

IETM TOOLKIT

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# A FOR ADVOCACY

## *A basic framework for arts professionals*



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**A for Advocacy. A basic framework for arts professionals**

***IETM Toolkit***

**by Elena Di Federico**

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General coordination: Elena Di Federico, Nan van Houte, Elena Polivtseva (IETM)

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For further information please contact [ietm@ietm.org](mailto:ietm@ietm.org)

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# Foreword

Advocating for the arts at the EU level is part of IETM's mission, and advocacy at EU, local and national level has been a recurrent topic of discussion during IETM meetings, at least in the last ten years. Various sessions and working groups have dealt with various aspects of advocacy, and in 2015 and 2016, two Satellite meetings focused respectively on 'The art of valuing' (for arts councils and other policy-makers) and 'Valuing the arts' (gathering artists, policy makers and research institutes). While this consistency reflects the ongoing struggle taking place across Europe to defend public funding for the arts, over the years there has been a shift in the overall attitude and target groups. The earlier sessions mainly aimed to gather individual arts professionals for a common discussion, to share their experiences and discuss how to amplify their individual voices; later meetings provided training and concrete tools to advocate for the arts at national level; the latest gatherings have paid attention to involve cultural policy-makers in a joint reflection with practitioners, to define relevant arguments to defend public budgets for the arts. This shift reflects a change in the actual needs of the field: the old model - the arts professionals applying for subsidies on one hand, and the policy-makers taking decisions about those applications on the other hand - has evolved into a situation where the two parties often fight side-by-side to defend the importance of investing public money in the arts.

Following the request of its members, IETM has developed this Toolkit building on the discussions on advocacy held at IETM meetings since 2008 and on concrete actions carried out by IETM members in different countries. The publication summarises the key elements of advocacy, presents some inspiring practical cases from different countries, and offers links to practical resources - all freely available online - to develop a thorough advocacy action.

Overall, this Toolkit aims to provide a solid ground to continue the conversation within IETM, and to build the capacity of IETM members to advocate for better conditions for the (performing) arts in their own countries. It hopes to help individuals and small-/medium-sized organisations with little or no experience in advocacy (whether because of limited resources or mission) to engage in defending their case at the local and national level. While the general principles of advocacy apply everywhere, certain parts of the Toolkit - particularly the case studies - focus mostly on Europe.

As Milena Dragičević Šešić suggested at the opening of 'Valuing the arts', the [IETM Satellite meeting in Paris](#) in March 2016, 'culture should be defended as a human right, as a space of critical thinking, as a right to dignity and dissent, as a space of debate of core social values, as the guardian of societies' past - a past they

sometimes risk, or would like to, forget'. But the arts are also about imagining alternatives to the current reality. Advocating for the arts is ultimately advocating for a better future.

You're welcome to join the conversation on our [Members' Forum](#) and during the [next IETM meetings](#).

We would like to thank all our members who shared their experiences in advocacy, in particular Barbara Poček, Cristina Carlini, Grzegorz Reske, Pippa Bailey, Rutger Gernandt, Susanne Næss Nielsen, Katrin Hrusanova and Vesselin Dimov.

# 1

## *Introduction*

## DEFINING ADVOCACY

The Merriam-Webster English Dictionary defines advocacy as 'The act or process of supporting a cause or proposal'.

Višnja Kisić and Goran Tomka define awareness raising and advocacy as two 'complex processes that aim to change the way an issue is understood, covered, financed and dealt with, which can include a variety of possible activities and methodologies'. The main difference, according to their '[Awareness raising and advocacy learning kit for heritage civil society organisations](#)', is that 'in advocacy the addressees are more narrowly defined: they are decision makers of some kind, usually politicians. However, there is no advocacy without raising the awareness (of decision makers) and no real consequence of raising awareness without some kind of changed decision-making (by different groups)'.

The Arterial Network's '[Arts advocacy toolkit](#)' builds upon the definition of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance of advocacy as 'a process of influencing people in positions of power, be they individuals, groups or institutions, to bring about favourable change in policies, laws and practice'. The same toolkit also defines advocacy as 'what networks, NGOs, community groups and institutions use to make changes in their environment, community, workplace or government, by raising awareness'.

However, policy-makers are not only 'advocacy targets': IFACCA's '[Good practice guide on arts advocacy](#)' suggests that, in some ways, all that national arts councils and arts agencies do is advocacy: 'a central role of arts councils and cultural agencies is to make the case for the arts. [It is] important to recognize that advocacy happens in lots of different ways, and takes place both formally and informally, consciously and unconsciously'<sup>1</sup>.

Overall, advocacy is about different ways to relate to power (UNICEF), and in this sense there are several possible approaches:

- **Constituency building:** reinforcing the voice of those you represent; empowering them to advocate for their cause, instead of speaking on their behalf;
- **Education:** educating, informing your target audiences (for instance, policy-makers) on the specificities of your field/concerns/interests/demands;
- **Cooperation:** engage in joint projects with your target audiences (for instance, common workshops with policy makers);

- **Persuasion:** win policy makers/politicians over to your cause, give them arguments to propose amendments to policies;
- **Pilot programmes:** providing proof of your arguments; make sure you can test your idea within a specific time & location and demonstrate the results;
- **Litigation:** disputing a negative funding decision by complaining to a Board of appeal or going to court;
- **Confrontation:** showing the decision-makers the real consequences of a decision by means of a concrete case;
- **'Good cop/Bad cop':** showing the decision-makers what would happen if the request wouldn't be implemented and, vice versa, what they gain by supporting you.

Advocacy has developed in different ways in each country, mostly in line with the way public funding has traditionally been allocated to the arts - a given in some places, an exception in others; this has influenced the need, and therefore the capacity (and/or the habit) of the arts sector to get together and defend its own interests. However, the interest for advocacy seems to have increased in the arts field everywhere since the beginning of the economic recession in 2007, which affected also the availability of public funding for culture.

In the last ten years or so, the arts sector around Europe (and beyond) has faced mounting pressure to justify public investment in the arts by proving their 'value'; several studies (see Resources) describe how engaging in the arts ('actively' or 'passively', physically or digitally, etc.) benefits individuals and societies. Arts organisations have more or less enthusiastically engaged in the ensuing evaluation processes, and emphasising the 'instrumental values' of the arts has become the new normal. However, many voices have raised to call for greater attention to their intrinsic value, to be acknowledged before focusing on instrumental values or 'spill over effects'.

As IETM meetings are aimed at addressing the most acute and topical issues faced by the contemporary performing arts community, advocacy has been a recurrent topic of discussion in specific sessions at IETM plenaries, and even the focus of whole Satellite meetings (see the Resources below). Interestingly, however, discussions held at IETM meetings around very different topics - from audience development to the environmental crisis, to the rise of populism - often end with some call for action that is, in fact, a succinct advocacy message. This kind of 'advocacy in disguise' is interesting in that it shows the will, and the capacity, of the arts to argue for their value for societies at large.

<sup>1</sup> Ann Bridgwood, 2003, in IFACCA, '[IFACCA Good Practice Guide on Arts Advocacy](#)', 2014

As stated by the [European Alliance for Culture and the Arts](#),

'...culture and the arts (...) are the essence of every civilisational development. They are substantially important to our identity, give meaning to human existence and reflect our shared history. Indeed, European culture and the arts refer to 3000 years of shared cultural heritage while bringing contemporary relevance to people's lives today. Flourishing in dialogue with other cultures, they reflect our "living together", interconnect people in society, transmit knowledge and values. At the same time, they safeguard tangible and intangible evidence of the manmade and natural world for current and future generations.'

'Culture and the arts are the essential drivers of creation and appropriation of meaning. In today's digital world, the arts present the unforeseen and open new perspectives beyond customer-specific solutions. Through the diversity of intellectual and emotional experiences they can teach individuals about complexity. They contribute to the constructive experience of otherness. In this sense, they are an important response to the cultural, social, economic and religious tensions existing inside societies, within the EU and outside European borders.'

Advocacy, however, is not only about 'more subsidies': desirable improvements can concern funding systems that suit the reality of the field, better overall working conditions, a more inclusive sector, a stronger role for the arts in society, access to culture for all... to achieve this, people in decision-making positions need to better understand how the arts sector works. Advocacy should aim to achieve positive, structural changes in the performing arts system to make it fit to the needs of people working in it.

'There is also a pressing need to take better account of the reality of the majority of highly flexible workers in the sector. Alongside the major institutions, there are a plethora of small and micro enterprises, often operating on a project-basis, who have no permanent employees for technical or artistic roles. Thus many of the workers in the sector are active through multiple engagements, often combining different employment statuses and even moving across different countries and national employment regimes. In practice, such workers may encounter difficulties in accessing their social and labour rights and are hard to capture through social dialogue structures.'

['The prime role of culture and the arts in society'](#), Joint statement by the European Social Partners in the Live Performance Sector, 2016

## RESOURCES

- **On the value of culture:**

'Socio-economic impacts of culture', Compendium of cultural policies and trends in Europe: <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/socio-economic-impact-of-culture.php>

'Value of arts', IETM website (Themes): <https://www.ietm.org/en/Value-Of-Arts>

The Warwick Commission on Cultural Value (resources, mostly focused on the UK): <https://warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/resources/research/value/>

Culture Action Europe, 'The value and values of culture', 2018: [https://cultureactioneurope.org/files/2018/02/CAE\\_The-Value-and-Values-of-Culture\\_Full.pdf](https://cultureactioneurope.org/files/2018/02/CAE_The-Value-and-Values-of-Culture_Full.pdf)

EAEA (European Arts and Entertainment Alliance), 'The prime role of culture and the arts in society', Joint statement by the European Social Partners in the Live Performance Sector, 2016: <http://fia-actors.com/policy-work/cultural-exception/cultural-sector-economics/cultural-sector-economics-details/article/the-prime-role-of-culture-and-the-arts-in-society/>

European Alliance for Arts and Culture, 'The power of culture and the arts': <https://allianceforculture.com/the-appeal/>

- **On advocacy:**

Arterial Network, 'Advocacy and networking toolkit', 2014: [http://www.arterialnetwork.org/resources/our\\_publications/art-advocacy-and-networking-toolkit](http://www.arterialnetwork.org/resources/our_publications/art-advocacy-and-networking-toolkit)

IFACCA, 'Good practice guide on arts advocacy', 2014: <https://ifacca.org/en/what-we-do/advocacy/advocacy-tools/good-practice-guide-arts-advocacy/>

Višnja Kisić, Goran Tomka, 'Awareness raising and advocacy. Learning kit for heritage civil society organisations', Europa Nostra, 2018: <http://www.europanostra.org/europa-nostra-publishes-learning-kits-fundraising-advocacy-education-heritage-organisations/>

- **IETM resources:**

'Making our voices heard', report from IETM Plenary meeting in Zurich, 2008: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/making-our-voices-head>

V. Shishkova, 'Beyond the numbers', report from IETM Plenary meeting in Sofia, 2014: [https://www.ietm.org/en/system/files/publications/beyond\\_the\\_numbers\\_report3\\_vsh\\_05\\_11\\_0.pdf](https://www.ietm.org/en/system/files/publications/beyond_the_numbers_report3_vsh_05_11_0.pdf)

V. Shishkova, 'The Art of Valuing: Opening Speeches', report from IETM Satellite meeting in Brussels, February 2015: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/the-art-of-valuing-opening-speeches>

V. Shishkova, 'The Art of Valuing: Panel Discussion', report from IETM Satellite meeting in Brussels, February 2015: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/the-art-of-valuing-panel-discussion>

D. Tepper, 'Valuing the arts', report from IETM Satellite meeting in Paris, 2016: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/valuing-the-arts>

'Advocating for the arts', report from IETM Plenary meeting in Amsterdam, 2016: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/advocating-for-the-arts>

K. Ruklis, 'Communicate, advocate, succeed!', presentation from IETM Plenary meeting in Valencia, 2016: <https://www.ietm.org/sites/default/files/attachments/meetingpage/2016-011-valencia-communicate-advocate-succeed.pdf>

E. Polivtseva, 'How to save Europe', report from IETM Plenary meeting in Bucharest, April 2017: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/how-to-save-europe>

E. Polivtseva, 'Hey, (E)U!', report from IETM Plenary meeting in Brussels, November 2017: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/hey-eu>



# 2

*Advocating for the arts:  
a basic framework to design your plan*

When designing an advocacy strategy, you can consider 5 key questions:

**WHY do you want to engage in advocacy?** Define your goal and objectives.

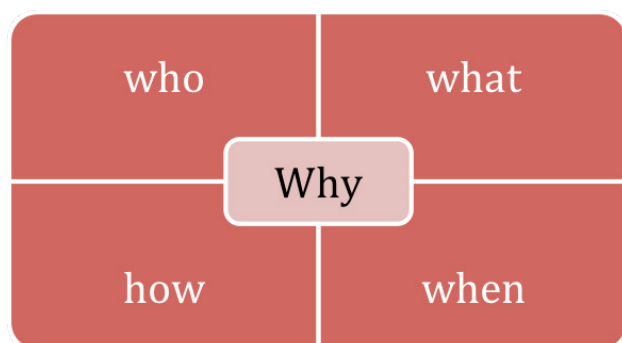
**WHAT do you plan to do?** Define how advocacy fits with your organisation's strategy and mission; quantify the efforts in terms of human resources, money, and working time.

**HOW do you plan to achieve your goals, deliver your message, and carry out your activities?** Shape your core message, your actions (campaign, petitions, etc.) and the tools you will use to reach your objectives; define a monitoring and evaluation system.

**WHO will be your targets, your allies, and your opponents?** Analyse the context you work in and define who you want to influence (your targets), as well as your actual and potential allies and opponents.

**WHEN will you deliver your message? How long will your advocacy action last?** Define an overall timeline - from now to the moment when your goal will be achieved, and the crucial moments to take into account.

The 'why' is the central question to ask yourself - and discuss with your team and partners - before engaging in advocacy; all the other questions relate to each other and can be explored in any order. You will probably go back to each question several times during the planning phase, as well as during the implementation phase.



## RESOURCES

- **Schemes of advocacy campaigns:**

A. Datta, 'Strengthening world vision policy advocacy - a guide to developing advocacy strategies', ODI - Overseas Development Institute, 2011: <https://www.odi.org/publications/5921-strengthening-world-vision-policy-advocacy-guide-developing-advocacy-strategies> (The Rapid framework, pp. 29-30)

Arterial Network, 'Advocacy and networking toolkit', 2014: [http://www.arterialnetwork.org/resources/our\\_publications/art-advocacy-and-networking-toolkit](http://www.arterialnetwork.org/resources/our_publications/art-advocacy-and-networking-toolkit) (especially p. 42)

'ACT! 2015 Advocacy toolkit': <http://restlessdevelopment.org/news/2014/06/20/act-2015-advocacy-toolkit> (see the Advocacy Roadmap, pp. 8, 78-86)

Višnja Kisić, Goran Tomka, 'Awareness raising and advocacy. Learning kit for heritage civil society organisations', Europa Nostra, 2018: <http://www.europanostra.org/europa-nostra-publishes-learning-kits-fundraising-advocacy-education-heritage-organisations/> (from p. 17)

## 2.1. WHY? DEFINING YOUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Obviously, what you should be advocating for depends largely on the situation in your country and the current position of your organisation. Your aim may be for example to have higher public budgets for the arts, to change the criteria used to allocate public grants, to ask for a better consultation with the sector in funding decisions... or others. The first thing to clarify therefore is what you are asking for - imagine an improved but realistic future scenario (your overall goal), and how to get there (your objectives and tools). Based on that, you can develop your message, and also define a way to measure your results.

Much of today's political discourse focuses on 'measuring the value' of the arts (and the public spending on arts), and the sector has often been trapped into proving 'spill-over effects', i.e. the process by which private and public investments in the arts and culture have 'a subsequent broader impact on places, society or the economy through the overflow of concepts, ideas, skills, knowledge and different types of capital' (European Research Partnership on Cultural and Creative Spillovers). However, there is a rich conversation going on around recognising the intrinsic value of the arts first, before looking at their instrumental values. Some suggest that arguing about the value of the arts in terms of a symbiotic relation to other, more broadly recognised sectors (e.g. economy) can be dangerous; the focus, instead, should be on the arts as a valued element of society, which is not questioned in terms of production value.

'Art without doubt contributes to the economy (city branding, gentrification, tourism and jobs, etc.), but art is primarily made to stimulate critical view on the established narratives, educate, open minds and drive social innovation and cohesion.'

IETM, 'Position paper on the mid-term evaluation of Creative Europe and recommendations regarding its post-2020 successor', 2017

'The future EU programme for culture should address the intrinsic value of culture and the arts, which - as vectors of critical thinking and awareness-raising - are crucial for a healthy democracy and a sustainable European project.'

IETM, 'Culture and the arts deserve a strong EU funding programme post 2020', 2018

A useful tool to reflect on the 'big picture' is the RAPID Context, Evidence, Links Framework (in A. Datta, 'Strengthening world vision policy advocacy' - see Resources), which suggests 28 key questions to clarify the external environment, the political context, the links (stakeholders, roles, power relations), and the existing evidence around your topic of interest. As the scheme was developed for international advocacy actions, in order to use it at a national or local level you may use a simplified version with fewer questions, which may include the following questions:

- **External environment:**

1. Who are the main international actors in the policy process? (e.g. the European Commission, UNESCO...)
2. What influence do they have at the national/local level (where you are operating), and who influences them? (e.g. some national or European organisations engaged in advocacy...)
3. What are their priorities and agendas?
4. What data do they use? (e.g. statistics, studies and reports)

- **Political context:**

1. Who are the key policy- and decision-makers?
2. Is there a demand for research and new ideas among policy-makers?
3. Are policies based on evidence (e.g. research, studies, data, collected at local, national or European level)?
4. How is the policy-making environment structured? Who takes decisions, when, where, and based on what?
5. What is the relevant legal basis (e.g. a national cultural policy...)?
6. Is there a way to influence decisions (e.g. a participative approach to policy-making via open consultations)?

- **Links:**

1. Who are the key stakeholders? (e.g. the professional sector, audiences...)
2. Who are the experts (individuals and organisations)?
3. What links and networks exist between them?
4. What role do they play? How do they relate with policy- and decision-makers?
5. How are these experts (individuals and organisations) perceived by the sector? What legitimacy do they have?

- **Evidence:**

1. What is the prevailing narrative? (e.g. how are the arts considered in general?)
2. Is there enough evidence (e.g. data, researches...) available? Is it reliable and convincing?
3. How are you using existing evidence to define your message/ demands? Could you use it better?

Most advocacy toolkits agree that your goals and objectives should be 'S.M.A.R.T.' (although different texts give different explanations of the acronym):

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable (or Agreed)
- Realistic (or Relevant)
- Timely (or Time-based)

However, [Kisić and Tomka](#) suggest that goals should also be A.W.E.S.O.M.E.:

- Adaptable
- Worthy of trust
- Embedded
- Shared
- Open
- Motivated
- Expressed

Take the time to discuss with your team (whoever is involved in the advocacy effort) about your goals and objectives, and to phrase them properly.

## RESOURCES

D. Tepper, 'Valuing the arts', report from the IETM Satellite meeting in Paris, March 2016: <https://www.ietm.org/en/satellite-paris-2016/reports>

'Beyond numbers', Report from the IETM Plenary meeting in Sofia, October 2014: <https://www.ietm.org/en/reports-0>

'The Art of Valuing: between evident and evidence-based', Resources from the IETM Satellite in Brussels, February 2015: [https://www.ietm.org/en/brussels\\_resources](https://www.ietm.org/en/brussels_resources)

V. Shishkova, 'General Mapping of Types of Impact Research in the Performing Arts Sector 2005-2015 (don't panic!); IETM, Brussels, April 2015: <https://www.ietm.org/en/mappings>

V. Shishkova, 'Look, I'm priceless! Handbook on How to Assess your Artistic Organisation', IETM, Brussels, March 2017: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications>

B. Stinehelfer, 'Making our voices heard', report from the IETM Plenary meeting in Zurich, November 2008: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/making-our-voices-head>

V. Kisić, G. Tomka, 'Awareness raising and advocacy. Learning kit for heritage civil society organisations', Europa Nostra, 2018: <http://www.europanostra.org/europa-nostra-publishes-learning-kits-fundraising-advocacy-education-heritage-organisations/>

A. Datta, 'Strengthening world vision policy advocacy - a guide to developing advocacy strategies', ODI - Overseas Development Institute, 2011: <https://www.odi.org/publications/5921-strengthening-world-vision-policy-advocacy-guide-developing-advocacy-strategies> (pp. 29-30: RAPID Context, Evidence, Links Framework)

IETM, 'Position paper on the mid-term evaluation of Creative Europe and recommendations regarding its post-2020 successor', 2017: <https://www.ietm.org/en/position-paper-on-the-mid-term-evaluation-of-creative-europe>

## 2.2. WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO?

If advocacy is part of your organisation's mission, you probably need to reflect regularly on your goals, strategy and allocation of resources; and you may not even need this toolkit, although some of the resources listed here could be useful anyway.

If advocacy is not part of your mission, you may want to engage in it anyway, either because you feel a duty to try and improve the situation, or because it is an opportunity to improve the situation while also positioning yourself in the local/national context. In fact you may even be expected to influence policies, for example if you have an (allegedly) privileged relationship with policy-makers and therefore more chances to be listened to, if you speak on behalf of your sector; or, on the contrary, because you are not publicly funded and therefore you are free to criticize unwelcome policy decisions, since you have 'nothing to lose'. In all these cases, it is crucial to think at an early stage about the human and financial resources you actually have at your disposal to plan and implement an effective advocacy strategy. Otherwise you risk either to let this extra activity eat up too much time and energy of your team, or to be obliged to leave some actions unfinished due to lack of resources (and often a combination of both).

In order to understand how advocacy fits with your organisation's capacity, you may use a classical SWOT analysis, which asks you to define:

- Strength: what strength does your organisation have to engage in advocacy?
- Weaknesses: what are the problematic / weak points of your organisation's ability to engage in advocacy?
- Opportunities: what opportunities do you see in engaging in advocacy?
- Threats: what threats/risks can you foresee in engaging in advocacy?

Ideally, after completing your SWOT analysis, you should try and quantify the resources available for advocacy (assuming that it does not form part of your current mission, and therefore it requires additional resources or changes in current assignments). At this stage you may only be able to make a very general estimation, but while you progress with your advocacy plan, keep in mind to think about money, human resources and time required to carry out each activity.

## RESOURCES

Arterial Network, 'Advocacy and networking toolkit', 2014: [http://www.arterialnetwork.org/resources/our\\_publications/art-advocacy-and-networking-toolkit](http://www.arterialnetwork.org/resources/our_publications/art-advocacy-and-networking-toolkit) (especially p. 42)

## 2.3. HOW DO YOU PLAN TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS, DELIVER YOUR MESSAGE, AND CARRY OUT YOUR ACTIVITIES?

### Gathering evidence

As facts and figures are the language of many politicians, your arguments should be backed up with evidence. First off, gather existing knowledge, and build on it. Effective awareness-raising strategies should be based on the wealth of existing researches, surveys, reports, and case studies already available. Review such tools and use them as a basis to develop your message, adapting it to the specific conditions of the performing arts sector in your context. Look at the bigger picture. For instance, it might be inspiring to consider scientific research into '[happiness indicators](#)', '[quality of life](#)' and emotional responses - you could find new, interesting indicators to support your arguments.

In some cases you may also need to initiate critical research that does not necessarily tick all the policymakers' 'boxes' (or fit their agenda), but offers a genuine picture of the sector. Reclaim the definition and analysis of the arts' value and contribution to society. Consider asking for (higher) envelopes for research, documentation and evaluation within the budget of your and other organisations, to develop sector's owned advocacy tools. Consider partnering with universities or higher education institutes to carry out audience studies for your organisation<sup>1</sup>. Ask society itself why and how the arts are meaningful to them: involve general audience (your community) and researchers in the evaluation of the impact of culture and the arts.

### Shaping your core message

You have to define a core message to convey through your advocacy efforts, and you need to adapt it accordingly to the targets you are addressing, the context, the timing, and the media you are using to communicate.

The Arterial Network's '[Arts advocacy and networking toolkit](#)' suggests to prepare a 'one-minute message', highly efficient for quick and immediate impact. The one-minute message contains:

- Your statement
- Some evidence
- An example
- A call for action

<sup>1</sup> see suggestions in G. Tomka, 'Audience explorations' and V. Shishkova, 'Look, I'm priceless!' - in the Resources

You can then elaborate on the one-minute message in order to deliver longer statements with more evidence and examples, when appropriate.

Communication is crucial, and is also the root of all misunderstanding. Consider not only what you say, but how you say it. It is important to understand how the policy-makers you are addressing see the world and interact with it. When you phrase your message, therefore, you need to find the balance between using 'their' language, even if it instrumentalises the arts, and using arguments that make sense to 'you' - the grassroots. Your discourse should make sense to you, but also be broadly understood. You may need to revise the 'old arguments' used to legitimate support for the arts in the last decades (e.g. national prestige, civilising mission, economic importance, correction of the market, responsibility in the welfare state) and replace or combining them with new ones (e.g. human rights, public interest, social cohesion, etc.) that relate to the deep societal and political evolutions currently at work. You also need to present your arguments in a wording that sounds understandable, and even appealing, to people who do not share your ideas, and possibly engage in dialogue with them.

When crafting your message, be precise: clarify, for instance, if you are speaking about culture and/or the arts or 'creative industries', independent arts or institutionally funded arts, or both. Clear messages should pursue clear objectives in a language that is accessible to all; and different arguments are needed to be effective at local, national and European level. A general message may not be effective to prepare the ground for more specific demands.

A frequent argument of politicians against public funding for the arts is that 'If you need public subsidies it means that your work is not good, otherwise you would be able to sustain yourself'. But if a need for subsidies is a proof of failure, then the bank system and the industry have proved to be real failures based on the enormous subsidies they get. Cultural subsidies are considerably less in volume and they are being administered in a more transparent manner than those of any other sector; only, the same kind of subsidies are allocated to tech companies and others under the name of 'promotion of innovation'

V. Shishkova, 'I am granted therefore I create', report from the IETM Plenary meeting in Valencia, November 2016

Once the message is defined, it is of course crucial to deliver it effectively to your targets. Speaking the politicians' language can help them to understand what the arts sector does; however, a personal story about a real project carried out by real people can speak louder than figures and facts, so common language can be more effective than political jargon. You may also use storytelling to present your message as a catchy story combining key elements

- a hero, a mission to accomplish, a villain, etc. - into a coherent and engaging story (see Europa Nostra's 'Learning kit', p. 23 for suggestions). And you could also imagine artistic ways to deliver your message.

'#WakingTheFeminists began as a campaign for equality for women in Irish theatre in late 2015. The movement was given form by an unprecedented outpouring of personal testimony from hundreds of women working across all areas of Irish theatre - directors, designers, authors, actors, stage managers, technicians, and more - sharing their experiences as victims, or witnesses, of discrimination based on gender.

It became apparent straight away that no research existed to provide context or analysis for these experiences.

The Arts Council of Ireland convened a plenary meeting for the #WTF movement leaders to make a presentation to the full council - a very unusual opportunity. Following the presentation, the Council decided to fund a ground-breaking research into gender balance in ten of the top publicly funded theatre organisations in Ireland over a ten-year period, from 2006-2015, as a way to create a baseline from which changes can be measured. This research, the first of its kind in Ireland, was the piece of the puzzle that was missing: its results fully support the arguments made throughout the #WTF campaign - that women are generally underrepresented as artists in Irish theatre, particularly in the leadership roles of Author and Director, and that this tendency is most evident in the theatre organisations receiving most public subsidies.'

[#Wakingthefeminist website](#)

In recent months, Hungary has been stirred by the public protests against the new higher education law, which threatens to shut down the Central European University. Aniko {Racz} remarked that there is an increased number of artists taking to the streets - theatre-makers, designers, visual artists, etc. - who shape the tone of demonstrations, enriching it with alternative, artistic ways of communication. These new creative elements, reinforced by the sense of humour, make the protest actions much more effective and impactful. Aniko brought a couple of examples for arts used as a tool to point at the absurdity of the current regime, one of which is a street art graffiti campaign of the Two-tailed Dog Party, a recently founded political party.

E. Polivtseva, 'How to save Europe?', Report from IETM Plenary meeting in Bucharest, April 2017

The logo of the Two-Tailed Dog party, a joke political party in Hungary (source: Wikipedia)



Last but not least, social media will certainly play a role in your advocacy efforts; in order to see how they can serve you best, check IFACCA's '[Good practice guide on arts advocacy](#)', that lists successful social media-based advocacy campaigns. '[The complete advocacy guide](#)' by The Campaign Workshop explains how to build a strong digital presence.

## Defining your actions

Knowing your main goal and your objectives, you can decide the actions to undertake. A pragmatic way to proceed would be to look at the objectives you have defined, and to build a list of actions to achieve each objective. It is recommended to list also who is responsible for each action, who else is involved (partners), when this action should happen, and how much it would cost. You may also grade your activities from the easiest to the most complex, or from the most to the least likely to succeed.

As the title suggests, '[Straight to the point. Mapping an advocacy strategy](#)', by Pathfinder International, provides clear explanations to plan your advocacy strategy, and so does the '[ACT! 2015 Advocacy Toolkit](#)'.

A typical advocacy action is a campaign. IFACCA reviewed the following types of campaign:

- **Lobby campaign:** Uses contact and relationship-building with political representatives to secure political support. Makes extensive use of research and other evidence-based materials. Success relies on the strength of relationship and weight of the evidence.
- **Public awareness advertising campaign:** Uses advertisements and other public relations materials to raise general awareness of the campaign and the campaign message. Success relies on effectiveness of advertisements and media coverage.
- **Grass roots campaign:** Engages supporters and activists to disseminate the campaign message and enforce the message via calls to action. Success relies heavily on degree of engagement from supporters and activists.
- **Grass tops campaign:** Uses celebrities and high-influence people to champion the campaign by disseminating and enforcing the campaign message. Success relies heavily on celebrity effectiveness/appeal and celebrity engagement.
- **Astroturf campaign:** Uses campaign-generated content (such as 'human interest' stories) to promote media coverage relating to the campaign. Relies heavily on the effectiveness and appeal of content to attract media coverage. Content is prone to be viewed with suspicion because it is created by the advocate.

- **Sampling the arts campaign:** Uses arts events and products to engage people in the arts with the aim of demonstrating the benefits of the arts through direct experience. Relies heavily on the effectiveness and quality of the event program and on the ability to draw in target audiences.

Most campaigns use a mix of the elements above.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring allows you to assess your results along the way, and realise promptly if you need to adjust your work (e.g. shape the message differently, use different communication tools, increase your social media or offline presence, etc.) to reach your objectives. Evaluating the results of your advocacy activity at the end of it allows you to assess if you have reached your objectives, to learn important lessons for the future, and to justify to your funders and/or constituency (members, audience, Board etc.) the resources you have used.

A best practice, particularly for long-term advocacy activities, would be to write concise monitoring reports regularly; besides allowing a timely assessment of the activities, such reports would build the basis for a final evaluation that you can share more widely. In your evaluation, be honest about the challenges you encountered and the failures, if there were any, but also be fair about your achievements.

A basic framework for monitoring and evaluation consists in listing the objectives and the related actions, and assessing the results. Clear examples are provided in the '[ACT! 2015 Advocacy Toolkit](#)', Europa Nostra's '[Awareness raising and advocacy](#)' toolkit, and Arterial Network's '[Advocacy and networking toolkit](#)'.

## RESOURCES

European Alliance for Culture and the Arts: <https://allianceforculture.com>

- B. Stinehelfer, 'Making our voices heard', report from the IETM Plenary meeting in Zurich, November 2008: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/making-our-voices-head>

D. Tepper, 'Valuing the arts', report from the IETM Satellite meeting in Paris, March 2016: <https://www.ietm.org/en/satellite-paris-2016/reports>

V. Shishkova, 'I am granted therefore I create', report from the IETM Plenary meeting in Valencia, November 2016: <https://www.ietm.org/en/i-am-granted-therefore-i-create>

IETM Themes - Value of Arts: <https://www.ietm.org/en/satellite-paris-2016/reports>

IFACCA, 'Good practice guide on arts advocacy', 2014: <https://ifacca.org/en/what-we-do/advocacy/advocacy-tools/good-practice-guide-arts-advocacy/>

V. Kisić, G. Tomka, 'Awareness raising and advocacy. Learning kit for heritage civil society organisations', Europa Nostra, 2018: <http://www.europanostra.org/europa-nostra-publishes-learning-kits-fundraising-advocacy-education-heritage-organisations/> (p. 33 for the evaluation of the advocacy campaign)

Pathfinder International, 'Straight to the point. Mapping an advocacy strategy', 2011: <http://www.pathfinder.org/publications/straight-to-the-point-mapping-an-advocacy-strategy/> (p. 8 for the list of approaches and activities to plan your advocacy strategy)

'ACT! 2015 Advocacy toolkit': <http://restlessdevelopment.org/news/2014/06/20/act-2015-advocacy-toolkit> (pp. 59-65 for planning your activities; pp. 66-71 for monitoring/stocktaking)

Arterial Network, 'Advocacy and networking toolkit', 2014: [http://www.arterialnetwork.org/resources/our\\_publications/art-advocacy-and-networking-toolkit](http://www.arterialnetwork.org/resources/our_publications/art-advocacy-and-networking-toolkit)

Warwick Commission, 'Resources - Value and Measurement': <https://warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/resources/research/value/>

V. Shishkova, 'Look, I'm priceless! Handbook on How to Assess your Artistic Organisation', IETM, Brussels, March 2017: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications>

G. Tomka, 'Audience explorations. Guidebook for hopefully seeking the audience', IETM, Brussels, 2016: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications>

'Advocating for the arts', Report from the IETM Plenary meeting in Amsterdam, April 2016: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/advocating-for-the-arts>

E. Polivtseva, 'How to save Europe?', Report from the IETM Plenary meeting in Bucharest, April 2017: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/how-to-save-europe>

J. F. Helliwell, R. Layard and J. D. Sachs, 'World Happiness Report 2018': <http://worldhappiness.report/download/>

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Better Life Index: <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/#/111111111111>

The Campaign Workshop, 'The complete advocacy guide', 2015: <https://www.thecampaignworkshop.com/ebook/the-complete-guide-to-advocacy>



## 2.4. WHO ARE YOUR TARGETS, YOUR ALLIES, AND YOUR OPPONENTS?

### Targets

If advocacy is about influencing people, particularly those in positions of power, a crucial step is to define who is in 'power' - who is taking decisions, but also who is able to influence the decision-makers. In Europe there are several resources freely available illustrating cultural policies and decision-making processes in different countries.

The [Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe](#) provides an overview of the situation in [43 countries](#), with the ambition to soon include all 50 member states co-operating within the context of the European Cultural Convention. The Compendium website also includes statistics and an overview of trends. The national experts appointed to keep the country profiles up-to-date may also be well-informed, potential allies for your advocacy activities.

You can find more detailed information about the decision-making processes in the field of culture in your country on the website of the Ministry responsible for cultural policy, or the competent regional/local institutions or agency; universities may also be able to provide information (e.g. the departments of cultural management, political sciences etc.), and so the Theatre Institutes or similar institutions, where they exist.

The following two resources are rather designed for professionals from other countries, not so much for the local ones, but they may still provide some useful information.

'[Platform: An East European Performing Arts Companion](#)', published by EEPAP - East European Performing Arts Platform, is a compendium compiled by theatre critics, historians and theorists from Central and Eastern Europe, and explores in particular how, in 11 post-communist countries, the performing arts handle issues such as elaboration of the past and responsibility for the present, both in terms of artistic contents and organisational structures.

IETM regularly publishes [mappings](#) and articles on the contemporary performing arts sector in the countries visited during Plenary and Satellite meetings (the articles can be found in the Resources related to each [event](#)). While the decision-making process is not always explained in detail, you can still find interesting information about key organisations and recent evolutions in your country.

In general, it is key to remember that policy-makers are not (always) 'the enemy'; on the contrary, building long-term alliances with them can be an effective means to adapt the policies - budget, funding

schemes, access to the profession, overall working conditions etc. - to the grassroots reality and the needs of professionals.

[In Poland] Theatres are treated with censorship {by the central government} - not directly, but through the media. The reason why theatres can go on is that they are mostly subsidised on the municipal level.'

J. Janssens, '[Governing with populists](#)', Report from the IETM Plenary in Brussels, November 2017

When approaching policy-makers for the first time, the following practical tips may be useful:

- Write an e-mail rather than picking up the phone to approach someone you do not know: e-mails give the person enough time to understand who s/he is dealing with and reflect on how to react;
- Make sure you are addressing the right person: allocate enough time to research who is doing what. If you are writing to a high-level person, add all his/her assistants/advisors in copy: most probably they will be the ones reading your e-mail and they are the ones thirsty for factual input for their work;
- Put yourself in the shoes of the 'target' while crafting your e-mail, and explain clearly what the recipient has to gain from paying attention to your e-mail: What will s/he learn from being in touch with you? Do you have unique information to share? How will meeting / talking to you help your 'target' in her/his job? Make sure it is all clear from the beginning of your e-mail;
- Be concise. Your e-mail can *always* be shorter;
- Keep in mind that your 'target' may have an opposite view and probably is being influenced by dozens of other interest groups: beware that you are presenting a 'point of view', but not the 'truth';
- Do not include misleading or unverified information, as this can ruin your reputation from the very beginning;
- Always ask for a meeting, even if you are just sending a policy paper / publication. A personal contact is of the utmost importance, even if your message is best presented in a written form;
- Do not hesitate to send 1-2 reminders and/or give a call if you do not get an answer (within reasonable intervals, depending on how pressing the situation is).

As already mentioned, you should strive to build long-term relationships with policy-makers, their assistants, and administrators, otherwise each political change will jeopardise your previous achievements. Convince policy-makers that they should leave a legacy that lasts even after their mandate is over.

In order to build long-term relationships with policy-makers, you could consider the following tips - always keeping in mind what is appropriate (and legal) in your context:

- You may invite politicians to performances, explain the working process behind and arrange a meeting with the performers afterwards, so that your guests can see and understand what you do first hand. Do not hesitate to make your guests aware of successes and triumphs in terms of earning money and international recognition;
- Invite some politicians to have dinner with your colleagues, so they can establish relationships with artists on a more personal level, and perhaps their struggles and obstacles will be less easy to ignore;
- Remember that the situation is not as simple as good guy/bad guy: misunderstandings and misrepresentations can occur on both sides - not only on the side of politicians, but also on the side of the artists. Sometimes policy-makers are incapable of distinguishing show business from art, and the reason could be that (some) artists are incapable of clearly explaining what they do and defining their role;
- You may consider inviting some policy-makers to join the Board of your organisation;
- Try and make your way into the decision making arena by applying as an external advisor in advisory boards, arts councils or juries, offering your support to policy makers when they have to write their policy papers and communications, etc.

When you talk to policy-makers, make sure you can show that you are talking on behalf of a larger advocacy network (whether formal or informal), not just for your own personal interest.

Finally, remember that decisions are sometimes taken outside the formal policy processes and that public pressure is a powerful tool for advocacy; so, besides targeting policy-makers, recognise the importance of the media and the general public - your allies.

## Allies and opponents

An effective advocacy action is based on clear aims that are shared by all members of the advocacy group, and understood by the whole community, from audiences to policy-makers. In order to achieve this understanding, you need to consider carefully the context you are working in.

An interesting tool to define your allies and opponents is the spectrum-of-allies, proposed by the [‘ACT! 2015 Advocacy Toolkit’](#) (see page 19). The spectrum-of-allies is a frame that allows you to consider how different groups and institutions relate to your goal:

- Your active allies: decision-makers and influencers who agree with you and are fighting alongside you.
- Your passive allies: those who agree with you but aren't doing anything about it.
- Neutrals: those who are neither for nor against your issue, and who are unengaged.
- Passive opposition: those who disagree with you, but who aren't trying to stop you.
- Your active opposition: those who work to oppose or undermine you.

The first obvious step is to check your inner circle - your organisation and those closer to it. Within the arts and culture field, join forces with other organisations and other (arts) disciplines. Challenges, working processes and conditions may differ, but finding similarities can be of greater importance. The cultural sector is rich of its diversity, but, when responding to urgent calls for action at local, national or international levels, it would be crucial to speak with one voice. Of course, this is not always possible, and so it is important to seek some balance between your specific needs and the general interest of the sector. A successful approach can be to suggest policy-makers to test a special feature or policy for your organisation or discipline, with the argument that you can function as a guinea pig for further developments of the same feature for other structures or disciplines.

Solidarity is a key word: all members of the advocacy group (however informal this can be) must be willing to work and fight for the interest of the others. Make sure that in the advocacy group someone has direct access to power - politicians and administrators.

Identify leaders, i.e. good organisers who know the cultural field well and are well known and appreciated because of their experience. They are necessary to keep the advocacy group together and keep up its motivation.

Once you have found allies in your inner circle, get out: find more people outside of your bubble, in order to talk about your bubble. Engage in constructive discussions on the value of the arts by making your voice heard in different places and with different types of interlocutors. Establish partnerships to make the arts sector more visible through large-scale collaborations and joint actions. Alliances with other sectors (environmentalists, trade unions, education and health professionals, anti-discrimination groups, among others) could help to advance progressive societal agendas in which the arts have a role to play, and make the arts more visible in societal discourses.

Art policies are not meant for the artists and the artistic sector, but for the citizens - like health policies are not made for doctors and hospitals, but for citizens. Therefore, engage with society at large. Sometimes art professionals feel better by making strong statements towards policy-makers, but their sharpened political position is a useless provocation if in the end they stay marginalised and disconnected from the larger part of society. Audience engagement is key to reinforce the position of culture in society, and it is not limited to actual audiences (e.g. those coming to your theatre), but to wider communities. This is how you can mobilise large societal support for your cause: the more diverse the voices that support you, the stronger the message.

If we defend the idea that the arts have a strong role to play in society, we have to enhance our presence by making the arts visible

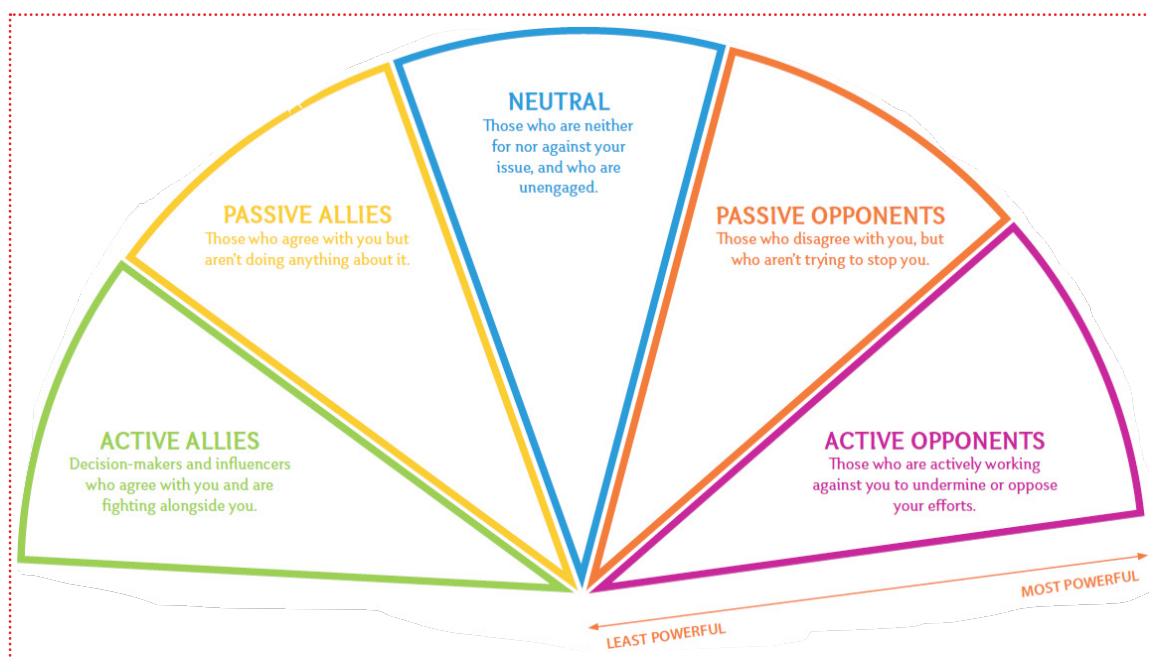
in the streets and raising awareness in original ways. Engaging in dialogues can happen anywhere: in theatres, in the media, in the streets, in schools, when having dinner with friends - every interaction counts. The audience has to feel the sector struggle and be part of its game.

'The arts sector should free itself from the vocabulary that has been taking over cultural policy discourses and from its own language (democratisation, creative industries, mainstreaming, etc.): we have to reclaim the values that confront the realities of contemporary Europe (interculturalism, solidarity, loyalty, liberty, equality, brotherhood and unity), and that re-legitimise the public role of, and public interest for, culture.'

M. Dragicevic Sestic, in D. Tepper, 'Valuing the Arts', report from the IETM Satellite meeting in Paris, March 2016

When you engage with communities and with other sectors, keep in mind the following tips:

- A lot of civil servants, politicians, journalists, and even your relatives know nothing of art and do not understand what you actually do. Do not take things for granted, but be ready to explain over and over again what you do and what you are asking for; make sure you have trained 'translators' who can explain in common language what you want, so that you can share your message widely;



The 'spectrum-of-allies' (source: 'ACT! 2015 Advocacy Toolkit', page 47)

- Create a platform for meetings, invite people from outside your group and host them kindly; ensure a participatory approach and a genuine engagement: people themselves are best fitted to know what they want and need;
- Aim at convincing other sectors about the value of culture and the arts for their specific cause; make sure the common messages reflect the mutual interest;
- Effective cross-sectional collaborations require a lengthy and profound preliminary research aimed at getting acquainted with the community's needs and the partnering sector's working modes, before actually embarking on the practical realisation of a project. Regularity and a long-term vision are crucial for building trust and achieving real change;
- You need the active engagement of the staff of the partner organisations: they should be convinced of the power of the arts, not just 'hosting' artists in order to tick certain boxes. There should be a shared understanding of, and a belief in the goal of, the advocacy action among all the stakeholders;
- Ensure the project leaves a legacy where possible: for example, let the participants have ownership of the project and share the positive results with others, thus leading to greater participation in future projects; or allow other organisations' staff to learn artistic methods and integrate them in their daily practice;
- Allow some flexibility in delivering the project, and be prepared to adapt the approach and / or the expected outcomes or outputs; be prepared to do a lot of 'non-artistic' work;
- Remember to demonstrate how much societal support you have by collecting number of signatories, endorsements etc.

Last but not least, the media can be powerful allies. Connect with them, make sure you have enough time to communicate, inform them well and clearly; provide them with tickets, clear information (the kind they can copy and paste into their articles), special interviews etc.

Now for the opponents: if someone thinks that the arts are a waste of time and money, there is little you can do to change their minds. But politicians can hardly ignore you if you are representing a hefty part of society. Try and remain in dialogue with those who do not support you, by arranging meetings, looking together for common interests... the arts are an ideal field to engage in 'agonism', not antagonism<sup>2</sup>. In some cases, by engaging in an open discussion

<sup>2</sup> See W. Hillaert and S. Hendrickx, '[The art of critical art](#)', interview with C. Mouffe

- albeit uncomfortable - you may clarify many misunderstandings and prejudices and eventually gain new allies to your cause (or at least drag some opponents into a more neutral position).

Ultimately, however, accept that in some cases dialogue is really not possible, and you should better focus on your activities and your allies (without forgetting that someone may actively confront you at some point).

'In 2001 Rotterdam was Cultural Capital of Europe. The culture sector was given an enormous boost; there were nice programmes and much exchange between the different communities in the city. At the same time, something changed, in the same year, in the streets of the same city. It was the time of 9/11. Pim Fortuyn rose to power in 2002, when his party Leefbaar Rotterdam suddenly became the biggest. All of a sudden, Rotterdam Capital of Culture was portrayed by some as "a waste of money for an elite that only serves itself". Cuts for the cultural sector followed, but there was also a dialogue. From this, it appeared that populists claimed to represent the people, but in reality, we worked with a large and diverse group of citizens. On the basis of that experience, we started the conversation. We also listened to the problems the politicians brought to light. We tried to understand what mattered to them. We invited Leefbaar Rotterdam to all shows and projects. This way, their sense of ownership did grow.'

But in the meantime, much has changed. The 2012 government, that as a minority was supported by Geert Wilders, took over the agenda of his party, the PVV. A race for the populist voter started. What followed were very heavy cuts for the culture sector. The sector ended up on the streets chanting 'for civilisation,' against barbarism and budget cuts. 'We couldn't have made a bigger mistake,' posed Jan Zoet: 'we claimed civilisation and thereby excluded those who vote for Wilders. It created an enormous backlash, that we really only now have overcome.'

'Talking to populists is a strategy that you could still use in the start of the 21st century. The position of PVV is different. The strategy that worked for Leefbaar, does not work for a new generation of populists. They refuse any discussion about themes that are not on their agenda. Art is one of those themes.'

J. Janssens, '[Governing with populists](#)', report from the IETM Plenary in Brussels, 2017

## RESOURCES

'Advocating for the arts', report from IETM Plenary meeting in Amsterdam, 2016: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/advocating-for-the-arts>

J. Janssens, 'Governing with populists: experiences from the Netherlands, Catalonia, Poland and Hungary', Report from the IETM Plenary in Brussels, November 2017: <https://www.ietm.org/en/themes/governing-with-populists-experiences-from-the-netherlands-catalonia-poland-and-hungary>

E. Polivtseva, 'How to save Europe?', Report from the IETM Plenary meeting in Bucharest, April 2017: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/how-to-save-europe>

D. Tepper, 'Valuing the arts', report from the IETM Satellite meeting in Paris, March 2016: <https://www.ietm.org/en/satellite-paris-2016/reports>

B. Stinehelfer, 'Making our voices heard', report from the IETM Plenary meeting in Zurich, November 2008: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/making-our-voices-head>

V. Shishkova, 'I am granted therefore I create', report from the IETM Plenary meeting in Valencia, November 2016: <https://www.ietm.org/en/i-am-granted-therefore-i-create>

'ACT! 2015 Advocacy toolkit': <http://restlessdevelopment.org/news/2014/06/20/act-2015-advocacy-toolkit> (see the spectrum-of-allies, pp. 46-47)

W. Hillaert and S. Hendrickx, 'The art of critical art', interview with C. Mouffe, RektoVerso, 4 May 2012: <https://www.rektoverso.be/artikel/art-critical-art>

Compendium of cultural policies and trends in Europe: <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/socio-economic-impact-of-culture.php>

EEPAP - Eastern European Performing Arts Platform, 'Platform: An East European Performing Arts Companion': <http://eepap.culture.pl/feuilleton/platform-east-european-performing-arts-companion-publication-eepap>

IETM, Country mappings: <https://www.ietm.org/en/mappings>

IETM, Articles about contemporary performing arts in the countries hosting IETM Satellite meetings - see the Resources available for each Satellite meeting: <https://www.ietm.org/en/evenements/passes>

## 2.5. WHEN WILL YOU DELIVER YOUR MESSAGE? HOW LONG WILL YOUR ADVOCACY ACTION LAST?

Time is a crucial element of an advocacy strategy: it is essential to deliver your message at the right moment, and also to define a realistic and coherent timeline for your overall plan.

In planning your advocacy campaign you should clearly define the crucial moments when you should (or should not) deliver your message. For example, when are the key decisions on budgets, funding allocation, possible revisions of the funding systems etc. planned? When do you need to deliver your message to different targets to make it more effective? When drawing your timeline, keep in mind important dates like public and religious holidays, that may interfere with your plans, as well as key moments like political elections.

Remember that in the European Union, national policy-makers have an influence on the EU budgets as well. The 6 months running up to each revision of the European Financial Framework or a future Creative Europe Programme, for instance, can be the best moment to address your national policy-makers to stimulate Member States to approve a stronger support for the arts and culture in Europe.

IETM has released a [Ten-Point Reflection on the European Commission's proposal for a Regulation establishing the Creative Europe programme \(2021-2027\)](#) that puts forward concrete suggestions to ensure that the future funding programme fits the needs of the sector.

Discussions at IETM have pinpointed that, in general, policy-makers are getting short of solutions to cope with the current societal challenges and the arts can offer a new vision. The [European Alliance for Culture and the Arts](#) has released an [Appeal](#) about 'The power of culture and the arts', based on the premise that the European Union is a distinct cultural union; individuals and organisations are invited to sign and disseminate the appeal to urge national and EU policy-makers to re-think the European approach and to include culture and the arts in the long-term strategic goals of the European project.

## RESOURCES

'Advocating for the arts', report from IETM Plenary meeting in Amsterdam, 2016: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/advocating-for-the-arts>

IETM, 'Our reaction to the European Commission's proposal of the EU's future budget', <https://www.ietm.org/en/our-reaction-to-the-european-commissions-proposal-of-the-eus-future-budget>

European Alliance for Culture and the Arts: <https://allianceforculture.com>

## 2.6. FURTHER TIPS

### Risk factors and bad practices

Practical experience shows that advocacy can entail some risks:

- Burning yourself down by putting too much energy in advocacy, for too long, with not enough people. Be realistic about your organisation's human resources capacity to engage in advocacy activities that come on top of your normal work;
- The trap of quality: quality problems persist in every sector, but the arts sector is the one that seems most obsessed with it. Keep in mind that 'artistic quality or excellence' is often an excuse to maintain the status quo and to exclude artists that do not conform to the 'norm' (it is for instance the main objection to the inclusion of disabled artists and artists with a diverse background, as well as the preferred excuse to justify an all-male programme or panel). There is a chance for the sector to engage with policy-makers in order to reshape funding policies, juries, advisory committees and evaluation criteria, to make the arts sector more inclusive;
- Beware of polarised debates: particularly 'in the age of populism', culture can become a battlefield, where social debate tends to polarise, often in terms of 'traditions endangered by foreign invasions' (see red box page 23);
- There is a risk of 'appropriation' by one political side, which may come to think of itself as the 'defender' of the arts and culture against the 'uncultured' other (e.g. the right representing the 'true' culture of the nation, or, vice versa, the left considering the arts as 'their' field).

The IFACCA report identifies a set of practices that risk to weaken an advocacy campaign:

- Lack of measurable objectives
- A target audience that is too broad
- Over-complicated messages
- Communicating too many messages or ideas at once
- Lack of internal support and leadership
- Inadequate budget
- Lack of planning

- Underestimating the value of commercial marketing and PR practices
- Lack of evaluation
- Lack of collaboration
- Lack of flexibility: not being nimble enough to take advantage of opportunities and current events that directly or indirectly impact on the campaign.

'(...) Toni Gonzalez is talking about "culture wars". In times of fake news, art and culture are not on the political agenda. At the same time, culture has become a battlefield, an instrument in the polarizing battle, and the space for cultural expression is restricted, as can be seen in a couple of examples. In Madrid, some puppeteers were arrested because they were discussing terrorism. An Epiphany parade in Madrid led to a scandal, because the costumes they used were new. Las Naves del Matadero in Madrid is an example of how the performing arts sector lost a space for presentation. In Barcelona, there was a lot of fuss about an artwork in a public space about refugees (on the same place as a monument commemorating the Catalans who died in 1740). At the same time, folk culture is used as a frame of reference in image building.'

(...) 'In today's context, it is impossible to take part in a political discussion in Poland, says Marta Keil. To clarify, she talks about the controversy caused by the performance of *The Curse* by Oliver Frljic. That performance was about the catholic church in the country, in relation to the underexposed discussion about paedophilia. That is a big taboo in Poland, as the church played such a pivotal role in the post-communist transition. Because of that, the church had been rewarded a significant voice in the political system. "You understand that discussing this subject in the theatre created an enormous riot, not only in the media, but also at the entrance of the theatre itself. It was very aggressive. The audience needed to enter the theatre through the demonstration and the counter-demonstration, and then still through the security. This example makes it vividly clear that it's impossible to stay away from the debate. Going to the theatre is already a choice. In the meantime, the context is polarising. There is no possibility for a substantial debate when it comes to forbidding performances."

J. Janssens, '[Governing with populists](#)', report from the IETM Plenary in Brussels, 2017

## Follow-up or exit strategy

When does advocacy end, and what happens next? If you have reached your overall goal, you may still continue to monitor progress and development; you may even consider making advocacy part of your mission (if you can find the resources to sustain it). If you did not reach your goal, you may decide to keep fighting - adapting your tools, methods and message - or to give up. And of course, between complete failure and complete success, there are many nuances to explore.

However, you may also need to stop before you have actually reached your goal, for different reasons (lack of resources, sudden changes in the political landscape, change in the staff, tensions in the advocacy group, threats, etc.). In such cases, you need to build an exit strategy: how to communicate to your allies that you are going to stop? How will this be perceived? Will this mean the end of an advocacy campaign, because you were the one leading it?

## Most of all, continue to make arts!

Being both in and out the advocacy process is key to preserve the critical and vital power of the sector: you need to combine explaining with performing. As Nina Obuljen - now Minister of Culture in Croatia - put it at the end of the IETM Satellite in Paris (2016), 'We should continue to demonstrate the energy and value of the arts through our discourses but also through our capacity to take risk and offer artistic disruptions. We should not always ask for more but also show how strong we already are'. Let's keep going!

## RESOURCES

B. Stinehelfer, 'Making our voices heard', report from the IETM Plenary meeting in Zurich, November 2008: <https://www.ietm.org/en/publications/making-our-voices-head>

D. Tepper, 'Valuing the arts', report from the IETM Satellite meeting in Paris, March 2016: <https://www.ietm.org/en/satellite-paris-2016/reports>

J. Janssens, 'Governing with populists: experiences from the Netherlands, Catalonia, Poland and Hungary', Report from the IETM Plenary meeting in Brussels, November 2017: <https://www.ietm.org/en/themes/governing-with-populists-experiences-from-the-netherlands-catalonia-poland-and-hungary>

IFACCA, 'Good practice guide on arts advocacy', 2014: <https://ifacca.org/en/what-we-do/advocacy/advocacy-tools/good-practice-guide-arts-advocacy/>

# 3

## *Case studies*



## UNITED KINGDOM

What Next? is a movement bringing together arts and cultural organisations from across the UK, to articulate, champion and strengthen the role of culture in society.

What Next? wants to work collaboratively to build alliances outside of the cultural sector, build relationships with local and national government and engage the public in new and different conversations about the arts.

What Next? is an experiment. The movement is not constituted and strives to remain non-hierarchical, open and responsive to best meet the needs of the chapter attendees. It aims to be responsive to the changing climate and the ideas of everyone who gets involved.

In a very short time What Next? has grown and expanded from a few people round a table in Southwark to a project encompassing hundreds of individuals and organisations. The development of What Next? has been completely organic and, in many ways, colleagues involved have deliberately resisted the urge to take a traditional route to forming a coalition, to working together or to lobbying for change. There are currently several chapters around the UK.

## SLOVENIA

Glej is a member of Asocijacija (Association), an umbrella organisation for NGOs in Slovenia. Furthermore Glej's managing director, Inga Remeta, is part of their board, and most of Glej's advocacy activities are carried out through that channel.

In recent years Asocijacija has engaged in advocacy around different topics:

- The New National plan for culture (2018 - 2025);
- Changes in the 4 year grant application funding scheme;
- Improving conditions for self-employed in the culture sector (particularly the right to a paid sick leave, and adjusting the pensions' level);
- Improving the matching funding available for EU-funded projects (coming from the Ministry and local governments);
- Improving the conditions of structural funding for cultural operators managing venues (local government);
- Changing the main legislation concerning culture and working conditions in the field;

- Decentralisation and professionalisation of NGOs outside Ljubljana

To pursue its objectives, Asocijacija engaged in different activities:

- Organising public debates to discuss solutions and possible courses of actions;
- Exposing the problematic of cultural legislation to a wider audience through the media;
- Writing proposals and engaging in professional debates on the topic;
- Meetings with ministry officials;
- Establishment of advisory committees formed by professionals to help the Ministry and local governments to tackle complex issues concerning culture;
- Meetings with the Prime Minister, who eventually discarded the drafts of the National plan for culture and the changes in cultural legislation due to the fierce opposition by professionals from the sector;
- Discussions with the Ministry of public affairs and the Ministry of finances about possible co-financing of culture.

Given the structure of Asocijacija - an umbrella organisation representing cultural NGOs - the representatives of all member organisations were actively involved in the debates and actions.

As a result, following the criticism of the sector and the activities mentioned above, the proposal for a New National plan for culture was discarded, and so were the proposed changes in the cultural legislation.

The main challenges faced by Asocijacija were:

- The non-responsiveness and inertia on the side of the Ministry of Culture (not responding to proposals, not willing to engage in dialogue);
- The negative perception of cultural NGOs by the public (as 'leeches' sucking on the national budget), exacerbated by right-wing politicians for their own agendas;
- The frequent lack of consent among NGOs.

*From an interview with Barbara Poček, Glej*

## ITALY

ETRE is a network of theatre and multi-disciplinary residencies based in the region of Lombardy, in northern Italy. ETRE's mission is to promote the concept of artistic residencies, to promote the value of culture for contemporary societies, to support the work and the professionalisation of artistic companies, and to engage in European and international networking.

Between 2009 and 2014 ETRE has engaged in a strong advocacy work to make the Lombardy Region (local government) acknowledge the work of theatre residencies; this was needed in order to facilitate the access to public funding, but also to engage with other Regions that already had established protocols for collaboration. Through this work, ETRE acquired a prominent position in Italy, and their advocacy activities had an impact both at the regional and at the national level. Key activities were:

- The series of meetings 'Nobiltà e miseria', coordinated by L'Arboreto in Mondaino, which gathered the representatives of theatre residencies in Italy and invited the Ministry of culture and local governments to participate: these meetings allowed the sector to get together, to get stronger, and ultimately led to a change in the FUS - the Ministerial funding for performing arts, which includes (FUS 2015/2017, art.45) joint funding by Ministry and Regions for the establishment, development and promotion of artistic residencies;
- ETRE also engaged in collecting signatures in favour of contemporary arts around the Lombardy Region;
- Previous activities failed either out of lack of interest by regional policy-makers (e.g. an attempt in 2010 to convene all local governments responsible for residencies failed, as only three invitees out of 15 attended), or for political reasons (e.g. in 2011 ETRE proposed to the Lombardy Region to approve a list of residencies and, while in principle all parties agreed, at the moment of the vote political rivalry prevailed and some party refused to vote for a proposal led by a party from the opposite side of the spectrum).

ETRE engaged in all its activities in a very open way, trying to put different stakeholders together and looking for common objectives and goals. It has always looked for allies, particularly residencies in other regions and/or from other fields.

Challenges:

- The fact that ETRE receives funding mainly from a private banking foundation, Cariplo, has been a political obstacle rather than an asset: regional institutions (in Lombardy and other regions) have seen this private funding as an 'intrusion'

in the public domain. It took years - and an agreement for economic support to regional cultural activities by Cariplo - before the foundation and the Region finally opened a dialogue.

- In Italy it is extremely hard to lobby for the arts and culture. Public funding is crucial, but is all too often allocated in a non-transparent, non-meritocratic way, but rather on the basis of one-to-one relationship between the funder and the applicant. This makes it impossible to create a compact political movement advocating for the sector's interests.
- In Italy, movements for political renewal are born in the independent sector, where professionals work for free to establish contacts, elaborate a strategy, develop plans... while often not having all the competences, and certainly not the money and time. If on one side this guarantees a certain political 'purity' (such organisations have no time to defend private interests), it makes them also very fragile and unsustainable since they can only engage in politics as a side activity.

*From an interview with Cristina Carlini, ETRE- C.Re.S.CO.*

## NORWAY

Dansearena nord engages in advocacy on a regular basis - or perhaps the right word is on an irregular basis. Their goal is to inform policy-makers about how the field understands new regulations and changes within the cultural system.

Dansearena nord tries to talk to cultural politicians a couple of times per year. They aim to stay in contact with politicians and bureaucrats at a local, regional and national level, although keeping in contact with the national level is hard as the organisation are situated so far north in the country, and never actually meet these people unless they manage to set up a formal meeting. But they also try to talk to politicians informally, which can be equally important.

Dansearena nord does not have the capacity to engage in a full strategy, but often collaborates with other regional dance centres in Norway in order to touch base with politicians across the country - and then the different centres agree on communicating the same issues. They do not work exactly alike, but they support each other and are financed in the same way, so joining forces has proved helpful.

Thanks to their own lobbying efforts and to collaborations with partners in the whole country, Dansearena nord has managed to get a national grant from the state budget to support dance touring in Norway. This has taken two-three years.

Challenges:

- The principle of 'arm's length distance' is somewhat problematic in Norway as it is used as an excuse by the Ministry of Culture not to take responsibility for the national development of culture. On the other hand, in the Arts Council it is difficult to find anyone to talk to, other than the secretaries (who are not in the position to take decisions): here the arm's length principle makes it difficult to spread information, to lobby or to address important issues. It only allows to write the usual funding applications, but it does not leave enough space to discuss overall matters;
- The constant re-structuring of the grant systems is another challenge, as some organisations that do not get funding may end up 'out of sight' for the Arts Council;
- Grants do not follow the indexation, so the actual amounts get smaller every year.

*From an interview with Susanne Næss Nielsen*

## THE NETHERLANDS

Ulrike Quade company in the Netherlands engaged in successful advocacy activities with the main goals of:

- Increasing funding available for independent companies;
- Discarding proposed amendments to the current KPI (Key Performance Indicators) used to assess funding applications: the KPI include outputs (amount of performances per year) and a percentage of 'Own Income' (generated through box office, private funding, coproduction fees from partners etc.); the proposed change in the way the self-generated income is calculated was perceived negatively by the sector;
- Adjusting subsidies in line with indexation.

All these goals (and other actions that have not succeeded yet) were achieved through advocacy activities carried out in collaboration with other companies. The second objective (related to the KPI) was pursued in collaboration with two other companies, forming an improvised working group, that engaged in friendly cooperation with the Performing Arts Fund, focusing on the practical implementation of the proposed changes.

Often, advocacy for the contemporary performing arts in the Netherlands happens via NAPK, the Dutch performing arts companies association, via two of its commissions: one for independent companies and one for BIS - Basic InfraStructure (non-independent institutional players in the field as well as

private structures with multiple sources of income). The two NAPK commissions work together when advocating for major policy developments.

The main challenge to face when engaging in advocacy is to explain the work around producing a theatre work (incl. logistics, budgets etc.) to policy-makers and politicians.

*From an interview with Rutger Gernandt*

## AUSTRALIA

Performing arts producer Pippa Bailey speaks about her experience in Australia in the last few years:

'There was a big campaign in Australia after the Australia Council for the Arts' funding was cut in 2014 - interrupting a new initiative to fund companies for longer (6 years instead of 4) and try to get away from the political cycles (elections every 3 years). The money was given to the Arts Ministers office to manage and a new fund was created. In some ways it was helpful to have another source of funding, but individual artists were not able to apply. The sector's outcry was impassioned and sustained through a senate enquiry, where government officials received over 2,700 submissions from different parts of the sector.

Eventually, after four years, some of the money was returned to the Australia Council. During the 2014/15 campaign, I joined regular meetings in Sydney for the theatre and performing arts sector here. There was a very active campaign at the time of the last federal election delivered through venues and audience lists. Actors stood up after curtain calls and asked the public to help. At the time I was working for a small touring organisation and we engaged through the companies and venues we were touring with.

Here is a [link](#) to an interview with David Pledger, one of the spokespeople during the campaign, who talks about his work in Brussels.

Finally, the government was returned to office in 2016 by a slim margin, the arts minister responsible lost the portfolio and the rest of the money was returned in 2017. This action has done huge damage to the independent sector and the repercussions are ongoing. The best result was the campaigning and communication that started amongst the arts community and a feeling that the protests had worked.'

## POLAND

'The most important (and most efficient) advocacy action in field of art and culture in Poland was initiated officially in 2010 as an informal and open movement called 'Citizens for culture', asking for change in artistic education, open and equal access to arts and culture, and a general increase of the state spending on arts and culture up to 1% from the state budget, with the slogan '1% for culture'.

The movement never became 'institutionalised', but from a certain moment on it worked on a paper called 'Pact for culture', signed on one side by Prime Minister Donald Tusk and on the other by representatives of the movement - around 40 citizens, including recognised artists (like Agnieszka Holland), journalists, as well as directors of numerous art institutions (including the one being run by the Ministry of Culture). Thus, managers of public art institutions stood against the government in the protest asking for increasing resources and changes in legislation.

Based on the principle of 'citizen movements', all people involved in the movement act as individuals, however the movement involved also groups representing over 100 organizations and institutions, from small NGOs to the National Library, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute or PEN Club - in most of the cases also the senior management. As a non-written rule, people who were changing position from institutional/organizational to positions in local or national administration withdrew from the movement.

Based on the Pact, in 2011 two committees have been established: one next to the Prime Minister, negotiating general changes and the position of culture in the State budget, and the second next to the Ministry of Culture, acting as a watchdog for the Ministry's policy and an advisor for new programs. I was invited to join the second group, together with other 20 representatives.

Within 4 years of activity, the Committee working with the Ministry of Culture monitored the annual budget of the Ministry, and proposed a number of new grant lines, of which the most important were:

- A new program for subsidies of new music creations;
- A new program, 'Cultural observatory', giving support to NGOs researching in the culture field;
- An integral multilayer program of support for reading (highly increased budgets for purchase of new equipment, digitalisation of regional libraries, reading education of children and youth);

- An integral multilayer program of culture education: a three-year pilot project for supporting consortia of educational NGOs and institutions for audience development among school children. This program has been implemented through regional subcontractors chosen through an open call.

In most of those projects, 'Citizens for culture' were actively involved in the preparation of legislation, either directly or by proposing experts. In the last year of activity of the former government, the state budget proposal for the next year reached for the first time the requested 1% of state spending.

The new government decided not to continue the collaboration with the movement (although members of the committee never received any formal document ending the collaboration).

'Citizens for culture' is still active as an external watchdog, releasing open letters that pinpoint unlawful acts of the current government and cases of censorship.

Challenges:

- The communication between Ministries was slow and difficult; only after a certain time a more efficient modus operandi with the Ministry of Culture was established, and procedures started to be efficient. The movement recognized a high level of disconnection and lack of communication between governmental institutions;
- Lack of trust between the community at large and the activists involved in 'Citizens for culture'. In some cases, activists have been accused to represent the particular interests of their own group (art discipline, kind of institution); however, protesting individuals didn't accept the invitation to join the movement;
- While 'Citizens for culture' collaborated successfully with the government in place at the moment of its creation, in late 2015 the new government (still in place today) dismissed the movement, refusing to meet them and to continue with the consultation group. Taking in consideration the general trend of the new government, it should be noted that the movement can be accused of political activity against the government if it collaborates with politicians to prepare new bills.

*From an interview with Grzegorz Reske*

## BULGARIA

ACT Association for Independent Theatre is the association of freelance professional theatre groups, established in 2009 as a union of NGOs and freelance artists in the contemporary performing arts, with the aim of developing, advocating, regulating, promoting and connecting independent organizations and artists in the performing arts field in Bulgaria and abroad.

ACT's overall aim is to provide adequate conditions for the professional work in the performing arts in Bulgaria. The Association actively works to get the concept of 'independent performing arts' established in Bulgaria; it promotes the creative potential of the independent scene and supports its organisational competences as adequate, timely and significant not only for the future of Bulgarian culture but also internationally.

ACT has five objectives to achieve its overall goals:

- To increase the visibility of the sector and its positioning in front of policy-makers, thus becoming a recognised interlocutor (particularly thanks to the ACT Festival) - partly achieved (see below);
- To improve the status of independent artists in Bulgaria, where the freelancer status for artists does not exist (only for theatre directors) - this was not achieved, since ACT could not really work as a professional union, but more as a think tank. However, the association is planning to work with international partners to pursue this objective further;
- To increase the budget for independent projects, and to have them funded under a separate annual funding line - partly achieved;
- In the case of independent companies performing in a city or state theatre, to increase the percentage of income from tickets going to the company from 50% to 70% - achieved;
- To have a special stage in the national theatre only for independent productions - this was not achieved, since a recent reform establishes that only in-house productions can get public subsidies, and basically independent companies are not invited to perform in the national theatre. However, ACT's efforts to get a space for independent arts eventually succeeded (see below).

The ACT Independent Theatre Festival (see first objective above) started in 2011 as a platform supporting independent artists and creation and giving them visibility, become increasingly successful and grew into an international festival. The first edition coincided with an IETM Caravan meeting, which paved the way to the

IETM plenary meeting in Sofia in 2014. This helped ACT to grow, strengthen its position at home and internationally, and achieve further goals.

The IETM plenary in Sofia (where ACT was one of the local co-organisers) was a milestone in the process towards having a special venue for independent arts (see last objective above): the new venue, Toplocentrala, is planned to open in late 2019, hosting different artistic disciplines, with a focus on contemporary art.

ACT works in collaboration with other actors from the independent scene, including visual arts and music; they are involved in a joint project for Sofia, supported by the Municipality. This is a big step forward, as the different actors can now sit together and share goals and vision. Over the last two years they have developed a strategy, which is awaiting for approval from the authorities.

The main challenges encountered were:

- The fragmentation of the independent sector, with different disciplines working separately and not communicating well with each other;
- Trying to plan and work in the long term in an environment that is planned for the short term: for example, subsidies from the Ministry of Culture and the Municipality of Sofia are allocated for a one-year period, and the association - like any NGO, in any sector - cannot get funding for a longer period. Long-term planning therefore is very risky;
- Limited resources for international collaborations (the Sofia Municipality provides small grants, funding five-six projects per year; the amount of the grants is increasing);
- Lack of specific funding for inter-disciplinary and inter-sectorial work in the country.

*From an interview with Katrin Hrusanova and Vesselin Dimov*

**IETM TOOLKIT**

[www.ietm.org](http://www.ietm.org)