

Report  
*Fair Enough?*

Report from the  
IETM Focus Meeting Brussels  
7-8 April 2022



**Fair Enough?  
IETM Publication  
Report from the IETM Focus  
Meeting 7-8 April 2022**

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# Background

In 2020, IETM members joined forces for an intense reflection and strategy project; entitled **Rewiring the Network (for the twenties)**. This year-long network-wide brainstorm brought together 377 professionals from the 500+ strong membership. They identified multiple unsustainable features of current cross-border collaborations and brought to light alternative ways of internationalisation, emerging and developing across the globe. The [Rewiring the Network report](#) summarises the results of this collective journey, and develops transitional paths in artistic, social, economic, ecological and human perspectives. The project has set the foundations for building and testing possible strategies for sustainable transitions and IETM's own agenda for the coming years.

**Rewiring the Network** showed that it is possible to engage a large number of IETM members in a joint strategy brainstorm, and was deemed a huge success by the network. The new format of the Focus meeting is derived from this success; to bring the network together in a physical location, once a year, for joint strategy building and sharing of ideas.

## The IETM Focus Concept

In 2022, IETM opened a new chapter. Over the next three years, from 2022 to 2024, the network aims to figure out how each of us, no matter what role within the sector we play, can advance the fair and green transition of the performing arts sector and rethink our international existence, in small and large steps.

Each year, we will focus on a topic and further the network's agenda and solution-based thinking on the topic at hand, through meetings, publications, advocacy, learning and sharing programmes. Across the years, we will focus on the following topics:

- **2022:** Fairness and Working Conditions
- **2023:** Environmental Sustainability and Green Transition
- **2024:** Taking stock of our learnings during the previous years, and attempting to present a joint network vision of the New International in the Performing Arts (NIPA).

Our new Focus meetings will be the key to gathering our membership in order to contribute to IETM's agenda of rethinking and searching for more sustainable, fair, equitable and inclusive models, while also exploring what the emerging notion of "translocal" can do and mean for our sector.

The concept of "translocality" has been used in various fields, such as migration, media studies and geography, and it has only recently gained its ground in the arts. Dutch philosopher and writer Maarten Doorman articulates translocal activities as activities which are "*oriented on other parts of the world without losing their intrinsic bonds with the locality they belong to.*"<sup>1</sup>

IETM's exploration of the New International through translocality means to pave the way towards a locally rooted internationalisation. For the Focus meeting, participants were encouraged to bring case studies and inspiring solutions on fairness and working conditions, in relation to the locality they belong to.

The first IETM Focus was held in Brussels 7-8 April 2022 and attended by 173 IETM members and guests. It was a space to explore, critique and improve our work practices and conditions. Are they fair and human enough? What does "fair" mean in your specific professional context? Which practices and conditions can you and your organisation change, and what is beyond your power? These questions and more were explored in three participatory working sessions held over two days at the Brussels meeting.

1 | <https://dutchculture.nl/en/news/translocality-artistic-internationalisation-after-the-corona-crisis>

The three sessions were as follows, with the attendees split into nine working groups of 10-15 participants, during each of the three sessions:

### Session 1

#### *Mapping urgencies and good practices*

In the past, we have been confronted with professional situations where we questioned fairness. Many of us have worked towards change to inspire fairer conditions in our local contexts. In this session, we shared and mapped out our most urgent issue regarding fair practices, as well as solutions and good practices we observed or tried out.

### Session 2

#### *Case studies*

Taking a step back from our own organisations and practices, this session delved into some fair practice case studies from different contexts. In working groups, several fair practice examples were analysed and discussed.

### Session 3

#### *Prototyping fair futures*

During the last session, the inspiration from the meeting gathered at its culmination point. Either individually or with co-workers, participants created prototypes for what their organisation/practice could look like when implementing a fair practice principle or example.

In addition to those three main working sessions, the IETM Focus meeting offered a keynote talk, introductory and wrap up sessions, a small artistic programme provided by Brussel based performing arts organisations, a network gathering space, a reception and a closing party.



IETM Focus Meeting © Bo Vloors

**Designer of the Brussels IETM Focus meeting:**  
*Ingrid Vranken, a Brussels based independent producer*

**IETM members who moderated the working sessions:**

- *Anikó Racz*
- *Cristina Carlini*
- *Görkem Acaroğlu*
- *Inga Remeta*
- *Harriet Macauley*
- *Pippa Bailey*
- *Noémie Vanden Haezevelde*
- *Rachel Bergin*
- *Sepehr Sharifzadeh*

# Intentions and outcomes

The IETM Focus did not attempt to construct an idea of universal fairness in the arts. Following the concept of translocality described above, we strive to empower and reveal local aspirations and definitions. We invited our membership to reflect on the urgency in relation to fairness in the performing arts and several models of fair practices, and to imagine a prototype of their own fair practice which can be implemented in their specific contexts: organisations or freelance professional activities. The meeting aimed to give participants the opportunity to think local in a transnational setting, and to create a new vision for themselves while interacting with their international peers. Everyone had the same task - to create their own fair practice model. Everyone had the right to interpret “fairness” the way it was most relevant for their specific context, values and experience. **IETM acknowledges that for a truly effective action plan to work for such a large network, we need a multifaceted, nuanced and diversified approach which respects the differences between the realities our members work and live in.**

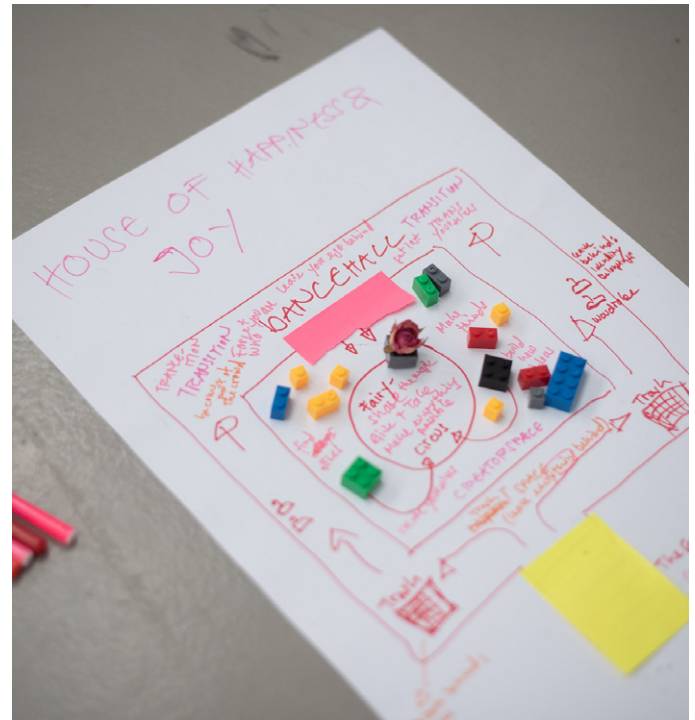
*“We have to unlearn many of the old ways if we want to introduce new and fair practices into our ecosystem.”*

*- a shared conclusion from the discussion*

The ‘social contract’ that keeps our societies running needs to change radically towards slowing down, allowing time for reflection, recreation, human relationships and sharing resources, instead of competing for them. This gives more value to sustainability and caring, and less praise for growth and productivity.

Radical trust, transparency, honesty, inclusivity, mutual respect, empathy, social justice, solidarity, valuing the common good and the environmental sustainability over the individual flourishing, stepping back when needed, slowing down, scaling down and acting locally – these are the values that would uphold the positive change towards fair(er) practices in the arts, according to the Focus participants.

IETM Focus Meeting © Bo Vloors



Shared knowledge, joint advocacy on policy and funding levels for fair practices in the arts, fundraising and redistribution of funding, taking personal responsibility and acting locally for positive changes were recognised as the tools that will empower the sector to influence broader systemic change.

The fringe example of the [Common Wallet project](#), presented during the keynote speech by Brussels-based artist Anna Rispoli (available online [here](#)), inspired many of the prototypes and fair practice solutions that emerged and were shared during the two days of IETM Focus.

## THE COMMON WALLET

The Common Wallet is an initiative from ten Brussels based people, who since January 2018 have been living off a common bank account. The stakeholders contribute their entire individual incomes into the shared account, yet each uses as much money as they need, regardless of whether or not it corresponds to the income they contributed – and without reciprocal monitoring.

“By detaching money from individual ownership and enforcing a common economy, the participants in the Common Wallet question the taboos and injustices they face with the current financial system,” Anna Rispoli explained. The project started as an experiment on whether we can successfully replace control with radical trust and transparency. The Common Wallet hopes to prove that mutual care and support, usually associated with family bonds, can expand to other types of social and professional relationships, and that solidarity leads to greater individual empowerment, stability and happiness.

For now, the Common Wallet project succeeds in providing a safety net against the precarities of the socio-professional context of the arts. It has gradually changed the stakeholders’ relationship with money, from viewing income as an individual gain in a neo-liberal world to a common good shared with trust. According to Anna, the project is better to be multiplied than expanded, as a group of 10 – 12 stakeholders is the optimum. A short guide on how to start and maintain a common wallet project can be found [here](#).

# Mapping Urgencies

Participants in the first working session, *Mapping urgencies - good practises or good attempts?*, brought examples from their local contexts and artistic practices.

A lot has already been done to achieve more fairness in the arts through the sector, organisations and policy makers. A variety of examples of initiatives aimed at improving the working conditions in the performing arts were shared during the meeting - [see Appendix A](#)).

There are many key elements that influence the sector's ability to make changes and improve conditions. The two elements below were identified the most:

## Legal Frameworks

The legal framework of working conditions in the performing arts varies greatly between freelancers and contract workers and from country to country. In countries such as Belgium and France, there is a notion of the status of the artist, and in many other countries, artists and art professionals are treated like other freelancers or contract employees. Some tax systems allow for a minimum, non-taxable income for art workers, while others, such as the Latvian tax system, do not allow even a copyright / author's rights tax derogation.

## Adaptable Support Systems

The COVID-19 pandemic hit economies and the arts sector hard. In some countries, governmental counter-measures provided support for the livelihood of organisations and professionals and the support was not necessarily entirely linked to the production of artistic output; it seemed unconditional support was possible, which allowed for the sector to adapt to the new reality and remain relevant. This flexibility from the support systems is an example to explore as a basis for a fairer structure for funding, which does not only arise in a state of emergency but also becomes the norm.

Despite this diversity, several major, unfair practices evolved during the discussions as common urgencies to address. If lack of funding was the only obstacle in achieving fairness in the arts, our task would be easy. However, in many cases, additional funding does not lead to fairer practices. The current **funding paradigm**, based on the values of growth and productivity, amplifies unfairness and calls for urgent change. This was supported with examples from the global north and south to the east and west, from both rich countries to countries with limited resources, from professionals working internationally to locally, and from young, mid-career professionals to experienced workers.

Participants in the Focus meeting agreed that performing arts professionals need to unite their efforts and **advocate together** on several crucial changes, both on a **policy level** and in **funding practices**, in order to create a fairer future for the arts. Advocating for fairer practices should be a common and persistent effort of **the sector**. However, the participants shared a common concern that many in the sector tend to ignore this, and rather comply with unfair practices in the course of their day-to-day work. This is consequential, as it leads to the continuation of historical neglect and the subordination of certain groups. Despite some strong initiatives aimed to make the sector more fair, solidarity for change is not strong enough and the change needed in mainstream structures has not happened.



IETM Focus Meeting © Bo Vloors

When we focus exclusively on funding systems which concentrate solely on new creations, it creates various negative side effects in the sector, such as:

- The artistic quality of the work
- Relationships with audiences
- The social rights of performing arts professionals
- Their careers and personal wellbeing
- The environmental sustainability of the sector
- Time and resources to develop new collaboration models

Participants deemed slowing down and allowing more time for reflection, research and communication, as well as rehearsal and longevity of performances, as the most urgent changes needed both in **the funding for the arts** and for the way **art professionals** structure their own working cycles.

Focus meeting participants made a clear distinction whose responsibility it should be to change for the better. As you read, you can identify those responsible in the 'urgency' section through the following colour code:

- funders
- artist organisations
- the sector



**Funding for the arts** needs to shift towards supporting and stimulating environmentally sustainable practices of production and touring - both at local and global levels.

The most important **urgencies and recommendations on how to counteract** shared by participants can be categorised into several groups:

## Power Relations

### URGENCY

If a conventional, hierarchical mindset prevails in organisations and funding bodies, there is no space for a fairer and more horizontal distribution of power and decision-making. In such hierarchical structures, competition is the main tool for career development. This limits the opportunities for professionals from underserved groups, and reproduces structural inequalities, exclusion and underrepresentation - even if so-called 'quotas' are implemented. In terms of funder-artist relationships, a hierarchical mindset doesn't allow for reciprocity. Artists find themselves catering to funders' expectations and therefore compromising their artistic values.

### RECOMMENDATION

We have seen several examples of **artistic organisations** who have implemented horizontal decision-making procedures<sup>2</sup>, as well as alternative ways to allocate funding, emerge. These horizontal practices should be well communicated by **the sector** in order to reach both artists and policy-makers.

### URGENCY

Despite several positive developments and examples of fair practices, the subordinate position against institutional powers artists often find themselves in has to be addressed and fought against by politicians and policy makers.

### RECOMMENDATION

An honest and active conversation between **policy-makers** and **the sector** regarding expectations and limitations would help to build step-by-step concrete strategies and measures for the shift towards fairer practices in the arts<sup>3</sup>.

### URGENCY

Freedom of expression by artists is under attack in democratic societies and even more so under authoritarian regimes.

### RECOMMENDATION

**The arts sector** needs to join forces and defend the freedom of expression by artists. Several organisations, like [Article 19](#), [Freemuse](#), [Artists at Risk Connection](#) and [more](#) work specifically to protect artistic expression.

## Access and Equal Opportunity

### URGENCY

Participation in the arts is a social right, which has to be equally accessible to all. Although the fair distribution of access to the arts - both attending and participating - has been on the radar of national and transnational (EU, UNESCO) policies and programmes, there is still a lot of work to be done.

### RECOMMENDATION

Targeted measures to ensure fair and equal representation in the arts sector for all, and especially for vulnerable groups, should be kept at the heart of any **public cultural policy**, stimulating active inclusion and sustainable representation. **Arts organisations** are already implementing inclusive governance policies, which is leading to diverse cultural offers and therefore diverse new audiences. **The arts sector** networks should persist in their research and advocacy efforts to ensure that equal access and opportunity to take part in the arts is always on the agenda.

### URGENCY

Gender based violence remains a huge problem in the arts sector. A recent research<sup>4</sup> reveals that "*contrary to the cool, informal, accessible and egalitarian reputation of the cultural and creative sectors, there are in fact more hidden hierarchies and power relations. The informality is a blessing and a curse it seems, as have been evinced in previous sections. Sexual harassment happens in the cultural and creative industries, and seems to be more prevalent in these sectors than in other economic sectors.*"

The informality and lack of rules and procedures in our sector hits those who are the most vulnerable the hardest. It was commonly agreed by Focus participants that the culture in our sector and unfair paradigms and structures makes female artists and art professionals the most vulnerable, as they are subject to harassment and bullying in the workplace. They seem to not have the same opportunities as male artists in terms of career development and no access to leadership and managerial positions. Women are also usually the main caregivers, be it of children, parents, relatives, etc.

The lack of access to a support system for caregiving, as well as the rapid tempo of creative production imposed by existing funding schemes, hinders women's opportunities for career development even further. Participants from various backgrounds felt this was a problem both in institutions and in freelance practices.

### RECOMMENDATION

**Arts organisations, festivals** and venues must pay attention to how many women they are representing, and make sure female artists receive equal attention. This way, female professionals stand an equal chance of being hired for managerial positions and attention is brought to gender representation in the decision making processes as a whole.

[#MeToo in the Arts: From call-outs to structural change](#), a recent research based publication led by IETM and On the Move, as part of the [Shift project](#), offers detailed recommendations for **the arts sector** on how to tackle gender inequality; working towards creating a sector-wide standard for arts leaders to receive formal training in creating safe professional environments and prioritising structural work on gender equity and diversity, both on a national and transnational level.

2 | This IETM meeting report highlights several examples of horizontal processes [https://www.ietm.org/system/files/publications/mind\\_the\\_gap\\_0.pdf](https://www.ietm.org/system/files/publications/mind_the_gap_0.pdf) and this IETM publication is a case study of alternative funding practices <https://www.ietm.org/en/resources/toolkits/supporting-relevance-ideas-and-strategies-for-inclusive-fair-and-flexible-arts>

3 | IETM has initiated such conversation for years and continues to advocate for improved working conditions of artists, recognition of the status of artists and position of freelance artists. One of the latest efforts in this regard was a Policy Statement on a EU action towards a sustainable and fair situation of artists and cultural professionals, written by IETM and endorsed by several other European networks. <https://www.ietm.org/en/advocacy/policy-papers/policy-statement-eu-action-towards-a-sustainable-and-fair-situation-of>

4 | <https://eenca.com/eenca/assets/File/EENCA%20publications/Final%20Report%20-%20Gender%20in%20CCS%20EAC%20with%20Additional%20sections%20AV%20and%20Radio.pdf>

**URGENCY**

There is poor access for young artists and art professionals, and less opportunities for ageing artists. The continuous demand for the “new” devalues experience and artistic maturity. As a result, young artists only see older artists who are not able to sustain themselves, and therefore decide to step away and leave the sector.

**RECOMMENDATION**

New, fairer working models must allow opportunities for new professionals and sustainability for established ones. This has to be tackled on a **policy level**, but **art organisations** can and already are implementing solutions for age-related discrimination in the sector. For instance, [Contact Theatre \(UK\)](#) is engaging young people at all levels of its organisation. Some Focus meeting participants shared they are envisaging mentoring programmes that will connect established and mature professionals with newcomers in the field.

**URGENCY**

Although the conversation on inequality in the arts gravitated towards age and gender unfairness at the Focus meeting, the shared understanding was that any hindrance to access, based on ethnicity, sexuality, background, physical or neurological diversity, needs urgent attention.

Several programmes which foster international touring and cooperation claim they promote diversity, but in reality, various types of artists are often left behind, either because the countries they are based in do not provide adequate funding for taking part in international projects, or because they originate from a minority group that is systematically hindered in access to funding<sup>5</sup>. In addition, many international projects allow a considerable pay gap for the same work for artists from different countries. Some producers decide to compensate from their share, but this cannot be a sustainable practice.

**RECOMMENDATION**

International touring and cooperation schemes should be developed by **policy-makers** with a view of ensuring diversity of voices and inclusion, as well as maintaining environmental sustainability. Projects such as [Perform Europe](#) have made these recommendations in this regard. We need to develop cross-border codes for fair payment so that art professionals from different countries receive fair and equal remuneration for the same work. This could be negotiated with the joint efforts of **the sector**. The Creative Europe programme could be the first to enforce such fair practice codes.

**URGENCY**

The dominating use of English as an international language is unfair.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Artists and organisations** can do much more to encourage a wide variety of languages in their communications, by providing translation and interpretation, encouraging the use of international sign languages and even allowing body language and dance for self-expression in the artistic environment.

- funders
- artist organisations
- the sector

5 | Several examples of such minority groups exist. Here we name one example, artists from the Roma ethnic and other traveller groups. Data on Roma ethnic groups is scarce. It mainly focuses on human rights as access to healthcare, education, work and shows the grim conditions these ethnic groups are living in throughout Europe. See: [Advancing Roma inclusion](#), ONCHR and minorities report collection or [Breaking the Cycle of Roma Exclusion in the Western Balkans](#), WB 2019.

**Social Rights****URGENCY**

A lack of social security has been a persistent issue for decades in the performing arts, in particular for freelance artists and producers. The pandemic made it a crucial urgency: there is a critical need for social and economic security across the sector.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Introducing paid leave, including maternity and caregiving leave, and establishing the status of the artist and its benefits across funding and taxation systems, are among the main tools to counteract precariousness in the sector. **The sector** and **funders** should work together on this major shift towards achieving a better work-life balance. **Art professionals**, on their part, have to insist on including social security benefits in their contracts.

**Fair play****URGENCY**

Negotiating pay equality within the sector, locally and on an international level, is a prerequisite for fair distribution of funding.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Salary rates have to be adjusted to the actual level of living costs. This is the responsibility of **art organisations** and **funders** and concerns both freelance and employed art professionals.

**URGENCY**

Continuous demand for new productions is not sustainable; increasing the volume of productivity as a model of continuous growth is not sustainable either.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**The sector** has to join forces and advocate for a fair **payment structure** that allows for paid research and fundraising periods, sick and carers leave and annual leave, and not just compensation for production and final output.

**URGENCY**  
 A considerable part of the working hours of art professionals and organisations goes into funding applications and reporting. These hours are often unpaid.

**RECOMMENDATION**  
 Minimising the bureaucracy of **access to funding** and simplifying **procedures**, especially for project-based activities. Allowing work hours spent on writing applications to be part of funding applications budgets.

**URGENCY**  
 In some countries, artists' pay falls into flexible expenditures and when budget cuts happen, artists and producers are usually the first to suffer.

**RECOMMENDATION**  
 This practice has to be banished by the **policy-makers and funding organisations**, as it is undoubtedly unfair.

**Budgeting**

**URGENCY**  
 Participants shared the perception of a lack of transparency around budgets in the sector.

**RECOMMENDATION**  
 There is a need for budget transparency within **organisations**. In a joint project, it is fair to be informed who receives what and why. Furthermore, budget transparency can expand to any publically funded projects as a requirement from the **funders**.

- funders
- artist organisations
- the sector

**URGENCY**  
 Once again, the focus on production skews the nature of artistic processes. There is often funding available for producing new work, but not for artists and organisations to show existing work. They can neither delve into new research, connect with audiences or develop young talents by passing on knowledge and experience.

**RECOMMENDATION**  
 A fundamental shift in **funding schemes** should address these unsustainable practices for **artists and organisations**, and **the sector** should insist on this immediate shift. Organisational and project sustainability should be reflected in budgets, as well as structural support and capacity building for artists, producers and art professionals. This is once more a shared responsibility of **artists and policy-makers**.  
  
 Lastly, but not less importantly, contracts across **the sector** should reflect the principles of fair practices, including a fair distribution of power and benefits. In general, contracts should reflect a framework of clear organising principles for a transparent and equitable arts ecosystem.



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# Mapping good practices

The urgencies above are already being acted upon in many art organisations and individual practices around the world. Some truly inspiring examples of practices and initiatives from organisations, new policies, and joint efforts in the sector were shared during the discussions and the brainstorming session Two Case Studies. Several key elements were agreed upon as fundamental to have in mind for the transition needed.

On one hand, participants agreed that it is counterproductive to try to impose a global and ultimate model for change towards all organisations and art professionals, as local contexts differ substantially, and what brings fairness in one context might alleviate inequalities in others. The values and the ethos of fairness in the arts can be shared across the sector, while the actual steps and priorities are best to be defined on a local level. A participant gave an example of introducing green travel practices when touring: for some regions, this is a long-awaited change of mind shift and budget redistribution, while some countries are simply lacking infrastructure for green transition or are geographically isolated (island position).

On the other hand, privilege refusing to let go of the old ways and deeming change unfair has to be distinguished, addressed and counteracted. Moreover, we have to admit that we are all privileged in certain aspects, compared to those missing at such brainstorming meetings.

The [Rewiring the Network report](#) presented a two-path trajectory for the transition of the performing arts to a sustainable future which proved valid in the case of fair practice transition as well: unfair practices should be broken down, while fair practices should be recognised and supported; and this can only happen through the joint effort of all players in the sector.

During the *Fair Enough?* workshops, participants shared the understanding that 'unlearning the old ways', 'de-growth', 'stepping back' and the consequent potential loss of income and shrinking of activities are the necessary detriments of opening space for positive changes. Securing the transparency of decision making, bringing new voices in the decision making process and implementing policies against transgressive behaviour in the workplace will most likely increase the administrative burden over organisations, and will require extra effort from individuals. The implementation of ecologically sustainable production and touring comes at a greater cost in the beginning of the process. Yet all these steps need to be taken on the path towards a fair future for the performing arts.

So, how can the sector take this on? As it has been clearly stressed, the fundamental shift towards fairer practices will come with change on the policy-making level. All the advocacy work needed is beyond the capability of a single player, but the joint efforts of the sector in producing consistent messages, appeals and campaigns can make this major change happen. On the other hand, fair practices and good examples need amplification. The sector should support art professionals and organisations on their path to fairer practices by collecting know-hows, providing guidelines and by celebrating good examples and making them visible.

**Below are the ideas that came from the participants at the *Fair Enough?* Focus meeting, when reflecting on their own practices and what the art networks that they are engaged with already do.**

- **Common wallet to resolve unfair funding distribution**  
The Common wallet project from the keynote presentation was recognised as a working solution to tackle payment inequality in transnational projects with huge pay gaps. All it needs is transparency, radical trust and mutual agreement. Furthermore, joint advocacy efforts can lead to the restructuring of funding for international and cross border projects, so that inequalities are alleviated.



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- **Universal wages in the performing arts sector**

In general, the negotiation of universally recommended wages and rates in countries, industries and international projects was viewed positively. However, justified concerns were raised about the fair distinction between roles and functions for various institutions in the sector, i.e. technicians or administrators of smaller and larger organisations and festivals, as well as both beginners and experienced professionals. The lack of transparency on wages in the sector, even within a single organisation, exacerbates the problem of fair budgeting for artists, producers and productions.

To begin solving wage discrepancies, we need to ensure transparency and a fair distinction between roles and positions within the sector.

- **More care for the caregivers**

Numerous concerns were raised on how unfair the performing arts sector practices are for caregivers, many of which are predominantly women taking care of children and sick, or elderly relatives. Policies need to change, but a systematic change towards better work-life balance in the sector is also needed. The efforts of the sector to secure proper paid maternity or caregivers leave and opportunities for flexible working hours – both on the policy level and for implementing these social security practices in each organisation and project - will support this change.

- **Deliberate step back from positions of power**

Every individual that has power should recognise that there is a part of that power which can and should be given to someone who has less of a voice. We should ask ourselves the following questions:

- What part of my power have I been holding for too long?
- What part of my power must I share with others?
- Who has less access to being heard than me?
- How can I share my power with them?

Responding to these questions honestly is key for the process.

Undoubtedly, this is not an easy process, and the performing arts sector can support this individual mindset change with various awareness-raising initiatives and through leading by example.

- **Fair practice codes of conduct**

A compendium of shared fair practices, along with concrete action plans and best practice recommendation, can counteract the injustice of payment gaps, gender and social inequalities, harassment, exploitation and life-work imbalance, as they supply a solid knowledge base for networks and organisations to streamline their efforts on a local level. *Juist is Juist* is a strong example of a charter for fair practices in the arts (more are listed in [Appendix A](#)).

For example, maintaining up-to-date terms of references, digital libraries of relevant codes of conduct and artist statements and sample/template agreements is something the sector can already facilitate.

- **Mind our carbon footprint and continuously and actively foster sustainable practices when faced with climate change**

The rich and the privileged are the ones who have to make the most radical changes in order to combat climate change.

Each individual and organisation should make the contribution and changes they are able to in order to lower their carbon footprint. Many good examples and tools are available for carbon footprint control and guidelines to change behaviours. The sector has to promote and share possible methods and tools and take into account the differences in geographical and social contexts.

- **Slow down and de-grow. Do less, but do it better**

The general understanding that other aspects of creativity such as reflection, research, experiment, community involvement and relationships, sustainable touring, experiencing the full life-cycle of an artwork and enjoying a healthy work-life balance are no less important than production, which now seems the sole focus of the prevailing neo-liberal funding systems. We jointly need to agree on this systematic change and advocacy efforts of the whole arts sector, as funding bodies have to shift their mindset from valuing overproduction to a holistic approach for the arts sector.

# Prototyping the fair future of Performing Arts

While the two sessions on the first day of IETM Focus meeting mapped out the broader view of urgencies and examples of fair practice solutions, the second day was dedicated to imagining the future, with a creative session of prototyping bold individual visions for a new, fair practice in the sector. Participants worked either individually or in small groups. They had access to coloured pencils, markers, post-it notes, paper, lego building blocks, ribbons and natural materials like weeds, flowers and pebbles and two hours to create their metaphor of a fair practice or a fair organisation in the performing arts sector. The goal of the creative session was that every participant had the opportunity to 'take something home' and to find out which of the number of ideas and solutions generated in the group discussions can feed their own context and practices at home. *"It would be interesting to revisit participants within several months to see which seeds would sprout, which changes are on the way and whether our generated knowledge and ideas have been multiplied in local contexts."* said Ingrid, the designer of the *Fair Enough?* Focus meeting.



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The prototypes generated during the third session ranged from horizontal organisational modelling and shared governance; transparency around wages, budgets and opportunities; honesty, dialogue and trust; fair working conditions and equal access and opportunities; language diversity; systematic change and environmental sustainability. Artists, producers, funders, citizens, animals and plants – everyone was included in these bold new visions.

An island of dreams and creativity, a garden of delight, residencies for artists, houses of love and happiness, plants, boats, Lego constructions, bee hives, an octopus and even a persona named Poppy were among the prototypes presented.

## Here are a few highlights:

### “The garden of delights”

This model focused on the issue of transparency around pay, budgets and opportunity. Currently, the annual budget of the organisation is presented to and negotiated with the board of directors but not to employees or freelancers. If the budget would be shared transparently within the organisation and its contractors, maybe this will contribute to better collaboration. What is the essence of the garden of delights? The greenhouse represents a controlled space of safety, while the idea of the garden gives more space for growth. If plants (employees) are completely sheltered, then they will not be creatively independent.

The garden gives both security, care and independence. In terms of organisational structure, this model states that hierarchy should be reversed at times, while artists and producers each get a time to shine when they feel like it. This can be a more sustainable creative practice where ideas and inspiration can grow at different rates and times, therefore achieving a hybrid output between ideas and people.

To realise this ecosystem model, there is a plethora of different spaces in an organisation which can alternate between walled off areas for protection, messy areas for spontaneity, publicly visible areas, privately visible areas and most importantly a place to congregate in the centre. The method would be for the team to rotate around this 'garden space'.

The tagline is '*brave spaces instead of safe spaces*'.

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**“The Ecosystem of the Sloth”**

The sloth was chosen as a metaphor to represent a new fairer practice based on the generally expressed need to slow down and allow more time for reflection and research. The sloth has the time to climb the tree slowly, i.e. start a project, reflect on its ideas and activities, have doubts and conflict by going slowly and having the time and acceptance to develop at its own pace. Once the sloth has reached the top of the tree, it may gaze at the stars, and contemplate new ideas. Why is it an ecosystem? Because there are other animals in the forest the sloth can rely on. The immediate step a small-scale organisation can take to embrace the value of slowness is to break free from the fear of working at a slow pace.

**‘The pause’**

This prototype targets the feeling of being burnt out and issues of team communication and team structures. There is a need to pause in order to reset the working mentality from production and set it up for research, development and wellbeing. The main method of this prototype is to allow the organisation’s team a dedicated ‘time for nothingness’, with no expectations for production. This period should be fully paid. Inspiration sessions and team building exercises would better help to understand how the team functions than dedicating most of the time to administrative tasks. In practice, this would entail employees arriving at work but not actually working. The pressure of always finding an outcome (in team outings) can be restrictive to employee wellbeing.

The tagline for this prototype is *‘rather be a human being than a human doing’*.

The argument is that the productivity reached after such a time of nothingness will be effective in the long term, and could convince public stakeholders to fund the experiment.

**‘Cookuburo’**

The reason to choose a ‘kookaburra’ (an Australian bird) as the project title is because laughter is essential for positive appreciation for work and routine.

This prototype is aimed at welcoming laughter, pleasure and mutual understanding at the heart of an arts organisation (where these values belong). The Focus meeting participants who drafted the Cookuburo prototype envisaged creating a dedicated financial provision for psychological consultation. They suggested that business psychologists would be of great benefit to an organisation’s creativity and pleasure. In addition, this would ensure an understanding for each other in the team. Specifically, it is essential for employees to collectively discuss how they can complete their tasks, as it is common not to know what is consuming other people’s time. Knowing what the other is doing would boost both appreciation and knowledge. Therefore, finding new working solutions would be more efficient. Lastly, if everyone knows what everyone is doing, then people will have faith in each other. To fund this, the group suggested the fees for these professional psychological consultations should be included in the budget applications as measures for sustainability.

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## Conclusion

The accumulated examples of fair practices shared during the two days of the *Fair Enough?* Focus meeting clearly demonstrates that a lot has been done by the sector in this direction and that many organisations are taking steps to install fairness, inclusivity and trust in their work. A massive structural change is needed, one that will shift not only the arts and culture but our thinking towards a fairer and more sustainable society. Artists have always been at the avant-garde of change. The shift towards radical inclusion or zero-damage art practices that seemed fringe and 'hippie' a decade ago have now become 'the hype' [mainstream].

Performing arts networks are invaluable as the fertile grounds for fair culture - art professionals understand they are not alone and their knowledge and resources, and new models can be shared and multiplied. Networks can initiate conversations with other sectors (educational, welfare and so on) and join efforts for fair change of the principles of funding in the public sector as a whole.

It has been clearly articulated in the discussions that fairness is directly linked to deeper aspects that lie beyond the power of the arts sector, but lie in the fabric, values and characteristics of society and communities of individuals. Freedom, liberty, kindness, love, empathy, compassion, trust and care are some of the aspects at stake, which we need to take into account when designing what constitutes the centre of our practices.

Yet before all, we have to embrace honesty and admit that resources are not shared fairly, that decolonisation is still in process, that body ability, background, age, gender, language and geopolitical position are still barriers to access and participation in the international performing arts sector. We therefore have to keep in mind and constantly work - individually and collectively - towards the fair future we envision.

During the final conclusion session, one participant posed the following questions, with which we mark the end of this report:

*“How often do we think if our actions towards other people are fair or not?”*

*Do we need a crisis to remind us to be fair?*

*How can we move on from subjective concepts of fairness to objective ones?”*

# APPENDIX A

Mapping of good practices, presented at IETM *Fair Enough?* Focus meeting, Brussels, 2022

## Re: Contracting

Tools (toolkits, mappings of good practices and so on), sample contracts and codes of practice for contracting can guide arts professionals towards reaching more transparency and fairness for companies and artists. Participants expressed the need for maintaining a common up-to-date knowledge base of the best practices in the field. Below is what is already available:

Fair collaboration toolkit (EUNIC) - discusses values, language, legal contracts and projects.

Fair Practice code (UK, BE) - collaborative process between theatre production players to create 'a code' in fair public practice. Values are stated as non-binding responsibility of an organisation or producer when applying for money. These are centred around respect, responsibility, solidarity and transparency.

The development platform / Performing arts platform (Denmark) - courses and networks to establish a platform for producers to be aware of issues and support each other. The initiative is governmentally supported.

Charter on fair practices (Flanders) - ensures solidarity among artists.

## Re: Access and equal opportunity

As mentioned above, diversity in arts organisations and audiences go hand in hand. (See also Please turn off your cell phone, Cultural democracy in practice, Everyday creators: friends or foes?, Mind the gap: audience, governance and policies).

Artists and organisations are piloting numerous inspiring inclusion practices in different countries. Many participants shared that their organisations try to have diverse teams at all times, collaborate with professionals from a wide range of backgrounds, include audiences in creative processes, make the effort to sometimes work in atypical theatre venues and go to other non-performing arts spaces, which gives them the freedom to break the so-called "fourth wall".

Someone shared that their organisation allocates 5% of every budget to diversity and access. It is the same principle as allocating a part of the budget for contingency costs. This diversity or access budget can be used in different ways depending on the needs of the organisation and specificity of the project. Some examples are artists who need to have a space for rest and prayer, and justified funding for personal assistants for people with disabilities.

Diversified funding support, originating from different sectors like social welfare, education and healthcare, helps bring together artists and communities to co-design artistic work.

An Australian arts company has decided to split the director's salary to create a first nations co-director role and look for ways to redistribute power. Participants agreed that although it is a difficult decision, the privileged ones have to take their personal responsibility and step back in order to make space for the fair change in power distribution.

It has become a practice in some contexts that the board of performing arts organisations writes a parity and diversity charter, advising that a considerable share of co-production money goes to women, people of colour, ethnic minorities or differently abled people.

For instance, the National Theatre of Scotland, which does not have a building of their own, has implemented a policy that 25% of all commissions have to go to people of colour. They perform in every part of Scotland, and they are currently rewriting their mission to talk about having love as their first value.

Keychange festivals have committed to having 50% of their programme be female. Gender preference in programming is clearly articulated.

A project in Berlin called "Fair Stage" (by LAFT Berlin) outlines the value of what fair group practices are already in place in Berlin. Shared with state-funded theatres.

## Re: Risk and Power

Nolan principles - principles for good governance (UK) - standards in the public sector, most notably charities, can be implemented in performing arts organisations and individual practices too. Include selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Roundtable of dance 2018 (Berlin) - working groups that were open to anyone who identifies as a dance professional. The discussions were summarised in a report with recommendations; one of them moving funding from art centres to artists. As a result, dance artist scholarships are expected to become fast, unbureaucratic and not production-oriented.

Self-mistake (Portugal) - risk funding. It resists the artistic obligation to present a production by allowing grants to be given without this clause.

Triple bottom line accounting practice: evaluating money, environmental and social impact. Every line in the budget needs to take those three factors into account. Additionally, spending locally in disadvantaged communities and using the caterer where the show is happening helps reduce the carbon footprint of the artistic project and boosts local communities. This evaluation practice demonstrates clearly how changes for a better future take place.

Creation of PADA network for agencies and art producers, (Iran) that make artists' work circulate. It is a way to switch power and focus from programmers and curators to artists' collaborators. Five different working groups tackle various matters.

Sharing curatorial power (for example in international festivals) proved to work towards amplifying equal access to the arts. Some of the solutions are to give the power to under-represented artists to curate pieces, share a risk with them and trust them. The experience of Openoffice La Bellone is within this direction. One afternoon a month, art producers from Brussels gather at La Bellone and are available for any artist to come in and ask questions or assistance on their projects

## Re: Sustainability

Achieving the environmental sustainability of a performing arts project when funding doesn't deliberately allocate funds for such steps is a complicated task for any art practice. Yet several participants reported finding solutions, while everyone agreed that a major shift in funding policies is needed to back-up the environmental sustainability of projects.

TRACE platform - measuring every aspect of the project and aiming to be carbon neutral. There is a paid licence for this tool.

Choosing to travel by train when this is a feasible option has become a common practice.

In general, travel and touring seems to have the largest carbon footprint in performing arts activities. A suitable solution was found by the Sonica biennial festival. They invite artists to present different work for two weeks and to stay longer, with a minimum of 5 nights.



## Re: Social rights

'[The Balancing act](#)' (Canada) initiative done by the feminist fund tackles concepts such as how we include child care in artist budgets. Deals with conversations on equity compliance and intersectionality at a governance level. The aim is fostering dialogue and experimentation.

[Reshape project EU](#), a three year research and design trajectory - 60 artists, focused on five issues on fairness: the value of arts and social fabric, transnational and post national working, good governance (solidarity), etc. People from different backgrounds working on prototypes to overcome issues over three years. This could be useful in dealing with Covid-19 and establishing a solidarity arts field.

## Re: Fees & Fair pay

[Minimum salary agreement / funding - \(Germany\)](#) is a way to address the status of the artist, although there are some issues and clauses, which can restrict artists from receiving funding.

'[Freelancers make theatre work](#)' + 'freelance Taskforce' (UK) is an inclusive network of over 200 000 freelance workers in all tracks of the performing arts sector that engages with advocacy campaigns and fair working conditions for independent professionals.

Ireland pilots [the basic income for artists](#) - in 2022 about 2000 artists are appointed to receive it.

[The Common wallet project](#): a group of artists, producers and programmers who decided to put their money in the same bank account.

Experience to "pay what you want" for venue tickets. Forces spectators to have a reflection on where they are coming from.

Other actions briefly mentioned:

- [Broodfonds \(NL\)](#) applicants for a grant decide how it is distributed together
- '[Ons Fonds](#)' (NL) Peergroup funding
- Common Income (BE)
- [SOS Releif](#) (BE)
- [Right is Right / Juist is Juist](#)

