

PERFORMING ARTS IN RESIDENCE

New european models for education, creativity and development

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Summary

Arts in Residencies are recent models of artistic and cultural enterprises that develop their identity around a particular place, combining both the characteristics of a working place for artists and cultural education centres for local communities. Performing Arts have been underrepresented for various reasons. But in the Performing Arts field these phenomena are particularly interesting, because it offers new creative and educational opportunities, both for the professionals as well as for the communities in which the Residencies are based. Groups of artists, educators and cultural operators have been establishing Performing Arts in Residence (PAiR) in old theaters, but also in buildings previously used for other destinations, such as farms, factories, warehouses, former schools, military barracks, both in rural areas as well as in the city centers, or in more industrial metropolitan areas.

The project intends to create a PAiR network aimed at:

- expanding the opportunities for performing artists to create European productions, which include training and innovative models for continuous education and informal learning
- developing together actions to meet the specific needs of communities and artists;
- testing new practices of non-formal learning;
- experiencing new organizational and pedagogical approaches.

The project is aimed at the professionals staff such us: artists, trainers, cultural operators involving them in:

- International meetings;
- Workshops/ seminars / colloquia.

The project intends to achieve the following results:

- list of best practices developed by partners in order to propose guidelines for policy makers
- establish a permanent network of PAiR, with a website (platform for partners to share projects and disseminate results and outcomes).

Rationale

Three main issues are the major concern of all partners for establishing the learning partnership-project:

1. If we want to develop the European dimension in the performing arts, we need places and space to create European productions. Until today residence programmes for artists are focusing on visual arts, literature and music; dance to a certain extent. Drama and Performance Art are underrepresented.
2. New forms and intercultural practices of Dance, Drama and Performance Art need innovation in training. New forms in content and training modules on the level of continuous education are needed, if we are speaking about European / International artists, which need to prepare themselves to open their system. Theatre language is not anymore a national idiom.
3. The development of new art forms needs to be connected with the public and local communities and considered as one of main pillar of informal learning system.

The motivations leading up PAiR experiences are obviously very diverse from case to case, but everywhere the objective is to create an alternative model that goes beyond the activities of a traditional theatre, a performing art school, or a theatre company. The artists inhabit these place producing a variety of activities, spanning from education to artistic productions, engaging the local communities and visiting artists. The focus is not simply the public presentation of an artistic result, but the sharing of an artistic process as a whole, the research and development of new methodologies for production and education, the experimentation of cultural approaches that stimulate the development of the local communities, especially in rural areas. Among the beneficiaries of the PAiR are both the emerging artists /young companies that need nurturing conditions to develop their professional status and local communities which are enriched by artistic and cultural processes that occur on its territory. The PAiR serve different purposes and are in the middle of the crossroad between vocational training, life long learning, creative and artistic production, cultural

management. They contribute in many ways to the start-up of new companies and emerging artists and to cultural and artistic development of a territory.

Most importantly, generally the PAiR experiment new relations between artists and spectators, promoting activities that engage the public participation in different phases of the creative process. These initiatives, which can have many different forms and targets, contribute to the education and development both of the artists and of the spectators. They offer new creative models for training and educational practices at different levels and in different contexts. Differently from the visual arts or literature, the performing artists need a community of spectators to express their work. Often the community becomes the inspiration and focus of the work, connecting to various aspects of social life, offering services to the traditional educational institutions and establishing collaborations and synergies that create new professional opportunities, exploring the spaces of everyday life like narrative spaces. In some cases, PAiR represent the only cultural stronghold, that compensates to the lack of social and cultural public initiatives.

The great vitality and diversity of the PAiR produces a plurality of practices, which have not yet been studied and analyzed. Not even the tools to monitor the results have been yet developed. But there is a growing interest towards the Performing Artists Residencies. Even in the economic sector, there are researchers and experts observing with great attention the innovative capacity that these can induce in different areas of a territory. It is thus very important to carry on a survey at a European level, aimed at creating a permanent network between some interesting experiences in different European countries, promoting the mobility and circulation of ideas, trying to identify the strengths and weakness, the common points, to disseminate results, projects and best practices.

Of particular interest for this projects is the analysis of the contact points between the artistic process taking places in the PAiR and the different sector of civil society, the relation with local communities and governments in all its possible declinations, with the educational, social and economic sector, focusing on the role such organizations can play for the development of a territory in general.

We can thus articulate the projects in two main areas: one concerning the relation between the artistic process and the performance artists (actors, dancers, educators and trainers, directors, choreographers, dramaturges, designers, cultural operators and organizers), and one concerning the relation between the artistic processes and the audience, the spectators, the community to which the artistic process is directed. Particularly a very crucial issue is the impact on disadvantaged groups: the population in the prisons, the people with disability, the immigrant communities who can take advantage of workshops, seminars etc. Besides providing very stimulating creative possibilities and enriching human experiences, these activities offer important opportunities cross-cultural exchanges, opening the community to minorities that otherwise would risk exclusion. In all these cases, the individuals and communities taking part in such activities, become themselves protagonists of the creative process. Creativity is a very strong driving force for the evolution of the personality, for the personal growth and the acquisition of essential social skills. These creative processes greatly help in the integration of individuals in a community, overcoming all kind of linguistic, cultural and social barriers.

Every partners experienced different challenges in their activities, they work in very different context and at very different level, so each of them realised that in its specific framework they need to share and transfer experiences and results:

In Italy the province of Grosseto, with the support of the Tuscany Region is developing new business model for theatre and companies based on residencies. For AAM PAiR Project is an opportunity to exchange experiences with companies from different European countries, showing them our activities and the new workplace of the next three years 2013-2015, and showing our work and our model results in the other countries.

The PAiR project gives for AKT-ZENT the unique chance to further develop the research on new training models and methods. It will influence directly further programming and development of curricula. The community of AKT-ZENT is in fact the international theatre world. In this resepect, AKT-ZENT will function as a multiplier of results.

For T&Public as part of training related to theatrical production and companionship subsidized by the European Social Fund, the theme explored in this project will permit us to enter more and more in the mobilization of artists in Europe , through international tours that training's applicants envisage, to put in place their project developed within the formation.

For Rectus Centrum in Cyprus artists and the community need of new ways to improve and upgrade Theatre in order to promote the exchange of practices and methodologies between institutions and artists in Cyprus. This will enable the development of a consortium of institutions and practitioners and promote the learning of the practice of theatre art for personal development, artistic research and social transformation. Through the sharing of knowledge and information we can maintain the importance to strengthen and inspire professionals within theatre. In the long term this will lead to the regeneration of theatre. Through the partnership we intend to achieve the transmission and transformation of a theatrical pedagogy based on research as a tool for theatrical reconstruction.

Since its inception, in 1990, La MaMa worked as a gateway between Spoleto and the World, supporting exchanges and collaborations that greatly stimulated the local community and particularly the young people. The present project will help strengthening the possibilities of La MaMa Umbria in the pursue of its objectives, because it will offer to the people involved in the running of the activities, new tools and ideas to implement also in La MaMa.

The need for a more creative relation of the artists with the community is emerged. Per-Theater-Formance intends to achieve through the partnership and the exchange of good practices, these tools that they will contribute in the development of the non-formal educational and artistic processes inside the organisation and at the greek-performing arts-community.

PROJECTS OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY

The project intends to achieve the following concrete objectives:

- creation of a permanent network capable of connecting in the future other new partners coming from different country not yet represented;
- a list of best practices developed by each partners concerning models of artists in residence, community work, new teaching and training models as part of the creative process. To disseminate this list it will be realised a video with all partners contributions and a brochure in national languages involved. Press conferences / dissemination activities will be organised by each partners.
- network permanent website (portal for partners to share project, disseminate results and outputs, educational and artistic video thought You Tube platform).

The project aims to support PAiR as strategic educational centres all over Europe so that to create a network which could be the platform for future common projects and cooperation activities. So it intends to advocacy with national / regional public authority to create a common legislative framework to recognize and support them.

The chosen approach is promoting exchanges, professional mobilities within the network, lectures with experts from various social sectors, in order to define common long term objectives and strategies, building the basis for more complex and articulated future common collaborations.

The starting point is the collaboration with the International Festival for Theatre Training Methods, and the Theatre Education and Training Committee of the International Theatre Institute. It will bring together learners from all partners as well as their artistic directors and managers. From there the strategies of the 2-year learning partnership will be concretized. Learners, managers, and artistic directors shall learn from each other as well and benefit of the different points of view

The partners will create a calendar of working meetings, in the various centres, during significant moments and activities, which can benefit the purpose of the present project. During this meetings, will also be invited other local and national experts or personalities that can offer additional insights: pedagogues, educational managers, public administrators, teachers, interested in the cultural development of community.

The final point will take place on the occasion of La Mama Theatre Summer Academy in Italy summing up all experience in practice and theory.

Results and outcomes

1	Jan-March 2013	blog for internal use to share information between contact persons, planning mobilities programme, share documents, reports, video, foto
2	May - Jun 2013	project and network website. This will be the permanent networks's website (portal for partners to share project, disseminate results and outputs, educational and artistic video thought You Tube platform).
3	October 2013	List of good practices, approaches, methodologies, regional/national PaiR regulations. Each partners will contribute in elaborating a list of local good practices to confront with other partners contributions.
4	2013	Meetings of Res Artis International Network
5	2013	International representation of results at the ITI Worldcongress 2013
6	Jan - March 2014	Video containing good experiences made by partners and brochure in each partner's national language to present good practices.
7	June 2014	Final national conferences to disseminate results will be organised by each partner to present the project'outcomes to its local community.

European added value

All over Europe theatre companies are rapidly evolving toward an international scene, connecting them into specific networks. The main European value of project is creating a new network based on performing arts in residences offering the opportunity of comparing and transferring experiences and know-how among artistic and educative staff of the various countries, that otherwise it will remain as individual/local assets.

The list of good practices will be elaborated starting from each partner's experiences. It will be very useful for spreading the awareness of role and potentiality of PAiRs between different target such as public authority, schools system, other educative and artistic actors (theatre companies, public theatre etc.)

The creation of a European database / portal containing the best practices and experiences of every city involved in the project will remain as common assets and it will be very useful to reach new audience and involve new partners. In future all partners agree in enlarging the network with experiences of other European PAiRs coming from other country.

The great added value of the project will be:

- supporting European productions of the Performing Arts, and their circulation
- mentoring and teaching models rooted in the understanding of a common European culture, with all its diversities.
- supporting informal learning methods based on performing arts
- increase PAiR experiences in number and quality.

Impact

The project's impact on persons (trainers and staff involved) will be a concrete development of their professional skills in terms of knowledge of innovative approaches provided by transferring competencies from country to another in the following field:

- artistic activities by means of experiencing different theatre methods
- training and educative activities by means of experiencing different methods aimed at special target (school pupils, disadvantaged people, immigrants, prisoners)

The indirect target group (such as public authorities, communities involved, school system) can benefit from an increased level of motivation and skills in the artistic and educative staff and in a more qualitative results of their work.

The institutions involved will benefit from project at different level:

- During the daily activities through the internationalisation of their work and perspectives.
- In long term because the project helps to bring out professionalism and expertise that currently does not exist in each institution.

We expect to activate a process to increase quality of interaction, relations and experimentation of new approaches, new perspectives and new methodologies among participants. We intend to create a permanent mutual space in order to share results and innovative models. We consider that it will be a progressive process on internationalization involving all the partners.