



**Reaching for
the stars...**

**... landing in
the dirt**

When cultural
projects miss
the mark

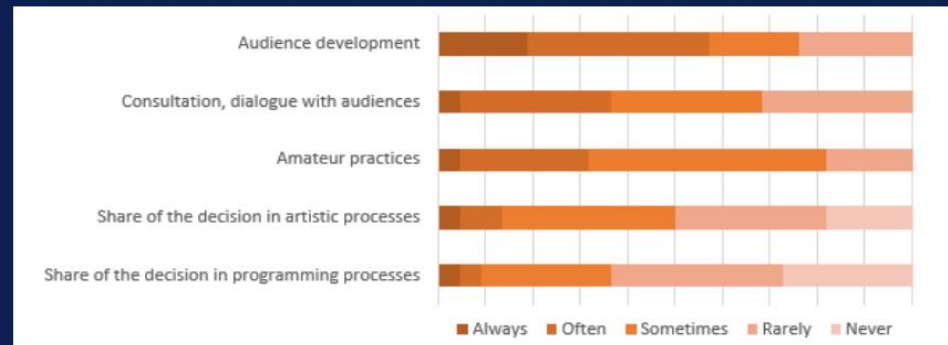


Cultural participation

The analysis of the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends shows that around 80% of the 24 European countries analyzed in our study include promoting “cultural participation” as a main cultural policy objective

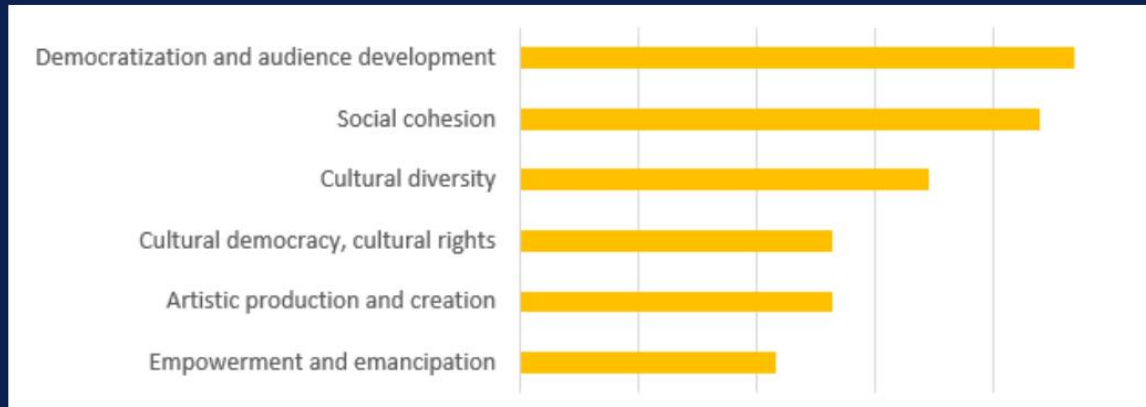
[Dupin-Meynard, F. and Négrier, E. (2020). Cultural policies in Europe: a participatory turn?]

To what is “participation” mainly referring within cultural policy documents?



[Dupin-Meynard, F. and Négrier, E. (2020). Cultural policies in Europe: a participatory turn?]

Most frequent cultural policy objectives justifying participatory policies



[Dupin-Meynard, F. and Négrier, E. (2020). Cultural policies in Europe: a participatory turn?]

New portfolio of Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture, and Sport

“Ursula von der Leyen has also tasked Micallef with making cultural heritage more accessible and easier for (young) people to visit and enjoy. Earlier in the mission letter, the importance of cultural accessibility was also emphasised. How will this be implemented in practice? Could it include the idea of European cultural passes, which has been circulating and was proposed by some European parties in their manifestos”

[CAE, New Commissioner, new portfolio, 19/09/2024)



Bringing culture into vs. Giving centrality to the culture



UNESCO 2003

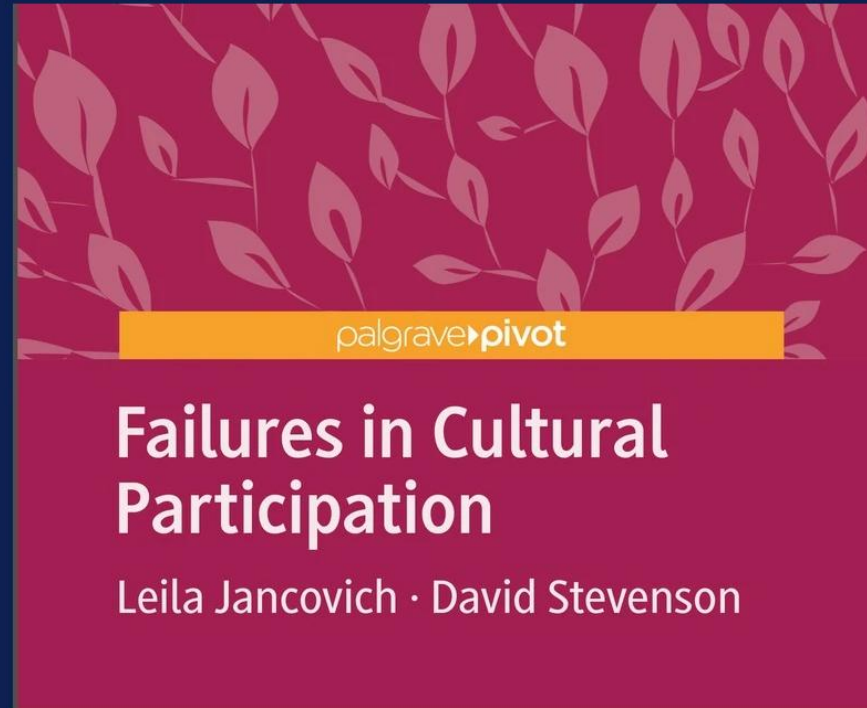
ARTICLE 2 - The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity

[UNESCO, Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage]

Rhetoric on the Arts

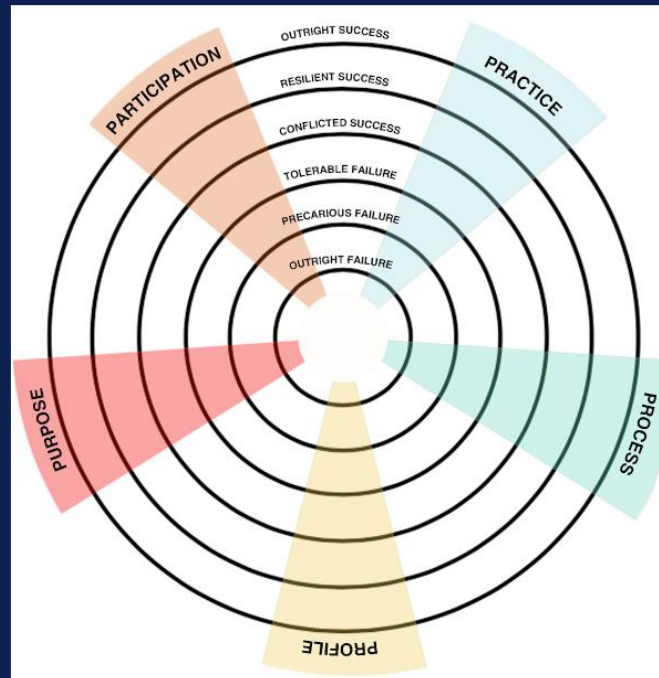
The language frequently used when discussing highlights how the arts are often described in idealized, positive terms that may not always align with their complex, sometimes challenging, realities.

Failures in cultural participation



[Jancovich, L. and Stevenson, D. (2023). Failures in Cultural Participation]

The wheel of failure



[Jancovich, L. and Stevenson, D. (2023). Failures in Cultural Participation]

Profile:

- The programme generates primarily negative coverage at a local and/or regional and/or national level
- There is little to no awareness of the programme at local and/or regional and/or national level
- The programme generates positive coverage at a local level but does not result in a national discussion about the importance of this type of work.
- The programme generates positive coverage for the funder but does not raise the profile of the organisations or artists
- The programme generates positive coverage at all levels, raises the profile of all the organisations and artists involved and leads to new opportunities for them
- Increased awareness and profile lead to a national commitment to mainstream the funding to support this type of work

Purpose:

- Opportunities for people to participate locally did not increase and few of the participants had not taken part in cultural activities locally in the past year
- Opportunities for people to participate locally increased but few of the participants had not taken part in cultural activities locally in the past year
- Opportunities for people to participate locally did not increase but most participants had not taken part in cultural activities locally in the past year
- Opportunities for people to participate locally increased, most participants had not taken part in cultural activities locally in the past year, but there was little local interest in sustaining the programme in long term
- Opportunities for people to participate locally increased, most participants had not taken part in cultural activities locally in the past year, and there was strong local interest in sustaining the programme in long term
- Opportunities for people to participate locally increased, most participants had not taken part in cultural activities locally in the past year and were also now participating with other local activities/organisations

Process:

- Local organisations, artists, and audiences are only collaborating in ways they have done before
- Local organisations, artists and audiences are collaborating in new ways, but with limited effect
- Local organisations, artists and audiences are collaborating effectively in new ways but only for work related to this programme
- Local organisations, artists and audiences are collaborating in new ways, but some involved have found it hard to adapt and won't adopt these approaches in future
- Local organisations, artists and audiences are collaborating in new ways and have committed to adopt these approaches to work together in future
- Local organisations, artists and audiences are collaborating in new ways; have committed to adopt these approaches to work together in future and are supporting others to do the same

Practice:

- Those involved in the programme do not feel that the art created was of quality
- Those involved in the programme feel that the art created was of mixed quality
- Those involved in the programme feel that the art created was of quality but did not involve new or innovative practice
- Those involved in the programme feel that the art created was innovative and of quality, but a significant number of their peers disagree
- Those involved in the programme feel that the art created was innovative, of quality and most of their peers agree
- Those involved in the programme feel that the art created was innovative, of quality and their peers are building upon the work in new ways

Participation:

- Those who are currently least likely to take part in cultural activities we fund were not consulted about the design of their local programme
- Those who are currently least likely to take part in cultural activities we fund were consulted but their opinions didn't influence the design of their local programme
- Those who are currently least likely to take part in the cultural activities we fund were invited to help design their local programme, but the majority opted not to
- The opinions of those who are currently least likely to take part in cultural activities we fund informed the design of their local programme, but they weren't involved in decision making
- The opinions and decisions of those who are currently least likely to take part in cultural activities we fund significantly shaped the design of their local programme
- The opinions and decisions of those who are currently least likely to take part in cultural activities we fund significantly shaped the design of the programme both locally and nationally

Critical reflections

- Were these failures inevitable?
- Were expectations too high to begin with?
- Could these failures have been avoided? If so, how?
- What could you have done differently?
- What could others have done differently?
- Are the failures balanced out by successes in other facets of the project/policy?
- What have you learnt from the failures in the project/policy?
- How can you recognise these failures alongside your successes in any evaluation of your project/policy?
- How can you share your learning openly with others to facilitate social and instrumental learning within the cultural sector?

Different kinds of quality

- AESTHETIC: is it beautiful?
- TECHNICAL: is it masterful?
- INNOVATIVE: is it cutting edge?
- INTERPRETATIVE: can people understand it?
- EDUCATIONAL: can people learn from it?
- RELEVANT: can people relate to it?
- PARTICIPATORY: can people get involved or contribute to it?
- ACADEMIC: does it produce new research or knowledge?
- BRIDGING: does it spark unexpected connections?
- IGNITING: does it inspire people to action?

[Nina Simon, But What about quality?]



**Thank you
very much!**

giorgio.bacchiega@unicatt.it