Documentation Open Spaces
8th to 11th of September 2016, Olsztyn

1. Context and aims of the workshop

The workshop "OPEN SPACES – OPEN SOCIETY" was part of a series of workshops for cultural managers from whole Europe. The main objective of these workshops was to discuss certain relevant topics, which affect cultural managers in their daily work as well as the NGOs they work for. Through international exchange, professional inputs and discussions, the workshop wanted to enhance skills and networks of the attending managers. In the first two meetings, we discussed models and best practice examples in establishing and maintaining cultural facilities (2013 in Leipzig) as well as possibilities and problems in cooperating with the private and public sector (2015 in Berlin).

The third workshop in Olsztyn was directed to questions about public exchange, audience development, and societal impact. During the meeting, we discussed with the participants how they could deal with the public of their direct cultural, social and political surrounding. Another goal was to find out about differences and similarities in diverse European countries and discuss strategies to cooperate with local environments. Therefore, the main two questions we were asking in the workshop were:

- How do I enhance the communication with the audience? How can I learn more about them?
- How do I increase the social and cultural influence in my local community? How do I involve these people in the activities of my NGOs?

2. Concept and methods of the workshop

"OPEN SPACES – OPEN SOCIETY" was an intensive three days workshop and a mix of professional inputs from two invited experts as well as a moderated discussion with the participating cultural managers and self-reflection phases. We used the techniques of storytelling and image-based communication as methods to reach our workshop's aims. The idea behind these methods was for the participants to find new perspectives about their cultural NGO and their audience, and to widen the local community, if they are not yet interested. Using images to speak about organisation and possible aims created a connection between words and images, a connection that allowed a newest and easiest way of communicating. This new way of communicating through images encouraged the participants to develop a story about their own cultural NGO. This way of dealing with the public keeps the relation to the existing audience vivid and also appeals to users and stakeholders. As a result, this new discourse allows strengthening the impact on the local community.

In a multi-steps process, the participants were able to reflect on the motivation and purposes of their work and on the impact of their organisation on the society. They analysed the needs and interests of their audience as well as future target groups. Additionally, we invited two experts to speak about their experience in developing and communicating with the audience: Ewa Romanowska from Fundacja Borussia (Olsztyn, Poland) and Jonas Büchel of Urban Institute (Riga, Latvia). Based on this input, the participants tried to match the aims of their cultural NGO with the needs and interests of their existing and potential audience. By using images, we asked the participants to create a story, which tells something about their organisation and its objectives. In groups' discussion, we tried to find the right channels to communicate their outcomes as well as some methods to measure the success of this approach.

3. Results of the Workshop

We compiled the main outcomes of our workshop into this documentation for you to use and adopt it to your own situation. You are free to use its content for your own purposes (look into the imprint for licence information).

a. Defining your Offers
You will always need to define what you are doing in a most striking and convincing way. It is only that you are not doing the same in every Situation and for everyone! The space you have and the work you do may seem completely different to an administrative worker from the city council, a user coming to your cultural events or a volunteer who helps you to keep the strings together. This brings you into the position to define your offers according to the different parties of the city society. Who is looking onto your NGO from where? Which resources (e.g., space, info, contacts, formats) does my NGO offer in order to make an impact on society? We found that it really helps to ask these questions to individuals in order to recognize, for instance, that an administrative person working for the city library is a citizen, a social person, maybe a family guy, and in most cases a user (and even lover) of cultural events. She may even be a stakeholder in our structure and yet undiscovered. So, each participant of the workshop defined his/her audience among five different persons, each with special characteristics. Also, they defined what they want to give to each single person. As a result, we asked ourselves: how do we convince people to support us or to use our offers more often?

b. What are your Target Groups?
On the other hand, you cannot only work with and for one group of persons. Of course, a successful NGO has to be aware of each group composing the city society and the way certain issues have to be told to these groups. A target group is commonly an intended audience or group of people that is identified as the recipients of a particular advertisement or message. In the course of our workshop, we made the conclusion that every of these target groups needs a specific attention in order to achieve what we aimed for. The means and the intensity of our commitment with these groups of people depended on the simple words "how" and "why" we wanted to change their perspective on our work. In order to do this, we agreed on essential questions we needed to ask ourselves to be able to understand our target groups: How do they see us or aren't they just aware that we are here? Do we share the same interests? Do we have something to offer them? Are they already supporting us – if yes, by which means and resources? Is it possible to work with and for them? What are the target groups that we are only considering? What are the ones we would like to work with/for? Which groups of the city society are represented the most in our identified target groups? Who is missing?

c. Channels and Interfaces – Ways of Communication
For the purpose of the workshop, we decided to differentiate two categories of communicative tools: interfaces and channels. By the first, we intended to put together a bunch of real or virtual spaces where people actually meet and interact, like a marketplace or a bazaar of ideas, symbolic images and personal impressions. These are the places to listen to stories and to tell them your own. On the other hand, channels of communication

are not too easy to differentiate. They are more the tools of "one-way "communication. This is why they can mostly be understood as media, like flyer, posters, advertisements etc., while interfaces refer to the deeper meaning of public relations – i.e., actually to relate to people around you (to see our results for both categories, see the Annex, p. ??).

Why did we want to separate these communicative sets? Because communicating your issues efficiently depends on whom you want to reach and what you want to achieve. If you already know what you are going to do, it may be easier to firstly announce what you are planning. However, to really get to know what your future audience, your city government or your neighbours want, it is highly recommended to talk to them and to have their feedback on your plans and also your present work. In the end, it means that you will always have to use both categories – interfaces and channels – in a balanced relation to each other.

d. Measuring

One of the most important things for NGOs' activists is to determine criteria to measure the success of your work. We always have a lot of ideas and are very critical on our work. So, before we start, defining clear criteria can help us to review our work in a more objective way. In the framework of our workshop, we collected information about methods of measuring and communication success. We used some questions like "What does it mean – in the light of the workshop's insights – to be successful in the society? How can I measure my success with certain target groups? (To see the results, go to Annex, p. ??.)

4. Conclusion

This workshop of course was only a part of a series of meetings that will still be ongoing in the course of the next years. To go deeper in a mutual understanding and co-operation, we founded a Facebook-Page where every member of the network (see Annex, p. ??) can post their newest projects and discuss recent topics of the OPEN SPACES project. You will find the network at this page: www.facebook.com/OpenSpacesNGOExchange/ (see for a QR-Code on the last page).

In the following, you will find an Annex, which provides you with some materials, methods and outcomes of our workshop that we considered to be of interest to you. You are free to use it for your own purpose, if you refer to its origin in the OPEN SPACES International NGO Exchange Network (see the imprint for licencing issues).

ANNEX

1. Talking to the Living and the Dead – The 'Invention' of Storytelling

Our idea was to make use of the very old technique of storytelling to bringing to the fore the most important topics and questions about your NGO, the work you are doing, and the story of the space you are taking care of. We figured that it could be an excellent tool to improve the communication with your audience or users as well as with your surroundings that may not be familiar with your work yet.

We began with an old story that provided us a starting point to reflect on storytelling in general and to remember cultural and communicative practices. It was written down around 95 AD/CE by the Roman poet and rhetorician Quintilian, who delivered with his twelve-volume books *Institutio oratoria* (*The Institutes of Oratory*) one of the most profound instructional theories about talking to people and convincing them of one's own beliefs and values. The story that is of interest to us reads as the following:

> 11. The first to teach an Art of Memory is said to have been Simonides, of whom a well-known story is related: That when, for a stipulated sum, he had written in honor of a pugilist who had won the crown, an ode of the kind usually composed for conquerors in the games, half of the money was refused him because, according to a practice very common with poets, he had made a digression in praise of Castor and Pollux, for which reason he was told to apply for the other half to the deities whose praises be had chosen to celebrate.
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> 12. The deities, according to the story, paid it. During a splendid entertainment in honor of that victory, Simonides, being invited to the banquet, was called away from it by a message that two young men, mounted on horses, earnestly requested to see him.
>
> 13. When he went out, he found nobody, but he discovered, from what followed, that the deities were not ungrateful to him, for he had scarcely passed the threshold when the banquet room fell down upon the guests and crushed them so horribly that those who went to look for the bodies of the dead, in order to bury them, were unable to recognize, by any mark, not only their faces, but even their limbs. Simonides, by the aid of his memory, is said to have pointed out the bodies to their friends in the exact order in which they had sat.
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> (Quintilian: *Institutes of Oratory*. 11, 2. Ed. by L. Honeycutt, transl. by J. S. Watson. 2006 [1856]. Retrieved Nov. 9, 2016, from http://rhetoric.eserver.org/quintilian/.)

Within these three paragraphs, Quintilian refers to the very common legend that Simonides of Keos (c. 556–468 BC/CE) found the key to the art of memory within his artistic poetry. By remembering the participants of a celebration from their positions at the table before the scrambling house of a boxing champion smashed them, he was able to give back the unrecognizable remnants of the bodies to their families. By putting together the pieces of the bodies and also their life stories, he enabled the families to mourn and to commemorate their lost beloved ones.

Three decisive aspects of the story seemed to us to be crucial to understand and approach the techniques of storytelling in our own NGO related context:

- It sometimes helps to take an outer perspective. Simonides stepped out of the house as well as of the frame of the celebration. In fact, two godly heroes, Castor and Pollux, called him. Saved by this intervention, he could look at the whole issue from

another perspective. Also, he made a decisive step backwards from his surrounding context, i.e. he brought himself into a distance, what enabled him to reflect and remember instead of being caught by the circumstances. We figured that this was also an important competence for cultural workers.

- One needs to know where the thresholds/interfaces of one's context are. By over-stepping the threshold of the house, Simonides completely changed his situation: he was not part of the festive community of the livings any more, but he was communicating with the gods. He was the only one who recognized the part of the gods in the winning of the pugilist and, at the same time, he was able to keep communicating with the bereaved going. This makes him a great communicator who knows who is to praise and who to blame. Maybe, it would be good to know where the thresholds within your own context are. Who is to be addressed? In which way? Who is to be acknowledged for setting the context of your work? Also, having the right means and manners in order to communicate with different parties of your surroundings could be an advantage.

- Images and stories can be great media in transmitting the issues of your work. Simonides was not just delivering facts, he was telling stories about the livings and the dead. And Quintilian's story even combines both media of memory and communication: Simonides is using his visual memory (the table where everyone was sitting at) as well as his lingual capacities about the stories of the dead to commemorate them. By using a specific image or an imagined space, he could remember parts of the story by virtually going back and filling places at the table one after another. It gave his report a narrative order. This 'art of memory' can be of great help if you want to tell other people about your space, your work or your personal story. By arranging three or more images together (self-picked or associatively found), you can construct an easy-to-remember storyline, which helps you to develop a story that you can tell about yourself and your work.

2. Once Upon a Time … – How to Create a Story

As it was said in the last paragraph, a storyline is quite simple to construct. First, you need three or more images to symbolize certain parts of the story that you can associate with keywords. Then, you can explicit what you are doing and use figurative allegories if you prefer. You can choose these images by chance (e.g., by browsing through a bunch of magazines, or googling for metaphorical keywords) or by looking for symbols that will explain what you are going to talk about.

Secondly, you have to make yourself aware of the people you are talking to: who is the one or the group that is going to listen to you, what do you offer them and what for? These questions mean that you have to identify your potential target group for each and every single story (see also the chapter on target groups). Of course, you can use the same images to tell slightly different stories to different people, but sometimes you also should develop an own story (even with different images) for another audience.

Thirdly, you should define what you are going for with your story. Are you looking for new audiences for your space? Do you want to convince someone to support you by several means or are you trying to define an issue to discuss on the agenda of your city? Depending on your aims, you have to address your target groups differently. Think about what usual and unusual parts of your work, stories about your space or interests as a citizen of the same city could eventually make your counterpart curious. Define for yourself what you would like to achieve with your story. Shall a member of the city parliament become your personal

supporter or are you aiming for a general awareness of the neighbours about your space and its history?

Now, have a look at your images again. You surely can find ways to combine the supposed interests of your addressees with the symbols and metaphors that you created. Look for analogies, allegories and other meanings and emotions that translate your aims into a story by which you can reach your audience. Don't forget: every simple story has a beginning and an end. In-between, something changes or at least happens. That's why you need three images at least. But don't be just point-blank – do not underestimate your counterpart and just present him straight facts or even fairy-tales. A good story does not just have one meaning only. It does neither moralize nor give simple instructions and indoctrinations. Your story rather lets the listeners thinking and coming to their own conclusions. Try to be a companion and a good storyteller instead of presenting some highlights and benchmarks only.

3. This is Where the Magic Happens – Ways of Communication

In the results section (part I), we made a point of making a difference between channels and interfaces. Now, we want to deliver some examples by which you may get an insight into our workshop results and have some stimulation to think about your own ways of communication within your specific context.

Interfaces, i.e. real or virtual spaces or practices to meet and talk to each other in a multidirectional way and with immediate response, for example are:
- Personal exchange/meetings, social relations with specific people
- Information points
- Going from door to door (especially in your neighbourhood)
- Gossip girls in your neighbourhood
- Window talks
- Special shops to meet your audience (e.g., shop with art supplies)
- Your own events and events organized by others
- Your own space
- Friends and family meetings
- Inviting children – get to know the parents and/or their teachers
- City hall, library and public places
- Platforms to meet (on- or offline), regular events, clubs or associations, special interests' groups
- Social media like Facebook, Instagram etc.

Channels of communication (i.e., mostly one-directional media to spread the word) may be:
- Facebook and other social media, if you only use it for posting
- Blogs/Website/Newsletter/E-Mail/YouTube, and other audiovisual platforms
- Ear-to-mouth advertisement
- Postcards/posters/flyers, and other visual communication
- Windows of your space, design elements
- Advertisement in public transport
- Local media (radio/newspaper/TV – on and offline)
- Information point in your city.

Of course, most of these examples may be considered as an interface and as a channel at the same time. It depends on you, how you focus your attention and how you use them for your own goals.

4. Am I Doing it Right? – How to Measure the Quality and Success of your Work

Of course, you have to be aware of …

- the amount of your association members, visitors, supporters, stakeholders, regular helping hands, Facebook-fans (in or decreasing)
- Perception in the local community and the general surrounding
- People getting in contact and asking questions
- Participation in events etc.
- Participation in voting, local petitioning, etc. (after setting an agenda)
- People who are against you, risings
- Destructions of your flyers, posters, place etc.
- Invitations to other events
- People from the local community
- Passers-by coming in and asking for something, regular recognition
- Concrete offers for help
- Your topics become an issue at schools, in the city hall, for the local government

5. How Do You do it? – Workshop Tools and How to Use them

Questionnaire "Offers of my NGO" (5 min)
Complete the lines of the questionnaire (separate document) for your own. Try to think in sentences in this order: To *whom* do I offer *what* to reach *which aim*?
Fill in 4 offers at least.

You can use this questionnaire to define the offers you already made – not to invent new offers.

Key questions to do this exercise:
- Which resources (space, info, contacts, formats) does my NGO offer in order to make an impact on society?
- What does my NGO offer to society?
- To whom concretely?
- What for?
- What is our aim in making an impact?

The "Head Sheet" (5 min)
Please, describe 5 persons that are representing different target groups of your work by name, age, and profession. Maybe you know them or not yet.
You can do it on the basis of your results of the questionnaire "Offers of my NGO" (if used).

You can use this sheet (separate document) to become clearer about your target groups.

Key questions to do this exercise:
- With whom do you have or would like to have contact?
- How do you meet them?

The "Cross Sheet" – exercise 1 (15 min)
– You need the results from the "Head Sheet"
Categorize/Put in order the persons you chose into a scheme (separate document). Cut their heads out the paper and glue them on the scheme sheet.
There is no "good" or "bad" position for the several persons.

You can do this exercise to differentiate between the target groups and to get useful information about them.

Key questions to use this sheet:
- SUPPORTER: Who supports me with resources (e.g., money, time, skills)?
- STAKEHOLDER: Who is a business partner? Who has 'only' an interest in my work?
- USER: Who uses my offers?
- NON-USER: Who does not use my offers?

Key questions to do this exercise:
Who is the person (name, age, job)?
What offer are you making to this person?
To what target group does he/she belong?
How are you making your offer to him/her?

The "Cross Sheet" – exercise 2 (7 min)
Think and write down interfaces and channels you know or you can use to interact with the people outside on coloured cards. Put them in an order:
- Interfaces we understand as real or virtual spaces of interaction
- Channels we understand as ways/tools of communicating

You can do this exercise to expand your perspective on the things you already do and to think further about possible ways of interaction.

Key questions for doing this exercise:
What interfaces and channels can you think of in order to interact with the people you recognized during the "Head Sheet" exercise?

The "Cross Sheet" – exercise 3 (3 min)
Put coloured dots onto your persons (within the scheme) to indicate the number of interfaces and channels you use to interact with them.

You can use this exercise to apply knowledge to your own context.

Key questions to do this exercise:
What sort of interaction do I use the most?
Have they been chosen properly?
What thresholds do I have to overstep to generate my offer to people?
What thresholds/barriers do they have to overcome to use my offer?
Where are they coming from?

This exercise is based on presentation and feedback rounds. Everybody needs to be prepared for it.

Feedback rules
Read this feedback rules and ask if everyone does agree or would like to ask or add something.

> Giving Feedback	> Getting Feedback
Give Feedback only when you are asked for.	Listen actively!
User your feedback not for a lecture.	Take it as a subjective point of view from another person.
Do not generalize.	Don´t justify yourself, don´t explain, don´t argue.
Speak from your point of view.	Answer positively.
Describe your perception, don´t interpret or judge.	Check what you heard: "Did I understand you right/properly that…?"
Make clear that your interpretations are a subjective assessment.	Feedback constitutes no obligation to change anything on what you said/presented.
Explain the effects of special behaviors as your observation: „I think", „I observed", „I noticed".	
Mention always positive points. Omit negative thought patterns, describe positive perceptions too!	
Suggest how to improve, express wishes.	
Be honest!	

Feedback of an outsider (2 x 7 min)
Work in groups of two people, within which everybody has the same time frame. One person presents to the second a concept, a project, some ideas and results of a single work. The second person gives his/her analysis (subjective). Then change of roles.

You can use this technique for more personal topics. It can be used as a feedback tool in a group of people that do not know each other yet and within which the level of trust is not yet clarified.

Be aware of that you as a moderator have to support the groups to comply with the rules. We advise to publish the rules on flipcharts pinned in the seminar room or written on cards then given to each participant.

Exercise 1 in the framework of the topic (10 min + 2 x 7 min)
You need the "Cross sheet" at least level 1.
Use your scheme and think about whether you would like to make any changes or amendments after you got some new input. Take into consideration the institutional and societal embedding of your NGO. Think of real persons who are using/in contact/not using your offers.
Give the scheme to your neighbour; he/she gives feedback on the following questions:

Do I understand the situation of the NGO?
What do I like about the offers the NGO is making?
Where do I see the strongest potential of the NGO in order to make an impact on society?
What is the common capital that arouses from the NGO's work?
What is the most sensitive threshold/barrier I see in regard to the NGO's offers.

Feedback of the group – collegial consultation (about 10-15 min/p.p.)
Work in groups of 6-8 people that sit in a circle. Everyone presents something / answers to a question. Afterwards s/he "leaves the circle" and sits face-away but still can hear everything. Everyone else gives a short feedback on what s/he heard and what to do to improve the presentation.

You can use this technique to get a more detailed feedback, with many perspectives or as a real input for the whole group. We saw that it worked very well in the first day of the workshop. Please, assess the situation in your group.

Feedback of the group – traffic lights (1 min/p.p.)
Sit in a circle and hold three cards (green, yellow, red). Say one after another only one sentence about the situation you have to assess (workshop, meeting, seminar). The other persons show with their cards, whether they agree (green), disagree (red), or don´t know (yellow). Don´t repeat sentences, everyone has to find a new aspect. Encourage participants, also to talk about the framework of the situation that does not immediately belong to its content (e.g., the food, weather, the bar of last night).

You can use this technique to get many different perspectives and a short flashlight of the group´s opinion. It is shorter and funnier than a classic evaluation round.

Tell a Story about your NGO – step 1 (5 min)
Think about a story (5 min), you would like to tell a specific target group that you would like to change in their regard to your NGO (Non-User to User, Stakeholder to Supporter). If used properly, the "Cross-sheet" could be the basis.
Maybe take your space as a starting point.
Maybe make use of Simonides' 'art of memory' to compose it.

Key questions for doing this exercise:
What is a key meme of my NGO's work?
Why should people be interested in it?
How can I communicate my passion to others?

Tell a Story about your NGO – step 2 (about 10-15 min/p.p.)
Use the "Feedback method" on the group/collegial consultation. Everyone tells a story of 5 min about the NGO/the space to a specific target group, and gets a short feedback on what the others thought and what to do to improve the story.

You can use this exercise to get practical experience in telling stories, thinking of images, spaces, and arguments in a protected space. The participants get a first feedback on the way they built the story. Then, they become aware of the effects of the stories.

Key questions to do this exercise:
What are the images that arose while hearing the story?
How do I perceive the space and the societal surrounding of the NGO and why?
Do I believe that this NGO can change something within my city?

Tell a Story about your NGO – step 3 (30 min)
3-image story: chose 3 images from a bunch of images or draw them yourselves and put them into an order, develop a three-step storyline (beginning/initial situation, offer/proposal of the NGO, changed situation)
Provide a bunch of images (weekly papers, other material), paper, pens, etc.

You can use this exercise to visualize a specific meme on the NGO. Then, back it up with a narrative. Afterwards the participants have got an idea to reach a specific target group. They tell a specific story with a specific intention.

A key question to do this exercise could be:
How can I get my colleagues to tell the same story about our NGO as I do?

Tell a Story about your NGO – step 4 (5 min p.p.)
Presentation: Present your redefined 3-image story to a specific target group in 2 minutes. The other participants give their feedback as virtual members of this target group. Work in groups of about 8 persons.

You can use this exercise to improve your presentation. Everyone tells a refined story and gets a feedback from their target group. You can also use it to precise the interfaces and channels for this specific target group.

Key questions to do this exercise could be:

If I was a representative of a target group of that NGO, what would I think of it?

How did I hear about it and how do I see the work that is done there? Which impact does it have on me? How can this impact be measured?

Organisations involved in the NGO network 2013–2016

Anexa nr. 1, Chișinău, Moldova
Center for Balkan Cooperation LOJA, Tetovo, Macedonia
Cinémathèque Leipzig, Germany
Cultural Dialogue, Kremenchuk, Ukraine
Galerie D21, Leipzig, Germany
Freunde der Borussia Olsztyn/Allenstein e.V., Leipzig, Germany
Fugitif, Leipzig, Germany
Fundacja Borussia, Olsztyn, Poland
Fundacja Brama Cukermana, Będzin, Poland
Galerie KUB, Leipzig, Germany
Halle 14, Leipzig, Germany
IG Fortuna, Leipzig, Germany
Internationale Elias Canetti Gesellschaft, Ruse, Bulgaria
KSA:K Center for Contemporary Art, Chișinău, Moldova
Leipziger Kulturpaten, Leipzig, Germany
Oberliht Association, Chișinău, Moldova
Fundacja Revita Warmia, Jeziorany, Poland
Rosa Collective, Chernivtsi, Ukraine
Tabačka Kulturfabrik, Košice, Slovakia
Theatre Union/Contemporary Drama Centre, Chișinău, Moldova
ZK/U – Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik, Berlin, Germany

Paulina Maloy, Wrocław, Poland
Katarzyna Młyńczak, Wrocław, Poland
Julia Ovcharenko, Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine

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Miasto Olsztyn (Logo)

Project team
Concept, co-ordination, PR: Micha Braun, Ludwig Henne, Yvonne Meyer, Dominika Złakowska-Cieślak
Moderation: Micha Braun, Weronika Czyżewska-Poncyljusz, Ludwig Henne, Yvonne Meyer
Documentation: Micha Braun, Ludwig Henne, Yvonne Meyer
Graphic design: Andrij Fil