

Cultural Heritage for Inclusive
Growth Collection

The Trafo programme and the distribution of power among its stakeholders

Pedro Affonso Ivo Franco

October 2023

Acknowledgements

Series Editor

Dr Chris Dalglish, Inherit

Series Manager

Nikki Locke, British Council

Special thanks to

Angelica Burrill, Stephanie Grant, Rosanna Lewis, Jonathan Morley, Stephen Stenning and Ian Thomas (British Council)

Skye McAlpine Walker and Aphrodite Sorotou (Inherit)

Stephen Hignell and the team at Nordicity

Stamos Abatis (graphic design)

The Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth Collection

Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth (CH4IG) is a British Council action research programme which, since 2018, has been exploring how local culture can improve the lives of individuals around the world. The essays in this collection were originally commissioned by the British Council and Nordicity as independent thematic studies during the pilot phase of the programme. They have since been updated by their authors and edited for the British Council by Inherit.

The essays are published as part of the British Council's What Works Cultural Heritage Protection programme, which is designed to support better outcomes for heritage protection and local communities by bringing the best available

evidence to practitioners and other decision-makers across the international heritage protection sector.

Together, the essays explore the role of cultural heritage in bringing about the change which is needed to secure a sustainable future for people and the planet. The collection explores the relationship between heritage and sustainable development from different geographical, topical and philosophical perspectives. The diverse essays are bound by common themes, namely that cultural heritage is at the heart of human development; that cultural relations create conditions in which human development can occur, and; that human development is enabled by people-centred approaches and transparent, accountable and participatory governance.

The author

Pedro Affonso Ivo Franco is a musician, and a consultant working across the culture, climate and international cooperation sectors. He holds an MA in International Relations and Cultural Diplomacy and has expertise in culture and sustainable development, decolonial perspectives in international cooperation and the intersection between arts, culture, and climate.

Pedro has worked with international organisations, governments, cultural, environmental and development institutions, companies and entrepreneurs, mainly around Latin America, Europe and Africa. He has been a consultant for the United Nations Trade and Development Organization (UNCTAD) and is a permanent member of the International Cultural Relations Research Alliance of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Originally from Brazil, Pedro is now based in Germany, and he has contributed a case study from each of these places to the Cultural Heritage for

Inclusive Growth Essay Collection. In his essays, he draws both on his personal experience and on his professional expertise relating to culture and development. In one essay, he writes about the community he comes from in Brazil – Chão de Estrelas in the suburbs of Recife – its Maracatu carnival tradition and the work of the Cambinda Estrela Cultural Centre. In the other, he discusses the Trafo programme in Germany, an initiative of Kulturstiftung des Bundes (the German Federal Cultural Foundation).

The editors

The collection was edited by Dr Chris Dalglish (series editor) and Skye McAlpine Walker (copy editor and proofreader) of Inherit.

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This essay was commissioned by the British Council, edited by Inherit and authored by Pedro Affonso Ivo Franco.

Suggested citation: Ivo Franco, P A (2023) *The Trafo Programme and the Distribution of Power Among its Stakeholders*. British Council. Available online: doi.org/10.57884/7wxh-hv33

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Introduction

The TRAFO Programme¹ is an initiative of Kulturstiftung des Bundes (the German Federal Cultural Foundation or GFCF). In its first phase between 2016 and 2020, the programme aimed to transform existing rural cultural organisations – theatres, libraries, museums, and cultural centres – into models which demonstrate how regional actors can take on responsibility for the cultural life of their region, sustain and develop their cultural offers, and establish new participatory management practices.

This essay analyses how the first phase of the programme created conditions through which regional stakeholders could share power in the cycles of planning, implementing and monitoring the projects in which they are engaged. The essay concludes that this programme has supported the distribution of power by opening new spaces for

interactions; constantly building capacity; giving stakeholders the same level of importance, and; stimulating the share of responsibilities which has resulted in interdependency in decision-making. Through the particular case of the TRAFO programme, this essay showcases inclusive and sustainable approaches to the preservation, protection, planning, development and management of cultural heritage and it demonstrates mechanisms to support long-term change and sustainability in approaches involving cultural heritage for sustainable development.

This essay is based on primary data collected in 2017 from the TRAFO managers through questionnaires and online semi-structured interviews. This information was subsequently updated and new data collected.

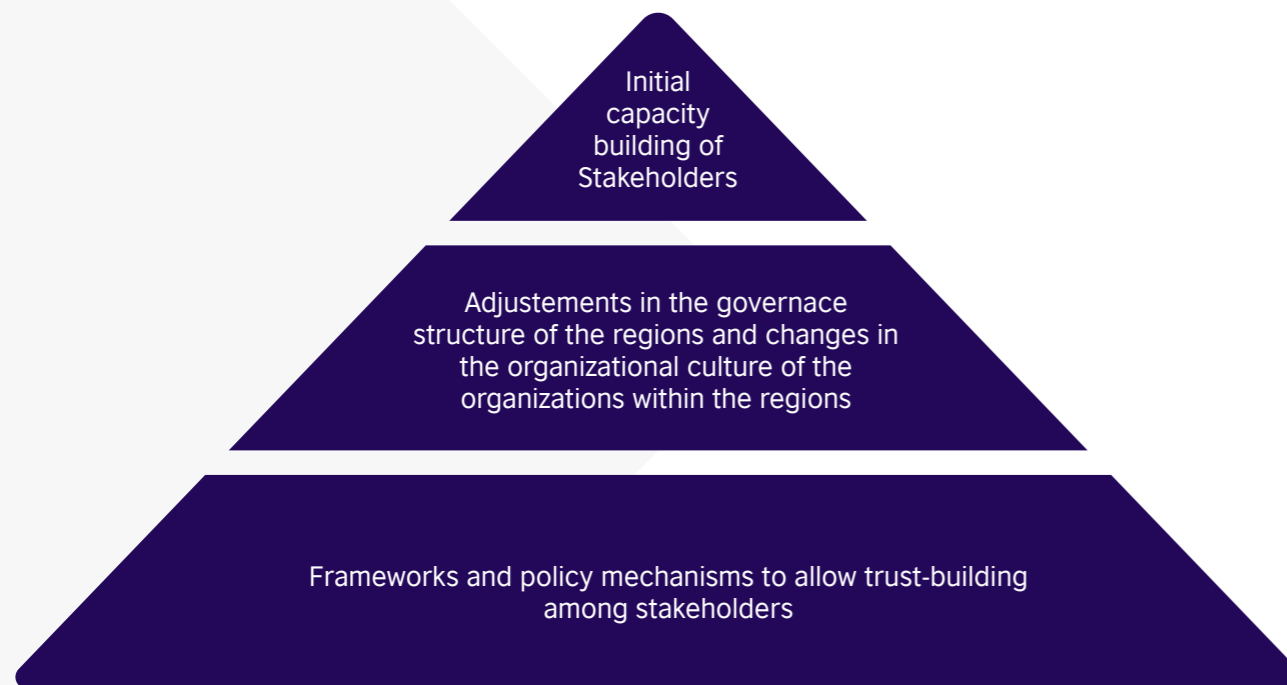


Figure 1: Trafo Programme initial achievements towards a more equalised balance of power.

1. <https://www.trafo-programm.de>

The Trafo Programme

The GFCF promotes arts and culture across all German regions. As a public institution, it has historically established a number of funding programmes supporting cultural institutions in urban areas.

The cultural sector in many rural regions has been facing a chronic struggle to address daunting challenges. As industries and businesses restructure their operations, jobs are cut, the population in small towns and rural areas decreases, and the proportion of older citizens left behind increases. Consequently, tax revenues fall and cultural organisations are often the first to suffer cuts in public subsidies. Even though such organisations are crucial to establishing identity and fostering a sense of community, their cohesive effect in these regions is frequently undervalued.

The conditions for preserving and presenting the cultural offer are fundamentally different in rural areas compared to urban areas. For example, cultural institutions in rural areas have to attract a far more dispersed audience and usually have a much smaller budget with which to do so.

Recognising the need to support rural cultural institutions, from 2016 GFCF worked with stakeholders in the German regions of Oderbruch, Southern Lower Saxony, Saarpfalz and Schwäbische Alb to enable them to:

- a. Take on responsibility for the cultural life of their regions;
- b. Develop new cultural offers and management models, taking into account participation and

participatory governance approaches;

- c. Transform the local cultural offer into modern and exciting cultural assets for the community.

According to Kristin Baessler,² TRAFO's Head of Knowledge Transfer & Communication, one of the focuses of the programme is to examine what kind of role rural cultural institutions could play in their regions by asking: how could the cultural offer be adapted to the needs and interests of the local population? What should an attractive regional cultural infrastructure look like in the future? And how can things be organised differently?

For GFCF, the answers to these questions had to emerge from the organisations looking into their region, opening themselves up to participation and cooperation and, consequently, retaining their importance as living cultural places for their communities.

To anchor these transformations in the first phase of the programme, GFCF stimulated interactions among regional stakeholders including cultural managers, artists, civil society, politicians and civil servants involved in the projects. In addition, GFCF established conditions to allow regional stakeholders to share power and responsibilities in the programme cycles of planning, implementation and monitoring.

GFCF expects that, through regional stakeholder interactions and joint and equalised decision-making processes, the changes achieved will last longer, allowing the foundation to gradually withdraw over the long term.

2. Interview with Kristin Baessler, 27 July 2017

Participation and participatory governance

Participation and participatory governance are two increasingly common approaches being taken into account, either in specific projects or in large programmes in the cultural sector. Placing citizens at the heart of decision-making, both approaches provide skills, relationships and environments, enabling people to better govern themselves.³

The term 'participation' is used by intergovernmental bodies, policy-makers, civil society organisations and academics to refer to a range of forms and degrees of citizen involvement in activities which directly affect their lives.⁴ The steps involved in placing people at the heart of such activities by giving them the possibility to be informed, to consult, to support, decide and act together, have been the subject of different frameworks and systematisations.⁵ One of the most well-known was developed by Arnstein⁶ who's famous 'ladder of citizen participation' shows levels of participation ranging from level zero (manipulation) to level eight (citizen control). Wilcox addressed participatory methodology starting from 'information to consultation and from deciding together and acting together to supporting independent community interests'⁷ also representing steps leading to the ultimate level of joint control over resources and processes.

In defining participatory governance, some authors and institutions have described additional characteristics, either considering 'participatory

governance' as a step further than 'participation' or understanding participation as an approach which encompasses participatory governance.⁸ This article understands participatory governance in relation to:

- The establishment of collective deliberative practices;
- Public processes;
- Broadening authority and power sharing.

As a result of its roots in Governance Theory, participatory governance is an approach that can open new spaces for decision-making and new management models in which final decisions are taken collectively, rather than solely by the dominant power, and processes are conducted in accordance with shared responsibilities.⁹ The adjustment of power in participatory governance approaches does not occur without adjustments in the governance structure as well as in the mindset and capacity of organisations and stakeholders involved in such processes. If, on the one hand, the dominant power (usually the state/civil servants) needs to be ready to relinquish some of their authority and power, on the other hand, civil society institutions and citizens need to be empowered and trained to accommodate and perform the decentralisation of power and assume responsibilities.

Participation and Participatory Governance in Culture

In the cultural sector, some researchers have looked at the importance of participation as a tool

to assist organisations dealing with cultural heritage preservation, especially those involved

3. Michels & De Graaf, 2010
 4. Sanoff, 2008
 5. Van Asselt & Rijkens-Klomp, 2002
 6. Arnstein, 1969
 7. Wilcox, 1994
 8. UN-DESA, 2008
 9. Lynam et al, 2007

with the preservation of cultural commons, where the protection of cultural resources is the shared responsibility of different stakeholders. According to Sani, links between cultural organisations, the state and civil society in managing cultural heritage can 'create a greater sense of collective ownership in the community and facilitate the long-run sustainability of the cultural organisations involved'.¹⁰

Regarding practical experiences of participation in the cultural heritage sector, Lynch analysed engagement and participation in twelve museums and galleries in the United Kingdom and found that real cases of participatory governance were hard to identify. Even participatory projects involving the public sector, cultural organisations and citizens failed to accord the participants equal importance and gave different weights to different participants in the process, leading to some groups feeling *used* by others.¹¹

For Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts,¹² when participatory approaches create inferior and superior categories of participants, participation cannot be maintained and participatory governance, in the sense of co-governance, cannot be reached. On many occasions, institutions that benefit from specific projects stimulating participation for a period of time, do not necessarily sustain participatory practices after the end of the project, maintaining an unequal balance of power among stakeholders.¹³

Participation in the Cycle of Planning

Participation as a Contractual Requirement for the Regions

In 2015, GFCF allocated €13.5 million to fund six projects and artistic approaches which would have a pioneering function in pointing the way to new methods of cultural offer and management.¹⁶

Power is usually understood as the exercise of authority, domination and/or control in a manner that those with authority (the powerful) suppress those who are dominated (the disempowered). The relationship of the powerful with the disempowered gives the powerful the ability to continuously exercise power over the disempowered by utilising, for instance, physical or verbal coercion, legislation, institutions and financial means. The exercise of power dominance can also occur psychologically, making the disempowered feel incapable and without rights to challenge the power configuration. For Lukes,¹⁴ power is an instrument applied by one party over another in order to prevent participation, or to shape the desires and interests of the disempowered.

According to Foucault,¹⁵ power is diffuse and fluid rather than concentrated. This assumption encourages the understanding of power as a form that can be shaped to allow different parties to seek their objectives. Therefore, this essay assumes that the creation of conditions during programmes and projects which stimulate as much as possible an equalisation of power in the participatory process can not only give more sustainability to participatory and inclusive approaches but can also lead to participatory governance.

According to Steifuhner,¹⁷ for sparsely populated areas it is important to rethink the cultural offer for a whole region. In line with this, GFCF started looking for organisations and sought recommendations from the German state ministries about small regions within their states with a fragile cultural sector.

10. Sani, 2016, p 9
 11. Lynch, 2011
 12. Turnhout, Van Bommel & Aarts, 2010
 13. Buchenrieder et al, 2017
 14. Lukes, 2005
 15. Foucault, 1980
 16. https://www.trafo-programm.de/2415_programm/2558_uber-trafo
 17. Steifuhner, 2015

Already in the talks with the ministries, GFCF established a set of requirements that indicated the need for bringing together cultural organisations, artists, civil society, politicians and public servants. According to Samo Darian,¹⁸ TRAF0 Programme Manager, the programme understood that participation would be an important approach to guide the transformation of process. Consequently, TRAF0 established participatory approaches and collaborative partnerships among stakeholders as a contractual requirement. Three prerequisites were established in the initial talks with the regions and organisations:

1. That mayors, land committees, civil servants and political representatives would need to be willing to actively participate and share responsibilities for five years in the cultural transformation processes of the regions and organisations;¹⁹
2. That organisations' managers would offer a vision of how their cultural institution should look in five or ten years. This would result in initial ideas on how to develop their work and structures further;
3. That all the projects aiming to be part of the programme needed to describe participatory ideas and methodologies in their project applications, pointing out the stakeholders that were going to be involved.

Participation as an Initial Challenge

Whereas some organisations already had an idea about participatory approaches, for most participation was something new. As such, the requirement for interested organisations to present ideas on how they would get in touch with the politicians, other cultural institutions in the same region, civil society and other organisations such as schools and kindergartens, was one of the first issues the programme needed to address through capacity-building initiatives.

In the project selection phase, four regions were

selected and six organisations. Three organisations were selected through a competition and three through recommendation by the ministries. With the regions and organisations defined, the programme faced three main challenges.

Firstly, implementing participation in practice is often complicated due to the historical mistrust between parties.²⁰ For Harriet Völker,²¹ TRAF0 Programme Manager, the first challenge for projects had to do with the loss of trust in the implementation of ideas generated in participatory processes. Since proposals that come out of participatory meetings and the agenda of the decision makers often did not match, ideas were not translated into action. As a result, the local populations lost their faith in calls to take part in the process.

The second challenge was to identify who were the regional stakeholders (especially the politicians and public servants) and select the project managers for each region. All regions had a certain difficulty, either in finding the interested stakeholders, or in bringing the identified stakeholders together. According to Harriet Völker,²² it was perceived by the programme that many of the stakeholders were not familiar with work in the cultural sector. As a result, the programme had to transform somebody into a project manager who could also play the role of networker with the regional stakeholders.

After the identification of stakeholders in each region, the third challenge was to build capacity among these stakeholders by bringing facilitators and experts from the outside of the programme and connecting them with local expertise.

VeneKlasen & Miller²³ point out some ways of understanding power as a positive rather than a negative force through what they call 'the positive expressions of power'. One of these is known as 'power to', which is about being able to act. This ability begins with the awareness that it is possible to act. This awareness can be escalated to the process of taking action through developing skills and capacities, making parties realise that they

18. Interview with Samo Darian, 22 September 2017

19. In the German context, the regional and local authorities are responsible for political and legal decisions in their regions. Therefore, as a federal institution, GFCF does not have the power to sustain changes on the local level without the participation of the local authorities.

20. Castell, 2016

21. Interview with Harriet Völker, 27 October 2017

22. Interview with Harriet Völker, 27 October 2017

23. VeneKlasen & Miller, 2007

can create an impact. These ideas were taken into account in the capacity building process which enabled the project managers to increase their capacities and gain legitimacy among local stakeholders.

Building Stakeholder Capacity and Improving Relationships

Building capacity at the local level was a means of empowering the local population and finding local solutions for local problems: practices understood as positive by Buchenrieder et al.²⁴ The local project managers needed to open new contact lines and suggest new models of management and operation with these new contacts. To accomplish these objectives, the programme identified facilitators that could build capacity among the organisations and paid for the facilitators to work

Participation in the Cycle of Implementing

After gaining a sense of the organisations and stakeholders that would be taking part in the programme, GFCF developed the programme structure by consulting them. In turn, the organisations and stakeholders were able to identify their main issues and what they wanted to try, in terms of methodologies, to reach the transformation objectives proposed by the programme. The TRAF0 Partnership Meeting took place in Halle an der Saale in March 2016, being the first meeting among the six projects and working as a common ground for conversations among stakeholders.

Participants included representatives of the cultural organisations, government representatives from the four regions and programme managers. The aim of this first meeting was to get to know each other and to showcase the six projects and their goals. The meeting showed that despite the distinct nature of the projects and the methodological flexibility given by TRAF0, the projects were facing, on many occasions, similar problems but providing different answers.

24. Buchenrieder et al, 2017

25. Valentine, 2017

26. Tufte & Paolo, 2009

together, not only with the identified project managers, but also with the other stakeholders, giving everyone the same opportunity to learn.

Very often, participatory experiences are met with scepticism because of a negative history of relationships between stakeholders, requiring creative and new forms to re-establish this relationship.²⁵ Because most stakeholders did not have a greater knowledge than others regarding participation and participatory governance in the cultural sector, capacity could be built with stakeholders starting from the same level, and the situation avoided where previous knowledge is translated into a natural hierarchy in which the higher position would be occupied by the most technically capable.

TRAF0 Academy

One of the common challenges identified by the institutions was how to build a permanent culture of trust in which stakeholders with different technical backgrounds, roles and responsibilities could feel comfortable to express themselves and see their ideas becoming true. To address this question, the programme dedicated the TRAF0 Academy to the topic. In January 2017, the first TRAF0 Academy took place in Clausthal-Zellerfeld, having participation as the main topic. The Academy was aimed at opening ground among the programme stakeholders to discuss and learn about participation. For that purpose, experts from all over Germany were invited to come and offer advice to stakeholders.

Tufte and Paolo²⁶ mention the vital importance of capacity-building and informing and consulting people in a non-hierarchical atmosphere in order to give voice to everyone. Consequently, the participants can feel equally valuable and more comfortable to be active in the upcoming steps in

the participatory process. At the end of the first TRAF0 Academy meeting, information to be discussed at the next Academy meeting was collected from the participants, regardless of their backgrounds, roles and responsibilities within their projects.

Setting the agenda is also a form through which powerful actors continuously maintain their influence over the disempowered; by suggesting and deciding the topics on the decision-making table.²⁷ For VeneKlasen & Miller,²⁸ this dynamic is called 'hidden power' and it operates to exclude and undervalue the concerns and representation of the disempowered. An answer to the hidden power issue is the priority that can be given to strengthening organisations and movements of the disempowered by building collective capacity which leads to power and leadership redefinitions.

The second TRAF0 Academy took place in Münsingen in September 2017. At the centre of the event were the questions decided by stakeholders in the first Academy. Beyond addressing the topic of 'what content and structural peculiarities culture has in rural areas and small towns', the Academy also gave credibility to the participatory process, putting on the agenda the topic that had been voted and commonly agreed before among stakeholders.

Stimulating Interdependency Among Stakeholders

The programme recognised and respected that each stakeholder would be crucial in playing their designated roles and that relationships among them could create interdependency. Although the cultural organisations in the regions led on putting stakeholders to work in each region, stakeholders are altogether responsible for the projects they are involved in.

Stakeholders have different responsibilities in the projects in accordance with their background and positions, for instance: politicians are responsible for legislating and public servants are responsible for responding to the politician's demands; cultural

managers are responsible for dealing directly with the cultural organisations; civil society is responsible for giving opinions and monitoring. Despite the different roles, the two events promoted by GFCF allowed stakeholders to learn from each other, creating an atmosphere where stakeholders were put on the same level of importance, breaking the power hierarchy. This remarkable step could be considered a signal of a new culture of participation emerging from the top, with GFCF transferring this practice to the project levels.

An equalised flow of information among stakeholders involved in the projects could be interpreted as another signal that the participatory process stimulated by GFCF put stakeholders on the same level of importance. In some participatory processes, especially involving the government, the information about a project in general follows a top-down model, reaching and privileging stakeholders who are on the top of the project hierarchy. Consequently, on most occasions, civil society, which is usually at the bottom of the hierarchy, does not have the chance to get an accurate, first-hand sense of what is happening.²⁹ In a participatory process information is a crucial resource. Receiving privileged information later prevents participants from preparing themselves and it limits their capacity to opine and take better decisions.

Especially in participatory approaches involving the public sector, the longer you have politicians on your side, the more they are aware of what is happening.³⁰ Beyond the politicians, the involvement of civil servants that will be on duty regardless of the politicians' terms of office, assures the maintenance of the relationships with the public power. As a result, influenced by the GFCF environment, the projects built a trust structure between the parties involved.

Participation as Openness and Inclusiveness

Amongst the positive expressions of power stated by VeneKlasen & Miller,³¹ there is also the notion of 'power with', which describes collective action

including both the psychological and political power that emerges from the sense of unity and common interests among the parts. This notion can be fostered 'through building shared understandings and through planning and taking collective action'.³² In this context, the artists were helpful to show the politicians how the transformed cultural offer could look in a more tangible way, involving and encouraging them to have a better understanding and empathy for the projects.

Artistically speaking, the participatory process presented another opportunity for reaching the TRAF0 overall goal of redefining a new cultural offer. The GFCF reinforced that one part of the

project budgets would be dedicated to artistic projects from the communities attended by the projects involved in the programme. By giving the artists the possibility to produce and showcase their offer in specific exhibitions, the programme created another alternative to stimulate the participation of the communities. In most of the regions, local artists have not had the chance to fundraise or to make arts their way of living due to the lack of maturity of the arts and cultural market. This opportunity for artists has given the programme and the projects the chance to portray an open and inclusive image for the communities.

Participation in the Cycle of Monitoring

Open Meetings

The meetings are organised by the projects themselves and open to the public as a mechanism to discuss the cultural-political situation in the regions. It is the moment when the projects inform and consult the local population by asking, for instance, what they would like to see happening in the region in terms of cultural offer. The typology of civil society participants and topics discussed varies significantly from project to project due to their different natures and purposes within the programme. According to Harriet Völker,³³ the people who came to the meetings were those involved in cultural activities and those who hoped to be part of the project, such as schools and kindergartens. Therefore, the natural limits of participation in terms of overall participation of citizens was delimited by the background and/or interest of citizens in the project being implemented in their regions.

The topics discussed in the meetings were also very flexible, with each project having the chance to address the issues related to their realities. It was observed that in some regions, the meetings were designed to talk about funding possibilities and, if someone had a good idea, this idea could be taken into account. Yet, according to Harriet

Völker,³⁴ this active participation pattern has been seen in all the projects. The consideration of opinions in the process occurs regardless of the participants' technical background. For instance, someone working in a kindergarten with a pedagogical background can have a relevant opinion regarding an arts exhibition and this opinion can be discussed and become a practical action in a horizontal flow.

Regular citizen participation has also been observed to occur when the participants have a historic and emotional attachment to the project. The presence of diverse groups taking part in the open meetings also showed how participation in the cultural sector naturally involves other sectors. When discussions are extended for too long, they affect the relationship time and efficiency of the project because of the challenge of reaching a consensus. In these circumstances, the mediation and matchmaking role of the cultural managers is crucial to guide the process.

In terms of balance of power in the open meetings, VeneKlasen & Miller³⁵ also speak about 'power within' related to 'the sense of confidence, dignity and self-esteem that comes from gaining awareness of one's situation and realizing the possibility of doing something about it'. In this

27. Gaventa, 2006

28. Klasen & Miller, 2007

29. Paolo, 2003

30. Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2004

31. VeneKlasen & Miller, 2007

32. VeneKlasen & Miller, 2007

33. Interview with Harriet Völker, October 27, 2017

34. Interview with Harriet Völker, October 27, 2017

35. VeneKlasen & Miller, 2007

perspective, the open meetings have given an incentive to the projects to be connected to their communities' ideas.

Steering Committee – Lenkungskreis

In the steering committee (lenkungskreis), the cultural organisations invite civil society representatives and representatives of public power (politicians and civil servants) in order to present the activities being developed in the projects and discuss what should be done next. As in the open meetings, in the lenkungskreis the TRAF0 managers adopt an observer role, being neutral in terms of voting. The lenkungskreis meetings were part of the programme requirements and have worked as a ground to share responsibility among the decision-makers and to give legitimacy to the project initiatives. Beyond knowing more deeply what the project is doing, stakeholders need to decide, for instance, to which activity the money will be allocated and what the project wants to do in the future. The frequency of the meetings is also relative, depending on the availability of the projects, they can organise it four times per year or just twice. In the meetings, the participants are encouraged to actively suggest ideas and offer advice. The decisions are made as horizontally as possible respecting a common consensus.

The lenkungskreis requirement has been also crucial for the participatory process and its balance of power because it is an official form to bring the projects close to the politicians. As the project covers different regions, there are politicians from different political parties and governments with different sizes. There have been no complaints observed by GFCF regarding politicians and the government exercising exaggerated power.

Furthermore, the lenkungskreis as a participatory tool is also crucial for the regional stakeholders because they give a sense of permanent contact. Another concept used by VeneKlasen & Miller in regard to 'invisible power', is as the power that shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation. The invisible power problem takes place when important issues are not only taken out from the decision-making table, but also from the minds and consciousness of

those affected, ending up with influencing the way individuals perceive their place in the world and usually affecting their sense of acceptance of the status quo.

Conclusion

The research for this essay found evidence that the programme and the projects within it are acting towards the sustainability of the participatory practices and participatory governance approaches. However, it is still too early to confirm if the participatory practices will keep taking place, and if the participatory governance of the cultural offer in the regions is going to continue after the end of the programme when GFCF withdraws its technical support and budget.

In 2018, the second phase of the programme started with a further 18 regions included. The second phase of the programme followed similar steps to the first phase, with the regions developing their ideas to transform their institutions and heritage. The aim was to develop new approaches that show how regional networks can be successfully established, how existing cultural institutions can implement new offers and formats, and how the population can be involved in these processes. In autumn 2019, an independent jury of experts selected five regions to receive funding for the implementation of their transformation projects by 2023.

Culture creates opportunities and places for community, but what if physical encounters are not possible, when a large part of the interpersonal exchange shifts to digital channels? How can cultural institutions still fulfil their tasks and roles?

The programme created opportunities for communities to meet. But, during the COVID-19 pandemic, with physical encounters not possible, a large part of the interpersonal exchange shifted to digital channels. In a series of short interviews and video statements, TRAF0 actors gave an insight into the questions that arise for them from the COVID-19 pandemic, reporting which digital offerings their cultural institutions were responding to and that, for some, there may be an opportunity for further development creating a digital ecosystem for the programme.³⁶

Although it is necessary to have a more accurate study or evaluation conducted after the end of the programme, it is also important to highlight that

within the context of cultural governance in Germany, regardless of the effective long term results, the TRAF0 programme has played an important role due to its endeavours to lead participation to rural organisations dealing with local cultural heritage, increasing their capacity to realise the potential of heritage for sustainable development.

In the cycle of planning, the case study shows how important it is to establish participation as a requirement before the beginning of a programme. Along with this contractual requirement, it could also be observed that the requirement of identifying stakeholders to be part of the programme opened ground for subsequent capacity-building initiatives.

Based on the material presented in this essay, the conclusions and recommendations are:

For practitioners and professionals

Since the beginning of the programme, stakeholders were put on the same level of importance. This allowed stakeholders to overcome declared challenges related to the previous experiences of trying to implement participatory practices. By learning horizontally about participation, stakeholders could be informed, consulted and able to express themselves openly and with confidence despite their backgrounds, roles and responsibilities. This process initiated by TRAF0, was reflected in the application of participatory tools by the projects in each of their regions. It is important to highlight that in the cycle of planning, GFCF was ready not only to require, but also to support, the institutions to comply with the requirements by constantly building capacity.

In the implementation cycle, the risk of having a dominant power in the participatory dynamics could be reduced by making stakeholders share responsibilities and consequently creating interdependency among them. These responsibilities shared within the programme

36. For further discussion of typologies, see Chrissie Tiller Associates, 2014

could create a mutualistic relationship with each part empowering the other and all parts being empowered together. This environment has been supported by GFCF and has overflowed from the programme level to the projects level.

In order to reach this level of relationship, the programme found ways to put the different stakeholders together and build trust among them. It was found that the use of artists to show the politicians how the process they were taking part in could look in the future was crucial. Another valuable initiative observed by the programme was the requirement for the projects to open themselves to the local population through the funds for local artists. This initiative was understood as a way to psychologically empower and inform the civil society that they can also have an impact in the projects and in the overall programme.

For institutions

Building capacity and empowering the cultural managers of the projects to exercise, with more quality, the role of networkers, represented a step towards the sustainability of the participatory practices and participatory governance approaches within the overall programme and regional projects. As the cultural organisations are responsible for calling participatory practices and participatory governance approaches on the local level, the cultural organisations are also responsible for matchmaking interests. In this sense, the tools, initiatives and mechanisms created an environment and established conditions which avoided an exacerbated and/or paternalistic leadership exercised by one of the parts.

For policy and decision makers

The balance of power from the previous cycles could be reflected in the cycle of monitoring which decisions are taken and how legitimacy is given. The open lenkungskreis meetings were understood as new spaces to broaden decision-making, having a positive effect in the consciousness and mindset of the participant towards the programme and themselves. Participatory governance requires adjustments in the governance structure as well as in the mindset and capacity of participants.

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