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Strategies for Audience Development and Best Practices in European CCI Projects

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Why are we talking about the audience development?

- Descending and aging audience
- More and more difficult to attract people who are 25-55 years old
- Weakening artistic and cultural education in schools
- Competition with other sectors



Why are we talking about the audience development ?

- Impact of new technologies
- Responsibility for taxpayers.
- Etc.



Holistic approach to Audience Development

Audience development – EC priority which helps European artists/cultural professionals and their works:

1. reach as many people as possible across Europe;
2. extend access to cultural works to under-represented groups.
3. It also seeks to help cultural organisations adapt to the need to engage in new and innovative ways with audiences.



Concept of Audience Development

Audience development includes cultural, educational, social and economic aspects.



What are the aims of audience development?

- Keep existing audiences
- widen audience
- diversify audience
- reach unrepresented groups
- deepen the relationship with the current audience
- improve the experience for both existing and future audiences



What kind of projects are we talking about?

- Applicants know their existing audiences and the ones they want to reach
- Audience development – integral part of the project
- Staff members for audience development and feedback
- projects focusing on creating audience development skills for cultural operators/artists as one of their main goals
- Focus on demand size, not only supply
- Artists' interaction with local communities



Strategies for audience development

- Outreach and accessibility
- Education
- Partnerships
- User engagement
- Audience segmentation
- Pricing
- Geography
- ...



Outreach and Accessibility

- Just a first step...
- Europe upholds strong principles of equal opportunity for everyone in society, including people with special needs. The arts sector and the broader community are very supportive but in practice there are still barriers to full participation.
- Homeless, periphery, children, youth, prisoners, outskirts, disabled and etc.
- Digital opera/theatre in cinemas



Education

More education in culture organisation, more culture in education system

- Partnerships with universities, schools, kindergartens...
- Thematic sessions
- Lectures, meetings, workshops, camps and etc.
- ...



Partnerships

- Cooperation with different sectors and groups (science, new technologies, business, tourism, ecology and etc....)

Example: Kaunas biennial and dance company “Aura”

Example: Nature Music Hall, Latvia

Example Ludwig Museum in Hungary – partnership with a restaurant during the exhibition of photographer Martin Munkácsy.



Partnerships (II)

- Culture organisations of a certain city create a common proposal for the audience. Possibility of including tourism agencies.
- Schools – cooperation for activities for the youth, f.e. night at the museum, gallery, theatre..
- Organisations taking care of disadvantaged groups and/or at risk of exclusion, including people with disabilities and their families, homeless people, elderly people, migrants, women who have suffered violence, prison inmates, etc.



Audience engagement

Stages for engagement: creation, presentation, reflection

- Example. Young critics – one of the most successful strategies.
- The Zuidplein Theatre in Rotterdam – client is always right in social sense, theatre adapting to social environment.



Audience engagement (II)

- Hamburg Thalia theatre invited public to express their opinion about the plays it would like to see next season.
- Latvian national opera created programme for children – “Opera Fairytale”, where children can create operas.



Audience engagement (III)

- V & A museum, London. Hands-on tasks in the museum.
- Big pit, Wels – excursions by ex-miners
- “Wolf Will” project „To be Jewish“.
- Antony Gormley’s, One & Other.

Trafalgar square, 4 columns, 25 000 volunteers.
2400 people standing on them for one hour doing
whatever they want. 55 000 comments, 1 million
visitors.



Audience engagement (IV) Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra, Choir and Library

- having an insight into the life of the philharmonic
- getting presents when entering new members
- perform 35-40 concerts outside Budapest
- public rehearsals before first nights are open for the public for free



Audience engagement (VI) Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra, Choir and Library

- Saturday afternoon chamber concerts for families
- Pre-concert talks that are an open discussion about an art piece before performing it
- Concerts just for youth
- Online concerts for symbolic price
- Sharing the space



Segmentation

- Process during which audience is divided into groups, considering the specific event, demographics, psychogeography, communication and use of media skills.
- Other strategies/programmes might be adapted according to the needs



Pricing

How much does it cost?

- Special attention for youth and families (UK – for free, Austria – free up to 19 years.)
- Discounts for groups
- Hungry for Arts and Culture – Caritas (AU)
special program by which private donors compensate expenses for organisations which deal with unrepresented groups.



Geography

to bring arts to the people and not vice versa?

- Transport as a challenge
- Disabled persons

Opportunities:

- mobile events, tours
- Create together with audience, in their working space
- Free transport



Tactics

- If organisation wants to change its relations with audience, it must to change itself first.
- Three factors for change: possibility, competencies and motivation.
- To include creative/culture staff in AD process - usually they have ideas which are not in the heads of managers.



Tactics

- Try to look at your programme through the eyes of audience
- Connect with your audience emotionally

People do not want art, they want art experience. They expect to be able to make decisions. Conditions must be created that they could identify themselves with the organisation and say, “oh, this is really about me”.



Tactics

- To pay attention, not only seek for it
- Nontraditional events in nontraditional spaces with nontraditional public using nontraditional communication tools....
- To raise questions, not give answers



Tactics

Surprise...

- Santa Klaus asking for money
- give fee for attendance...
- Lecture about opera for children in singing opera
- Text on the window „we need customers – no experience is needed“
- **Neighborhood.** Audience should feel that organisation is a good neighbor which cares about environment.



Tactics

- Do not offer the same experience in a new package
- To share stories, to listen
- Dinner together with artists
- To make staff members (f.e. supervisors) part of the programme.



Tactics

- AD strategies in every segment of organisation and in every activity
- What we “know” what audience feel is not necessarily truth.
- To reach non-audiences, we should leave our territory not only physically, but also psychologically.
- **Artichoke Trust** – light performances on crowds.



Tactics

Literature project <http://www.openingthebook.com>

We do not want people feel guilty that they do not read.

- To mix books in the shelves
- Create thematic stands, f.e. according to experiences.
- Change furniture
- People's recommendations – I want a book about somebody more miserable than me (whichbook.net)



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