined and longer-term qualitative approach to measuring growth, in-depth impacts, changes of perspective or practice... or unexpected outcomes. Organisers are generally aware of their limits and often say they lack the human and financial resources needed to carry out such evaluation. Interestingly, it seems that local partners and communities met abroad are very rarely asked to feedback on their experience, even if they were key contributors, nor to collect quantitative and qualitative data that could help improve future experiences.

Pointers for methodological development

In our comparative analysis of cross-border mobility programmes that support artists and culture professionals, we can highlight the following key principles:

- **Intermediation** involves creating the right circumstances for international visitors to engage with a foreign context. This includes a full awareness of local specificities, complexities and stakes, covering the performing arts ecosystem, socio-political realities, and sensitive issues such as local working conditions, colonial history, or relationship to artistic freedom and censorship. Alongside strong communication and intercultural skills, this intermediation requires an attitude that is mindful, respectful and knowledgeable of both the cultural landscape visited and the circumstances of participants. Organisers themselves are not always equipped with or aware of the capabilities it takes to act as effective 'facilitators', 'translators' and 'bridges' of cultural realities. Lastly, this intermediation makes it possible to challenge or answer expectations from different parties, and to reinforce the role of the intermediary themselves as the one responsible for creating the conditions for conducive and fruitful exchange (while not providing all the answers, answering all requests, or being accountable for all frustrations and failures).
- **Caring** involves looking after the stakeholders hosting or animating the international visit, and of course creating a safe space for the participants themselves. By its nature a mobility experience involves taking participants out of their 'comfort zone', and bringing them to an unknown context where they must navigate different expectations, emotions and discoveries. Organisers help participants to adapt to a new context and stay open to its new experiences. But the same attention needs to be paid to the local performing arts community being visited, in order to consider their needs and expectations and manage any potential impacts. Whatever the curatorial approach, a short international trip implies that participants won't meet or visit all cultural players, hence the importance of introducing flexibility in scheduling activities or allowing a degree of self-organisation.

- **Legacy** goes beyond practical evaluation. Of course, many see the necessity of performing longer-term evaluation, six months or even two years after an international experience, as developing transnational initiatives always takes time and all stakeholders, especially independent ones, are busy handling project-based operations, short-term obligations, and unexpected emergencies. But we believe that what happens next is very much informed by the mobility experience itself and the intermediation and care that were invested. The values and working principles in place for a professional development programme, including an international visit, may have a profound and lasting impact on the pathway and decisions of beneficiaries, helping them to develop greener practices, network and grow artistically, and share new knowledge with co-workers.

These three values resonate with the contemporary issues – from sustainability to social justice to inequality – that currently demand change from across the cultural sector. Putting them at the heart of our mentoring programmes has the potential to embed them more deeply in the sector itself – and to lay strong foundations for the international work of tomorrow.

4 Examples of practices

Over the course of the Learning Trajectories project we collected and analysed examples of practices taking place across Europe in the performing arts field. The list presented here is far from exhaustive but gathers together initiatives that were regularly pointed out to us by artists and culture professionals. We have organised them alphabetically according to a typology we think will be useful for readers.

Many mentoring programmes focusing on the creative industries were not included here but have been noted in the Annotated Bibliography and were particularly inspirational for shaping the Handbooks.

International professional development programmes

AFIELD (France/International)

AFIELD is a network of social initiatives from arts and culture. Through a fellowship programme, it gathers and supports artists and cultural practitioners who develop social initiatives that benefit communities within and beyond the arts field. Within their ongoing artistic practice, or as a step 'further afield', selected initiatives enact positive, social, environmental and political change in response to the needs of a community. This often takes the form of a school for new pedagogies, research centres, or small businesses that share knowledge, address inequalities, and prompt new perspectives.

As a network, AFIELD strives for horizontality and collaboration among members. Through monthly calls, peer-to-peer exchanges and a participatory grant, it fosters an infrastructure for mutual support. It also aims for the development of like-minded initiatives and their visibility across the globe. Amplifying creative voices and solutions, AFIELD wishes to bring arts and culture to the forefront of social experimentation and international philanthropic thinking.

<http://www.council.art/fellowship>

Avignon and beyond (Belgium/France)

Commissioned by Les Doms, the French-speaking theatre in Avignon, with the support of Wallonia Brussels International, and coordinated by On the Move, the 'Avignon and beyond' internationalisation programme supports Belgian performing arts companies to develop their business opportunities and international outreach. Using the one-month showcase in Avignon Off festival every July, the programme spans several months and proposes regular individual and collective sessions to understand the different international performing arts markets (mostly France and French-speaking contexts), develop their communication and marketing skills and tools, map opportunities for partnership, collaboration and touring, develop contacts, and make the most of their presentation in the Avignon showcase.

www.lesdoms.eu

Bounce (France/Europe)

Led by Circostrada, Bounce is a mentoring programme dedicated to providing tools, connections, knowledge and resources for the next generation of contemporary circus and outdoor arts workers. It proposes skills for future steps, giving space for participants to explore creative, relational and economic potential in an international context, and deepening their reflection on their working environment through the lens of Circostrada's annual red threads. The programme aims to:

- Encourage mutual transmission between more junior and more senior contemporary circus and outdoor arts workers.
- Help tomorrow's contemporary circus and outdoor arts workers grow and gain experience.
- Enrich and diversify the understanding of the issues and realities of the contemporary circus and outdoor arts sectors.
- Connect upcoming contemporary circus and outdoor arts workers with one another in order to develop a sustainable community of solidarity.
- Reflect on the annual topic of Circostrada (this year, 'Diverse body/ies') and include it in their practice.

The programme includes three online and in-person workshops, individual time with facilitators, mobility experiences (including at the annual network general meeting), and a travel grant among other features.

<https://www.circostrada.org/en/actions/bounce-professional-development-programme>

DeploY (France)

Led by the regional performing arts agency Spectacle vivant en Bretagne, DeploY supports the development of performing artists and collectives through mentoring and funding opportunities over two years. It aims to work on the notion of 'international artistic presence' in a global approach that integrates research, prospection, cooperation and dissemination. The programme helps each structure to identify the intrinsic potential of their international work and to source appropriate resources.

www.spectacle-vivant-bretagne.fr/deplo-developpement-international-des-structures-artistiques-de-bretagne

Forecast Platform (Germany)

Forecast offers artists and creative thinkers from anywhere in the world the chance to work with accomplished mentors to bring their projects to fruition. As an international mentorship programme with annual editions, Forecast transcends neatly defined disciplines and genres to provide insight into creative production processes, carving out space for the next generation of trailblazers to explore the burning questions on their minds.

For each edition, Forecast selects six mentors from various disciplines who offer selected participants their expertise in developing and realising their project ideas. Each edition of Forecast is different; the selected mentors impact the nature and content of every iteration. They define the types of applications to be submitted, and play an instrumental role in developing their mentees' ideas from proposal to production. The mentoring process itself offers a space in which both parties can experiment, exchange, and push their concepts in new directions.

The programme is supported by Germany's Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media in collaboration with radialsystem in Berlin.

<https://forecast-platform.com/about/concept>

Liv.in.g (Italy)

As a social enterprise promoting and supporting the internationalisation of the performing arts sector in Italy, Liv.in.g offers individual consultancies as well as mentoring and capacity building programmes including several features such as:

- Mapping and positioning for performing arts organisations, with data collection and first advice on tailored strategies.
- Mentoring for internationalisation and promoting collaboration with other organisations, including an evaluation of real needs and networking opportunities, and the use of economic and financial instruments to develop one's business plan and income.

- Participation in the networking event 'Life on Mars', with Italian and international organisations and public and private institutions.
- Access to workshops, short courses, events and seminars, live and online.

<https://www.livingnet.eu/services/>

NB8 Mentoring Programme (Sweden / Nordic-Baltic countries)

Led by the Nordic Circle of Artistic Management, an international network created for the development of production and management skills across the field of dance, this capacity building mentorship programme welcomes managers and producers, including self-producing artists, from all Nordic and Baltic countries.

The programme is deliberately kept separate from festivals and conferences as it looks to create the right environment for an in-depth professional exchange. Selected participants meet for an induction event in the Swedish archipelago and then individual discussions between mentors and mentees take place throughout the year, online and in-person, at national and macro-regional meetings.

<https://www.nb8circle.com/>

PARI! Parcours d'accompagnement et de réflexion sur l'international (France)

Commissioned by the Institut français and French Ministry of Culture, and coordinated by On the Move, this professional development programme welcomes selected performing artists, visual arts organisations, and music ensembles for a nine-month journey. It supports artists and organisations to think on a deeper level about what it means to be 'international', while meeting the environmental, ethical and social concerns of international work. Participants range from established organisations looking to make a strategic shift, to new or independent players who have the potential to develop but lack access to information, resources and connections. With individual and collective sessions spread over the course of several months, participants receive tailored support in areas from strategic development to communications.

<https://on-the-move.org/work/projects/pari>

REG.Lab Mentorship programme (Croatia/Balkan region)

Led by Plataforma Kooperativa in the framework of the project 'Regional Lab: New Culture Spaces and Networks as drivers of an Innovative and Sustainable Bottom-up Development of Regional Collaboration', co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Commission, this programme has a focus

on independent culture, arts, and the cultural and creative industries in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia. The mentorship programme itself focuses on a specific mentor-mentee relationship covering skills and expertise that artists, cultural operators, and programme managers in the partner networks and platforms have acquired through years of practice. The programme provides training on practical skills needed in the sector and combines training expertise with the peer-to-peer exchange of experiences and skills.

<https://platforma-kooperativa.org/?topmenu=projects&topsubmenu=reg-lab>

SHIFT mentoring (Finland)

Led by the Finnish Art Agency, the SHIFT mentoring programme offers personal career coaching and group meetings with external experts over ten months. The aim of the programme is to provide tailored support for developing artists' careers, for example by setting long-term goals, understanding the workings of the art world, and forming international contacts. The mentoring programme was organised for the first time in 2015 and recently adopted a focus on international participants, developing an online programme for participants to join from all over the world.

<https://www.finnishartagency.com/shift>

Statens Kunstfond-Danish Arts Foundation (Denmark/Canada)

Since 2008, this Danish funder has helped to create a strong brand for Danish performing arts professionals at CINARS, the international conference and fair for the contemporary performing arts hosted every second year in Montreal, Canada. The Foundation selects Danish artists and collectives with international potential to form part of a delegation. Together with a project manager it then organises a strategic training course that takes place over the months leading up to the visit and participation in the conference.

It aims to:

- Provide exposure for and promote Danish performing arts.
- Increase knowledge of Danish performing arts internationally, i.e. with a view to future collaborations and co-productions.
- Strengthen international experience and vision for Danish stage artists, producers and managers.
- Establish and further develop networks between Danish performing artists, producers and managers and international venues, collaboration partners, institutions, and other relevant actors within the international performing arts environment.

The course aims to sharpen and strengthen the participation of the selected Danish performing arts actors at the conference, including by providing strategic guidance and curating the mobility experience with networking activities, meetings, and site visits in Montreal.

<https://www.kunst.dk/kunststoette/internationale-muligheder/scenekunst>

International intensives

Atelier for Young Festival Managers (Belgium/International)

The Atelier for Young Festival Managers is a seven-day training programme addressed to young artistic festival managers or those who have ambitions to become involved in programming or in programming related departments within a festival. Through the programme, participants broaden their programming skills, widen their horizons, and develop new project ideas under the professional guidance of renowned festival managers from all over the world who share their rich experience. The Atelier focuses on the very essence of festivals: the art and the artist.

<https://www.thefestivalacademy.eu/en/activities/atelier>

Boarding Pass Plus Dance (Italy)

Organised on the occasion of the ten-day summer festival Santarcangelo dei Teatri presenting contemporary performing arts in public space and unconventional venues, the Boarding Pass Plus Dance programme involves:

- Tailored paths for guest artists (invited by partners in order to avoid the competitive mechanisms of an open call for participation, based on the notion of care).
- The sharing of challenges and of the resources to respond to them, encouraging collaboration among partners and artists beyond transactional relationships.
- The exploration of the digital sphere as a public space - not only a channel for marketing, but a real chance for digital engagement and the development of new creative and dramaturgical paths.
- The possibility to connect with international stakeholders and co-create without needing to travel.

<https://www.facebook.com/Boardingpassplusedance>

European Theatre Academy (Germany/France)

Organised by the European Theatre Convention, a European network gathering 54 members from 30 countries, the Academy offers masterclasses and the opportunity for participants to work on their own projects with mentors. The programme focuses on the different aspects of curating and managing international theatre collaborations, as well as on providing networking opportunities with other young theatre professionals. It provides an overview of different theatre systems and forms of international collaboration, dealing with artistic as well as administrative, financial and legal questions in the European context. Participants benefit from expert lectures on funding and support, production and curating, sustainability in theatre, touring, and accessing foreign theatre markets. Several group work sessions with selected mentors enable participants to work on their own projects and delve into practical issues and considerations.

The programme takes place in Avignon, France, on the occasion of its annual theatre festival, and is therefore enriched by festival performances and daily collective discussions on the works seen together.

<https://www.europeantheatre.eu/page/activities/professional-development/european-theatre-academy/about>

IETM Campus (Belgium/Europe)

Each year IETM, international network for contemporary performing arts, organises a six-day intensive training course covering all aspects of working internationally in the performing arts sector. It welcomes an international group of 25-30 young professionals who are just starting to internationalise their careers. Taking place on the occasion of major performing arts festivals, it allows participants to dive into the local performing arts landscape and benefit from the learning and networking opportunities that these festivals can offer.

A group of experienced mentors from the performing arts field share their knowledge on various topics of working internationally: developing artistic projects and ideas, curation, communication, presentation, and community and audience work. Thanks to the limited number of places, participants receive personal attention for their specific situations.

<https://www.ietm.org/en/meetings/ietm-campus-berlin-2022>

Producers' Academy (Belgium)

CIFAS organises an annual European capacity building programme focused on international production in the performing arts. Created in 2016, the Producers' Academy is organised in the frame of Kunstenfestivaldesarts in Brussels. A group of selected international producers are invited to take part in

a programme of conferences, workshops, and peer-to-peer learning sessions, raising questions about their practice in the international cultural sector. Each edition explores themes closely related to the new modalities that are opening up in the production of the performing arts in response to present and future crises: digital innovations, local production and sustainability, mobility, cultural recovery plans, cultural institutions being called into question, etc.

The Producers' Academy increasingly pays attention to the notion of care, one of the fundamental concepts of feminism, and explores attentive and responsive practices and social and sustainable approaches in order to potentially invent new, adaptable, fairer models of governance.

By meeting with experts and practitioners, participants approach practical aspects of international collaborations – including administrative, legal and financial issues – as well as conceptual aspects, exploring innovative production models that can reinvent our global cultural landscape.

<http://www.cifas.be/en/workshops/producers-academy-2021>

National mentoring programmes with an international dimension

Mentorprogram (Denmark)

The Development Platform for the Performing Arts (Udviklingsplatformen for Scenekunst) organises a one-year mentoring programme that focuses on professional and personal career development. Performing arts producers and self-producing performing artists, whatever the stage of their career, are invited to take a deep look at their practice with the support of coaching. Each selected participant, matched with a qualified mentor, accesses valuable experience and insights, including in relation to internationalisation strategies, communication with international presenters, and expansion of an international network.

In the course of the programme, the mentor and mentee meet up at least seven times online or in-person, on top of the three mandatory joint meetings.

<https://www.udviklingsplatformen.dk/raadgivning/udviklingsplatformens-mentorprogram-2022-23>

CircusInfo Finland & Dance Info Finland

CircusInfo Finland and Dance Info Finland, organisations that promote Finnish dance and circus and collect sectoral data, have (joint) continuous mentoring programmes and run regular online sessions/webinars focusing on national or international work. They work to strengthen the export strategies and networks

of Finnish circus and dance artists in North America and Asia. Mentoring programmes run by CircusInfo Finland have often been integrated as part of larger projects, like the performing arts HEL Showcase in September 2021.

<https://sirkusinfo.fi/en> & <https://www.danceinfo.fi/en>

International curated mobility experiences

Fresh Connections Worldwide (France/International)

Organised by FACE, this curated mobility programme supports cultural exchange and the seeding of cooperation projects – within Europe and with other continents. Trips are organised to explore different regions of the world, involving visits to artistic events and fairs, rehearsal spaces and venues, but also meetings with local artists and presenters, local and national institutions, arts schools, and training programmes. These trips provide participants with a concrete international experience and provide them with a solid understanding of each region's context; at the same time, they give insights into the barriers faced by international cooperation projects and develop tools to tackle such obstacles.

Since 2014, FACE has organised nine exploratory trips for international professionals in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), New York City (USA), Seoul (Republic of Korea), Montreal (Canada), Santiago and Valparaiso (Chile), Tokyo and Yokohama (Japan), Brisbane and Adelaide (Australia).

<http://fresh-europe.org/activities/fresh-connections-worldwide>

Global Crossing (France/International)

Global Crossing is an activity organised by Circostrada for its members in a country outside Europe. It allows them to get to know new contemporary circus and outdoor arts contexts and markets, and to develop collaborative opportunities and exchange knowledge and skills. This activity also provides a basis for members to meet local stakeholders and discover artistic programming.

The initiative is dedicated to helping contemporary circus and outdoor arts workers take up the challenge of connecting with peers beyond their national borders, promoting conversations and action around various topics such as fairness, equity, equality, diversity, and accessibility, in close connection with the local challenges of the partner country.

<https://www.circostrada.org/en/actions/international-connections>

Kreativ-Transfer (Germany)

Developed by Dachverband Tanz Deutschland, the advocacy association for dance in Germany, Kreativ-Transfer supports travel to international festivals, fairs and platforms for the international networking activities of cultural professionals. The programme consists of accompanying and preparing dance professionals with expert sessions, information, know-how, and tips and tricks for international networking and cooperation. Kreativ-Transfer also proposes curated mobility experiences for delegations of German professionals.

www.kreativ-transfer.de

European cultural platforms and networks

Many European cultural platforms and networks co-financed by the European Union through the Creative Europe programme also offer international activities for their members, including general meetings and networking events, or curated mobility experiences taking place every year in different contexts. Beyond curating international seminars and conferences, they often curate mobility experiences prior, during or after the events.

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