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VOICES OF CULTURE
Structured Dialogue between the European Commission and the cultural sector

Voices of Culture

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN NON-URBAN AREAS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Voices of Culture

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN NON-URBAN AREAS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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INTRODUCTION

Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that: ***"Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits."***

It is this right of access to, participation in and enjoyment of culture which sits at the heart of this report. Drawing inspiration from our short time in the peaceful yet dynamic surroundings of Fagus Werk in Alfeld, we have come together from across Europe in recognition that this right is not limited to our cities. From the remote island to the hamlet; from the village to the town; from the suburb to the metropolis; equality of opportunity to participate in the cultural life of our community should not be defined by where we choose to live nor our ability to travel.

In responding of the perceived urban-centric nature of cultural policy and its related actors across Europe, the group was tasked with exploring 'The Role of Culture in Non-Urban Areas of the European Union' through three themes:

- developing culture in non-urban areas;
- rural areas burdened by over–tourism;
- territories affected by depopulation.

Whilst we entered this process with an open recognition of the likely divergence in the challenges and opportunities across these themes, we have established a series of recommendations which are underpinned by a unifying foundation; culture, in all its varied forms of expression and interpretation, plays an integral role in non-urban areas and this needs to be more actively recognised and supported across different levels of government.

We hope this report adds to both the thinking and actions within this area of European policy discourse. Although developed and largely prepared prior to the acceleration of the COVID-19 pandemic across Europe, it feels acutely important to recognise and promote the value of culture to us as individuals and as communities. Participation in cultural activity not only brings people together in body but provides us with the mental space and stimulus to connect with each other; to reflect; to challenge; to dream; to imagine a different and better future. Ensuring this opportunity is open to everyone feels more important now than it ever has.

CHAPTER 1

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN RURAL, PERI-URBAN, IN-BETWEEN AND/OR UN(DER)USED NON-URBAN AREAS

[redacted]

Context and initial conclusions

This chapter has been prepared by and on behalf of a group of stakeholders who have met to discuss the "in-between" and "non-space" section within the broader paper *"The role of culture in non-urban areas"* prepared by Sylvia Amann (14 January 2020) and in particular the three questions posed therein which members of our group had been asked to consider in advance of our meeting. Our starting point has therefore been about culture in - and related to - places of particular types and it is, therefore 'territorial' in its approach, a factor we have tried to keep to the centre of our thinking and discussions and which has shaped the ways in which this chapter and its recommendations are presented.

For varied reasons the group felt that rather than conceive of non-urban areas as being somehow "in between" urban settings or constituting "non-spaces"[1], we preferred to address places and areas which we considered to be rural, peri-urban, in-between and/or un(der)used – they all share the key element of being non-urban, albeit they may have some characteristics in common with what is usually labelled "urban" – and, to varying degrees, they will have links and interdependencies with urban settings. We also noted that such areas are often those which are in some sort of transitional state and where changes in land use and landscape are easily detected and are themselves often already the subject of policy interventions of different kinds. In the interests of brevity and consistency, this chapter hereon refers to "non-urban" as an all-inclusive term covering rural, peri-urban and in-between and/or un(der)used. Where these terms are used independently, this reflects a distinction within this group.

In particular, our approach has been to look for and at the positive attributes and potentialities of non-urban places and spaces as we share a view that this is commonly overlooked or underplayed. We do not wish to ignore the challenges and obstacles faced by such areas but want to move beyond any sense of their being characterised only by problems and negatives. In other words, we are keen to focus on the strengths and opportunities of the non-urban whilst being mindful of their weaknesses and the threats they face.

1 1Whilst also recognising that "non-space" is sometime employed in a very specific sense to describe places which have lost a previous specific function (usually in terms of land-use) and are rendered purposeless and lacking an identity as a result, this is perfect valid but is a much narrower focus and more specific meaning than what we set out to address

As regards the three questions asked within Amann's original paper, the group returned to these towards the end of its discussions and considered the extent to which we had advanced debate in each of those three areas. Across all three ran a wariness that we need to be very careful not to look only at the potential or actual contribution that culture might make to other policy agendas, we need also to recognise the inherent value and importance of culture per se. This is a point we would want to emphasise.

A short summary of our conclusions with regard to each of the three questions originally put to us is presented here as a bridging mechanism into the next sections of this chapter:

01 ***(Q2.1 in the original paper) As regards making most effective use of spaces/places in non-urban locations.***

We had found our own way to arrive at what we felt was a value-free description of the non-urban places we are looking to describe and explore. We concurred that such territories are of both different and evolving types and natures but the key point is to give due (and fair) account to their potential. Clear and different opportunities exist for creators, supporters, audiences and broader communities (of both interest and place) if this can be done. There is a clear role for policy at all levels to recognise the potential of such territories.

02 ***(Q2.2 in the original paper) As regards taking cultural offers from the urban to non-urban.***

In reality, we perceive this as a much more complex and multi-directional process than phrases such as "reaching out" are able to capture. Artists and works move to and from urban and non-urban settings over short and longer timeframes and often repeatedly; either work or crea-

tor/practitioner may originate as much in the second as the first and spend more or less time in either setting – or indeed spend time in both concurrently. Again the group's approach has been to focus upon – and call for actions to capitalise upon – the opportunities that this movement/transference of cultural offers might bring.

03 ***(Q2.3 in the original paper) Art and culture bridging urban and non-urban settings***

We felt this implied a disconnect or a tension between urban and non-urban which may not in reality exist, or which at least tends to be overplayed. We reminded ourselves that many artists working in urban settings originate from non-urban areas, for example, and that much work does already tour with input from both urban and non-urban operators. That is not to deny that non-urban places can be inaccessible from urban ones and vice versa – for any number of reasons that go beyond physical connectivity. Nor do we want to ignore the importance or validity of local (place-based or even place-specific) culture and identity in urban settings as opposed to non-urban ones, but we also reminded ourselves that that distinctiveness is often very apparent between two or more urban settings or two or more non-urban settings, etc.

Content of discussion

Place, space and terminology

Our debate began by exploring our own understanding of the sorts of territories we are looking at here and the value and meaning of terms such as "non-space" (see previous section). In reaching our own preferred terminology of "non-urban", we acknowledged that each can be confused and confusing and that there are gradations of activity level and significant variations in the character of places even within those types of territories which

we are pulling together under a single grouping/heading. They do have in common a sense of mixed identity and are often perceived as being somehow "transitional". Whether the "peripheral", depends on one's individual view and for some in the group, for example, the suburbs can, in reality, be strongly peripheral to the urban centre in terms of having poor physical access to urban centres. In other senses the areas we are describing are well-connected to urban centres and, for example, are often linked for many as a daily commute to their work journey.

We also realised quite early in our discussions that we need to be clear in differentiating between "place" by which we mean a location or setting as opposed to a "space" which can be used to mean both the degree of open nature of a place or a performance space – as in a venue for presentation and/or performance. In writing this chapter we have tried to confine the use of the term "space" to mean the second of these things and explicitly talked about space (as in open space) where that was pertinent to our discussions.

We also explored a little more deeply the sort of territorial challenges and characteristics that we are already familiar with in the types of non-urban places we are talking about. For example, thinking about former industrial or military sites outside of main urban centres for which that past purpose is now defunct and how that has impacted upon the present with, often, a pervading sense of loss of purpose, and a lack of activity ("things happening") and an accompanying desire, or policy aim, to "bring life back into" such places. That in turn directly impacts on population/depopulation trends, quality of life for local people and communities, local economies and how all of that is addressed (or not) in EU level, national and regional/local level policy.

However, what we also want to not lose sight of at this juncture, is how this impacts on local cultural operators, on potential or actual participants and audiences and how, more generally, culture and creativity is part of life in such locations. What we want to ask and understand is how that is best communicated and by whom? The role of collaborative arts practice as part of broader initiatives around place-specific territorial dimensions needs to be made more visible and better communicated and understood.

CASE STUDY

Creative Places Tuam, Ireland

Creative Places Tuam, Ireland, is a three-year pilot programme led by the Arts Council of Ireland. The Creative Places programme, the first of its kind in the country, recognises and addresses gaps in the spatial and demographic distribution of the Arts Council's funding and is developed for communities around the country that have not had opportunities to benefit from sustained investment in the arts.

In January 2020, Create, the national development agency for collaborative arts in Ireland was awarded the tender to manage the pilot programme, developing a creative programme in collaboration with the people of Tuam, Co Galway. Tuam is a rural town with a population of 9,000 situated in County Galway in the West of Ireland. Interestingly, Galway City, some 34 km from Tuam, is European Capital of Culture 2020.

This pilot programme (2020–2022) with funding of €150,000 per annum, aims to build capacity locally for a sustainable grassroots approach to creativity and arts engagement. It will create new opportunities for local communities to collaborate on meaningful arts experiences, both during the three year programme and afterwards.

This programme is forming a key part of Create's current strategy and work over the next three years which, together with the people of Tuam, sets out to establish a durational, sustainable, community based arts practice in the town. Create will work in collaboration with local communities to forge opportunities to celebrate and grow artistic and cultural capacity in Tuam and its surrounding area. https://www.create-ireland.ie/programme/creative-places-tuam/

Tangible and intangible assets – the non-urban contribution

When considering non-urban places and spaces we might think in terms of the tangible (more physical) benefits that exist in such locations – venues at affordable prices, of different and inspiring types, in attractive settings, linked to other cultural "offers", etc. We need also to think about the less tangible such as the opportunities to work with and for new co-creators, audiences and other local stakeholders. Non-urban settings and landscapes have inherent relevance and value as the setting and inspiration for work and the sorts of opportunities that all that means for artists, creators and cultural organisations themselves to work in and move across (see next section) different types of (geographic) settings.

We are keen to see that full scope is given to exploring just how culture in non-urban across the EU and beyond can reach all sorts of non-urban communities and the full range of individuals and organisations within. This clearly implies a role for education (in its broadest sense) and for research – two dimensions which were raised on numerous occasions during the course of our discussions. Equally clearly we will want to ensure that the increase in knowledge and understanding is translated into policy and supports mechanisms including funding programmes.

Just what the scope and potential for culture in non-urban settings is, formed a large part of our deliberations as we undertook what was essentially a SWOT analysis of non-urban areas in the context of culture. There is a feeling amongst us of some sort of inequality of opportunity between cultural operators in urban areas and those in non-urban ones. That is partly attributable to capacity and critical mass, especially in terms of accessing funding opportunities. We make a number of specific recommendations below as to how these factors might be countered and/or compensated for.

We also discussed the role that culture in non-urban areas might play in developing community cohesiveness and in part in addressing issues around

disconnects or even tensions between different groups of people in given areas – with immigrant and transitory communities given as an example, and where a greater understanding of cultures and the differences between them might ameliorate broader social relations. (At the same time reminding ourselves again that culture must be valued in its own right as well as being a means to a broader end)

CASE STUDY

H2020 Project RURITAGE

we [illegible] that that distinctiveness is often very apparent between two or more urban settings or two or more non-urban settings, etc.

RURITAGE (GA No 776465) is a four-year-long EU-funded research H2020 project, which strives to enable rural regeneration through the enhancement of cultural and natural heritage. RURITAGE identifies six Systemic Innovation Areas (Pilgrimage, Resilience, Sustainable Local Food Production, Integrated Landscape Management, Migration and Art and Festivals) which together build a unique paradigm for rural regeneration.

Throughout the RURITAGE project, thirteen rural areas have been selected as Role Models, prosperous cases that provide good practices, knowledge and skills to six Replicators, one for each Systemic Innovation Area. These Replicators represent local rural communities that, thanks to knowledge exchange and capacity building, and by applying RURITAGE approach and tools, will build and implement their own heritage-led regeneration strategies based upon their rich cultural and natural heritage.

RURITAGE offers to rural communities various innovative tools: the Atlas, an innovative and creative rural landscape mapping providing a comprehensive representation of human-landscape interactions; the My Cult-Rural Toolkit, to collect Co-Monitoring data; an open and free Replication ToolBox including the RURI-

TAGE Practices Repository, the interoperable RURITAGE Inventory of Lessons Learned, the RURITAGE Serious Game kit, the Step-by-Step Regeneration Guidelines and a Decision Support System (DSS) for supporting rural communities in undertaking a process of regeneration.

RURITAGE - Rural regeneration through systemic heritage-led strategies

Rethinking non-urban and urban culture

Too much cultural policy and research work, it seems to us, is urban-centric. It either ignores or does not go looking for contributions beyond urban settings, or underplays the role that non-urban areas might play. Administrative boundaries often seem to be regarded as insuperable barriers to co-operation but this is often assumed and not checked and is not always borne out by reality in our experience. Non-urban is too often characterised only in the sense of being somehow divided and isolated from the urban and often less important.

Our sense is much more of non-urban areas where locations/venues for cultural working and events are often more available, accessible and affordable than in urban centres. The non-urban areas – often within more open settings than urban spaces allow – are themselves an inspiration for creative work and the locations/venues themselves are often different enough in themselves to also serve inspirations for work in various forms and genres. These aspects can be harnessed relatively straightforwardly in order to involve audiences and collaborators who are otherwise in practice debarred from participation in cultural activities over-focused and over-situated in urban centres. We recognise that capitalising upon this potential will need a shift of mind-set on the part of many, including cultural operators themselves which often function with what we would regard on occasion as being over-centralised operating models based upon an urban presence with occasional forays beyond. What we would want to see further explored and supported as an antidote to that approach is a more fragmented, multi-location operational model approach which ought to be encouraged and sustained through joined-up policy and programmes of support.

CASE STUDY

PeerGrouP, Netherlands

PeerGrouP is based in the North of the Netherlands, in a rural area. Their work is usually site specific and site generic. A field, a big coaster or a whole village can be their performance site; they hardly ever perform in theatre buildings. PeerGrouP consists of people working in different art disciplines. Actors, architects, dancers, sculptors and musicians work with a director towards a theatrical presentation. Often the work is a mix between theatre (in the broadest sense), an exhibition and a (social) event. The audience eats, drinks and sits together with the performers.

The work of PeerGrouP can be described as site-specific in a socially engaged manner. Every site and every location has a history and specific features. The first focus lays on the people who “own” the environment. These people are the key to the specific stories, the conflicts, the celebrations and ceremonies.

For example: in a village without a bakery, PeerGrouP started by building a bread oven and created a temporary bakery where the villagers were invited to trade their stories for bread. The final performance was as much a PeerGrouP performance as a performance of the villagers.

https://www.peergroup.nl/english/

CASE STUDY

Take ART, Somerset, UK

Beyond the established art galleries and venues in the county of Somerset there are several actors bringing exhibitions and performances all around the county. The organisation Take Art is a part of an innovative rural touring network which strives to make professional arts experiences accessible to all communities within Somerset. Rural touring is basically about bringing a wide range of experienced arts performances to local ”venues” like village halls, churches or schools. The touring schedule consists of art forms like theater and dance to spoken word and circus.

The whole idea of rural touring is based on cooperation and getting people together. The outcome is a social meeting place for locals which creates a sense of belonging and pride within the rural communities. Take Art’s work does not stop at networking though, they also organise and support creative workshops and education. By providing opportunities for people of all ages explore, participate and work within the arts they enable sustainable social and economic development through culture.

Take Art is a Role Model in H2020 project RURITAGE (GA No 776465), providing good practices in the Systemic Innovation Areas “Art and Festivals”.

Take Art: touring professional arts in rural areas

Relationships between non-urban and urban areas

The group returned to this dimension of the subject numerous times and in different contexts. For example, in wondering where cultural works of whatever genre are created and where they are presented or otherwise made accessible and how work can best be shared between territories of different types. The reality of some sort of concentration of creative endeavour in urban centres is acknowledged and already much publicised and talked about, but clearly the case can be overstated and not all work is created in the urban or inspired by the urban and certainly urban settings are not the ”cradle” for all creativity and culture. As for artists themselves we noted that not all artists are born, bred and resident in cities – far from – and indeed a number of us noted a trend in reverse, whereas perhaps previously cultural operators had gravitated from non-urban to urban settings as a seemingly inevitable part of a life and career trajectory, they often now look to move in the opposite direction. This may reflect a larger “disconnect” between urban and non-urban and an attempt to recreate that bridge some of us felt, for others it was more about re-achieving a balance and roundedness. Whatever the underlying reason or reasons might be (we did not analyse this in detail), we felt that it does have clear implications for:

- **how we might best support artists and cultural institutions in that movement between places and what we feel is a clear need to do more in this regard;**
- **how we might fit culture and creative endeavour into broader schemes looking to connect places of different territorial types;**
- **the sorts of impacts any such movement of artists and creators might have on the nature and medium of works being created;**

- **what it might mean in terms of their being able to engage with new collaborators or audiences;**
- **how this might all play into a larger movement towards the decentralisation (from major urban centres) of cultural operations.**

CASE STUDY

Deveron Projects, Huntly, Scotland

Deveron Projects is based in the rural market town of Huntley, Scotland. Artist led, Deveron Projects connect artists, communities and places through creative research and engagement. The Town is the Venue describes the framework in which Deveron Projects work and contribute to the social wellbeing of the town - inhabiting, exploring, mapping and activating the place through artist driven projects. Huntly's small town context, 18th century streets and the surrounding Aberdeenshire countryside offer an abundance of possibilities to work with. Deveron Projects have engaged with local people and their clubs, choirs, shops, schools, churches, bars and discos in Huntly since 1995. Deveron Projects believes that artists are cultural activists who can engage people and communities, adding vitality to our society. Creative and playful processes can be employed to untangle and overcome real-life challenges, defuse conflict, solve problems and open up new possibilities.

https://www.deveron-projects.com/home/

Recommendations – actions to be taken

A number of specific recommendations began to develop during the course of the first day of our discussions and we allowed this to happen organically. On day two we returned to our debate with a much more explicit remit to work these more systematically into the series of calls for appropriate action that might be taken at different policy (and practice) levels as sort out below. This latter conversation tended to focus more at the EU level than any other – partly mindful of our intended audience in the first instance - but also in the awareness that what might be shaped at the EU level would in many instances then be adopted and refined at the national and sub-national levels.

At the EU policy level - and here we have taken as our starting point the section of the summary report by Sylvia Amann (14/01/20) which addresses "what can the EU do to promote culture in peri-urban spaces" – "Future-proof(ing) cultural policies outside urban areas".

1. It seems to us that there is more work to be done in understanding the implications of any rebalancing between creative and cultural activity in urban areas and in non-urban. In particular we need to better understand the sorts of opportunities and potential that this group itself started discussing and we need to give priority to this work and ensure that where there is already learning to draw upon this is utilised at exactly a point where policy and programme direction and shape is being determined for the forthcoming EU budgeting period and beyond.

In particular we call for the following:

2. As an overarching point, that culture and creativity should be treated not solely as a sectoral theme but as a cross-cutting or transversal dimension of:

- all high level EU policy initiatives;

- cohesion policy, where culture and creativity needs to be recognised and incentivised as part of a place-based approach to the regional development of EU territories and the relations between them as these come over time to be set out in partnership agreements, operational programmes and programme documents, etc.;

- other sectoral policies where the cross-cutting nature of culture and creativity needs to be explicitly written into policy tools and the programme documents that might result;

- policy and activity in other policy realms which are often assumed to be unconnected or unrelated to culture, for example, exploring the “culture in agriculture”.

3. For culture and creativity to be treated as a cross cutting and transversal dimension of EU policy initiatives will require coordination and the exchange of information and knowledge across different EU policy and intervention areas such as territorial cohesion, research, employment, social affairs, innovation and others. All involved need to identify an effective way of bringing this joined-up approach about in the immediate future given the point we are at in the policy and budget formulation cycle.

4. That this involve all the relevant EU institutions with a role in policy and programme development and not be limited to the Commission only but extended to incorporate the relevant committees and “intergroups” within the European Parliament, relevant Council meetings at the member state level and the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and EESC constituent bodies as bridges to and from the sub-national level.

5. That this approach extends beyond EU policy to EU level commitments, for example to an explicit analysis and understanding of the contribution that culture in non-urban areas can make to climate change commitments under the Paris Agreement and to the broad sustainability aims as set out within the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

6. That within this process of awareness-raising and knowledge exchange the territorial dimension of culture be made explicitly clear to take account of:

- the particular potential, opportunities and challenges related to culture in non-urban places – both in terms of its innate value and its contribution in economic, environmental and social terms;

- the current under-recognition of the role of non-urban culture which should be actively addressed with any current erroneous assumptions and assertions as regards the role and potential being actively challenged and corrected.

7. That this explicit recognition of the inherent value and contribution of culture in non-urban areas be reflected in the text of key documents which are produced and approved as part of the agreement of the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

8. That attention be paid to the following particular existing and emerging EU policy tools (and underpinning legal instruments) which can serve to assist in the process of gaining greater recognition and reward for culture in non-urban areas:

a. the fund specific Regulations for:

1. ERDF/Cohesion Fund;
2. European Social Fund+ (ESF);
3. European Territorial Cooperation (ETC);
4. European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF);
5. Creative Europe;
6. Erasmus+;

b. European Green Deal – and in particular specific elements within such as:

1. the long-term vision for rural areas – where peri-urban, in between and/or un(der)used areas will presumably be in scope for consideration as well rural-urban linkages;

c. the Smart Villages initiative – which in reality applies in part to peri-urban, in between and/or un(der)used areas as well as more archetypically "rural" ones;

d. the existing Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) initiative which may come to be extended to a have a broader Agricultural and Rural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (ARKIS) focus;

e. the work on Democracy and Demographics under the leadership of Commissioner Suica;

f. developing EU Innovation policy work with a focus on the place-based nature of innovation – recognising the role and potential of the creative industries sector within the Smart Specialisation approach, etc.;

g. initiatives on "simplification" within EU funding instruments;

h. prioritisation of areas of focus within the Horizon Europe programme 2021-27;

i. future plans for LEADER, Community led Local Development (CLLD) and Integrated Territorial Investments within funding programmes.

At the national and sub-national level much might flow from the EU level as stated above but other different interventions were also part of the group's thinking during our discussions. We recognise that from the viewpoint of DG Regio and other EU level actors, the desire is not to impose top-down solutions but to support member states. To that end we recommend that:

9. The value and potential of culture in non-urban areas to be considered alongside the urban dimension of same as part of the process of agreeing the national level framework for finalising and agreeing:

a. national level operation programmes for European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund plus;

b. national level contributions to relevant European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) programmes;

c. Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) National plans and especially within the broader rural development focus of the second pillar.

10. Member states to be encouraged to capture, support and activate coordination between EU level initiatives and national policy instruments and funding regimes.

11. Member states encouraged and required to ensure that where instruments are designed at sub-national level and where programme management is delegated to the sub-national levels, that these same obligations be respected and implemented in practice.

12. That connections between cultural operators in non-urban areas and representatives of regional level interests within the EU Institutions themselves such as the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) to be strengthened and supported.

At the instrument level the above policy dimensions might be applied in practical terms by the following means:

13. Ensuring that culture and creativity is explicitly written into all programme schemes and especially those applying to:

- ERDF;
- ESF plus;
- European Territorial Cooperation – Interreg programmes;
- Horizon Europe.

14. We are keen to see that explicit advantage is taken of the territorial dimension as set out in the proposed new and cross-cutting Policy Objective 5 of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) 2021-27 (A Europe closer to citizens: sustainable and integrated development of urban, rural and coastal areas and local initiatives) where regional development is clearly tied to territories of different types.

15. We also want to see additional support measures designed into programme schemes to equalise the opportunities open to cultural actions in, from, and across non-urban areas.

16. We further call for explicit prioritisation to be given to interventions designed to harness the potential of non-urban areas and which serve to strengthen mutually beneficial links between these and urban areas.

17. Where instruments require that activities are restricted to areas which are judged “sufficiently urban” or “sufficiently rural” to be eligible for support, special care is taken to ensure that non-urban areas do not fall into a category that leaves them ineligible on both fronts.

18. And further, that the role and importance of such “in-between” areas

be incentivised and prioritised as opposed to being inadvertently penalised for being insufficiently urban or rural, where in reality that crude dichotomy only obstructs work of real value.

19. And where desirable, and in line with the stated aim and purpose of Policy Objective 5 as at 14. above, for the purposes of ESIF, we want to see a clear scope for using all investment categories and indicators within single place-based interventions. An approach well-suited to activities in rural, peri-urban, in-between and/or un(der)used areas where different priorities and concerns co-exist and are interdependent.

(In other words, to have a clearer territorial dimension written into all programmes in line with the principles set out in the EU Territorial Agenda 2020 and draft EU Territorial Agenda 2030)

At the action level there are a number of existing and therefore tested tools which we recommend are considered for use on a case by case basis by all relevant actors at EU, national and regional levels. They should serve as incentives and/or directly combat existing disincentives or inequalities.

20. Variation and flexibility in intervention rates – depending on the type of territory where actions occur, or the type of applicant organisation.

21. Single stage or multiple stage application processes designed to make the application process and funding decisions no less rigorous but intended to make developing successful bids a more realistic possibility.

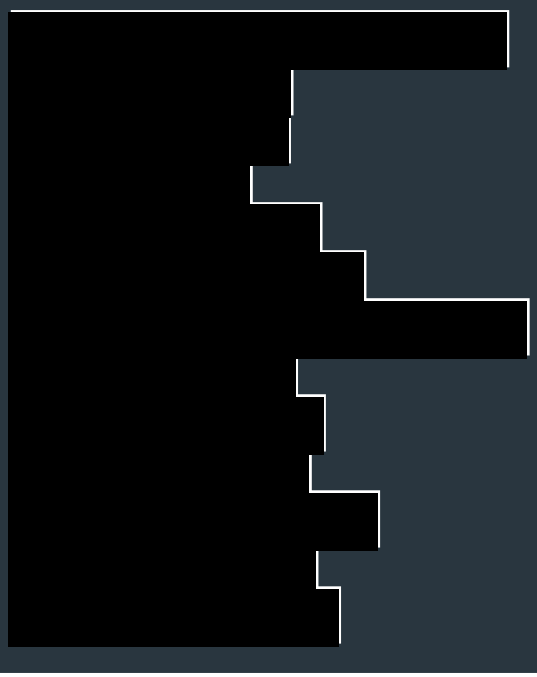
22. Calls for proposals (or additional weighting given to applications) which specifically require – or prioritise – work across territories of different types and which specifically reference “peri-urban, in-between and un(de)used areas” as well as simply referencing urban and rural.

23. Increased support for applicants looking to develop project work in non-urban areas – via Technical Assistance (TA) from within programme budgets or supported by other means at national or sub-national level. The two to be developed as wraparound support packages when possible.

24. Scope to include provision for grants awarding schemes such as cascade funding to third parties with project budgets (global grants, etc.) to enable smaller organisations and pieces of work to be supported.

25. Scope to place greater emphasis within projects on just how supported work is best embedded in policy and other practice at the local level in the mid to long-term – in ways similar to those used within phase two of Interreg Europe 2014-20 which 1) allocates a lump sum for preparation costs and 2) foresees a two-phase development of the project; after phase 1 (interregional learning process), phase 2 is dedicated to monitoring the implementation of the action plan.

DIALOGUE GROUP



CHAPTER 2

RURAL AREAS BURDENED BY OVER-TOURISM

[redacted]

Background

Sylvia Amann prepared the following questions for our topic:

01 **Small villages with interesting heritage sites, major beach resorts on islands and along the coastlines, winter tourism hot spots or attractions parks often suffer from too many visitors in peak months multiplying considerably the number of inhabitants.**

02 **How to overcome the need to allow access to cultural sites while retaining a reasonable framework of living for residents?**

03 **How to allow for a dynamic concept of identity and at the same time ensure authenticity[2] and sustainable development in cultural and artistic actions?**

04 **How to best develop cultural tourism, related ecosystems and cooperation frameworks?**

After submitting responses individually to Sylvia Amann, we formed our group. Then, while we did refresh our memory with regard to the summary prepared by Sylvia Amann, our group chose to make some gentle revisions to our topic because we felt conflicted with the title “Rural Areas Burdened by Over-Tourism.” In this sense, we found connecting rural areas with “over-tourism” was problematic and did not adequately reflect the current situation faced by our communities.

1. The word “authentic” proved to be troublesome within our group – particularly in relation to identity. Perhaps, because if “authenticity” is affiliated with identity then, as a result, there is a (hegemonic) voice which delineates what is an authentic identity and what is not, which is counter-intuitive to our discussion regarding identity as fluid and ever-changing (see below). Therefore, we noted the contentiousness of this word and have attempted to use it sparingly. However, “authentic” was language that was established by Sylvia Amann, so for continuity purposes some cases of its usage were maintained in our submission. All the same, we note that “authenticity” may perhaps be too “loaded” a word for this submission. Kindly, we are open to suggestions and alternatives for its replacement.

Therefore, upon continued discussion, our group felt that it was more appropriate to discuss rural, remote, and peri-urban areas and their varying experiences of tourism. We agreed that this more general topic seemed to better represent our participants and the communities we represent. Consequently, our recommendations reflect this slight redirection.

After settling on our revised lens, "Rural Areas Burdened with Tourism," our recommendations were generated based on considering what worked and did not work and what were our dream scenarios at the local, regional, national, and EU level. These discussions also generated a number of "Good Practices" of which we have presented throughout this chapter and at the end of our discussion as inspirations for policies and replicators to motivate positive change within our communities, countries, and the EU.

Nevertheless, despite all of our conclusions and reflections, we had one important question, which we chose not to dwell on too much as it would deter from our ability to identify realistic recommendations. Our group wondered what was the definition for a rural and remote place – especially because connotations differ so widely nationally across Europe[2].

Preamble

Before embarking on a more thorough discussion, we considered the term "over-tourism." We agreed that the words were rather subjective. Nevertheless, despite our different interpretations for "over-tourism," we were unified in the rationale that the extent of "over"-tourism depended on a local ability to support guests with social infrastructure. Indeed, "over"-tourism could be a matter of only a few visitors – if the community is not prepared to meet

2. The EU defines a "rural area" as an area where more than 50 % of its population lives in rural grid cells (grid cells that are not identified as urban centres or as urban clusters) (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Rural_area) and defines a remote area this way: "A region is considered close to a city if more than half of its residents can drive to the centre of a city of at least 50 000 inhabitants within 45 minutes. Conversely, if less than half of its population can reach a city within 45 minutes, it is considered remote." (https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/focus/2008_01_rural.pdf). Nevertheless, for the purposes of our discussion, these definitions are not as precise as we had hoped. Therefore, at the EU level, perhaps, national definitions could be applied to EU level guidelines for improved non-urban classification.

them, whether it is because of a lack of infrastructure or a social issue. Regarding “over”-tourism’s subjectiveness, as a group we decided that we would try to avoid the use of the word “over” during our discussion because we felt the context was better described as “being burdened with tourism”.

Whether or not we agreed on the term “over”-tourism, we all acknowledged that this kind of tourism, however we name it, is the opposite of quality tourism – as it can have a wide range of negative impacts – whether it is on the daily life of locals or on the local ecosystem (e.g., erosion, littering, effects on soil composition, etc.).

One of the main issues that was abstracted from the first steps of our discussion was the difficulty that non-urban areas can encounter in dispersing tourists, which results in having too many visitors at the same time, at the same place. Therefore, we need to find quality methods to disperse visitors in places burdened with tourism. Tourist dispersion methods could be concrete strategies through incentives or funding that aim to adjust tourist experiences towards a best quality tourism model that, for example, might look more like a pilgrimage where tourists could go from one cultural site to another, then go to a local festival, and then pass by an art exhibition – rather than a big group of tourists going to a single place and then leaving the area.

Moreover, suitable infrastructures to meet the needs of both locals and tourists was an ongoing concern. We need to ensure that natural and cultural sites are accessible without damaging them but also find a balance between limited transportation and mass transportation and their effects on non-urban areas – like cruise ships. Furthermore, we were especially interested in access to special sites and events for locals during the off-season as well as digital infrastructure, which would contribute to advertising and, perhaps, even regulate tourist flow too.

In terms of infrastructure implementation, we were divided. We wondered if infrastructure could be an incentive for both locals and visitors. We even discussed the term “infrastructure” and its varying connotations and the equal-

ly varying strategies that make it happen. Some believed that infrastructure would “catch-up” if perhaps a big event such as a festival was inaugurated; others believed infrastructure needed to be more tactically achieved.

Despite the varying topics of our initial discussions, we were again in agreement that the arts have an important role to play in the update of tourism strategies. Although we cannot expect artists to fix “over-tourism” for other sectors, artists should be a part of the solution.

CASE STUDY

Honeyland, Macedonia

In 2019, a documentary titled “Honeyland” was made about a bee-keeper in Macedonia named Hatidze Muratova. Although her and her mother live in relative isolation, their lifestyle is now threatened by their neighbours. This documentary aimed at raising awareness concerning the situation of the women, but also works towards the preservation of their lifestyle by publicising the availability of their products – although people are asked to avoid attempting to visit the women. The documentary is a savvy tool for educating visitors and locals alike – not to mention acting as a method for the preservation of both a tangible and intangible part of the local heritage without risking its damage. The documentary was nominated for an Academy Award.

https://honeyland.earth/donate-for-the-honeyland-kids/

Next, we looked for ways in which tourism and culture could be blended to better promote a smart form of tourism that would give a quality visitor experience where locals would also feel valued, instead of consumed. In our discussion, several participants stated that they actually wished for over-tourism for their community. Consequently, we discussed the tipping point – at what point tourism becomes "over-tourism" or when successful tourism becomes problematic, whilst also considering how important successful tourism is to improving incomes, showcasing cultural and/or natural sites, and for the provision of a wide range of general resources for non-urban areas.

As our discussion continued, we discovered how critical advertising and branding is for successful tourism. We then discussed the element of voice within advertising and branding and "Who chooses what is presented?" and "Who chooses what is advertised and branded?". Indeed, these choices need to be carefully unpacked to adequately represent a place and its people where the aim is to strengthen the communities' identity. We recognized that identity needs to be fluid, and we agreed that visitors – as well as locals – need to be reminded that identity changes with time and people, and that identity does not belong to the past. If work on the perception of identity is not completed, identity can transform into myth, which results in a polluted visitor experience that can contribute to the growth of stereotypes within local communities. Conversely, how do we create quality tourism and respect community identities? Surely, by offering carefully curated and thoughtful experiences, which were developed considering all local stakeholders (indigenous people, locals, minorities, and cultural operators). Quality visitor experiences, for example, can be cultivated by clearly defining the difference between science and/or historical facts and narrative, storytelling, and local legends, etc. Indeed, we agreed that local stories and legends are as much a part of community identity as local facts and historical accounts.

We also discussed the management of funds in rural places and agreed that funds available to non-urban areas are very often too large and have too much focus on cooperation projects, which can be difficult especially in remote places. Most often, a rural NGO cannot manage a €4,000,000 grant, but they could manage a project with a €50,000 value.

To reiterate, the ongoing goal of our discussion was to identify problems and articulate solutions to disrupt dysfunctional tourism or non-urban areas burdened with tourism – as opposed to "over-tourism" in particular.

Framework

As a group, we had to frequently revisit and reflect how arts and culture are stakeholders in the tourism industry with respect to heritage sites, festivals, education, and myth-making or myth-breaking. Sometimes, we tended to get "off-track" by merely discussing the effects of tourism on non-urban areas in general – and not specifically the arts and cultural effects and implications that are associated and linked to the tourism industry. Therefore, we should note that our framework reflects this lens. We understand that the tourism industry has vast implications and associations with other aspects of society in non-urban areas, but our attempt was to use the lens of art and culture as the unifying theme (our framework) to generate recommendations.

We determined that we needed to generate solutions for how rural areas manage tourism by binding the needs of the local community with the needs of tourism (for example, through social infrastructure like year-round public transport, which benefits locals and tourists alike). Furthermore, we attempted to derive recommendations that created bilateral, mutually beneficial relationships between locals and tourists where (in our dream scenario):

01 **The needs of both locals and tourists are met;**

02 **There is a genuine feeling of reciprocity between locals and tourists;**

03 **The tourism industry is equitable and sustainable.**

Nevertheless, as we worked towards establishing our recommendations, we realized quickly that a one-size-fits-all model would fail because of the diversity of economies and geographical spaces in non-urban spaces in Europe. Therefore, ideally, our "Good Practices" examples become references for replication that can be adjusted for varying usages within different non-urban spaces, depending on the characteristics, needs, and resources of the communities concerned. What is more, if our examples are established at the European level, perhaps our "Good Practices" will have more clout at the national, regional and local level?

Though we identified significant diversity within economies and geographic spaces of our collective non-urban spaces, we also identified a single significant similarity, which rural, remote, and peri-urban areas must similarly confront: language. Tensions between tourists and locals are a greater concern when there is a language barrier. However, again regardless of the diversity within economies and geographic spaces, we determined that art and culture can be a strategic connector between tourists and locals. Even more so, art and culture can be change-makers! Through cultural experiences, individuals do not have to share a language to be moved through aesthetic expressive storytelling, visual arts, or historical sites.

Therefore, investing in visitor centres is not always the ideal solution to manage tourism in non-urban areas because there is no immersive storytelling. Again, current investment models seem problematic in that tourism funding often supports tangible, hard costs as opposed to something more ephemeral like art and culture experiences and expenses. Our hope is that forthcoming local, regional, national and EU-level investment should include more freedom to incorporate artists within tourism and granting design. Ultimately, artists often are underused resources within tourism management because artists can seamlessly bind the needs of the local community with that of the tourists (e.g, through the creation and interpretation of a meaningful story by extrapolating archaeological evidence). What's more, we reference that a European study noted that the impact of the art and culture sector on jobs is eight times that of the auto industry.[3]

Titan Emilia & Voineagu Vergil & Todose Monica, 2008. "The Impact Of Cultural-Creative Industries On The Economic Growth - A Quantitative Approach", Annals of Faculty of Economics, University of Oradea, Faculty of Economics, vol. 2(1), pages 930-935, May.

For sustainability purposes, our recommendations were derived with a strategy intended to bolster opportunities for the tourism industry and to support the local community all year round – even though tourists are not always present all year round. Furthermore, we tried to deduce solutions that were more holistic and far-reaching in nature as opposed to, often, knee-jerk solutions like tourism taxes that are predominantly employed by urban areas and the "nitty-gritty" of arguing over how many nights tourist should stay before a discounted price was implemented. Instead, our recommendations aimed to deduce and foster quality, genuine experiences for tourists and locals alike.

Recommendations

Before outlining our recommendations, once again, we reiterate that a one-size-fits-all model will fail to adequately support most non-urban areas in Europe. However, our hope is that the EU should and could make policy recommendations that local communities can adapt for their own usage (through a trickle-down effect). The provision of EU guidelines and recommendations could be applicable for local, regional, and national authorities to choose to adopt for their own purposes. However, we stress that education (see below for more details) is also a necessity for local, regional, and national authorities to even be aware of EU guidelines and recommendations in the first place – prior to making steps to apply EU policies within their communities.

Actions for funding

1. **Increase accessibility in funding models:** We recommend that the EU should diversify existing granting designs to include simplified funding opportunities that would be open to both individual artists and NGOs. This modification would enable artists and the cultural operators that support

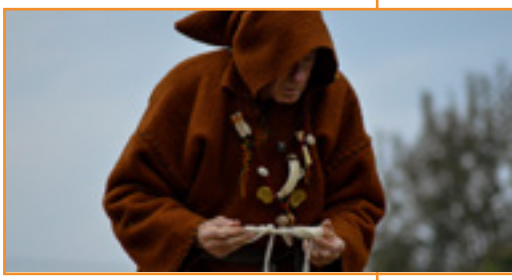
them to better access funding to act as support in rural areas to manage tourism by binding the needs of the local community with the needs of tourists (as suggested above through aesthetic expressive storytelling and other art-forms). Evidently, individual artists and small NGOs do not have the capacity to apply for grants within the €4,000,000 range, which is often the scope of tourism funds.

Furthermore, we suggest that a two-step application process would better enable small organisations (more predominantly located in non-urban areas) to manage their fundraising capacities more efficiently, and to be blunt, not waste their time unnecessarily. We have a few solutions: a short Letter of Intent (LOI) could be submitted prior to submitting a full proposal. Perhaps, the first step of an application process might even include a small funding allocation to support the time and effort needed for individuals and organisations to make a full application.

2. **Expand inclusivity and innovation in granting architecture:** We also recommend that the European Commission allow for more crossover concepts or cross sectoral approaches (e.g., culture and gastronomy) within funding models.

CASE STUDY

Journey to the Beginnings, Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Serbia



The mission of this project is to create infrastructure for a new interpretation of prehistoric cultural heritage of the ancient civilisations that lived along the Danube River. The project aims to use cultural heritage as a source of inspiration for contemporary arts and new technologies. It is a cross-sectoral collaboration between archaeologists, museum professionals, contemporary artists, and IT experts that results in live performances and a complex augmented and virtual reality based application.

> The Journey to the Beginnings project connects modern and ancient civilisations by linking them through participatory art and science experiences that balance archaeology and contemporary art with modern technology. The participating archeological sites are Lepenski Vir in Serbia, the Iron Gates Region Museum in Romania, the Vucedol Culture Museum in Croatia and the Matrica Museum in Hungary.
>
> http://journeytothebeginnings.eu/

3. **Initiate ringfence funding:** If our hope is for art and culture to "fix" or at the very least properly contribute as a stakeholder to tourism in non-urban areas, communities need dedicated funding to do so (e.g., perhaps a similar call to the current Creative Europe Cultural Cooperation Projects in the Western Balkans).

4. **Strengthen structural funds:** Individual artists and the cultural operators that support them through local NGOs need to be able to rely on increased structural funds (such as regional funds and cross border cooperation funds) to support work that contributes to tourism management in non-urban areas. For example, structural funds (particularly the European Regional Development Fund) could be more explicit to ensure that cultural and creative industries can access funding on the national level.

Actions for education

1. **Create clear visitor etiquette for tourists:** We assume that all tourists attempt to be respectful guests, but sometimes a lack of adequate information can impact the ability of tourists to behave respectfully (e.g., what is expected from them, how to contribute to a local place, how to take care of the territory). Improved guidance tools for tourists could be implemented through improved communication, visibility, branding, activity types, and marketing initiatives as detailed below.

CASE STUDY

Sheep View 360, Faroe Islands

To address a gap in google street views, Faroe Islanders decided to launch their own mapping project. They provided their sheep with cameras to record streets, causeways, and bridges of the archipelago.

Furthermore, replicating their methodology could be used to map both natural and heritage sites, so tourists can view online resources in advance-allowing them to judge their willingness to visit prior to arriving in person.

Thanks to the sheep, Faroe Islands now has google street view. https://visitfaroeislands.com/sheepview360/

2. **Establish grassroots counsel for local politicians:** It was quite apparent that some group members felt that local politicians were often unaware of trends and recommendations at the European level. Furthermore, our group felt that art and culture had a difficult "fit" within the municipal model because cultural activities are regularly applied through a more holistic approach in small communities where art and culture is managed through multiple ministries and consequently, art and culture can be weakened in their implementation. We recommend that the EU work towards disrupting the disconnection between local municipalities and EU initiatives and recommendations through improved access to advice and guidelines for both concerned citizens and local politicians. We anticipate that the grassroots counsel of local politicians has the potential to also spark grassroots economic growth through awareness-raising and ensuring opportunities do surface because public servants are better informed.

3. **Strengthen training opportunities for cultural operators:** Cultural operators of non-urban areas are all too often unaware of funding initiatives beyond the regional level. Once again, we hope that the EU will initiate robust training opportunities in addition to policy changes to eliminate this disconnection, so

local cultural operators are better prepared to serve their local communities by accessing not only local and regional funding opportunities, but national and EU level funds as well. What's more, as described above, if cultural operators can create awareness of the funding resources for their communities, they will be able to better equip their organisations and artists to contribute as tourism stakeholders within their local communities (e.g., through expressive storytelling and other art-forms that remove language as a tourism barrier).

CASE STUDY

Fundacion Uxio Novoneyra (FUN), Spain & Municipio de vila do Porto, Santa Maria, Açores, Portugal

FUN mentored a choreographer and the city council of Vila do Porto on Santa Maria Island in the development of two European Commission funding candidatures (results pending).

The mentorship was necessary because, as described above, non-urban areas lack the human resources and knowledge to apply for European Commission funds in their current design. With the support of Creative Europe's I-Portunus mobility (a small-scale EU fund available to artists), Vila do Porto developed the Anti-Bullying Movement Project, which is a cooperation project that uses contemporary dance to disrupt bullying in underrepresented, at-risk, and multi-barriered youth populations. www.cm-viladoporto.pt, http://uxionovoneyra.com/en/

4. Launch skill development resources for local citizens/stakeholders: Locals care dearly for their communities, ancestry, culture, and landscape but can be unprepared to make use of the best strategies to forge local pressure to adequately take care of their territories. Moreover, if municipalities feel pressure from local citizens, change will transpire. Skill development for local citizens can take place in a variety of forms but within the blended tourism and art and culture context, this could result in training sessions where locals learned improved skills to tell their own stories, to protect or develop their cultural heritage, or to more adeptly sell their own products.

5. **Balance instruction for students:** For local citizens to understand the depth of their own identities (not misplaced myths peddled by over-enthusiastic tour guides), curriculums should be augmented to reflect local ancestry, culture, and landscape, so children and youth have a more sensitive understanding of their home communities. With more comprehensive and inclusive curriculums for children and youth, we can advance local identity and traditional knowledge.

6. **Up-skill tour guides:** Our group felt that there was a propensity for tour guides to propagate myths as opposed to the incorporation of local traditional knowledge, which can be more transformative than science for tourists looking for a meaningful story. Heritage experts within our group were leery about the tendency for over-enthusiastic tour guides to over-embellish the local culture so much so that a quality tourist experience could be lost. Furthermore, we suggest that tour guides should rely on chronology as opposed to unnecessary date references because we found that the tour guide has been transformed into a form of a local, modern storyteller--perhaps a new profession. Investing in up-skilling tour guides will provide locals with greater professional expertise and create much needed jobs in non-urban areas. Furthermore, tour guides are an essential component of a quality visitor experience because if a guide is able to incorporate traditional knowledge in addition to an understanding for the protection of the environment and sharing of local stories all within the tourist experience, a visitor will be more apt to stay for three hours instead of thirty minutes. And, a better quality tourist experience benefits locals and visitors alike! In addition, as described above regarding the augmentation of course curriculum, up-skilling tour guides has the potential to also contribute to the preservation of local identity and traditional knowledge.

Actions for communication, visibility, branding and marketing

1. **Sustain:** We encourage local, regional, national, and EU local policy makers to foster sustainability in tourism that benefits all citizens (visitors and locals alike) because tourists have the potential to make valuable im-

pacts in communities, but the possibility for a sustainable tourist approach may require cross sectoral incentives (as described above). Locals, and we also believe, visitors themselves, do not want to be mere "takers" in a local community and environment.

2. **Diversify:** It was imperative for our group to identify ways to diversify tourism experiences – especially in small communities – for example to disperse tourists and deter crowding (e.g., Sweden (https://visitsweden.com/) advertises the general forest landscape as opposed to a specific area). Moreover, variance in what communities promote diversifies the stories and experiences of a place, which prevents the construction of stereotypes, myths, and problematic tourist experiences. Diversity can also be applicable to calendaring, in that we hope and encourage local communities to diversify their festival calendar, which consequently will encourage diversification in tourists visits and the dispersion of peak points and times (see below).

3. **Digitise storytelling:** A savvy method for dispersing tourists is the digitisation of storytelling. However, we stress that digitisation of cultural experiences and heritage sites should never intend to replace in-person tourism. Digitisation can, however, augment existing tourist experiences by assisting in increasing the scope and scale of experiences – not to mention work as a mechanism for distributing tourists across saturated areas. In particular, big data could be used to monitor audience and visitor patterns to disperse tourists (if needed) by showing peak points and places. Digitisation can also be a method for augmenting the stories of artists and locals (through short clips or videos that could be connected to AirBnB bookings, which the municipalities could commission local artists to create). Informed artists' videos especially have the capacity to educate tourists and inspire their care for the local community and landscape. With care, we can generate respect.

4. **Democratise communications:** All levels of government must ensure that indigenous people, locals, minorities, and cultural operators are stakeholders in the communication, visibility, branding, and marketing process.

CASE STUDY

Festival of Walks 2019, Maribor, Slovenia

The city of Maribor has organised more than 30 walks in the streets, underground, and markets of the city allowing locals to tell stories and legends of their town (including "crazy stories"). The goal of the project is to deconstruct the clichés and stereotypes about Maribor. In addition to its ability to reconstruct the identity of a place and a community, this kind of project, if applied to other rural areas, could assist in the dispersion of visitors away from main attractions whilst simultaneously nudging them in the direction of rich local life.

The festival ensures that those that cherish the city guide visitors through "dusty niches and unspoken stories!" by introducing tourists to the diversity of Maribor – "its medieval and bourgeois faces, strong industrial and labour legacy, creative urbanity, […] and soft hills."

https://www.rajzefiber.si/eng/blog/festival-of-walks-2019

5. **Connect:** We recommend connecting global SDGs with the creative and tourism sectors – as per Agenda 2030. Perhaps, as described above through education, training, or more accessible and inclusive funding initiatives.

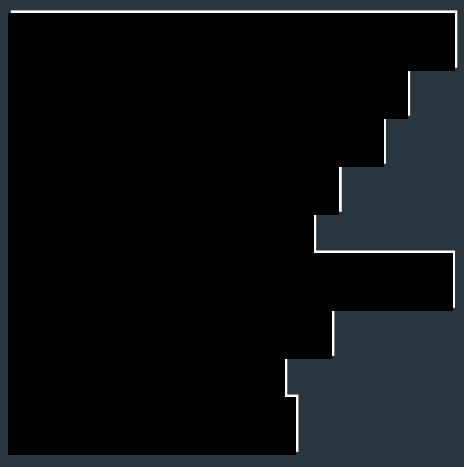
Actions for accessibility & infrastructure

1. **Recognise both hard and soft infrastructure:** Infrastructure incentives (such as garbage bins and transportation) are given funding preference in comparison to soft infrastructure strategies (such as educational opportunities). Ultimately, non-urban areas need both, and soft infrastructure is often forgotten but is equally as important as hard infrastructure.

2. **Democratise planning:** Once again, we reiterate that indigenous people, locals, minorities, and cultural operators are all equally important stakeholders in infrastructure as they are all involved in the communication, visibility, branding, and marketing process of a local community. As such, indigenous people, locals, minorities, and cultural operators, should be included in the infrastructure and spatial planning process, which will ensure that art and culture are a part of the dialogue about infrastructure and territory.

3. **Promote equitable access:** To promote equitable access to local sites for local people, we recommend local, regional, national, and EU level policy makers prioritise seasonal, discounted rates for locals during off-peak times. This creates added value for the education of local children and youth, not to mention that sharing of traditional knowledge through all community levels through the synchronisation of education. Locals will keep the visitor sites informed of their stories and traditional knowledge; equally, as the visitor sites will keep the locals informed of ancestral and historical knowledge.

DIALOGUE GROUP



CHAPTER 3

TERRITORIES AFFECTED BY DEPOPULATION

Writers:
[redacted]

This chapter is organised around premises outlined in the UN Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals. In particular it addresses:

- **The target 11A** *'Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning'* associated to the SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities.

- **The target 10.3** '*Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard'* associated to the SDG 10 Reduced inequality.

- **The target 16.7** *'Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels'* associated to the SDG 16 Peace Justice and Strong Institutions.

The two overall premises are:

01	***The intrinsic value of culture and art. Being conscious also of the importance of cultural diversity for innovation and for sustainable development.***
02	***The starting points for culture and art initiatives should be based on positive narratives of the rural population. This is supported by research in rural areas.***

Guide to reading this chapter: The chapter is organised in accordance with the following three questions:

A **How to work better with arts and culture in rural areas?**

B **How to increase cooperation/interaction locally and between urban and rural populations through art and culture?**

C **How to provide sustainable culture-based developments for empty buildings and non-used infrastructures?**

Question A)

How to work better with arts and culture in rural areas?

A1: Lesser funds are available for cultural projects in non-central urban areas. This fact is true in many EU Member States. It is also true that the lack of national funding is partially counterbalanced in some countries by using EU rural and regional development programs for cultural activities and investments. Furthermore, salaries in cultural institutions in rural areas tend to be lower than for cultural managers in main urban areas. The cost of living might also be perceived to be lower, but the higher (and rising due to CO2-pricing) mobility costs and time requirements for developing cultural projects and technical cost because of lack local competences are often not considered. Culture cannot solve all the problems in non-urban areas, but it is a change-maker as we know from many (difficult) urban quarters (Sylvia Amann).

Conclusion: More funding from all policy levels directed at cultural and arts projects including informal groups of activists and artists in rural areas is needed.

Recommendation A1: Advocate for arts and culture at the heart of all EU policy. This includes broadening the existing EU funds to include cultural financing in rural areas and creating appropriate funds to support cultural life in less densely populated areas.

Rationale: There is not enough understanding of the importance of culture and art at the EU, the national and the local level.

Specific recommendation: The Commission has to promote research and evaluation projects to collect data about the importance of culture and art for rural quality of life, for participation in public debates and decision-making processes and for bridging sustainable rural-urban interactions. Data should include qualitative measurements of the intrinsic value of culture and arts for sustainable rural development.

CASE STUDY

ASTRA museum, Sibiu, Romania

In November 2018, ASTRA museum organised an educational programme entitled “This is what I know about my village!” in 3 culturally underprivileged villages of the Sibiu county: Nou Român, Valea Viilor, Cop?a Mare. During this programme, co-financed by the Administration of National Cultural Fund, 60 school children were given general notions regarding cultural heritage and were supported in documenting the defining traits of their villages in a mix of real field research processes and games. They received research kits, which they used in interviewing people from their villages, in drawing a map of the tangible cultural heritage elements they considered to be defining for their area and in preparing a photo exhibition.

« The children attended practical craftsmanship workshops and, as a final activity, they were brought to the city, where they attended guided tours in the city center and in two museums. The fact that the program had a great influence on them was perceivable later on. For instance, during a brunch organised in Nou Român in the spring of 2019, some of the children proudly presented their village to the participants, wearing the "local guide" t-shirts that they received at the end of the programme. In 2015, ASTRA museum was part of the European Cultural Diversity Hub, an EEA Grants project which contributed to the development of human resource capacities in the Târnvioara village by facilitating access to professional training in traditional crafts (woodwork, metalwork , house restoring, etc.).

The museum supported the project promoter (Gilding Association of Sibiu) in organising the workshops, during which 70 local people completely repaired five house facades from their village in accordance with their local tradition.

https://www.fonduri-diversitate.ro/en/large-projects_doc_98_european-cultural-diversity-hub_pg_0.htm

A2: With the EU aiming to achieve a more balanced territorial development more attention is paid to non-urban, rural and peri-urban areas in recent years. The spaces outside the main urban areas in the EU tend to have smaller and fewer cultural institutions and related educational opportunities than the big cities. The numbers of artists and creative entrepreneurs, as well as the size of audiences, are usually smaller (Sylvia Amann).

Conclusion: More locally anchored arts and cultural institutions and projects are needed.

Recommendation A2: Create long-term solutions for arts and culture in rural areas.

Rationale: Creating arts and cultural institutions and projects takes longer in rural areas because of distances, less density, diffusion, and capacity issues in establishing networks of (financial) partners. This is not necessarily a disadvantage, but it should be taken into consideration in funding programmes and institution building.

Specific recommendations: Involve local and national competencies, including young people, in arts and cultural institutional and funding programme building. Take advantage of place-based knowledge across arts and cultural disciplines and anchor the decision processes at the local level including the consideration of time for consolidation. Make sure national and international experiences are shared and taken into consideration in decision making processes. Create platforms at the EU level for national and local networking and knowledge exchange. Support existing local networks (e.g., music schools) as multiplying factors in the cultural landscape of rural areas. Facilitate access to cultural funding, e.g., by offering better possibilities of consultation.

CASE STUDY

Cultural cooperation, Midt-and Vestjutland, Denmark

The organisation is rather unique and might inspire others. The co-operation is financed through a system, where municipalities pay by the amount of inhabitants, and the institutions pay by number of employees + size of public funding. Through the corporation's workshops and seminars even the smallest institutions get the opportunity to send employees to seminars and workshops, and the smallest institutions can be a part of interesting cultural activities. In the Cultural Region we have different examples of concrete projects.

> Academy for volunteers: Most cultural institutions in rural areas are struggling with funding, and therefore they depend on volunteers. A museum has developed courses for volunteers so they can participate in the presentation of the field. Furthermore they train employees being responsible for volunteers. Rural forum / Nyland Forum: A 3-day meeting held in 2017 and 2018 focusing on Rural areas and Art. Rural Forum was developed with inspiration from the European City of culture Aarhus 2017-project "Rethink the Village". And on a more strategic level all the 19 municipalities, which were cooperating in ECoC2017 are now continuing to cooperate.

A3. It is a challenge for cultural operators, companies related to corporate social responsibilities and artists to create an overview of existing competences and disciplines and therefore there is a risk that local anchored culture and projects become isolated events rather than elements of coherent efforts to let arts and culture be one of the drivers for economic and demographic development in rural areas.

Conclusion: There is a need for cultural programmes that (a) support the existing cultural clusters and (b) create new cultural clusters within and across artistic disciplines.

Recommendation A3: Make applications more accessible for local stakeholders and change-makers. Existing financial grant schemes should be revised and simplified.

Rationale: Art projects provide a sufficient space for a certain experimentation on solutions, approaches and in the long-term might effectively support local empowerment. Art projects are introducing to the locality of non-urban territories something different or unknown as a way of bringing community together. Such creative approaches are inspiring inhabitants to continue organising gatherings and activities. Vital cultural areas are attractive for creative companies and entrepreneurs. Arts clusters will attract also younger artists and cultural operators to rural areas.

Specific recommendation: Provide start-up funding or financial incentives to support the preparation of projects (e.g., micro-grants). Reopen the possibility of having volunteering hours for co-funding in the EU creative programme. Increase the co-funding rate for volunteering hours in cultural and artistic projects. The criteria of co-financing could also be changed for the projects that pay specific attention to the rural areas (e.g., instead of 50 % or 60 % from the EU and the rest from local funds, this share could be moved and increased till 70 or 80 %).

CASE STUDY

Creative Scotland, Place Partnership Programme

Within the breadth of CREATIVE SCOTLAND's support, there are a range of creative models which represent good practice in cultural development across non-urban areas. The primary of these is the 'Place Partnership Programme'. In short, this programme is a model of funding and collaboration between Creative Scotland and local partners to support the development of the arts, screen and creative industries, with a focus of working in non-urban areas.

The programme supports local artists, organisations and non-cultural actors to come together to spark ideas that promote collaborative working, build capacity and ultimately deliver creative activity which responds to the distinct opportunities and challenges within different localities. CREATIVE SCOTLAND has supported this approach in sixteen regions, twelve of which have been in non-urban areas. CREATIVE SCOTLAND has interesting results to share. This includes the difficulty and value of forming peer networks in non-urban areas, and the major developments, models and indeed new bodies that have been established through the approach.

https://www.creativescotland.com

Question B)

How to increase cooperation/interaction locally and between urban and rural populations through art and culture?

B1: Culture cannot solve all the problems in non-urban areas, but it is a change-maker as we know from many (difficult) urban quarters. A sustainable economic policy for non-urban areas also needs to be in place in order to avoid further depopulation – especially of the younger generation. The cultural and creative industries including the Creative economy are elements of this challenge. Digital accessibility for rural areas is another (Sylvia Amann). On the one hand, there is a stereotype that in rural areas, which is that people are not culturally educated, but this is untrue. On the other hand, there are parts of the population who are highly educated in terms of arts and culture, but who do not receive high-level cultural offerings in these areas.

Conclusion: Local authorities, local and national media should challenge the stereotypical discourse toward rural culture.

Recommendation B1: Communicate rural life and places as a source of inspiration for contemporary arts and culture and vice versa.

Rationale: The relationship between the rural and the urban is dynamic rather than static. Increased focus on communicating the dynamic relationship through art and culture will direct attention to the attractiveness of rural settings as places for young families to settle. Opportunities for financial stability and growth given by the Creative economy, might prevent non-urban areas from depopulating.

Specific recommendations: Create interdisciplinary hubs and a special programme for operators and artists operating in rural areas which includes the media. Facilitate art educational programmes at a higher level in rural areas. Support programmes which merge traditional arts and crafts with subculture innovation and contemporary arts. Create and encourage good practices of cooperation between the local communities and artists. Create marketing platforms for cultural events that attract au-

diences to travel to non-urban areas. Use cultural offerings to attract the young generation to return to rural areas, keeping in mind the age and class differences.

CASE STUDY

Inland

INLAND - Campo Adentro: arts, agriculture and countryside, focuses on the economics of art and land, organised utopia, and the ways we interact with the biosphere. The project functions as an open space for land-based collaborations, economies and communities-of-practice as a substrate for post-Contemporary Art cultural forms. Taking different forms in different European countries, INLAND Europa publishes books, produces shows, and makes cheese. INLAND participated also in Culture Crops – BtO 2019, contributing to the debate about creating structures capable of proposing other forms of peer-to-peer participation.

https://inland.org

B2: There is a lack of cross-generational cooperation and intergenerational dialogue, especially when audiences are ageing and there can be an unwanted gap. Formal cultural training programmes and education do not target mobilisation of this group. There is a lack of strategic thinking about how to bring rural and urban areas together and a lack of systemic programs, solutions and tools to educate and support regional leaders, so that they can then encourage local animators to act and respond to social needs associated with intergenerational challenges.

Conclusion: Village assembly halls, cultural centres, empty abandoned farm buildings and unused land should be predestined for educational and integrative purposes and as intergenerational hubs.

Recommendation B2: Support educational programmes that direct attention to commonplace barriers for under-represented (distant and rural/ suburban) areas, thereby raising awareness and leading to problem solving programmes.

Rationale: Vital rural communities depend on the existence and maintenance of different types of local meeting places. These include formal meeting places for programmed activities, ad hoc informal meeting places for locals to just have a chat and third places for cultural gathering and learning. Studies point out that the actual combination of such places in rural settings is a strong marker for place-based identity and for social mobilisation across age, gender, interests, and socio-economic strands.

Specific recommendations: Allocate spaces for the creation and formation of different types of social meetings in rural contexts. Create spaces for artist-talks programmes. Understanding the art process might support better understanding of the local community and the development of how (both) such processes are fragile and how inspiring they can be.

CASE STUDY

Colourful Bus Stops, Oleśnica, Poland

This is a bottom-up visual art project called “Colorful bus stops”, Community of Oleśnica, Poland. Idea by artist and local leaders about social regeneration of the bus stop. Adults involved in refurbishing it on a technical level, common decision on visual project, all age groups of inhabitants involved in the painting, led by a professional artist. Intergenerational aspect, taking responsibility for the public space and aesthetic. Till 2019 a snow-ball effect – inspired other 18 villages to create their own unique colorful bus stops. In 2018 this project received a title of one of twelve Best practices of Innovative Audience Development in the report od “Economia Creativa”. Link to the report: https://nck.pl/upload/2018/05/cultural-heritage-innovative-audience-development-best-practices-by-economia-creativa-15-march-20184.pdf

B3: The category of a "city-centrism" – a desire to implement and "import" urban culture in rural areas (where there is already culture). Symmetrical migrations across Europe of youngsters from rural areas towards the cities and a reverse migration of adult residents of cities towards non-urban areas are causing fewer opportunities for non-urban areas to culturally grow. Raising awareness is crucial in order to understand how the integrated locality might influence its own strategic development priorities. This process of raising awareness has to be initiated, sometimes if not by the community itself, then by the enlightened processes of tutors implementing programmes dedicated to rural areas.

Conclusion: Investment in improving social and cultural skills is needed for a structural change.

Recommendation B3: Invest in capacity building projects which realise horizontal competencies acquisition. Analyse the changing conditions of implementing cultural activities across generations. Also, diagnose and research the locality in order to respond more effectively to the needs of civil society.

Rationale: Being united and integrated, being networked, gives (social) power to setting the right priorities. Art and culture can release certain emotions and deliver aesthetic experiences, which awaken social power and enable underrepresented groups disadvantaged by, e.g., mobility issues, lack of funds, underdeveloped skills or lack of experience of the arts.

Specific recommendations: Recognise the specificities of cultural events in rural areas (compared to events organised in urban areas) and the importance of sustainability, involving local communities, and educating visitors (respect for environment, behavior vis-a-vis local communities). Support publicity like the local newspapers and social media writing about and reporting from cultural events in rural areas. Improve interactions between local actors from different sectors. Support art festivals in rural areas to access tourism flow while maintaining sustainability. A suggestion is also to divide the local cultural events for/by amateurs and recognise them as specific traditions to be maintained

and to be distinguished from professional art events in order to give them the specific support they need.

CASE STUDY

Broumov Region Development Agency, Broumov, Czech Republic

The non-profit organisation Broumov Region Development Agency was founded in 2004 with the intention to be the initiator of local development. Despite the expectations, try to bring an ambitious program, to return to the Broumov region, hope for the future. There was no plan what exactly to do. The first project was to establish a tourist information site, to support the development of tourism in the Broumov region and this was soon followed by a desire to revive the devastated Broumov monastery. Firstly Broumov Region Development Agency rented the monastery garden, where it began to organise the first cultural events. The number of activities, projects and employees gradually increased. The agency then started to cooperate with various organisations in the region, within the Czech Republic and abroad and it started to operate sightseeing tours in the monastery. All efforts culminated in 2013 by obtaining a quarter-billion CZK subsidy from the European Union, which gave the Broumov Region Development Agency the opportunity to start with reconstruction of the whole monastery garden and renew the historical skittle house and the gardener's house, which it transformed into the gallery of contemporary art. New multifunctional hall was built in the upper part of the garden and the big part of the monastery itself was revitalised as well. Since that time The Broumov Monastery Educational and Cultural Center, which is one of the main pillars of the organisation's activities, operates in the new premises. Through this long-lasting process, an important learning is that day-to-day patient work, although sometimes it looks slow and fruitless, is the best solution and in the long term it will deliver the best results.
https://www.changemakers.com/node306408/entries/agency-development-broumov-region

Question C)

How to provide sustainable culture-based developments for empty buildings and non-used infrastructures?

C1: Young people are leaving for the urban centers and so are many women with higher education and people with a higher rate of cultural consumption. There is considerable depopulation of some areas outside the cities, leaving behind empty buildings and infra-structure (Sylvia Amann).

Conclusion: Arts and cultural initiatives should reanimate vital meeting places which could attract younger people and families to settle in rural areas.

Recommendation C1: Support owners/stakeholders who encourage arts and culture to animate empty buildings creatively as local public meeting places and infrastructure.

Rationale: Along with the loss of population, workplaces and private and public services, rural areas have lost many meeting places for social interaction and community building locally. Revitalisation of empty buildings through arts and culture will create different types of meeting places which support community building and enhance quality of everyday life. Searching for solutions and access to abandoned places (not only buildings), through art and culture as elements of communication and providing additional methods to increase the residents' awareness of the creative use of places as alternatives to their primary purpose.

Specific recommendation: Specific support should be given to arts and cultural projects that encourage younger artists to settle in a rural area for a period of, for example, 3-12 months and to engage with the local rural community and landscape as part of their cultural project. Such projects could be, for example, artist-in-residence programmes. Other projects could be short-term artistic residency projects for theater companies, cultural workshops and public art involving local traditions and crafts and subculture and educational arts and culture institutions. The

inspiration could also come from the Hackerspace, Makers Movement and Resartis, which could be implemented in the cultural sector – especially when trying to find new goals for abandoned spaces.

CASE STUDY

Kunstkollektivet 8B, Odsherred, Denmark

This is an artist-in-residence run by voluntary locals. Village people created a non-profit organisation and bought the empty buildings from the closed down grocer. With support from funding organisations and voluntary work, the building was restored to provide workshops and studios. The studios have high quality equipment for textile and ceramic artists. The house was restored also with five single rooms and shared bathrooms, kitchen, arts library and lounge. Around 20 artists a year from all over the world come to Kunstkollektivet 8B to stay for 2-3 months to experiment and develop their art.

The artists are inspired by the local landscape, nature and culture and their interpretations and inspirations are built into their works. This gives new meaning to the locality and local people see the village in a new way. The local volunteers running Kunstkollektivet 8B arrange in cooperation with the artists in residence artist-talks, seminars and exhibitions and send out specific invitations to the high schools and folk high schools nearby, so that the younger generation get the experience of a strong and inspiring international culture and arts environment in their rural locality.

https://kunstkollektivet8b.dk/en/home-3/

C2: Empty buildings and villages left behind have a negative impact on perceptions of the potential development of a region. In many areas, the distribution of elderly-young and male-female is no longer balanced (Sylvia Amann).

Conclusion: Cultural narratives about empty buildings provide sustainable ground for rebuilding and re-circulation.

Recommendation C2: Empty buildings in rural areas should be classified as cultural by the locals and arts professionals together, from the point of view of protection, maintenance and possibilities for new use.

Rationale: What may just be another empty building for people passing by is a cultural monument for locals. Sustainable re-circulation of buildings materialises into art which can in turn give voice to the locals left behind, by reframing the narratives and identity of the place.

Specific recommendations: Cultural operations should be decentralised so that skills are developed at a local level. These include, for example, learning about getting permissions to put on a show, licenses and zoning regulations. Cultural operators should be trained in cooperation with local people about the sustainable inclusion of place-based narratives and the reanimation of physical infrastructure, i.e., buildings. Cultural operators should be trained in strengthening local participation, ”building bridges” through debates and supporting cooperation between stakeholders from various sectors and industries. Support decentralised forms of cultural organisation that enables the creation of horizontal networks of local partnerships, both in non-urban and urban areas.

CASE STUDY

CC Local Point, Viana do Castelo, Portugal

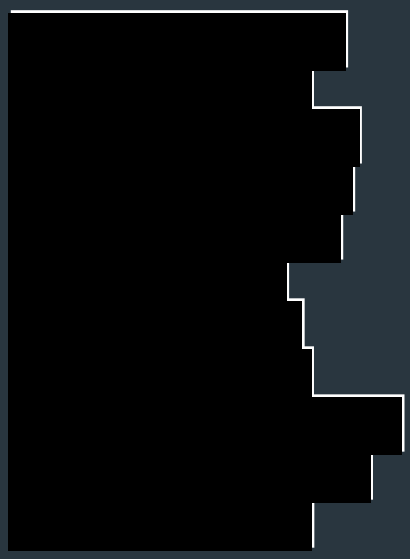
“CC Local Point” is a project led by D10 and Creative Commons Portugal that aims to clarify basic copyright law and its relation

« to CC licensing, and to promote the use of CC licenses as an alternative option for creative practice and business model development. The purpose is to offer community free legal advice and to promote activities around CC Licenses and Open Business Models.

CC Local Point has an objective at a wider scale to spread the word about open licenses and to create contact points in other creative hubs so they can reinforce their role as problem solvers for artists, makers and creative professionals.

http://www.dinamo10.net/en/cc-local-point

DIALOGUE GROUP



Conclusion

This report contains over fifty recommendations for action. Running across EU policy; national and sub-national frameworks; funding mechanisms and criteria; and models of community engagement, we have identified many positive steps which could be taken. To reinforce the potential value of taking such steps, we have also included diverse case studies from across Europe. Although operating in different contexts and adopting their own distinct approach, each of these case studies demonstrates both the important role of culture in non-urban areas and the results of commitment, imagination and support at the local level.

It is recognised that this report is contributing to a much wider policy discourse and these recommendations will inevitably require further refinement, however, it is these principles of commitment, imagination and support which we believe should remain fixed. This report consistently identifies a need for a greater commitment to culture within non-urban areas across nations and at different levels of government, including the European Union. The discussion and recommendations draw out the need for, and models of, imaginative policy and collaboration which maximises resources and promotes the exchange of skills and ideas. And finally, it calls for commitment, including a very clear need for a greater level of dedicated resource to support the development of culture in non-urban areas. If these principles can be embedded, we have no doubt that culture can play a more active and positive role in non-urban areas, bringing significant cultural, social and economic benefits across the European Union.

APPENDIX

OTHER EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES

Other Examples of Good Practices

Throughout our 2-day discussion, we have highlighted a number of additional best practices that we believe could be spring-boards for further development.

1. **ECOC | 2019 MATERA, ITALY:** Temporary Citizens and the Marketing of Temporary Passports: Process allowed visitors to receive a temporary passport for a year to make them feel fully part of the community. https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/en/processes/temporary-citizen.html

2. **POLYPHONY PROJECT, UKRAINE:** Preserves and presents living musical folklore of Ukrainian villages by recording elder ladies' voices and then cataloging songs online using geospatial technology. https://www.polyphonyproject.com/en

3. **LIVING WRECKS - THE MARINE LIFE OF SCAPA FLOW, STROMNESS, UNITED KINGDOM:** Presents both the wrecks from both World Wars present in the bay as well as the local wildlife that have developed in the wrecks. An online exhibition is also available to the public. https://www.stromnessmuseum.org.uk/whatson/online/living-wrecks-marine-life-scapa-flow

4. **PEARSE MUSEUM, RATHFARNHAM, IRELAND:** Holds many different events and exhibitions throughout winter that allow the museum to have a life-line within the local community in the low-season. http://pearsemuseum.ie/

5. **EUROPEAN HISTORIC HOUSES ASSOCIATION, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM:** Many of their business models involve opening the houses' doors to the public for guided tours, exhibitions, concerts, etc. http://www.europeanhistorichouses.eu/

6. **SKARA BRAE, ORKNEY, UNITED KINGDOM:** Built its visitor center outside of the World Heritage Conservation area with a cafeteria, shop,

and museum. https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/skara-brae/

7. **THE MUNICIPALITY OF TRAENA, NORWAY:** Re-thinking tourism in an interesting way because instead of referencing tourists as visitors, they re-frame non-residents as "super," "part-time," "short-term," "temporary," or "one night locals". http://tenktraena.no/

8. **GOTLAND & FARÖ ISLANDS, SWEDEN:** The municipality works towards establishing sustainable transport and garbage collection systems that benefit both visitors and residents. They also support cultural activities for permanent residents during off-peak season.

9. **MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF CRATO, BRAZIL:** In this city of 130,000 inhabitants, the municipality changed the opening hours and installed a night museum activity.

10. **RURAL AREAS IN ITALY (ABRUZZO, SICILY):** Have benefited from tourism development that was based on the involvement of local production (Frattura) and local involvement (Agrigento – the garden of Kolymbethra).

11. **KATERINA SEDA, A CZECH REPUBLIC ARTIST:** Implemented an arts project related to the normal life of the local population, the UNES-CO company. https://www.unes-co.cz/en/home/

12. **ATLAS ARTS ON THE ISLE OF SKYE, SCOTLAND:** Combines contemporary practice with heritage and engages people. https://atlasarts.org.uk/projects/stools-martin-campbell-ewan-thomson/

13. **NORDIC COUNTRIES & SAMI PEOPLE:** The reflection on the Nordic countries about further dialogue with the Sami communities since the proposed question interacts with questions of power, influence, and voice (e.g., Laponia, World Heritage in Swedish Lapland). https://laponia.nu/

14. **LEVSOS GEOPARK:** Provides guided tours for migrants in order to enhance their knowledge of the places of arts and culture.

15. **ENCC NETWORK ACTIVITIES:** Created and disseminated the Crowdsourced Manifesto, Culture for Shared, Smart, Innovative Territories, which was presented on 16 March 2020 with joint recommendations provided by CAE, IETM and TEH as the 'Beyond the Urban' webinar. https://encc.eu/activities/projects/working-group-territorial-development

16. **THE PLACE STANDARD, SCOTLAND:** Is a tool to structure conversations about places including physical infrastructures and social aspects. https://www.placestandard.scot/

17. **BORGHI PIÚ BELLI D'ITALIA, ITALY:** Network of small centres with great artistic and cultural heritage.

18. **ECOC | AARHUS 2017, DENMARK & ECOC | LEEUWARDEN 2018, NETHERLANDS:** The cultural tourism approaches of the European Capitals of Culture Aarhus 2017 and Leeuwarden 2018.

19. ***ECOC | 2019 PLOVDIV: RegionalE:*** A cluster of projects in the framework of Plovdiv 2019 for the preservation and presentation of local culture. http://plovdiv2019.eu/en/platform/fuse/122-regionale

20. **SHEEP VIEW 360, FAROE ISLANDS:** To address an important gap of google street views, Islanders provided their sheep with cameras to record streets, causeways, and bridges. Thanks to the sheep, Faroe Islands now has google street view. https://visitfaroeislands.com/sheepview360/

21. **ROSEN&RÜBEN, HILDESHEIM, GERMANY:** (roses & beets) is used to promote culture as a cross-sectorial element through advisory services and workshops in addition to funding, technical, and PR supports. https://www.rosenundrueben.de

22. **WILD ATLANTIC WAY, IRELAND:** A coastal road of 2,500 kilometers that allows visitors to avoid main attractions in an effort to discover the country through intelligent signage. https://www.wildatlanticway.com/home

23. **REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL, SOUTH EAST EUROPE:** Regionally owned and led cooperation framework offering small scale fundings (between €20,000-50,000) and a simplified 2-step application. https://www.rcc.int/

24. **XPO CO. CLARE, IRELAND** housed in a repurposed post office in the rural village of Kilnaboy, XPO is a multifaceted, place based, artistic programme, engaging artists and local residents for over a decade. https://www.facebook.com/xpofolkradio/

25. **THE FESTIVAL OF REGIONS, AUSTRIA** takes place every two years in locations outside of the urban centers and cultural hubs in Upper Austria. The Festival aims to establish a dialog between the local populations and local, regional, and international artists https://fdr.at/en/

26. **WORKHOUSE UNION, CALLAN, IRELAND** works with artists, designers, architects and crafts-people to develop projects examining housing, civic infrastructure and the commons, engaging people with the spaces and places we live in. https://callanworkhouseunion.com/about/

27. **THE MUSTARINDA ASSOCIATION** located in Hyrynsalmi, Kainuu province Finland works towards a post-fossil culture by combining scientific and artistic knowledge and experiential activity https://www.mustarinda.fi/program.

28. **RIVERS OF EUROPE (2014)** was an international artistic, civic and educational initiative, which responded to the question of the present and the future meaning of rivers. http://riversofeurope.org

29. **ECOC I KAUNAS 2022**, “Contemporary Neighbourhoods” project: The main focus is community participation in the creative journey towards

disclosing or strengthening the identity of each of the 25 neighbourhoods of Kaunas District Municipality (the sub-urban territory around Kaunas City) and revealing the local history, stories, traditions and highlights. This goal is being achieved through creative place-making activities carried out with the members of the community, artists and specialists from different fields, „Kaunas 2022“ team members. One of the special features of the project is residencies of artists (chosen by the community based on the survey) in the local communities to work with them directly and help each community implement the project in an artistic manner, creating a unique result. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SciSQmJkTPI