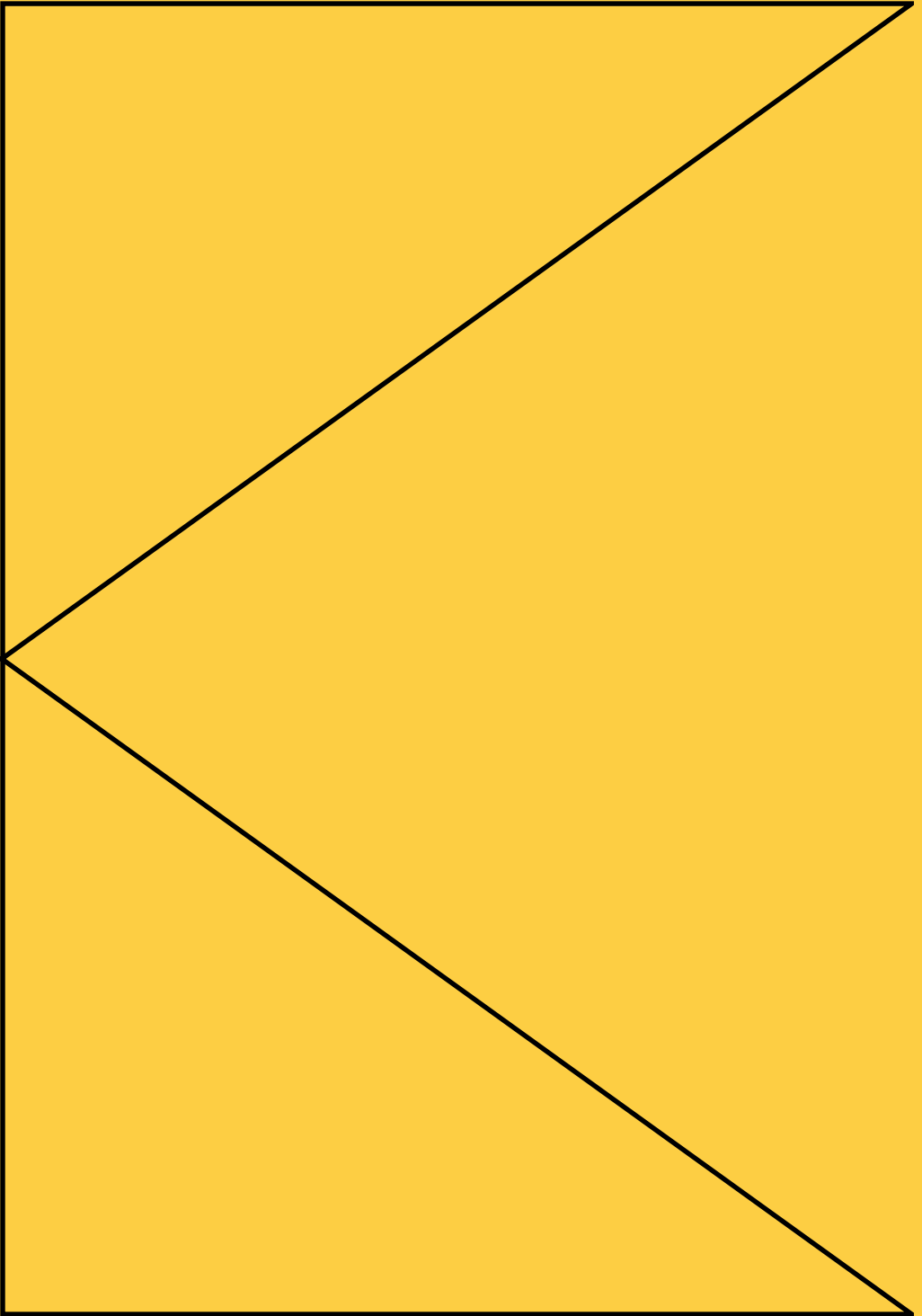


Kaunas –
European Capital
of Culture 2022

COMMUNITY
programme
methodology

This book declares that culture can make a positive effect on the lives of individual people and even of the entire groups of society, and this is not just a meaningless statement. The book presents in detail how the “Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022” project has managed to mobilise the residents of different neighbourhoods of Kaunas and the adjacent towns for joint creative activities, aiming to enable them to feel the owners of their living area. What is even more important, it that this book can serve as a beginner’s guide on the cultural work with communities, inspired by the rich experience of the project that lasted for several years. The authors of this book are willingly sharing their ideas and values which serve as a basis for community creativity, as well as their proven methods and instruments, lessons learned, and practical advice, also revealing the problems and challenges faced in this field of activity. The readers of this book might get inspired not just by its optimistic rhetoric, but also by the numerous examples of the implemented projects that seem to have actually provided an impetus for a number of local communities – from Eiguliai district in Kaunas to Kulautuva resort in Kaunas district.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Linara Dozydaitytė



Contents

4 **PREFACE**

10 **I. KAUNAS AND KAUNAS DISTRICT —
EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2022**

16 **Community Programme
“We, the People”**

28 **Fluxus Labs!**

58 **Contemporary Neighbourhoods**

68 **II. DEFINING COMMUNITY:
WHAT IS IT, WHAT FOR AND HOW?**

69 **Community — what is it?**

76 **Community — what for?**

80 **Community — how?**

94	III. BASIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES OF CREATING WITH THE COMMUNITY
95	Who Works with Communities?
102	Model of the Process of Creating
116	Essential Principles of Creating
120	Contextuality
150	Co-creation
164	Experimentation / Adventure / Playfulness
184	IV. CHALLENGES FACED IN CREATING WITH COMMUNITIES
185	Human Type of Challenges
188	Challenges in Building Relations
200	Infrastructural Challenges
204	Administrative Challenges
210	Unpredictable Challenges
214	THE REAL RESULT — ARTWORK
228	“WE, THE PEOPLE” PROGRAMME TEAM

Preface

Anyone who had once encountered the organisation and implementation of community activities would confirm that this means a process filled with challenges. Yet those who are determined to embark on this path do understand that the fruits of working with communities are worth the effort — a united and purposeful community is a powerful catalyst for a positive change. The members of the “Kaunas and Kaunas District — European Capital of Culture 2022” (hereinafter — “Kaunas 2022”) team who were engaged in organising the communities of Kaunas city and Kaunas district for cultural initiatives for several years, were convinced of this as well.

The project “Kaunas 2022” was intended to unite hundreds or even thousands of artists and creators at the local, European, and global level. The community programme “We, the People” has served to unite the residents of Kaunas city and Kaunas district for creating new public spaces, where they had never existed before, for awakening the residents’ responsibility for their neighbourhood, for organising celebrations in the squares of the districts, town halls, in parks, yards, saunas, garages, etc. Community projects have turned into a platform for alternative culture and self-expression of the subcultures of the city, country, and the entire Europe. The activities were aimed at discussing the significance of alternative culture in the general cultural context, searching for new art spaces, promoting critical thinking, responsibility for oneself and others, artistic/cultural worldview.

In the present book, you will find extensive information on various community activities, a model that helps to organise them, basic principles, tools, challenges, and real examples of activities. In this introduction, we want to discuss several key points that have accompanied the programme since its inception. They will not be listed separately in the book, as it was impossible to organise them into chapters, just because they served as the basis of activity or the mindset which was followed in the meetings with community representatives for five years.

It is the people and the communities they form that we viewed as the starting point and the basis of the community programme. Hence **a fundamental goal of creating and maintaining the relationships among people was set.** This goal, though not even documented or promoted, was embedded in the heart and the soul of every person working in the programme. That is seen as a fundamental value of the people working with communities. **Community programme, communication is valued above the results of the project achieved, solutions discovered, or creative products established.**

The importance of communication was enormous. It started, first of all, with keeping continuous communication among the coordinators, facilitators, and community representatives of the community programme “We, the People”. Face-to-face communication was key: that was how ideas were born and challenges solved. Along with communication, there was always support. You will not read it in this book, but it is important to emphasise that every community activist had a mentor (community programme coordinator or facilitator) — a person who supported, advised, answered questions, listened. Working with communities is not easy, and those who get involved actively and wholeheartedly, can sometimes, for various reasons, lose their motivation to act, so the aforementioned support becomes essential. Open conversations, maintaining connections not only when it is fun and good, but also when everything seems pointless and impossible, is what made this programme successful. This cannot stay underestimated.

Another feature is **the bottom-up ideas.** This is what makes community projects extremely interesting, though difficult to manage (especially when it comes to financing of the project). The idea of the community programme was to encourage community representatives, through communication, to dare to implement their own ideas, rather than the imposed ones, financed by one or another foundation. We have noticed that communities implementing their own ideas are strongly motivated and actively involved in activities. Nonetheless, to ensure active involvement of participants and create a safe environment, it is important to foresee **the periodicity of activities.** It allows one to plan the schedule of activities in advance, predict the progress and results of each meeting, and also gives the opportunity for participants to organise their busyness and priorities more easily.

Meeting the needs of the community through joint implementation of value-creating projects is another important aspect. The community programme has never sought to create objects or works of art for the sake of the object or work itself. For us, art was just a means to reach the goal. The created objects of art stayed as a symbol or a sign indicating that people were gathering and meeting in that place, and later continued to work and create independently. When implementing the ideas, it was very important to choose the right artist capable

of maintaining a balance between his/her artistic ambitions and wishes of the community, and ensuring high quality of the work.

The community programme “We, the People” adopted the attitude that quality is determined by the attention paid to the community: listening, research and dialogue, attempts to involve local residents in activities, discovering local talents, etc. Considering this, it is especially important for the artist working with the community to be empathetic, sensitive to the wishes and visions of the community, not to put his/her own ideas above the ones of the community, pay constant attention to the artistic quality and aesthetics of the project. A high-quality object creates the feeling of pride, the feeling that I/we have succeeded.

Finally, we want to briefly review the specific features of community projects, as this has significant impact on the content of the projects, their implementation process, and the full involvement of the community and artists. It is particularly important to break down a community project of any size into smaller parts. Apart from the research and reflection phases, the project implementation phase divides activities into smaller parts (milestones), each of which has a clear goal leading to the result. Breakdown into smaller parts is incredibly important because of the possible quick reaction to the changes that occur. Even halfway through the activities, the outcome of the project may change in response to the changed circumstances. In such cases, artistic activities are not stopped, but replaced with new ones, without sometimes being afraid to abandon the activities already implemented and start again (this is not considered a mistake, but rather an experience leading to a more appropriate decision). The most important thing is that the primary values should not be forgotten during the project — empowering the local community, fostering mutual relations, creating local well-being through artistic means, etc.

It is also very important to understand that, ideally, community projects should not be finite — **the end of one activity should be seen as the beginning of another one.** It is a never-ending process that is continuously nurturing the members of the local community.

The community activities of the “Kaunas 2022” project were implemented under the “We, the People” programme. This programme is divided into two projects — the “Fluxus Labs!” aimed at communities within the boundaries of the city of Kaunas, and the “Contemporary Neighbourhoods” aimed at activities in Kaunas district. The present book encompasses the aspirations of both teams to share their accumulated experience with the like-minded people who aim to organise community activities in a purposeful way.

The book begins by presenting the “Kaunas 2022” project and the community programme “We, the People”, its base values, goals, visions, and tasks. The first chapter provides a detailed overview of the programme’s practices, including the chosen operational models and chronology. In the second chapter, the authors seek to describe WHAT is a community, by presenting two widely accepted interpretations: community as a thing and as a social phenomenon. Having chosen and grounded the latter definition, the third chapter sets out to answer the question WHAT FOR?, looking at the importance of strong communities from different perspectives. The fourth chapter deals with the practical question of HOW to work with communities, and introduces the reader to the main directions of activity, the role and importance of facilitators. Next, a model of the process of creation with the community is presented, which distinguishes four stages of community projects. In answering the question HOW, a strong emphasis is placed on the core principles and values that the teams of both projects chose to rely on: co-creation, contextuality, and playfulness/adventure/experimentation. After a detailed overview of the base values, the authors share proven practices, project specifics, and other essential elements of working with the community. Finally, the authors identify and review the human, infrastructural, and administrative challenges that anyone working on a community-based project can expect, and share specific ways to address them. The final chapter presents a systematic summary of the activities of the community programme “We, the People” and the lessons learned. This book can be read both as a single text and as separate chapters, each of which reveals a part of the complex context of communal activities.

We are happy with the additional value created by the “Kaunas 2022” project for the local communities and thank everyone who contributed to the title of the European Capital of Culture. We believe that the work done and the ideas implemented will be useful in creating a modern environment based on the synthesis of the past, present and future in the city of Kaunas and in Kaunas district, where it is good to live, regardless of age, origin, profession, or views.

We also hope that the project experience accumulated in the pages of this book will serve the readers who seek to deepen their knowledge in the field of working with communities, and will have an impact beyond the boundaries of Kaunas city and Kaunas district.

Enjoy
the journey!

Authors



**Kaunas and
Kaunas District –**
*European
Capital of
Culture 2022*

The project “Kaunas and Kaunas District — European Capital of Culture 2022” can be called an inspiring journey that started back in 2015. For a long time, in the eyes of the Kaunas people, we saw that look filled with nostalgia and turned towards the past. We found ourselves increasingly questioning whether Kaunas was really ‘the second city’. We realised that the time has come for change and for the transformation of Kaunas and Kaunas district — from temporary to contemporary capital.

As soon as we took the first steps, we felt an expanding powerful connection linking the past, present and future. The year 2022 can be seen as the year of one big festival — illustrating the path that we all went and presenting Kaunas and Kaunas district as a brave, creative, and modern environment. The European Capital of Culture initiative started in 1985 and can undoubtedly be considered as one of the most successful projects in the European Union. We feel both happy and proud that Kaunas and Kaunas district have been awarded with this honourable title for the year 2022.

Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that this journey is about people and for people: The goal of successful travelling towards the contemporary capital would not have been reached without a large and professional team of the like-minded people, engaged cultural organisations, artists, partners, volunteers, and most importantly — without the residents of the city and the district. Taking into account the history and traditions and seeking to combine the determination-driven contemporariness with them, the team of the project “Kaunas 2022” has been implementing its activities through different programmes: “Modernism for the Future”, “Memory Office”, “We, the People”, “Designing Happiness”, “Emerging Kaunas”, “Cultural Partnerships”, “The Mythical Beast”, “Tempo Academy of Culture”, and the programmes dedicated to Kaunas district.

The “Modernism for the Future” programme is dedicated to the success story of the conservation of the modernist heritage of Kaunas. The “Memory Office” encourages to know the multicultural memory of Kaunas city and Kaunas district and to be proud of ourselves and the places we live in. The “Designing Happiness” programme looks at design as a relationship that helps to foster the connection between a human being and the environment and fosters sustainable creative solutions that increase the attractiveness and accessibility of the environment. The “Emerging Kaunas” is the programme dedicated to the development of the ideas brought by the youth, and the main goal of the programme is to provide opportunities for the young generation to create the environment in which they would be happy to live. The “Cultural Partnerships” programme brings together the cultural organisations of Kaunas city and Kaunas district, also strengthening their internal and external relationship. “The Mythical Beast” programme is dedicated to the collective narrative and creation of the contemporary legend of Kaunas city and Kaunas district by the local residents. The “Contemporary Neighbourhoods” programme implemented in Kaunas district takes care of the smooth integration of the above-mentioned programmes in the territory of Kaunas district in order to strengthen the cultural potential of this area. The “Tempo Academy of Culture” programme organises training in different formats dedicated to the young people, communities, volunteers, and cultural professionals. It is aimed at improving the existing competences, developing new skills, also discovering and fostering the talents. “We, the People” is a programme that promotes the sense of community through culture and has become the inspiration and basis for this book. This programme is presented in more detail in the following section of the book, and for more information on the rest of the mentioned programmes of “Kaunas and Kaunas District — European Capital of Culture 2022” please visit the website www.kaunas2022.eu.

Kaunas 2022 structure

MODERNISM FOR THE FUTURE

Promotes community awareness and a connection to the modernist heritage of Kaunas, develops new creative projects and strengthens the relevance of this heritage on a European scale.

MEMORY OFFICE

Collects and promotes people's stories and seeks to revive the multi-ethnic memory of Kaunas and the Kaunas District, and to strengthen the bonds and interaction between the different communities that live here.

DESIGNING HAPPINESS

Develops a new understanding of a comfortable city and urban living based on the recommendations of designers and environmentalists. Promotes learning how to adapt the city for everyone and educates modern urban citizens.

EMERGING KAUNAS

This programme is designed for young people of various ages, from infants to young adults and seeks to help them build a city they want to live in.

CULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS

A network of cultural organizations and creators, working together with Kaunas 2022 to develop over 100 unique artistic projects for a special 2022 programme.

FLUXUS LABAS! / WE THE PEOPLE

Seeks to increase the community spirit of the people of Kaunas and the Kaunas District through cultural activities: Residents are encouraged to form resilient and creative communities through joint activities.

TEMPO ACADEMY OF CULTURE

An informal training programme bringing together organizations and people involved in the project who are interested in developing new skills and innovative cultural projects.

KAUNAS DISTRICT PROGRAMME

Develops projects based on local and community identity together with the people of the Kaunas District, cultural organizations, and local and visiting artists (for example, „Contemporary Neighbourhoods“)

MYTHICAL BEAST OF KAUNAS

An entertaining part of the programme which has been preparing the storylines for the central events of 2022, based on existing and new stories about Kaunas. The programme is also creating a legend about the Mythical Beast of Kaunas.

Community Programme

*“We, the
People”*

The community programme “We, the People” is dedicated to the promotion of the sense of community through culture. Since the very beginning, when preparation of the application for the title started, this programme has been developed exclusively for the residents of Kaunas city and Kaunas district. After 5 years of activity, it is evident now that it is exactly the case – the residents have created the programme themselves.

The main ambition of the community programme “We, the People” is creating opportunities for different communities to be proud of their culture and promoting cooperation, respect for each other, and co-creation. Particular attention was paid to strengthening local cultural potential and uniqueness, the ability to take responsibility for themselves and the others, participation in culture, development of artistic/cultural worldview, and engagement of community representatives in decision-making, especially relating to the creation of their living environment. Residents were actively involved in the creation and fostering of their local culture. The programme has revealed that when we are able to enjoy the mutual relationship with the people around, to create and be pleased with the creative results in our own courtyard, our city or district, we love the world more and become more open and tolerant.

In this section of the book, we will describe two subprogrammes of “We, the People”: the “Fluxus Labs!” and the “Contemporary Neighbourhoods”. The “Fluxus Labs!” is functioning in Kaunas city area, and the “Contemporary Neighbourhoods” — in Kaunas district. The splitting of the activities into two subprogrammes dedicated to the city and the district has happened naturally, considering the different attitudes of the city and district municipalities towards communities and the slightly different community, cultural, and social contexts. Although the methods of organising the activities are slightly different, the two subprogrammes share the same values, principles, and a common goal, as presented in this book.



Fluxus Labs!

VISION: The communities in Kaunas are open, they involve the residents of Kaunas in their activities and recognise the cultural diversity within and outside the areas of Kaunas city and Kaunas district (*inclusion*); they create mutual relationship and collaborate by sharing their own culture (*connections*), which they seek to express in creative, innovative, artistic ways, also creating activities adapted for this way of interacting (*cultural entrepreneurship*).

OBJECTIVE: Empowering different communities to foster their own culture and become hospitable local administrators sharing culture with the residents of Kaunas, the Lithuanians, and the Europeans.

TASKS:

Teaching participatory culture.

Increasing the visibility of the community-based arts (including the artists working with local communities), their development (communication of the value of the community art to local leaders and businesses).

Fostering local community-based change in their living environment (helping local communities to respond creatively to local challenges).

Development of artistic and cultural worldview.

Teaching the principles of co-creation, promotion of the use of practices.

Establishing relationship with local communities, networking of local people and organisations.

Contemporary Neighbourhoods

VISION: A broad horizon of the views of the local communities towards art and culture, engaging the highest possible number of the community members, the Lithuanian and foreign artists, representatives of the cultural field and partners in the creative processes, which form the basis for the newly emerging works of art, cultural activities and mutual dialogue between the local communities and cultural institutions in Kaunas district.

OBJECTIVE: To create sustainable artistic and cultural projects in Kaunas district, based on local identity, involving the local communities, and acting jointly with the local communities, cultural institutions, partners, and artists.

TASKS:

Broadening the outlook of the local communities towards art, creative work, and culture.

Creating conditions for the use of the local infrastructure and human resources, also increasing the dissemination of culture and art in Kaunas district.

Enhancing mutual dialogue between the local communities and cultural institutions by providing space for communication based on horizontal practices.¹

Developing and strengthening the skills of local communities and cultural institutions for creativity and implementation of cultural activities.

Reinforcing the willingness of the local people to take care of their living environment and be proud of it.

¹ When referring to horizontal practices, we mean the activities where all those involved in the process of organisation and implementation act as equal partners.



Why Fluxus?

The Fluxus movement initiated by George Maciunas, born in Kaunas, had considerable influence on the appearance of the name and basis of the subprogramme. To name the movement founded by himself in 1960s, George Maciunas chose the polysemous Latin word *fluxus* which means flow, purification, instability; the artist has also highlighted the meaning of the English word *flux* denoting purification, melting, etc. The Fluxus movement sought purification from 'dead art', flooding the world with a new approach to creativity. Thanks to the ideas of George Maciunas, the Fluxus art served to unite artists, composers, architects, designers, and all those who were experimenting and looking for opportunities to combine various artistic techniques and disciplines, who were producing joint works based on co-creation, thus seeking for randomness and adventure. George Maciunas merged art with life by

means of various performative artistic practices and the objects that he created, and was aiming to bring change to the daily life of the viewers and to highlight the jokes existing in life. Rūta Gaidamavičiūtė's article "Fluxus and Lithuania" describes the core of the Fluxus movement with the utmost accuracy: "When it is understood that the greatest value in art is imagination, it also has to be recognised that the lands less civilised and less represented on the world art scene may possess even more imagination than those in abundance of everything."² At the centre of the philosophy of the Fluxus movement, there is resistance to the elite art, next to the attitude that everyone can create, actively advocated for by George Maciunas. This attitude of the artist has served as a key and fundamental value in the community programme (in all the projects implemented, the main creators were members of the community, seen as co-creators from the perspective of the artist).

² (Rūta Gaidamavičiūtė. Fluxus ir Lietuva (Fluxus and Lithuania). World New Music Magazine, No. 18, 2008. <https://www.mic.lt/diskursai/wnmm-nr-18/ruta-gaidamaviciute-fluxus-ir-lietuva/>)

³ A community laboratory is an ephemeral entity composed of the local people (and not only) willing to engage in a given activity and also develop a creative environment or take part in another activity which is relevant and significant to the community. In Kaunas, the first community laboratories were created in 2018 with the assistance of community facilitators — Fluxus agents, specifically trained for this type of work (see section "Who works with the community?" for more information on community facilitators and special training on community facilitation). The strength of the "Fluxus Labs!" lies in the fact that since the very beginning of the programme, all the coordinators, community facilitators and laboratory initiators had a common understanding that even a minor creative initiative can lead to strong long-term changes which are of key importance for a growing society that knows the importance of creativity and communication.

Fluxus + Hello (Labas in Lithuanian) = “Fluxus Labs!”

The part of the community programme implemented in the city of “Kaunas 2022” immediately caught the name “Fluxus Labs!”, which is also an invitation to every resident without special preparation to join the creative process and be with others — to say hello, make friends. The “Fluxus Labs!”, are community laboratories³ operating in the city of Kaunas, which aim to unite residents, artists, creators, activists, entrepreneurs, educators, and everyone who want to contribute to the creation and activation of their living environment through artistic and creative means.

The analysis of the philosophy of the Fluxus movement has led to the identification of the 8 principles of Fluxus — they were applied to all the “Fluxus Labs!” projects implemented. Putting these principles into practice resulted in more attractive activities, stimulated curiosity, made the activities easier to understand, brought playfulness and fun, and most importantly — everyone was granted the status of a creator.

Contemporary Capitals

The ongoing community project “Contemporary Neighbourhoods” aims to strengthen the cultural sector of Kaunas district, its partners, and local communities. The project is taking place in cooperation with the culture and education specialists of Kaunas district, businesses, external experts and partners, guest artists, creatives, community representatives and “Kaunas 2022” curators and coordinators.

Participating neighbourhoods:

*Akademija,
Babtai,
Domeikava,
Ežerėlis,
Garliavos apylinkės,
Lapės,
Linksmakalnis,
Kačerginė,
Karmėlava,
Kulautuva,
Raudondvaris,
Ringaudai,
Rokai,
Vilkija,
Samylai.*

Principles of the “Fluxus Labs!”:



DIY culture and
aesthetics



Randomness



Continuous change
of movement



Removed boundary
between art and life



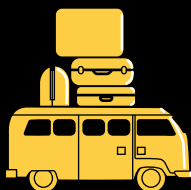
Combining different
disciplines



Adventure



Simplicity



Escaping everyday
life and routine

It is particularly important to note that these two projects are united by the fact that the greatest attention is paid to the establishment of mutual relations and to cultivation and maintenance of internal and external communication. Two main directions of communication can be identified:

1.

Communication of community programme teams with representatives of communities that implement local projects: regular meetings organised with community representatives or their groups; participation and help in their events; continuous connection by e-mails, calls, etc.

2.

Internal communication of the “Fluxus Labs!” and “Contemporary Neighbourhoods” project teams: the work of the past and future days and the arising challenges discussed during stand-ups (meetings) that are organised every morning. Teams discuss how to work more efficiently and pass on the available knowledge to other communities by changing the working methods applied accordingly.

Further in this section, both projects developed in the community programme “We, the People” (the “Fluxus Labs!” and the “Contemporary Neighbourhoods”) are presented separately. It all started with the “Fluxus Labs!” activities, and later, considering the territorial and administrative differences, it was decided to develop a separate project in Kaunas district called “Contemporary Neighbourhoods”. The chronology below gives details of how and when the “Fluxus Labs!” split into two projects. Also, considering their uniqueness, both projects are presented separately.



"Fluxus Festival", Kaunas, 2022

Fluxus

Labs!



Fluxus Labs!

This chapter provides a step-by-step introduction to the “Fluxus Labs!” project. It is presented chronologically in order to reveal the change of the original programme idea, determined by the socio-cultural situation of the city and the district and the constantly changing needs of the communities.

2017

The community programme “We, the People” was launched at the end of 2017 with lectures and training on community arts and on work with communities. The training, which lasted 5 months, was aimed at preparing the training participants (the future Fluxus agents, also known as community facilitators) for work with communities, thus seeking to address the existing public challenges through artistic and

creative activities. The training included acquaintance with the examples of community art in Europe and the good practices from other European Capitals of Culture, as well as learning the methods of facilitation, group management, local research, and reflecting on the activities implemented. (Read more in section “Who works with the community?”)

2018

In early July 2018, the first generation of the Fluxus agents started their work. Their activities extended beyond the organisation of certain meetings, creative workshops, or events, as the most important part of their task was to involve local organisations, artists and residents, to reveal their talents, to activate the existing non-traditional spaces. At that time, 3 agents were functioning in 3 areas of Kaunas district (Garliava suburbs, Zapyškis and Akademija) and 5 agents in Kaunas city (Šančiai, Eiguliai, Dainava, Vilijampolė, and Šilainiai districts). A system was created, where each agent had to implement a certain number of activities involving local communities and was remunerated with a symbolic fee each month. Additional funding was also allocated to the implementation of activities (fees for artists and creatives, tools for creative workshops, equipment, etc.). Since 2018, all the activities carried out by the Fluxus agents have been called the “Fluxus Laboratories”, or the “**Fluxus Labs!**” in short.

The activities run by the agents were managed and their content supervised by a “Fluxus Labs!” coordinator. Later, with the increase in the number of agents and their activities, the number of coordinators also increased. It must be noted that the “Fluxus Labs!” coordinators themselves were also performing partial functions of an agent, such as looking for communities, non-governmental organisations, or businesses willing to engage in the community action; helping the proactive community members implement their activities; facilitating their activi-

ties. In this way, the network of formal and non-formal communities was developed — not only through community facilitators, but also through the activities conducted by coordinators.

A call for the second round of the Fluxus agent training was launched at the end of 2018, based on the established evidence that the activities of the Fluxus agents in specific areas proved to be useful. The training programme was adjusted to take into account the existing experience in doing activities directly with communities. The Association “Kūrybinės jungtys” (“Creative Connections”) also contributed significantly to the improvement of this training programme. Besides, the Association helped to create a model for working with communities, which was improved over the years taking into account the gained practical experiences (for more detailed description of the model see Section “Model of the Process of Creating with the Community”). Consequently, in the beginning of 2019, 12 persons graduated the Fluxus agent training. In 2019, activities were implemented by 17 Fluxus agents.

The activities carried out in 2018 revealed several unforeseen challenges, but also provided significant opportunities for the establishment of the future strategic directions. One may say that the year 2018 was the year of exploration of the context and the territory, which enabled us to form a solid foundation for the community programme.

2019

The activities carried out in 2018 have also dictated several strategic directions of the community programme.

1 The experience gained in 2018 showed that the model of the Fluxus agent network was not quite suitable for the territory of Kaunas district for several reasons:

- the territory of Kaunas district has a rather dense network of cultural centres and leisure halls, one of the functions of which is to build communities, so the activities of Fluxus agents were accepted as overlapping activities;
- one of the goals of Kaunas district administration was to strengthen the competences of the employees of cultural centres through community projects. While the network of facilitators focused on developing cultural management skills of local members of the community;
- facilitators were provided with motivational tools for working with communities. For Kaunas district, it was decided that allocating motivational tools to one individual may adversely affect the motivation of other members of the community. For this reason, 'neutral' persons were engaged, namely the employees of cultural institutions.

Hence, in 2019, a new programme called "Contemporary Neighbourhoods" dedicated exclusively to the territory of Kaunas district was introduced, while the "Fluxus Labs!" continued functioning exclusively in the territory of Kaunas city.

2

Some of the Fluxus agents were implementing their activities together with the residents of multi-apartment buildings. Analysis of the activities carried out by different agents in different districts has shown the prevalence of similar challenges related to unattractiveness of the locality, lack of suitable space for meetings, alienation of neighbours, etc. This has led to the creation of a separate project — the “Fluxus Labs! Yard” dedicated exclusively to the yards (courtyards of multi-apartment buildings, new residential quarters, etc.). The project was designed to develop cultural community projects for courtyards in order to empower local people to take the initiative.

For the “**Fluxus Labs! Yard**” project, a unique and proven model of courtyard selection was applied. An important aspect was that the courtyards were assessed not by the commission, but by the communities themselves. As the actors in their own yard, they were well aware of the challenges of other courtyards. Moreover, this way of selection helped to avoid discontent related to unfair assessment or favouritism. These meetings were always accompanied by good emotions, and all the participating courtyards joined some of the other “Fluxus Labs!” activities in one way or another.



The “Fluxus Labs! Yard” model of courtyard selection

Announcement of an open call for taking part in the “Fluxus Labs! Yard” project.

The open call was addressed to the courtyard communities or activists willing to change something in their closest living environment and to address common cultural and social challenges arising in the yard, by joint effort of the neighbours. The persons willing to take part in the project were asked to fill an electronic form and answer its questions about the courtyard community, the level of their activity (or their passivity and the problems arising from that), the implemented activities (if any); they were also asked to send some pictures of the yard and describe the challenge that they would like to address jointly with their neighbours. It was underlined in the call and the questionnaire that the project was not meant to solve infrastructural problems and did not seek to implement such kind of projects, as the call was dedicated exclusively for a cultural or artistic project.

All the applicant communities were invited

to a joint meeting where each of them was asked to briefly present their yard, their community, and the challenges they wanted to solve.

Presentations were followed by voting,

each community entitled to vote for the number of yards equalling to the number of the projects to be funded in that year. The key criteria were the following: voting for the courtyards most in need of support and assistance in addressing their challenges, and courtyards with the challenges related to the community's cultural needs, as well as fulfilment of such needs. In this simple way, the winner yards were selected.



“When I heard about this idea, I never imagined that it could turn into such a beautiful reality. I did not expect that the message could spread so widely, involve and unite people — complete strangers, very different persons (first of all, from different social backgrounds!), and without any direct benefit to them personally, only for the well-being of the community. It was something beyond the material reality of our society.”

“Fluxus Labs! Yard” project participant Živilė Katkauskė

3

The “Fluxus Labs!” programme has been focused on geographical communities since the very beginning, assuming that such kind of activities were more durable, as the benefits remained in the given area and for the people who lived there. However, we noticed that there were excellent community initiatives that the Fluxus agents could no longer cover in their area of activity. It was also noted that such additional activities could create a possibility to find other active representatives in the communities and expand the network of such actors. Thus, the “**Community Initiatives**” project has been developed for this purpose. The project itself and its selection method were inspired by the participatory budgeting model. The aim of the “Community Initiatives” project was to reach the communities (or individuals) that had their community-based ideas already developed, but had no possibility to implement them. It should be noted that this project was mostly aimed at working and supporting community initiatives with no legal status (just like in the “Fluxus Labs! Yard” project), resulting in greater difficulties to access external funding.

Each of the newly emerged “Fluxus Labs!” subprogrammes were managing separate budgets, with the exception of the “Contemporary Neighbourhoods”, as the latter has developed into a separate programme.

The “Community Initiatives” model of community selection:

Announcement of an open call for community-based projects (initiatives). The applicants were requested to fill an electronic form and answer its questions on the planned project, its idea, its benefits to the local community or the community of interest, the way of involving the community, the continuity of the project; they also had to draft the budget of the activities.

The forms complying with the formal requirements (all fields of the form duly filled, background information on the project presented) passed to the second stage of evaluation, i. e. public voting.

The questionnaires submitted were evaluated in two stages:

- *administrative review;*
- *expert evaluation and public voting.*

At this stage, projects with a brief description and an associative illustration were posted on the website www.visikaipvienas.eu. On a special page of the website, community representatives and residents of Kaunas city and Kaunas district could vote for the initiative they liked most. The public voting accounted for 50 % of the final score and the commission's evaluation accounted for the rest 50 %. The projects that received the highest number of votes were granted support (to cover the artist fee; necessary tools; renting of equipment, etc.) from the budget of the “Fluxus Labs!” programme.

In addition to the above-mentioned strategic directions, several additional activities have emerged since 2019.

1.

Community Entrepreneurial Training Programme. The need for this type of training derived from interviews with the community representatives — they were continuously looking for ways how to support and maintain their cultural and/or artistic community-based activities. At that time, the idea of community (social) entrepreneurship seemed very attractive. Thus, we started organising community entrepreneurial training jointly with the consulting company MB “Tulbos konsultacijos”. Community teams received theoretical lectures on the start of the business creation process and on the community-relevant and social aspects of such type of business; they were also provided with individual consulting by the training organisers, which allowed them to go deeper into their decision, challenge, and development of their business idea. This programme was implemented for two years (2019–2020) and in that time the ideas of community/social business were deepened or newly developed by the following initiatives:

- **The “Soap Laboratory”**, the purpose of which was to revive and creatively present the traditions and history of soap production in Kaunas during the interwar period. Creative soap-making workshops with community, private events, and several educational events were organised by the team of like-minded people in the old town of Kaunas. The idea of interwar soap as a souvenir reflecting the Old Town community was created and developed (small-format soaps of special design were created to serve as a beautiful gift to other communities and foreign guests at various events).

- **The “Owl Coffee”** initiative was created by three residents of Žaliakalnis district in Kaunas. Its goal was to foster Žaliakalnis as the friendliest district for the Lithuanian artists, urban craftsmen, and cultural service providers. Besides, the “Owl Coffee” continues to invite local artists to create and sell the artworks created in or about Žaliakalnis, and use part of the profit for community events (more information at www.peledukava.lt).

- **“Stuba”** is a creativity house founded by Zapyškis town women, where household, creative activities, exhibitions, and celebrations come together under one roof. The “Stuba” team organises camps for children and adults, also trainings, workshops, events for communities, private gatherings.

2.

In 2018–2019, training for artists/creatives was organised, it lasted for several months. When implementing various creative community-based activities, it was noticed that there was a lack of artists and/or creatives in Kaunas and Lithuania who would be willing and able to engage in a creative process with communities in an ethical manner, based on the principle of co-creation, considering the needs and ideas expressed by each specific community (avoiding focusing on one’s own artistic idea). In organisation of this training, we were supported by the Association “Kūrybinės jungtys” (“Creative Connections”). After completion of this training, some of the participating artists/creatives continued to take part in the activities of the “Fluxus Labs!” or the “Contemporary Neighbourhoods” until the very end of the title year 2022.



“The ‘Owl Coffee’ was just a dream when we started participating in the entrepreneurship training. Jūratė and Jonas were not well acquainted with each other at that time, but we all had a common idea that Žaliakalnis needed an active community, one of the goals of which would be to promote the awakening of local artists. We had a lot of time to get to know each other better through regular meetings and homework in the training programme. Thus, we gradually deepened the idea, goals, and objectives of our ‘Owl Coffee’: we created a map of the community and our visions for the future; we prepared a business plan; we created a logo. We also tried our hand at filling out applications for various projects and participated in a social hackathon. All of this helped to believe that we could create a strong community in Žaliakalnis. Later, in the spring of 2020, we successfully launched our NGO called the ‘Owl Coffee’. This training programme helped us to spread our owl wings.”

Monika Briedienė,
co-founder of the “Owl Coffee” NGO

2020

At the end of 2019, our third open call for the Fluxus agent training was announced. This year, the training was in a way special, as it was dedicated to the community centres and residents operating in Kaunas city. The aim of the training was to introduce the participants to the already developed, practically tested and improved model of co-creating with the community (the model focuses on the artistic, creative, and co-creative aspects, not so much addressed in the day-to-day activities of the community centres). The training programme was slightly adjusted to take into account the practical experience already acquired by the participants. After this training, representatives of the community centres were not meant to become Fluxus agents (as was the case until 2020), but to act as “Fluxus Laboratories” and receive support for the project ideas created during the training. However, due to the pandemic that started at the beginning of 2020, these plans were only partially implemented (due to the restricted possibility to gather in groups and organise activities, as well as due to severely cut funding).

In 2020, the payment model previously applied for the Fluxus agents was changed. Since 2018, the Fluxus agents have been paid monthly fees for the activities delivered, but this model has created difficulties not only for the agents themselves, as they have not always managed to carry out the planned number of activities, due to the various changes taking place in the community, but also for the “Fluxus Labs!” programme, due to the heavy administrative burden. Thus, we have gradually moved to the project funding model, where Fluxus agents had to present a preliminary project, an

idea of activities with the community and an action plan, then it was agreed about the foreseen number of meetings and activities to be carried out. This has provided the agents with freedom to organise their activities over time, taking into account the existing possibilities and circumstances of the community and artists/creatives. The remuneration was paid in instalments after each implemented activity or in full, upon completion of the entire project. This has enabled the agents to navigate within the framework of the project and make the necessary changes more freely.



Indeed, the year 2020 brought numerous challenges. Due to the outbreak of the pandemic and the prolonged quarantine, as well as reductions in budget, part of the projects could not be implemented. However, it is important to note that even during the first quarantine, some of the activities were transformed and reshaped, with new activities created. The “Community Initiatives” project refused public voting and kept only an expert panel for evaluation of the submitted applications. The number of applications received in 2020 was relatively low, as the period of the submission of applications coincided with the start of the pandemic and the global quarantine. Speaking about the “Fluxus Labs! Yard” selections, they were successfully implemented, with 6 yards selected to continue the project, before imposition of the quarantine measures. However, due to the pandemic, the projects were not fully implemented, part of them were postponed for 2021.

Despite the obstacles, the “Fluxus Labs!” activities did not stop during the first quarantine — part of them were transformed, the other part recreated. This happened for the following reasons:



a) flexible approach to the ongoing projects: the intended plan is not followed blindly, there is a possibility to change project activities, taking into account the situation;

b) quick assessment of the situation, response to it, discovery of new ideas and ways to communicate, prompt decision-making;

c) the ability to reorient to other activities (even if the overall goal has not fundamentally changed), the ability to quickly discover new ways of implementation together with the communities.

Among the most successful projects developed during the pandemic were the “Culture to the Courtyards” and the “Quarantine Windows”. The initiator and photographer of the project Gabija Vainiutė took portraits of Kaunas residents spending time at home, wandering through their windows. This project also served as the basis for the international project “Europe at Home”⁴ that was initiated by the team of “Faro 2027” (candidate for the ECoC title), and the exhibition by Gabija Vainiutė was presented in many districts of Kaunas city as a travelling outdoor photography exhibition.

⁴ <https://www.europeathome.eu/cities.html>



2021

At the end of 2020, an open call for the final round of training for community facilitators was announced. This training was organised in a hybrid way, with live meetings and video calls. After this training, a few more people joined the team of the Fluxus agents.

The “Community Initiatives” project was born out of the need to discover and activate (non-)formal communities. In 2021, this project was aimed at composing initiative groups in each of the districts of Kaunas, inviting local businesses, community centres, NGOs, educational institutions, etc., for a general discussion with the



“Fluxus Labs!” and community facilitators on the activities to be realised in 2022. The initiative groups consisted of community centres, NGOs, educational institutions, local businesses, representatives of “Fluxus Laboratories”, community facilitators, etc. In their meetings, the groups worked to refine and create a specific community event, artwork or object representing each given district. Hence, throughout 2021, intensive efforts were focused on creating local steering groups, generating common ideas, initiating various activities, as a way of preparing for the year 2022. During these activities, community initiatives were gradually developed into community laboratories, and the actions planned in 2021 were expected to be visible in 2022 as major events of the “Fluxus Laboratories” of Kaunas districts, presenting community initiatives and the results of the 5 year long period of work with the community.

This whole journey of working with communities through employment of different creativity methods has revealed that two of the “Fluxus Labs!” strategic solutions were the most effective:

1.

Employing fully paid community programme coordinators. The position of community coordinators has not only ensured smooth operation of community facilitators, but also secured support for community initiatives, community centres, or other community based projects (which were not related to the existing projects run by the agents). This position was also justified because some of the community representatives, who were not community facilitators and did not receive extra wages, were motivated by community coordinators and provided continuous assistance not just in helping to organise activities, inviting artists, paying artistic expenses, helping with the necessary props for the activities, but also in continuously communicating with community representatives, providing consulting, discussing the future or past activities, helping in their evaluation and improvement.

Each coordinator of the “Fluxus Labs!” project had their own territories, where they carried out and supported community activities and initiatives together with community representatives. Each community had its own team where they decided what to do. The coordinator (like the community facilitator) was responsible for the ability of teams or individuals to implement their ideas in certain areas/communities.

2.

Employing partially paid community facilitators, prepared at special training. Although reward offered to community facilitators was rather symbolic, it motivated them to go into more responsible activities, devote more time and attention to what they do.

In community projects, a ‘mentor’ or a person who can advise and help solve organisational or other related problems is important for a local activist or activity initiator. Quite often, when faced with difficulties, initiators can give up and lose their motivation to act, but conversations combined with assistance from the outside (e. g., a facilitator) always helps to move on.

*Community
activists and
communities*

*Community
Facilitators*

**Fluxus Labs!
Coordinators**



In addition to the projects mentioned above (“Fluxus Labs”, “Fluxus Labs! Yard”, “Community Initiatives”), the “Fluxus Labs!” initiated and implemented several large-scale community events. Their goal was to bring together various local and interest-driven communities of Kaunas city and Kaunas district, to encourage them to meet, to present their local identity through culture and art, to make connections and celebrate community together.

Major events of the “Fluxus Labs!”

The **Neighbourhood Feast** was created by the artist Vytenis Jakas as a social initiative and has been organised in the Laisvės alėja (the Liberty avenue) in Kaunas since 2017, in order to celebrate the International Neighbours Day. Since the very start, the event has been focused on fostering the sense of community and friendship among the residents of Kaunas city and Kaunas district, as well as highlighting the value and importance of sharing a neighbourhood. After all, our neighbours are the persons closest to us, and we are sharing not just our common spaces, such as stairways, courtyards, districts, but also our presence in time, as the existing problems, joys, ideas, and attitudes can create wonderful opportunities to stay close to each other.

The highlight of the feast is the tables laid with white tablecloths, and the neighbours at the tables spending their time together and sharing their food, stories, and advices. However, since 2021, due to the global pandemic, the Neighbourhood Feast has changed its format — the communities and cultural organisations of the city and the district were invited to share their talents, artistic programmes, concerts, etc., in the open spaces, just because the city can be seen as our yard, and we can all see ourselves as neighbours.

“This feast was created by the townspeople themselves, spreading good mood. The emotion shared by the community is the most important thing here, and we can recognise it when we create it ourselves. I am glad that the idea is spreading among individual communities as well — people are organising get-togethers in their yards and even in their corridors. This was not the case before.”

Vytenis Jakas, initiator of the Neighbourhood Feast





“What can this event provide? Maybe a sense of unity. I myself grew up in a family of artists, and I think that the essence of the festival is to make invisible people visible. For example, you notice that your neighbour, whom you may not know, is here. This is unity. After all, we are not so much different. I am a true Kaunasian, I love Kaunas, and this city is mine and for me.”

“Fluxus festival” participant Augustinas

The **Fluxus Festival** has been organised since 2018, inviting people to celebrate communality. Fluxus speaks about a never-ending movement and the desire to rise, climb, and change — from temporariness to contemporariness, from the centre to the non-centre, from the routine to the unexpected. Indeed, this festival is in a way a summary of the artistic activities carried out by different communities during the year, and a great occasion to celebrate all the accomplishments; this is the feast for community gatherings, self-expression, and friendship.

As part of the festival, the residents, communities and guests of Kaunas city and Kaunas district are invited to jointly climb up the Parodos hill, dressed in unexpected costumes inspired by the Fluxus movement. Climbing the hill begins at the square named after the Fluxus pioneer George Maciunas; on the top of the hill, the participants get involved in an (un)expected and (un)usual artistic action created by the communities of Kaunas city and Kaunas district.



The “Culture to the Courtyards”

project was born in 2020, at the time of the global pandemic, when severe quarantine restrictions were applied. Artists from various fields were invited to perform in the courtyards of multi-apartment buildings (in line with the existing safety requirements), thus offering a possibility for the residents to enjoy exceptional performances from their balconies or windows.

A positive impact of the project on local communities was noticed — culture was brought to peripheral places, so that performances could be seen by those who normally do not have opportunities to participate in cultural events.

Besides, these performances encouraged communities to come together and initiate similar activities in their own backyards. This novel format received great attention and resulted in the nomination of the project for the “Classical: NEXT 2021” awards in the category of innovative music projects.

In 2020, Kaunas City Day was celebrated in the same way — numerous cultural organisations from Kaunas offered their performances to the city residents right in the courtyards.

In 2022, considering the success of the project “Culture to the Yards” became one of the main highlights of “Fluxus Labs!”, and more than 80 different musical, theatre, dance performances, and exhibitions visited the yards of apartment buildings.



Contemporary *Neighbourhoods*

Each neighbourhood, together with an appointed curator from “Kaunas 2022” (all neighbourhoods are working with a curator from “Kaunas 2022” acting as a coordinator)⁶ started their journey in search of their identity and the ways to make it strong. To achieve this objective, local research was carried out jointly with the residents. Along with that, surveys of cultural institutions involved in the project and their partners

have helped to better understand the history and traditions of each location, the relationship of the residents with the living environment, culture, community, and art. The surveys also focused on the challenges faced by the neighbourhoods as they also have a significant impact on the micro-climate prevailing in the neighbourhood. Local studies were conducted through interviews, surveys, and analysis of sources.

⁶ For each neighbourhood, there is an appointed coordinator — team member of “Kaunas 2022” (coordinator or curator). It has to be noted that there were no staff members at “Kaunas 2022” with the sole responsibility of coordinating the activities run with the neighbourhoods involved in the project — all the staff members were also fulfilling other functions. Thus, coordination of the activities in the neighbourhoods was a supplementary function and responsibility for them, requiring a dedicated part of their working time.



Having obtained a better understanding of each neighbourhood and the relationship of their residents with art and culture, as well as the emerging challenges, the existing traditions and expectations, it was possible to start defining the orientations for the creative community-based activities in the neighbourhoods, involving the local residents, representatives of cultural institutions and partners, artists from Lithuania and abroad. It is important to mention that community meetings were initiated in each of the neighbourhoods, as a forum for planning

and subsequent implementation of various activities (i. e., meetings with artists, creative workshops, seminars, etc.). All events taking place in a given neighbourhood are thematically connected, and they are designed so that they help to achieve the final result to be presented to the public during the warm period of the year. This is the time when Kaunas district becomes a grand stage for events, inviting the locals and their guests to concerts, festivals, contemporary circus performances, and exhibitions, in order to celebrate the strengthened identity of the place and the sense of community.



All participants in this project are linked by a scheme which could be referred to as a circular scheme. This means that there is no evident hierarchical structure in the project, and each participant is an important component. Participants involved in the project: Kaunas district municipality, “Kaunas 2022”, Kaunas district cultural or community centres, leisure halls, neighbourhood administrations, partners, artists, community members. This principle of connecting the participants reveals one of the main differences between the activities in the “Contemporary Neighbourhoods” project and those happening under the “Fluxus Labs!” in Kaunas city. In the urban context, people form part of communities that often operate

without any legal status, partners, or infrastructure. In the context of the “Contemporary Neighbourhoods”, a close connection is created with the cultural or community centres and leisure halls functioning in Kaunas district, and these units normally have a functioning and effective administrative structure, and their spaces that could be used for implementation of the activities. They often already have their collectives (choirs, dance groups, etc.) that can be involved in the planning and implementation of the activities. The above-mentioned partners (schools, multifunctional centres, libraries, etc.) also play an important role — they usually share their existing human and infrastructural resources with the project team.



Responsibilities, accountability *and administrative implementation* OF THE PROJECT

The community-based project “Contemporary Neighbourhoods”, as we will see in the following sections of this book, is a project developed jointly with legal entities functioning in Kaunas district. In other words, it is a project with a significant part of activities implemented by way of interaction of different legal entities. The funding for the project has been ensured by Kaunas District Municipality. The “Kaunas 2022” team, in cooperation with the cultural institutions of Kaunas district (cultural centres, their subdivisions, community centres) take care of the development of the project, organisation

of the cultural activities, and ensuring the involvement of the local communities in these activities. That is why administrative procedures play a crucial role in the context of the project.

It was observed that the appearance of the cultural institutions currently involved in the project “Contemporary Neighbourhoods” has never been incidental. These institutions expressed their desire to participate by submitting their application to “Kaunas 2022”.

In 2019, an open call for expressions of interest was launched inviting cultural institutions to submit a completed application form and requesting them to provide information in 6 fields, namely contact information, project planning, audience and social connections, description of the topic, available resources, communication channels.

Basic information:	name; neighbourhood; address; brief description of the organisation; names of the persons to be responsible for the implementation of the project and their contact details; local partners; descriptions of the activities carried out with the potential partners indicated in the application; results achieved before the start of the project.
Project planning:	description of the local cultural map, indicating the physical places, activities, traditions, legends, stories that are important to the community and that characterise it.
Audience and social relations:	the relationship of the target audience(s) to the applying cultural institution, indicating the level of activity of the selected audience(s) in the activities organised by the institution, and identifying the audience(s) that are not planned to be included in the project activities, also providing justification for their choice.
Description of the topic:	description and justification of the topic(s) relevant to the local community; connection of the value of the selected topic(s) with the values of “Kaunas 2022”.
Resources:	identification of available human, technical, and infrastructural resources.
Communication:	naming the tools and communication partners used for information dissemination.

The submission, consideration and approval of applications was followed by conclusion of the contract of cooperation with the cultural institutions of Kaunas district involved in the project. The main purpose of the contract of cooperation was to define the division of responsibilities between the cultural institutions participating in the project and “Kaunas 2022”.



"Summer Midnight Luncheon", Babtai Town, 2022

Main responsibilities of the cultural institutions participating in the project:

- Coordinating project activities in the neighbourhood, organising meetings with the community, ensuring the involvement of partners willing to contribute to community activities, creative workshops, event planning, implementation, etc.
- Performing the tasks provided for in the project stages: research, generation of ideas, involvement of artists, as well as other type of activities, in coordination with the project coordinator.
- Maintaining continuous communication with the coordinator, informing him/her about the progress of project development, planned activities, emerging challenges, the need for props or additional human resources, etc.
- Publishing information related to the project and its implementation through various channels and means, both in the physical and in the virtual space.
- Sharing human, intellectual, and infrastructural resources with “Kaunas 2022”, if possible.
- Not involving the coordinator in any internal conflicts unrelated to the project.

Main responsibilities of “Kaunas 2022”:

- Sharing human and intellectual resources, where possible.
- Participating in meetings with representatives of cultural institutions, community, partners.
- Maintaining continuous communication designed by the implementing cultural institution, sharing topical information related to the project.
- Ensuring coordination of creative workshops.
- Publishing project-related information on the “Kaunas 2022” information channels, both in the physical and the virtual space.
- Providing opportunities for the cultural institutions participating in the project, so they can use “Kaunas 2022” attributes when organising and implementing their project activities.
- Ensuring financing of project activities, initiating public procurement required in the context of the project, coordinating the project budget.

In addition to submitting an application and concluding a contract of cooperation, the implementation of the project was accompanied by cyclical administrative procedures: submission of monthly activity plans and reports and quarterly activity reports, annual budget planning:

- Monthly activity plans and reports were prepared by the cultural institution representing the neighbourhood participating in the project. The information was shared with the coordinator supervising the neighbourhood. The coordinator placed the monthly activity plans and reports in the monitoring system. The “Kaunas 2022” team member responsible for the overall coordination of the “Contemporary Neighbourhoods” project (hereinafter referred to as the CN curator), in turn, drew up a general monthly activity plan for all the neighbourhoods and submitted it on a monthly basis to Kaunas District Municipality and “Kaunas 2022” administration.
- At the end of each quarter of the calendar year, the CN curator prepared a general quarterly activity report for all the neighbourhoods based on the monthly activity reports available in the monitoring system, and presented it to Kaunas District Municipality and “Kaunas 2022” administration. This procedure continued during the period of preparation of the annual activity report.
- At the end of each calendar year, the coordinator and the cultural institution representing the neighbourhood prepared a budget plan for the next calendar year. The plan stated the following factors: when, for which measures and how much funds are expected to be allocated to the activities in the upcoming calendar year. The CN curator prepared a unified budget plan for all neighbourhoods and submitted it to “Kaunas 2022” administration. Finally, “Kaunas 2022” administration submitted the general budget plan for the coming calendar year for approval of Kaunas District Municipality.

In the current section of the book, we presented the main administrative procedures that were relevant for the development of the “Contemporary Neighbourhoods” project. However, the scrupulous planning and accountability for the work done may often be seen as contradicting the creative activities, in which the Nense of freedom is of high importance. Nevertheless, the planning and organisation of works has always helped to avoid numerous challenges and provided an opportunity to achieve the highest results in terms of strengthening of the community through artistic and cultural activities. The external look by the team members of “Kaunas 2022” and Kaunas District Municipality, their observations and advice in response to the operational plans or the results achieved, helped to look at many situations from different perspectives — this is also an important aspect in achieving a high-quality change in the relationship among the local communities.

**DEFINING
COMMUNITY:
WHAT IS IT,
WHAT FOR
AND HOW?**

Community — *what is it?*



Before starting to describe the meaning and benefits of working with communities, it is important to briefly stop at the very concept of 'community'. The way we define the community will result in the way we will be working with it, what attitudes and methods will be applied, and what aspirations will be set.

'Community' can be understood very broadly at least in two ways — either as an object or as a social phenomenon.

In the first case, we understand the community more as a group of people with clear boundaries, where it is clear who belongs or who does not belong to this group. Moreover, looking at the community as an object, we assume that the structure of the community (i. e., the relations among its people and organisations, their statuses) is more or less static and, most importantly, it is possible to recognise and describe it. This approach has been widely used in public governance, social work, education, as it is simple, understandable, and user-friendly, yet it has several significant disadvantages. Firstly, in real life, the boundaries of specific communities are not necessarily entirely clear. Even when thinking about a specific small rural community, it will not be fully clear whether it includes only the people living there or also its former residents who like the area, but do not live there anymore, or people who come only for work, but live elsewhere, etc. In addition, local people always have their own historical and cultural boundaries that do not necessarily coincide with the administrative distribution or a specific location. Secondly, in real life, communities can change very quickly and very significantly, and that is why in practice, when we try to understand the structure of a particular community, the links between its people and organisations as well as its 'nodes', we need to understand that in this way we only capture a certain moment in the life of the community, which can change soon. It is like a single shot from a never-ending movie. Thirdly, in real life, the structure of communities, that is the relations and statuses of people, various informal groups, and organisations, constitute a very complex and multifaceted network that we cannot fully recognise and understand. Thus, considering the community as a static structure, we follow a very simplified (and superficial) image. In practice, our understanding of a community as an object often ignores the inherent complexity of communities and then there is a risk that communities will become more closed, elite, isolated, and fragile.

Consequently, a different approach to the concept of community has gradually emerged when working with communities: a community was started to be considered not as an object, but rather as a phenomenon that occurs in certain groups of people. This is a kind of 'side phenomenon' which occurs when groups of people have several important characteristics. First, when the community is perceived as a social phenomenon, we are talking about large groups of people, comprising dozens, several hundred or even several thousand people. Large groups of people are characterised by their own dynamics, that is, they are changing in certain ways that are typical of them. Second, large groups of people, in real life, are almost always heterogeneous — they are full of people, initiatives, attitudes, beliefs, habits, political views, experiences, etc. Diversity and differences are natural features of commu-

nities if we understand them as a social phenomenon. Just when a wide variety of people, for various reasons, decide to consider themselves a part of the community (not necessarily a positive or productive part of it, which is quite interesting), a community is 'born'. When we understand a community as a social phenomenon, practical work is not so much about the boundaries or structure of the community, but rather the diversity and community change (dynamics). For us, what strengthens the circulation of different opinions, powers, resources, habits and customs, ideas, experiences and knowledge, gets more important than what specifically are the members of a given community

Diversity and the full range of opportunities and tensions created by this diversity are important in this respect when working in a community. It is precisely in the situations of emerging opportunities and tensions where people do most. The definition of a community as a social phenomenon is more complex and less understandable, and is therefore less used in practice, but at the same time it is precisely this kind of seeing a community that helps strengthen communities which are open, dynamic, resilient, creative, and full of energy.

Among the communities most frequently encountered in public policy are neighbourhoods or local communities. As far as these communities are concerned, they are often considered as objects linked to a specific geographical area, but as already mentioned before, such an understanding leads to specific dangers. To avoid them, it is worth considering local communities or neighbourhoods as a social phenomenon associated with large and diverse groups of people which have at least several common characteristics:

1.

The same or a very close living environment. Naturally, people living close to each other, often seeing each other, and actively interacting with each other, tend to see themselves as members of community more easily. This is one of the most obvious links.

2.

The same or a very similar infrastructure of organisations. People who use the same organisations start associating themselves with them. In the same neighbourhood, people use the same shops, churches, libraries, gyms, parks, schools, etc.

3.

Similar historical and cultural identity. People living close to each other have their own memories, stories, legends. They also form their own habits and customs, unwritten rules, norms (e. g., ‘we do it this way...’ or ‘we do not do it this way...’). Knowledge of the local customs and culture is one of the important targets of community work.

4.

The shared resources. In a community, in addition to the infrastructure of different organisations, people also share at least part of the common resources, such as transport, public spaces, cultural objects, shared assets, etc.

To sum up, the notion of ‘community’ deserves to be understood as a complex social phenomenon that occurs in large and diverse groups of people that are mutually connected by at least their close environment, existing organisational infrastructure, historical and/or cultural identity of the place, and sharing other resources. In this respect, a community is a dynamic (constantly changing) phenomenon. Thus, in community work, it is not its boundaries or structure that is more important, but rather the things that increase the circulation, i. e., the most diverse exchanges between the community people as well as exchanges of power, experiences, habits, opinions.



Community — *what for?*

Despite the increasing focus on communities, their inclusion and strengthening, these efforts are often given insufficient significance. Strengthening communities is considered to be an intrinsic or self-evident value. We tend to take communities as an intrinsic unconditional value or even a kind of ideal that is clearly worth pursuing, but in this way, we forget to name why and what benefits we are seeking. The quality of working with people in the local community depends on how we answer this fundamental question, and this is the meaning of community work. In addition to the very pragmatic aspirations of the day-to-day community work, it is also necessary to look for an answer to a more common, more fundamental question: **Why communities are necessary and important at all?** To find an answer to this question, it is worth looking at the importance of local communities from at least several, different perspectives.

From the **educational perspective**, communities are important and needed as one of the key spaces of socialisation. In other words, in communities people learn to be, live, and create among people, harmonise the norms of mutual life, prepare themselves for an independent life by engaging in a functioning circulation of opinions, experiences, views, interests, and other very important things. Speaking narrowly, socialisation is understood as a take-over of the existing social norms, but indeed, socialisation also means learning to act actively, change and improve the existing norms. Next to the family, the community is one of the most important spaces of such learning; therefore, **by enabling people to participate in the life and activities of the community, we simultaneously create conditions for people to see diversity, combine their values, create common norms, improve their coexistence.** To the extent that people in the community become experienced members of an open, curious, dynamic, and at the same time critically-thinking community, they will become active, conscious, sensitive, curious, and critical citizens. Open, curious, and critical communities that are not afraid of diversity and unusual situations, are more conducive to learning citizenship. By strengthening communities from an educational point of view, we create an environment conducive to learning, curiosity, and creativity.

From the **public policy perspective**, local communities are the backbone of resilient, creative societies. Communities create the basis for taking care of the interests of different people, balancing conflicting interests, public debate and building democratic co-existence. By strengthening the people's capacity to act in communities (i.e., negotiate, seek and find consensus, represent their interests, exchange views, set priorities together), we create a basis for a resilient democratic society.

From the **social welfare perspective**, communities are an essential source of social assistance and support. Complex social problems such as poverty, social exclusion, addictions, and domestic violence occur in communities and can therefore be tackled there. Open, active communities placing high value on solidarity are capable of creating and maintaining social well-being. Thus, by strengthening mutual sensitivity of people in the local community, as well as their qualities of leadership and initiative, mutual assistance and responsibility, we create grounds for social well-being.

From the **security perspective**, communities are one of the main sources of successful resolution of natural or technical disasters and crises. Independent, solidarity-focused, well-informed communities, capable of finding unique and flexible creative solutions to unexpected challenges or disasters, are the backbone of the state's security.

From the **cultural perspective**, communities serve as an interactive creative space. In curious, dynamic communities, there is an intensive exchange of ideas which is the basis of a living culture. Hence, by strengthening and supporting the circulation of various ideas and experiences in the community, we create the basis for a lively and dynamic culture.

To conclude, the importance of communities is very multifaceted, however, identification of the specific benefits enables us to maintain appropriate targets when working with communities. It should be emphasised that a promising community is an open, autonomous, solidary, and sensitive community.



Community — *how?*

The next important question is how working with communities strengthens circulation and what practical actions help increase the community openness, autonomy, solidarity, sensitivity, and other important features. The Community Pyramid™ tool developed by the consulting company VŠĮ “Kitokie projektai” (“Different Kind of Projects”) describes four main activity orientations to strengthen local communities. These are the following: fostering special relations, creating and maintaining a special space-time, strengthening special activities, and strengthening special knowledge.



Special relations

A healthy, strong, and independent community is based on special relations between people. 'Special' here means, above all, the informal, personal (as opposed to anonymous), open (involving) and enlightening (allowing to grow, improve, learn, exchange experiences) relations. If the community has sufficient capacity to build and foster such relations, its level of mobilisation becomes strengthened. The existing possibility for informal relations to emerge and get strengthened means, above all, that people not only communicate through formal, often hierarchical organisations, but also freely form informal groups, such as NGOs, neighbourhood groups, clubs, hobby groups, etc. Personal relations, in turn, mean that communication with each other is marked by not avoiding, but indeed seeking for personal, rather than anonymous, communication; people know each other by names, know each other's hobbies, etc. Both of the above-mentioned characteristics of the relations create an opportunity for creating an open relationship based on trust. Being open here means, first of all, trusting in advance and accepting people, even a purposeful invitation to engage, not precaution and mistrust. Being open also means being quite diverse, when people in the community have a wide range of communication and informal contacts, and there are no people or groups of people in isolation. And finally, 'enlightening' relations imply sharing of experiences, growing, and improving. While there are many factors that strengthen the creation and fostering of such special relations in the community, several key ones are:

Make it possible for as diverse as possible people in the community to meet as often as possible.

Improve the opportunities for people to open up and get to know each other in informal space.

Notice and celebrate the existing diversity of people in the community.

Identify and promote the abilities, talents, and strengths of the community members.

Special space-time

A healthy and focused community is created and strengthened by a special space-time. These are specific public (as opposed to private) spaces in the community and specific moments in the life of the community, where people meet each other in a non-pragmatic way, create and play together, exchange their experiences. It is important to emphasise that we are talking about both physical spaces, i. e., a close public environment in which people can meet outside their homes, communicate freely and without rushing, jointly engage in their hobbies, create and notice each other, and symbolic spaces, i. e., spaces, where people meet in a hurry, where there is a chance to engage in the most uncommon activities, play, engage in a wide variety of creative activities, do not rush to commit or achieve concrete results. This kind of physical and symbolic space not only creates opportunities for people to meet and get to know each other, but also enables them to discover each other's vocation, reach their dreams, and enjoy their hobbies. It is a space where a variety of creations are born. The creation and enhancement of a special space in the community is influenced by at least several specific factors:



Creating and maintaining opportunities for specific meeting places in the close public environment: parks, squares, cafés, clubs, community homes, etc.

Strengthening people's communication according to their hobbies by strengthening various hobby clubs, etc.

Creating and strengthening possibilities for people to meet and talk not only on matters, but also play, have slow communication, etc.

Noticing and celebrating the works created in this kind of space — be that physical objects, relations, or other intangible things.



The facilitator of “Fluxus Labs!” started her activities in Žaliakalnis at the end of 2018. Her first step was studying the place: observation; individual meetings with local artists, community representatives, cultural organisations; researching archival material, etc. At the same time, open events were organised (e. g., “Neighbours and Pets Day”, “Afternoons of Conversations and Games”), aimed at making contacts, drawing the socio-cultural map of Žaliakalnis, and recording the ideas and initiatives of residents. A contact with famous local graphic artist Aistė Ramūnaitė was made during the process of research. She dreamed of her yard's transformation to an open space for meetings and creative activities for the local community. Hence, in 2019, a cosy little woodhouse on the corner of Žemuogijų street in Žaliakalnis opened its doors to the first visitors.

During the warm season, this unique space was open to all who love art, who are looking for unheard stories and interesting people. The house itself was built by Antanas Gedmantas, the artist's grandfather, the former last captain of the Lithuanian Rifle Association and the founder of the Drama Theatre of the Rifle Association. Interesting and important meetings of people of various cultures and destinies have taken place in the house since ancient times. Continuing the traditions and considering the place where the yard is located, the space was symbolically named the **“Sprite on the Lawn of Strawberries”**.

Over the course of three years, open portrait sessions helped to create a space where art and life met, and local residents could immediately immerse themselves in the creative process. The informal environment of “The Lawn of Strawberries” and the creative support of the owner of the yard encouraged people to be themselves, share, discover different art techniques, and create together.

The garage building in the yard was renovated and started to function as an open community gallery in 2019. Portraits of Masks inspired by different people were exhibited there, reflecting both their inner worlds and the identity of Žaliakalnis.

Although no big team was formed during their activities, a group of visitors (5-7 people) continued to regularly participate in the Portrait selections. Participants of the meetings willingly shared their suggestions on how the garage, turned into a gallery, could be open to the wider public. The activities and friendly acquaintances helped to establish useful contacts (for example, some of the activities were recorded by a young man living nearby). While drawing portraits, people would engage in continuous dialogue, connecting

different generations: older painters were willingly sharing their knowledge, and interesting conversations were flowing on different sides of the easel.

The gallery "Sprite on the Lawn of Strawberries" has acquired its own face and has become a cosy meeting point not only for the residents of Žaliakalnis, but also for the residents of the entire Kaunas.



Special activities

Special activities are inevitably important for community mobilisation. Naturally, this speaks primarily about joint activities — when people act together. However, it is also important for these activities to create both personal and shared benefits (win-win) and be enlightening, i. e., enabling to strengthen one's abilities, grow personally, and improve one's specific knowledge and skills. It is essential that joint activities not only bring common benefits, but also personal benefit for everyone involved. It is also worth mentioning separately that it is not that important to involve as many community members as possible from the very start. It takes time for people to come and join, and it is more important to create possibilities for such joint action, various joint initiatives, be it small ones. Special activities can be reinforced by the following factors of greater importance:

Identifying similar needs in the community, increasing people's engagement in meeting these needs together.

Identifying, strengthening and respecting a wide range of people's self-help initiatives in the community; if there are none, creating them.

Initiating gatherings (be it minor) for specific tasks — this helps create faith in the personal and community power.

Spotting the 'silent' and the 'modest' members in the community, helping them take responsibility and demonstrate their abilities in public.

Promoting each joint activity in the community that has proved to be useful, no matter by whom and why it was organised.

Noticing and, if necessary, providing timely advice on emerging initiatives.

There are open workshops taking place in the former ceramics workshop of the painter Vaclovas Miknevičius called “Kita Neris pusė” (“The Other Side of the River Neris”), where a variety of artists can create: ceramicists, painters, graphic artists, sculptors, glass artists, illustrators. If you ever visit the place, you can get to know local artists, buy works of art directly from the hands of the authors, and also become creator yourself at various creative workshops. The main areas of activity of “The Other Side of the River Neris” include art, nature, and education, aiming to:

Create an open creative space for the residents of Vilijampolė district, where local initiatives, co-creation, and community spirit can spread.

Develop the awareness and activity of Vilijampolė residents on the issue of local identity and to encourage pride in their living environment.

In 2018, “The Other Side of the River Neris” opened its doors to the community. Since then, with the help of facilitator Gita, various activities have been organised and aimed at inviting the residents of Vilijampolė to join the newly created informal community, to become creators in various creative workshops, and organise informal community meetings. One of the ideas born during the meetings was the creative project “History on a Plate” — an installation created by the local community during an open workshop together with Daiva, a ceramicist from “The Other Side of the River Neris”. The participants were invited to display their stories on fired pieces of pottery. Later, the works were combined into a common visual narrative and were used for decoration of the outer wall of the building.

In order to involve more local residents, some of the activities of “The Other Side of the River Neris” were organised by transferring them to the people’s everyday environment, such as the courtyards of apartment buildings, the market, the bank of the Neris, or guided tours. In this way, the people of Vilijampolė not only learned about the activities carried out by the “The Other Side of the River Neris”, but were also able to try various forms of creativity, such as mosaics and painting. Some of the activities, such as the series of workshops “Thursdays for Community”, were organised regularly, so that community members could know that the artists’ workshops are open for creation to local visitors at the same time each week.



Know how

All the three areas mentioned above are closely linked to special knowledge or competence. The diversity of skills is essential for community mobilisation and healthy life. First, we mean social skills (communication and cooperation). Such skills do ensure that a wide range of people, in terms of education, status, habits, values or views, can communicate and act together within the community. Another very important type of ability is the ability to take initiative. The ability to act independently,

take care of one's own interests and act pro-actively is very important in the life of the community. Another crucial ability is the ability to learn from one's own experience, or the ability to reflect. It is crucial for community resilience, as it creates framework conditions for pooling experience, formulating significant lessons from new experiences, and improving community performance. Practical steps to strengthen special knowledge include:

Discussing various community-based initiatives, especially joint activities, helping people to become aware of the essential moments, learn the 'lessons'.

Targeted training, if needed.

Creating new, unusual activities and involving people in them; experimenting.

Common games with a 'lesson'.

To sum up, the key target in working with local communities is to increase their mobilisation and autonomy (cultivation). The most general result to be achieved by this work would be local communities that are mobilised, capable of living independently, interacting with their members. Even if this result may appear rather abstract at first glance, it is very important that it can be seen and measured through very specific manifestations and phenomena of the human behaviour emerging in the local community. Here are some (surely not all) of them:

Number of NGOs and other informal groups of people (neighbour gatherings, clubs, informal youth groups, parish groups, etc.).

Number of different local initiatives (gatherings for specific tasks).

Number of public spaces where people can meet and number of people who meet there.

Number of people in the community who know each other more personally.

People's ability to communicate and collaborate.

THE “FLUXUS LABS!” COMMUNITY MANIFESTO *(inspired by George Maciunas)*

*For us, the
community is made
of people who:*

are open and willing to act;

*care about their environ-
ment and everyday life;*

connect other people;

*create chains of willing and
acting people;*

*want to make everyday life
easier and more colourful;*

*combine different disci-
plines without regrets;*

*look for adventure in their
place of residence;*

are not afraid of chance;

*are not afraid of making
mistakes;*

*seek mystery and intrigue
in their living environment;*

*are not afraid of employ-
ing the DIY principles or of
asking for help;*

*do not measure the value
of their work according
to how much money they
invested, but rather how
people voluntarily and be-
nevolently engaged in it;*

*look for simplicity in the
complex everyday life;*

*are not afraid of movement
and change;*

*remove the boundary be-
tween art and life;*

*act to move their neigh-
bours away of their every-
day life and routine.*



BASIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES OF CREATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Who works with *Communities?*

The main actor in community activities, next to the local community itself, is a community facilitator. Finding the title for the position of a person leading the entire creative process carried out with the representatives of the community was not easy. It is a person who has to combine multiple functions and possess specific competences. We might say it is a promoter and activator of the community culture, catalyst of change, creative doer of networking, initiator of and mediator in creative projects (between community members, between the community and an artist, etc.). For the purpose of this methodology, this person will be called a community facilitator. The term 'facilitator' implies that this person, in addition to all the above-listed functions, helps communities to produce a creative and secure space for making the creativity of others known. Thus, a community facilitator, acting in a specific area, combines and helps to highlight the community's uniqueness, identity, visibility of the existing talents, and discover the local 'energy'. He is looking for ways to connect and engage people, help them support and strengthen their activities.

It should also be noted that the coordinators of the community programme "We, the People" have been fostering and developing the same qualities and competences in the subprogrammes "Fluxus Labs!" and "Contemporary Neighbourhoods".

First of all, a community facilitator must possess specific personal qualities that help in his/her creative work with the community.

Qualities of a community **FACILITATOR:**

Open

Empowering

Proactive

Providing the others with space and possibilities for acting on their own; transferring power to act independently; feeling better in helping the others.

Responsible

Has lively imagination

Persistent

Tolerating the state of uncertainty, admitting difficulties as part of work, daring to be different.

Fluxus-type of person: playing with ideas, following his/her own intuition, connecting different areas.

Curious

Wandering, listening and studying; questioning the established assumptions and attitudes.

Not afraid of making mistakes

Consistent

Showing practical attitude, striving for improvement, regularly developing his/her own skills, using critical thinking skills, able to reflect.

Willing to collaborate

Communicative, able to work with others, providing and receiving feedback, respecting the opinion of the others, sharing ideas and other 'products'.

A community facilitator CANNOT BE:

1. An individualist.
2. A person of conflict.
3. A person of radical views.

Among the multiple functions fulfilled by a community facilitator, the following are the key ones:

1. **Create and manage active relationship with local communities.** When starting to work with a community, a community facilitator goes into exploring the different existing competences of the community and its members (capability to come together, create together, open to innovation and ideas, organisational opportunities of the community) and discovers local leaders; makes acquaintances and builds friendly relations with local organisations and cultural initiatives; makes an assessment of the methods and tools that could be most effective in bringing together local activists, community members and creatives into a single network of local people in order to carry out joint activities; develops the methods that help the local community to take ownership of the cultural activities organised together with other local cultural initiatives; helps to find the right creative forms for community activation.
2. **Understand the uniqueness of places and communities.** Study the specificity of the chosen place based on historical material and the stories told by residents; communicate with the local population aiming to explore the social and cultural climate of the local environment; understand the local ethos and create a local historical/mythical/cultural map.

3. **Create a network of local communities, cultural initiatives, and other organisations on the ground.** To assess which methods and tools can be most effective in bringing together local activists, community members, and creative people into a common network of local people; to develop methods that will help the local community together with other local cultural initiatives to take responsibility for organised cultural activities, to initiate a network of local communities, cultural initiatives, and other organisations.

4. **Encourage communities to reflect on their activities and assess them.** Community facilitators work to discover and apply the methods which would help the artists, community representatives, involved organisations or individuals to jointly (or individually) reflect on their contribution to the activities and on the achieved results; use different methods and techniques to reveal the views, opinions, and ideas of the participants, and to use the responses for planning of the future activities.

5. **Plan and organise activities jointly with communities.** Jointly develop realistic and clear operational or project plans encompassing such aspects as common goals and targets; the expected impact and benefits for participants; the expected results; the activities envisaged, specifying resources, spaces and time costs; planned self-assessment and evaluation plans; details of the budget. Be able to respond to unforeseen changes in activities or projects. Create a safe environment for participants to be able to boldly take risk and experiment.

6. **Work with the group directly and provide facilitation service.** See each person in the group and ensure involvement of all the participants; share his/her views and feelings openly and encourage the others to do the same; create a climate of trust, establish and maintain good relationship with the community; employ the principles of co-creation.

For the purpose of the “Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022” project, community facilitators were specifically trained at the “Tempo Academy of Culture” (one of the 8 programmes of “Kaunas 2022”), Faculty of Communities. The training was dedicated to the development of the competences and skills listed in this section. The aim of the training was to prepare community facilitators for working with communities of specific locations and jointly develop community based creative projects.

Four training cycles were organised, each lasting 4–6 months, with 1–2 meetings per week. The first trainings were pilot: small scale, mainly focused on group meetings/lectures. Based on the feedback from the participants, the second training was supplemented with practical sessions and information that proved relevant after the first year of working with the community. The third cycle was dedicated exclusively to community workers or community activists, so the programme was adjusted according to the experience of the participants. The fourth cycle was interrupted by the global pandemic, so most of the training sessions took place remotely. This led to the adaptation of the training programme to this format.

The training consisted of three parts:

Theoretical lectures

on community, artistic activism (Fluxus art movement), artist-community relationship, urban sociology, sociocultural anthropology, design-based thinking, facilitation, reflections, qualitative research and its methods, etc. The “Kaunas 2022” project and its programmes were also presented to the training participants in more detail, focusing mainly on the community programme.

Practical sessions

during which the participants met with representatives of various communities from Kaunas and other cities of Lithuania, shared their best practices, participated in various practical facilitation sessions. In addition, periodic homework assignments (such as conducting pilot studies or initiating small-scale actions with local communities) were given. In almost all cases, the training was crowned by three days of intensive practical sessions, the purpose of which was not only deepening of the knowledge and practical testing in the group, but also team formation.

Description of the project idea

combining the theoretical and practical parts. The training programme was arranged in such a way that, from the very first meetings, the participants could practically get involved in the life of the local community: conduct research (observation, various questionnaires and surveys), get to know each other, and conduct pilot activities. After 4–6 months of theoretical and practical training, participants had to prepare a preliminary project idea according to the model described in the following section.

Here is a detailed description of the model that has served as the main focus in the training for community facilitators. The tasks were directly related to this model, which was later applied by the facilitators in practical activities with communities.

Model
of the Process
*of Creating
with the
Community*

Model of the Process of Creating with the COMMUNITY

Challenge

Which themes create energy
for change?

*Exploring local
context*



*Defining the
current
situation*

Community facilitators/
coordinators + interested
persons

Which goals will mobilise
for joint action?

*Required
changes*



Goals



*Identifying the
desired situation /
Vision*

Community facilitator +
Community representatives
who care about the identified
challenges and are willing to
change the situation

Questions

How will we achieve the goal?

Project idea



Operational plan

Team and roles of team members

Action

What goals will focus for joint action?

Self-assessment:

*What has happened?
How did the situation change?*

(What makes us think so?)

How do we continue?

Team + Interested persons

Plan



Creating with the community is a long-term process: one project, when completed, should lead to a new one. During the term of the project “Kaunas 2022”, a model of creating with the community was developed and implemented in practice. This model has been applied in different communities for 2–5 years.

As illustrated in the rhombus chart above, the model of creating with the community consists of 4 stages. It is important to note that, at the end of the last stage, we come back to the first one. It is a spiral model that can be repeatedly used in the development of community visions and for solving complex challenges in the long term.

The model is designed for community facilitators, artists, and community activists. By following the model consistently, one can cash out various project activities, opportunities, ideas, raise problematic questions, as well as check at which stage of activities the community project is, and where and how to move forward.

The form of the rhombus was chosen not incidentally. The left corner of the rhombus refers to our original situation when we come to the community as facilitators or artists (or even as members of the community), without knowing and without understanding many things. A period of study begins, when our knowledge is growing, so the walls of the rhombus expand. The highest (broadest) points of the rhombus indicate a certain degree of the knowledge achieved when we have sufficient amount of information. Then the process of purification (narrowing) begins — we start moving towards the right angle of the rhombus. Of all the information available, we single out the most important, necessary, or interesting part of it. The right angle of the rhombus refers to a decision or choice regarding the future development of the project, made together with the community and other parties involved. These processes are described in more detail in the sections dedicated to each stage of the model.

Rhombus 1 / STAGE 1

This stage is designed for getting to know and exploring.

At this stage we pose the question: what are the themes that invoke change?

Key participants: community facilitator, interested community representatives, creative or artist (not necessarily).

What happens at this stage?

At this stage, the facilitator carries out a study of the local context and the current situation (factual history, stories told by people, problem territories and why they are problematic, who thinks so, what kind of people live in the territory, what are their talents and abilities, what activities are or were happening there, what do people lack there, what do they dream about, what kind of organisations are based there, what is the level of interaction there, etc.). The aim is to replace the low level of awareness or poor knowledge with the maximum level of awareness. The aim is to collect as much information as possible in order to identify the topics or challenges common in the specific local community. The study can be carried out by means of different tools: observing the location, surveying (interviewing) people, focus groups, speaking to passers-by. Indeed, the most successful tools were the door-to-door visiting and speaking to people. Various creative methods of study can also be used: mapping of ideas, going for hiking trips, etc.

The study may last from a week to several months or longer. At this point, the most important task is to grasp the topics or challenges that are recurring and important to the members of the community. Once a certain level of awareness has been reached (at the widest point of the rhombus), the process of narrowing begins, i. e., when all the collected material has to be summed up with a view of finding a key topic or challenge to be addressed in the next stages of the activity. It is best if this process of narrowing is carried out with the representatives of the local community.

This stage is among the most important ones, as the study may reveal many topics that can help mobilise the community and invoke their interest. After selecting the most relevant topic at that time and passing through all the stages of the model, you can then return to the study stage and try to analyse another topic or challenge together with the community, repeating the process again.

This stage not only helps to collect a great amount of unique material and single out the activities worth pursuing, but is also important for some other reasons:

It assists in the formation of a team of like-minded people (the community gets mobilised or becomes stronger through carrying out a study and talking to people, getting acquainted to them, and then inviting them to the activities).

It helps to match activities with the needs of the population, thus avoiding misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

It helps to anticipate the obstacles or reasons why people do not want to get involved and participate in cultural activities.

It helps to save time and resources at other stages (when a network of people and organisations is created, they can contribute to the activities directly or in other ways (e. g., by providing support)).

It helps to get inspired for new ideas and actions and strengthen relations with the community.

Hence, having completed this stage of study, we have a topic or a challenge with which we continue to work and develop a community project.



Rhombus 2 / STAGE 2

This stage is designed for identifying the goals.

At this stage, we pose the question: what goals will mobilise the people for joint action?

Key participants: community facilitator, creator or artist (not necessarily), and representatives of the community who care about the chosen theme or the identified challenges and wish to change the situation.

What happens at this stage?

This stage starts with the selected challenge or theme. It is designed to define the goal or goals to be achieved by the foreseen activities. At this stage, we start to talk and discuss with the community representatives about the desired and necessary changes in their place of residence and about the long-term visions of the residents (related to the place of residence, community relations, etc.). There are a lot of preferred changes, visions and goals identified. Just like at the studying stage, once the widest point of the rhombus is achieved when the maximum amount of information is collected (or visions and goals reoccur), the sides begin to narrow down. First, the visions on the future expressed by the people are summarised and a common vision that is acceptable for all is created. Second, the desired change has to be named. Based on the identified changes to be achieved, the goals of the future activities are identified in order to bring the community together for joint action.

When identifying the goals, it is important to keep in mind the theme or challenge selected before. When it comes to the vision and the desired changes, it is worth always remembering in which direction (the theme or the challenge) we want to continue. Thus, the rhombus ends when we narrow its sides to the goal (the most convenient form is to pose a question).

This stage ends with a formulated question to which the members of the community will seek to find an answer at the following stages and will follow the identified goal this way.

Rhombus 3 / STAGE 3

This stage is designed for generating ideas, drawing up and implementing an action plan.

*At this stage, we pose the question:
how we will achieve the goal?*

Key participants: a team composed of the community facilitator and some of the most active representatives of the community should already be formed at this stage. If the creative or the artist was not yet introduced, he/she is invited to join at this stage.

What happens at this stage?

The starting point at this stage is the question/goal formulated at the third stage and the topic/challenge identified at the first stage. First, we generate various ideas on how the chosen goal could be achieved. This can take place in several ways:

1. the facilitator and the community generate all the possible ideas (and possible activities) and later select the most appropriate one which would reflect the theme best and would lead to the solution of the challenge. Only then will an artist or creative be invited to help implement a specific idea;
2. the facilitator and the community single out the idea and the activities and invite several artists or creatives to engage in different activities geared towards the goal (for example, when creating a community performance, one artist works with scenography and organises creative workshops, the other writes a script with people, and the third one directs the performance);
3. The artist or the creative is invited at the stage of generation of ideas. Then he/she helps to single out the ideas and eventually implements them together with the community.

The generation of ideas leads to the development of an action plan. At this point, we define how the chosen idea will be implemented: what activities will be organised, what resources will be needed, where actions will take place, which people will be involved, what kind of communication will take place, which partners should be invited, etc. It should be noted that the plan is preliminary. Therefore, given that it is the process that is important to the community, and considering the spirit of playfulness and experimenting, the plan may be subject to change. In this case, activities and resources may also change, just like new partners and new community representatives may get involved. We need to learn to accept these changes, reconsider and move on. The main thing is not to lose the identified goal and the theme (although they may also change in certain cases). At this stage, it is important to have patience and courage to change and to experience change, to make mistakes and to adapt to the circumstances, to stay in the state of uncertainty as long as necessary, and not to give in to the desire to keep everything in full control.

This stage is completed by a specific action/actions required to achieve the goal. When the theme, challenge, and goal are defined at the first stages, the third stage becomes a field of experimenting, where a variety of artistic tools and expressions are employed to be able to look creatively at the situation and change it.

Rhombus 4 / STAGE 4

This stage is designed for self-assessment.

At this stage, we pose the question: what have we achieved and what happens next?

Key participants: the team and the stakeholders (involved during the implemented activities).

What happens at this stage?

At this stage, we take a look at the path that has already been taken, from the study to the implementation of the idea. A meeting with artists, community representatives, and participants is usually organised at this point. A discussion on whether the situation has changed and how it has changed, whether the set goals have been achieved, or whether other goals than the planned ones have been achieved (just because we allowed experimenting and adventure), etc. It is also very important to get feedback from the involved artists or creatives. In answering these questions, conclusions are made and further activities

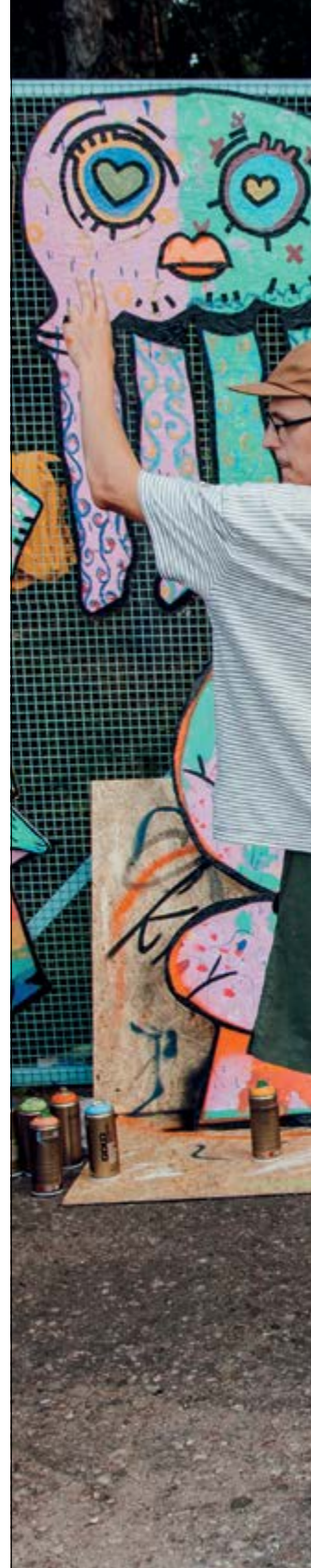


are planned. If the artistic tools chosen have not worked, we have to consider whether it is worth trying to start the journey towards the same goal again, only with different tools. If the goal has been achieved, where can we go next, which tools could we use and which themes could we explore. Here we come back to the first stage, the study. We have to remember what has been discovered, what other themes have dominated and, in the light of the experience gained in the implementation of the activities, start with a new project.

This stage is completed by self assessment of the process that has taken place, by summarising it, and starting a new study or a new activity.

Finally, it should be underlined that in practice, all the 4 stages are closely inter-linked and complementary. It is sometimes difficult to determine the point of transition from the study to the activity. Often, at the time of the study, some creative activities also commence (e. g., acquaintance picnics for the representatives of the local institutions and communities, small thematic festivals, etc.) and sometimes they get naturally transformed into the 'right' creative activities of the project. Besides, the self-assessment process can often start much earlier than the community project ends, as people's feedback, moods, and the change get already visible in certain activities.

The model of creating with the community is directly related to the principles of community activities: contextuality is visible in the first stages of research and definition, if the aim is to understand in which medium (context) the creative project will be implemented. The third stage is associated with adventure/experimentation/playfulness in finding the means and ways to achieve the goals set. Co-creation can be seen at all stages, as they explore, discuss, create, and reflect together — it is never a decision taken by one person, because everything is born from the shared ideas and on the basis of common agreements. These principles are described in more detail in the following section.





"Lagoon Festival", Petrašūnai District, 2021

1
2
0

Essential Principles

*of Creating
with the
Community*

If we compare work with communities with a specific phenomenon, it would be similar to the sand held in the palms. It seems like you hold everything in your palms, but at the same time a significant part of sand is slipping away, and the form of the sand held in the palms is changing. As already mentioned in the previous chapters, the result of working with the community is a process — constantly changing and unpredictable. The uniqueness of the community activities lies in their unpredictable nature and in permanent change, there are no strict frameworks, no rules or hierarchical structures, so it is very important to allow ourselves and the persons around to enjoy the natural flow of the processes.

In the current section, we present the principles and practices that proved to be the most effective throughout the entire period of preparation for the title year of the European Capital of Culture. We would like to underline that the practices, methods, or successes stories presented in this section may not necessarily be suitable for other (your) cases.

The measures and methods to be applied in each case may be individual, so it is important to observe the ongoing process and apply measures accordingly, rather than vice versa.

We would like to emphasise that when working with the community, you need to be open and creative, react to the existing situation quickly, be not afraid to change your planned activities (study plan, meeting plan, or even project plan), redesign methods, apply, adapt, merge, etc.





"Culture to the Courtyards" Project, Aleksotas District, 2022

CONTEXTUALITY

Before starting to develop activities with communities, it is important to know and understand the contextuality of the area, which can be considered as a multifaceted phenomenon. In the framework of the community-based activities implemented by “Kaunas 2022”, contextuality was determined based on the following:

Relations among the community members.

Activities of cultural institutions and other organisations.

Relationship of the community members with local cultural institutions and other organisations.

Relationship of the community members, cultural institutions and other organisations with culture and art.

Local challenges.

Expectations by the community members, cultural institutions, and other organisations on the environment and the phenomena occurring therein.

Local history, traditions.



All these elements form a common local context. Its examination makes it easier to understand how people living in the area or spending a significant part of their time therein identify or would like to identify themselves. Having detected the elements of the existing or sought identity, it becomes clearer what kind of community-based, cultural or artistic tools (theatre, dance, photography, street art, etc.) could be employed to form or strengthen the local identity. At the same time, the next phase begins — the search and integration of artists who are able to work based on the principles of contextuality, playfulness, and co-creation.

In the following sections, we will look at each aspect relevant to contextuality in more detail, present key questions that can inform site research, and analyse contextuality at different cross-sections.





Orientations for Disclosing Contextuality. THEIR SIGNIFICANCE



1. *Relations among* the community MEMBERS

People are the backbone of community-based projects and microclimate in each area. Social capital develops in every environment where different individuals come together. Its nature depends on the people who create it and their mutual relations. Whether it is a large urban or a small settlement community, the prevailing microclimate and the social capital being created in all of them depend to a large extent on the people living in the area, the level of community among them, their desire to strengthen the communality with the adjacent and more distant neighbours, the public service sector, cultural and other organisations. These are the reasons, why the relations among the community members in each city and settlement can be very individual and certainly highly different from the relations among the community members in other cities and settlements. Knowledge of the prevailing relations among the community members can help to better identify the methods of working with the community, anticipate the challenges that may arise and the ways they could be addressed. In a united community, the organisation and implementation of activities is likely to be smooth enough due to the internal motivation that is matured by good relations among the members of the community. A community in which one can identify exclusion of its members (e. g., settlers vs. old residents; young people vs. the older generation; high social status residents vs. hard-working members of the community, etc.), would require activities not only to strengthen the local identity, but also to promote unity in the community. It is important to note that in communities there may also be personal disagreements among its members. In this case, it is essential not to get involved in any personal conflicts or their resolution, but to look for methods of working with communities that would contribute to reducing tensions among the dissenting members of the community (the challenges arising in working with communities will be described in more detail in the following section of this book).

Thus, a profound view of the relations among the members of the local community (i. e., knowledge of the context of the relations among them) is an important element in assessing and understanding the possible course of work with the community, its problems, and potential solutions to problems. It also helps to plan work with communities, divide the work process into separate parts (choice of activity content, preparation for the implementation of activities, actual implementation of activities, reflection after activities).

Key questions:

1. What are the fundamental values upheld by the members of the community?
2. How do members of the community feel when interacting with other members of the community? Why?
3. If there is no close connection with the members of the community, people do not come to form communities. What are the reasons?
4. What measures do members of the community use to strengthen their mutual relations? Why?
5. What motivates or would motivate the members of the community to engage in the community based activities? Why?
6. What would demotivate the members of the community from engaging in the community-based activities most? Why?
7. How many communities there exist in the area and what are their mutual relations? What are the main reasons leading to different kind of relations among individual local communities?
8. What activities have the community members mostly implemented together so far? What activities and topics encourage community members to come together?
9. What places do community members usually gather in? What spaces are important to the community members and their relationship? Why?
10. Are there artists in local communities? What role and why do they play in the local community?



2. *Activities of cultural institutions and other ORGANISATIONS*

In most of the areas, there are cultural institutions and other organisations that make specific contribution to the microclimate prevailing in the area, to the formation of its identity, formation of collectives, organisation of activities, and provision of infrastructure for implementation of the activities. Before starting to work with the community, it is essential to find out which cultural and other type of organisations are active in the area and in which directions. It is also important to know the relationship among the members of the local community and the cultural institutions and other organisations acting in the area. Acquaintance with local cultural institutions and other organisations as well as awareness of their relationship with the community can play an important role in planning and implementation of community-based activities. Cultural institutions acting in the local areas often have a variety of collectives (dance, singing, art, etc.). Besides, there is often infrastructure available under the authority of cultural institutions, which might be suitable for implementation of community activities. Other organisations (libraries, local entrepreneurs, educational institutions, etc.) are also performing the function of mobilising the community members, human, financial, and infrastructural resources.

The (self)involvement of cultural and other type of organisations can lead to significant reinforcement in the process of implementation of the community-based activities. For example, planning and implementation of a community celebration can involve the existing artistic groups, and a territory under the authority of local entrepreneurs could be transformed into an area adapted for the celebration. Cultural institutions and other organisations acting in the area, their human, infrastructural, and/or financial resources could be considered as generators of significant added value. Indeed, cooperation with and integration of the mentioned bodies and organisations into community-based activities has numerous advantages:

It strengthens the sense of community in a fundamental sense.

It provides additional opportunities in the planning and implementation of community activities.

This integration is often smoother and more effective if, prior to the development of community-based projects, research is carried out on the cultural institutions and other organisations on the ground and their motivation to engage in community activities.

Key questions:

1. What cultural establishments are operating in the area?
2. What activities and why are implemented by the cultural institutions operating in the area?
3. What kind of active collectives have been created by local cultural institutions?
4. What are the values on which the activities of the cultural institutions are based?
5. How do cultural institutions operating in the area engage in dialogue with the local community?
6. What infrastructure can be offered by cultural institutions and other organisations acting in the area for community activities?
7. What is the relationship between local cultural institutions and other local organisations?

3. Relationship of community members with local cultural institutions and **OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

The present section could be considered as a continuation of the previous one describing the context (“Activities of cultural institutions and other organisations”). When planning and implementing community-based projects, it is essential not only to know the cultural institutions or other organisations operating in the area, but also to find out the prevailing relationship among these institutions, organisations, and members of the local community. Knowledge of the answers to the questions submitted below can serve as valuable material in planning of the community-building activities, searching for and selecting the most effective methods that would encourage the community members, cultural institutions, and other organisations in the area to engage in dialogue and work together towards achieving a common goal.



Key questions:

1. Is it known what kind of activities are being carried out and offered by the cultural institutions acting in the area?

2. Is there involvement in the activities offered by the local cultural institutions? Why?

3. Do local cultural institutions engage in the broad dialogue with the members of the community? Why? How?

4. Are members of the community inclined to engage in dialogue with the local cultural institutions? Why? How?

5. What is the relationship between the community and other organisations in the area: businesses, educational institutions, service providers, etc.? Is this relationship formal and restricted to official matters or close and based on trust? Why?



4. *Relationship of community members, cultural institutions, and other organisations* **WITH CULTURE AND ART**

Seeking to increase the dissemination of art and culture, it is especially important to identify the relationship between the members of the community, cultural institutions, and other organisations with culture and art. The range of the existing ways of disseminating art and culture is wide enough. A cultural institution, just like any individual, can have its own specific attitudes or traditions contributing to cultural and artistic dissemination. In this context, it is important to find out why cultural institutions opt for specific ways of disseminating art and culture, as these decisions may have close links with local traditions, history, knowledge of the interests of the local community. The study of this part of the contextuality may reveal which forms of art or culture are acceptable or unacceptable to the local community. The availability of this kind of database is helpful when deciding on the artists that could be offered to the community in order to achieve the highest results in terms of community building and dissemination of art and culture.





Key questions:

How often do the community members take part in or visit the cultural activities?

Do they accept art with appreciation? Why?

What kind of cultural activities are seen as the most interesting? Why?

What would motivate the community to take part in or visit the cultural activities more frequently? Why?

What could lead to reduced participation in or attendance of the cultural activities? Why?

Who are the usual companions for the community members when taking part in or visiting the cultural activities? Why?

With whom they would love to take part in or visit the cultural activities more frequently? Why?

What kind of cultural activities are most frequently organised by the local cultural institutions and artistic groups? Why?

Why do people take part at or visit the activities organised by the local cultural institutions and artistic groups? Or why they do not?

What was the most memorable cultural activity attended or visited? Why?

What kind of cultural activities would be more (less) preferred in the living environment?

What would serve as the strongest motivator to engage in joint organisation and implementation of cultural activities? Why?

5. *Local* CHALLENGES

The overall contextuality of each location is influenced by the problems and challenges arising in the area. Areas might face different problems, such as low youth employment rate, environmental issues, abandoned and neglected spaces, lack of space for community activities, high level of separation among the community members, lack of cultural/community activities, this leading to choosing other places for leisure time, more distant from the living environment, etc. These are just a few examples, yet the problems and challenges arising in each area can be particularly special, caused by the specific location of a particular area, the level of involvement in problem solving by the people living and working there, and by the local self-government or other type of public institutions.

Identification of the local problems can contribute to the planning and implementation of community-based activities. Indeed, the development of community-based activities can focus on a targeted pathway to solving the emerging challenges. Problem-solving through community-based activities can be done in different ways: through bringing together the community and directly solving the emerging problems (e. g., organising periodic environment cleaning campaign); through organising the community-initiated activities that could be thematically related to the emerging challenges, raising public awareness or drawing public attention to the emerging problems and possible solutions; through combining the mentioned two ways (e. g., a periodic environment cleaning campaign organised in parallel with a creative workshop focused on environmental topics).

The problems arising in a given area can often affect the quality of life of the vast majority of the community members — that is why actualisation of the problems and search for possible solutions to them could be seen as a potential measure contributing to strengthening of the community, as people get mobilised to achieve a common goal. Identification of the problems relevant to the area can contribute to a targeted choice of cultural and artistic dissemination tools.

Key questions:

1.

What are the major problems in the area (noise, pollution, lack of community, lack of transport infrastructure, etc.)?

2.

How and why do these problems arise?

3.

What are the ways in which problems have been tackled so far? What results have been achieved? Why?

4.

What actions of the community, self-government, and state institutions could contribute to solving/reducing the emerging problems?

5.

What artistic measures could help to actualise and/or address the emerging challenges and problems?

6. Expectations by community members, cultural

institutions, and other organisations on the environment

AND THE PHENOMENA OCCURRING THEREIN

When analysing the general context of an area, it is important to get familiarised with the expectations of the people living or acting therein regarding the phenomena taking place in the area or the members of the community. However, each resident or person acting in the local area can also have individual expectations. It is important to note that individual expectations of the community members may coincide, but in case of community disunity, it is likely that the members of the community will not be familiar with the expectations that other members might have. Expectations are often varied and might reflect a wish for a quieter neighbourhood, wish for a larger number of resting spaces, wish for a closer connection between the neighbours, wish for a higher number of active activities, etc. The expectations by the members of the community could be regarded as yet another piece in a puzzle leading to better understanding of the general local context. Having identified the wishes of the people living and acting in the area and having combined this piece of the context with the others, one may see a clearer picture of the measures that would be most effective for strengthening communities and for dissemination of culture and art.

Key questions:

What is the desired relationship with the rest of the local population? Why?

What is the desired relationship with the cultural institutions, educational institutions, and other organisations acting in the area? Why?

What kind of leisure spaces would be preferred? Why?

What kind of activities (events, educations, creative workshops, camps, hobby groups, community meetings, etc.) would be preferred? Why?

What kind of the living environment would be preferred in the future?







7. *History,* legends and TRADITIONS

Every city, town, and even a small district has its own story which tells us about the circumstances under which the area was formed, what people were previously living there, what kind of factories or famous gyms were operating there, how the area evolved over time, etc. Knowledge of the history often helps to reveal the traditions prevailing in the area. If the traditions of the area are cherished and fostered, their importance can be further strengthened through community activities. If the past traditions in the area are broken, it would be helpful to find out why they are no longer cherished and whether the community would be inclined to revitalise them, or maybe it would be willing to create new ones. Indeed, local history is often a significant foundation for both revitalisation of the old traditions and for creation of the new ones.

It happens often that in smaller towns where there is a clear distinction between the settlers and the old residents, the settlers are not aware of the history of the area, or their relationship with the area is rather fragmentary. Knowledge of the history of the living environment could be identified as one of the means for increasing the sense of pride in the living environment. When members of the community lack knowledge on the history of the area and the causes of the past or existing traditions, this valuable information could be more widely shared through cultural and artistic tools. When the tradition and the history of the area are fostered by the members of the community, the scale of this might be increased through creative and artistic dissemination, adding modernity and uniqueness to the ways of fostering traditions and history. Local history and traditions can serve as fired clay, strengthening community members through joint participatory activities.

Key questions:

When and under what circumstances the area was settled?

How have people living and acting in the area changed over time (national distribution, age groups, prevalence of social status, etc.)?

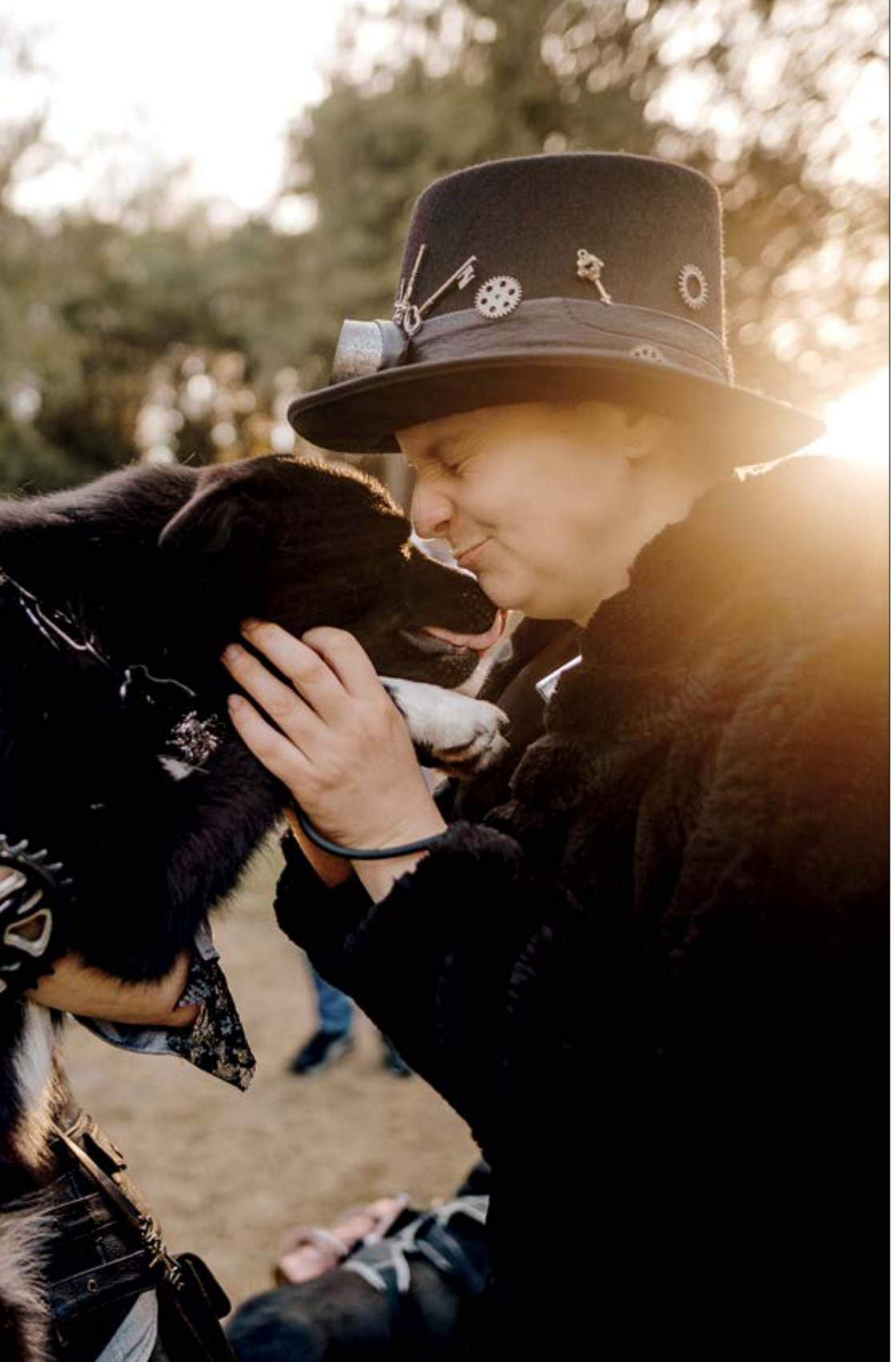
What were the things that made the area distinctive before? What are they now? Does the area have its own legends or myths? If yes, what are they?

What are the traditional holidays celebrated by the community? Why?

What other traditions do people living in the area have apart from those related to the celebration of holidays? How and why have these traditions emerged?

What informal stories (known or heard by individual members of the community) or/and fictional local stories have been associated with the area? Where do they have their beginnings?

In the present section, we have listed the orientations for revealing the contextuality, which were followed by the “Kaunas 2022” team members in the process of development of community activities in Kaunas and Kaunas district. As has already been noted, each area is individual and unique. Most likely, there are more orientations for revealing the contextuality, depending on each specific area and the people living and operating therein.



Tools for Context RESEARCH

ORIENTATIONS FOR DISCLOSING CONTEXTUALITY. THEIR SIGNIFICANCE



It has to be noted that different areas may need different methods for study of their local context. Based on the experience gained, it can be argued that the most effective way to study the local context is by applying the synthesis of several methods, allowing the local context to be considered from different perspectives. However, using one single method has its pros as well. For example, one can gather information about the local context, build mutual contacts, encourage the creativity and playfulness of the participants by using the method of creative workshops. It is also important to note that studying of the local context requires finding the ways to reach the local population and obtain the necessary information.

The following is an overview of the most common instruments used by the Community Programme “We, the People”:

Familiarisation / Informational meetings

Usually, the meetings are organised at the beginning of activities, which has a variety of purposes: to get to know each other, to conduct research, to discuss the current situation, to collect information about the area, the people living there, their talents, to discuss the progress of the project, existing challenges, to find ways to solve them, to share good practices of community projects, etc. It is important to emphasise that during these meetings, it is especially important to create a physically and emotionally safe environment, to present information in a structured, clear, and accessible manner to each participant. The feeling of trust by the residents is sought, so that the facilitator could prove that the true wish of the community facilitator, coordinator, or local activist is to create prosperity. The first meetings or the first days of the workshop, that are usually devoted

to getting to know each other, are especially important for building trust. If an artist is to be involved in the process, this should be communicated at the beginning of his/her activities. Good practice examples should demonstrate that co-creation projects are meaningful and feasible.

Door-to-door travel

This is perhaps one of the most complex, but also the most effective methods of studying the local context. First, using this method requires a lot of time and/or human resources. Next, residents can often avoid opening their doors and speaking openly to strangers. Therefore, this method of study of the local context requires staying patient and be prepared psychologically for the diversity of reactions from those who open the doors. This method helps not only to conduct research and gather information, but also to build closer relationships with community members.

The snowball method

It helps to discover individuals who could potentially join the activities. If you do not know the place or the people, you need to get a few contacts for the start (e.g., by interviewing people on the street, getting in touch via social networks, getting the contacts of acquaintances or relatives who live there). After talking with them, you may ask for recommendations of a few more people who could tell you about the area or who would be interested in getting involved in the organised activities.

Semi-structured interviews

with individual members of the community or groups of members of the community (by asking them the questions mentioned above in the present section). Semi-structured interviews can help to keep conversation rather informal and to create opportunities for sharing of comprehensive information. It is worth noting that interviews with individual members of the community should encompass the widest possible range of the local community, as the diversity of the information collected helps to objectively assess and understand the local context.

Meetings with community members / focus groups

It is often useful to bring together members of the community and talk to them. Joint meetings sometimes serve as a good basis for starting discussions, and this also contributes to comprehensive understanding of the local community and the local context. Obviously, one meeting may not be enough, sometimes they need to happen regularly. In this way, a larger local population can be reached: different people can come to the meetings, and there is always a possibility to meet new participants and listen to their ideas, observations, and stories. The idea of organising focus groups composed of different members of the community should not be left behind. Focus groups or meetings could be organised by grouping the local community into target groups (local youth, local seniors, local entrepreneurs, local young families, etc.). In the like-minded groups of people with similar characteristics, people are likely to share their thoughts more openly. However, when organising meetings with individual target audiences, it is important to ensure the widest possible range of each target audience.

Discovering local experts

When assembling a community and organising activities, it is important to involve people who live or work in the area, the context of which is being studied. These people have a special sense of place, and their knowledge, observations, and ideas can become the basis of activities. In addition, in most cases, each of them bring their own circle of people to the activities, which expands the audience and understanding of the context.

Sociocultural map

Its format can be very diverse, depending on the area and the audience being studied. The activities of the programme “We, the People” used large-format paper maps of a specific Kaunas neighbourhood, where visitors would mark different pieces of information. For example, you might ask them to mark the points where they spend their free time, to write down memories related to them; to mark the places they avoid/identify as unsafe. The map can serve as a tool that helps to collect information, establish initial contact with unfamiliar residents, and hear about their expectations.

Participatory monitoring

This relates to spending time in the tested environment and observing the processes without any external intervention and announcement on a study being conducted. This method helps to feel the natural, usual local microclimate, see what processes are happening in which spaces (e. g., why certain public spaces are abandoned or why others are actively exploited, what are they used for, how do people behave and feel when they are there, etc.). The method of descriptive observation might also be used. It means describing in written all the things that can be seen around, and later, when reading the notes, it helps to notice interesting things that might have been missed or could not be captured if a given place was not visited for a long time. This collected material contributes both to the knowledge of the local context and to the subsequent process of co-creation between the artist and the local community.

Due to the multi-layered nature of contextuality, it is essential to explore the selected area in detail before starting planning and implementing the community activities. The bigger the amount and the greater the diversity of the collected information on the area and its community, the smoother the dialogue with the community, local cultural institutions, or other organisations could be expected. Without any doubt, close acquaintance with an individual area can provide an opportunity to disclose or strengthen the potential of the area and its community, by demonstrating to the members of the community that the opinion and involvement of each of them is important, as mobilisation and focus on achieving a common goal have proven to be the most effective means for creating welfare in the communities. Furthermore, it is important to note that all the described orientations for disclosing contextuality are interlinked, and examination of one of them may lead to unveiling of another one.

The process of studying the local context, like further activities with communities, is usually not easily predictable, and numerous elements become revealed only during the process. For this reason, when exploring the context, it is important to stay curious and try to collect knowledge on the area and its community from different perspectives. Studying the context is one of the most important elements of working with communities, as it helps to avoid projecting foreign or unacceptable things on the community. Community members can become stronger, and cultural and artistic dissemination can be more successful when members of the community feel that their observations, ideas, expectations, or challenges are taken into account. Context research could be compared to a puzzle and a puzzle box. It is a tool that helps to understand the current situation and the desired result, just like a picture on a puzzle box illustrating the future result, with individual units of the puzzle showing the process of implementing community activities. The progress of the puzzle assembly further depends on experiment, adventure, playfulness, and co-creation — these phenomena will be described in more detail in the following sections of the book.





CO-CREATION

Co-creation is one of the fundamental principles that ensures successful development of cultural activities in the community. These are the process-oriented activities that allow the artist and the participant to change their roles, so that everyone can become a creator. Collaborative processes of co-creation generate unpredictable ideas and often surprise with unexpected products or results.

Modern local communities raise, and emphasise important topics and current events, they also raise debates through co-creation. At the same time, co-creation can become a reliable basis for strengthening the community itself or the relations between its members. Co-creation can provide individual satisfaction, a sense of community and pride (much easier achieved than in other sociological fields), it can encourage the community to unite even more. In addition, it has been observed that creative solutions often cost little, but have a significant and observable effect.⁷

The most significant aspect of co-creation discovered in the work with communities is joint **development of concepts**. Co-creation can work only if people are open to the opinion of others, are able to hear it and receive it, and when they do not follow the invented vision blindly, but can change it according to the thoughts expressed by the others. Co-creation helps to develop tolerance and ability to listen to each other, to accept the opinion of the other, to find a compromise. Creating concepts together is only possible when several conditions are met: the participants have common goals; flexibility in the creative process is ensured; long-term results are to be created.

Common goals. If people coming together have extremely varied goals, the co-creation process will be complex and unlikely to bring any tangible result. People need to agree about their common goal, and the content will be created during the co-creation process.

The creation of equal mutual relations and an open dialogue, when all participants involved in the creative process share their ideas, knowledge, talents, or abilities, is especially important here.

⁷ Landry, C. (2000). *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*. London: Earthscan.

In community projects, relationships based on co-creation are established between:

1. The artist and the community.

2. The community and the facilitator.

3. Among all the three parties, depending on the distribution of the roles in a specific project.

Maintaining an informal relationship between the artist, the facilitator, and the community allows participants to connect, observe, learn, and engage in activities in a non-binding way, when they feel ready for that. In order to create an equal relationship between the mentioned parties, all participants involved in the process must agree on a common goal, even if their opinions on the means to be employed are different.

Flexibility in the creative process.

When the artist and the community (experiment in progress) merge together, it becomes difficult to predict the result, as each member of the community has his/her own ideas and visions, but also the artist, when joining the project, reveals his/her own perception, vision, and aesthetics. If a facilitator is also involved in the process, there is also the third opinion to take into account. When everyone joins a common process of co-creation, a wide variety of options how to implement the idea can be offered, which is almost never possible to foresee at the beginning of the project.

The motivation of the community to create and engage in purposeful activities is fostered by the joint creative process, especially through various forms of joint production, for example, when members of the community can easily create tangible details (such as decorated clay tiles), that would give birth to a community work of art, when ultimately combined altogether. The 'experience of art', i.e., the very process of creating a work of art, not the final result, often becomes the most significant part. It is also important that during the co-creation process, the artist and the participant have the opportunity to change their roles, so that everyone can become a creator.

Long-lasting result. As the artist or facilitator is creating jointly with the community, all the participating parties become equal co-creators. In this case, each participant of the project assumes a certain level of responsibility. Members of the community who have assumed responsibility for the results of the project, tend to value and cherish them more, also rejoice over them and promote them more by sharing the news with their friends, neighbours, guests, etc. In each project, twofold results are normally achieved: first, creation of a new artwork (object, performance, installation, etc.); second, establishment of new relationships, increase of self-confidence and confidence in others, increase of trust in the abilities of one's own and the others, learning to make consensus-based decisions in favour of everyone, and many other results which are difficult to measure, but stay long after the project.



Factors of Unfolding Co-creation. THEIR IMPORTANCE

This chapter lists the factors that are closely related to the co-creation process: community empowerment, decentralisation, bottom-up approach, and solving local challenges.

Community empowerment and cultivation of participatory culture

Projects can be created and implemented most effectively only by motivated teams. People get motivated when they can engage in the activities that they enjoy, when they can reveal their talents, do what they can do best, try what they have always wanted to try, etc. The key goal of the “Kaunas 2022” community programme has always been to empower local residents to realise their ideas, to help them create a space where everyone could ‘taste’ success, continue the activities they started on their own, and take responsibility for them. However, when planning activities, it should be kept in mind that the specific tasks and the desired results should not exceed the community’s abilities and capabilities. It is important to periodically reassess the potential of the community and to actively involve its members by means of different tools.

Thus, at the start of activities, an active process of facilitation (mediation, support, guidance through activities) has to be initiated as well, and it should unleash the potential for cooperation among the local residents. It is important to realise that local people (community representatives) can join the activities either by using various resources or by taking responsibility for certain parts of the project that are the most familiar and most acceptable to them, encouraging them to open up. Indeed, community coordinators or community facilitators (team members of the community programme) had to always work hard to resist the desire of doing everything themselves, on behalf of the community members, so that the participants could face failures themselves, would be encouraged to have no fear of making mistakes, and to learn from that.

One of the examples, when the responsibility for the content of the event or activity is transferred to the community representatives themselves (the community is empowered), could be the “Yard Fest”. Participants were encouraged to create a comfortable space for themselves, to take care of the event programme and activities. When preparing for the fest, they were asked to bring their own tables, chairs, tablecloths, and food, and to think about the possible activities for the people sitting at the table during the event. In this way, the participants themselves feel like the creators of the event, and being able to contribute at the stage of preparation for the event, would surely promote their pride and responsibility. If a facilitator or an artist succeeds in involving and combining individual local resources for a common goal, the result would unite the entire community, thus creating space for making new acquaintances, learning from each other’s experiences, and collaborating.

Community empowerment happens when the community takes responsibility for the living environment or objects created by the community members in joint creative activities.

Through activities with artists and community facilitators, the community (or community activists) acquires the necessary skills to implement similar community-based projects on their own, and often to continue these activities. In this way, the community itself is encouraged not only to actively engage in the activities organised, but also to take interest in the activities of other organisations taking place nearby, to actively express their views, and to take initiative in implementing common ideas, without waiting until somebody would do this for them.

Resources that could be used by the residents and organisations willing to contribute:

1. Time and energy (e. g., making poster layouts and helping with their distribution, making a photo wall, creating a creative space for the little ones).
2. Skills (e. g., making photographs during the activities, creating poster layouts).
3. Knowledge (e. g., personnel of a veterinary clinic consulting on pet health and care; community officials sharing information about safe neighbourhood and pet behaviour in public spaces).
4. Creative talents (e. g., local performers, workshop managers).
5. Material resources (e. g., production, materials, or money from local organisations).

Decentralisation

The term ‘decentralisation’ is often encountered in politics and economics. However, decentralisation has become one of the key factors in the implementation of the projects of the community programme “We, the People” (especially in Kaunas city). Decentralisation of leadership and culture is significant here.

Decentralisation of leadership

Changes in the community begin as soon as the communal creative process starts. The process of co-creation often provides each participating person with an opportunity to express oneself and encourages the disclosure of various talents and abilities. Sometimes one clear leader role multiplies among the group, and the group members work together to create, share ideas, and make decisions. Sometimes persons who do not consider themselves leaders, but have the best

knowledge and abilities in a certain activity, temporarily become leaders of a specific activity. Decentralisation of leadership allows individuals to realise themselves, be heard, and co-create in the community.

Decentralisation of culture

Two trends have been observed: decentralisation of cultural institutions and decentralisation of local culture. In the first case, we are talking about cultural institutions that are involved in community processes. When the projects of the community programme “We, the People” started to spread, various cultural institutions (libraries, cultural centres, museums, etc.) were included in the activities. It was easy to notice that the forms of organisation and development of their cultural activities were transformed — cultural institutions began to establish an open dialogue with local residents and visiting artists. Often, an institution would develop its activities starting from extension of its physical boundaries, and would approach the local communities or would attract the communities that had no interest in the institution before. Cultural institutions and local residents lost their previous roles as suppliers and consumers of culture, and cultural life of the community started to be created. This is especially evident in the activities of the “Contemporary Neighbourhoods” project.

Another aspect is decentralisation of local culture. In the activities of the community programme “We, the People”, artistic actions of the community were created not only in the centre of a city or a town, but also closer to the living spaces, where people normally come together and spend their time, for example, in the courtyards of apartment buildings. This is how culture can spread (get decentralised) in a wider area.

The bottom-up approach

It is essential that the ideas implemented with the representatives of the community would come from the participants themselves, and would not be taken ‘from above’ by a facilitator or an artist, because in this case the community would not feel responsible and would not be inclined to get involved. After the community’s ideas are refined, they are further developed in the co-creation process involving the community, the facilitator, and/or the artist.

To ensure the bottom-up flow of ideas, the artist and/or facilitator should consider the following steps:

1. Speaking with residents.
2. Introducing artistic tools and possibilities.
3. Identifying a specific challenge (problem and workshop goal).
4. Involving residents in the process of generating and implementing ideas.
5. Organising creative workshops.
6. Planning workshop works and allocating responsibilities simultaneously.
7. Planned works are implemented (during the works, residents spend a lot of time together, and the artist and/or facilitator tries to notice and talk to each new member).
8. Achieving results: creating a space for community interaction (yard planting, doing small yard architecture, wall drawing, installation, etc.).

Solving local challenges through co-creation

As mentioned before, community projects usually focus on solving local challenges. The section on contextuality section describes how information is collected and local challenges become refined.

Practical examples show that people often start from naming the 'aching' infrastructural aspects, such as missing lighting or sidewalks, potholed streets, unorganised courtyard infrastructure, etc. By applying the co-creation approach and diving into the search of solutions together with the community, such features as alienation, lacking security, detachment, etc., were also brought to light from 'under the carpet'. The projects implemented by the community programme "We, the People" focused on solving deep challenges, while infrastructural elements were used only as a means for achieving the goal. For instance, when creating the lighting objects, benches, or tables together with the community, it was aimed to promote communication and cooperation among the residents. It is essential to note that it happened in an informal, artistic form, developed jointly by the community and the artist (facilitator or coordinator). The improvement of physical spaces and the offered solutions for the named challenges, through cooperation with the artist, were only the additional outcomes for the community.





Tools for Promotion of Co-creation in Working WITH COMMUNITIES

Creative workshops

Creative workshops can not only help achieve an artistic result and the set goal, but also be useful for different purposes: exploring and making connections; discussing various issues; reflecting on the former activities, etc. For example, by building furniture in the courtyards, the purpose of the project was to enable the community to create a space where they could continue to come together. When creating the wall drawing, the aim was to introduce the people living around to each other and enable them to continue to cooperate. In the community programme “We, the People”, creative activities were frequently used as an opportunity to look at one’s living environment in a new way.

Coffee and tea breaks

The success of a project depends not only on its key actions, but also on the targeted use of such breaks. This is particularly effective when coffee, tea or meals are provided by the members of the community. If there is no tradition in the community to create a cosy atmosphere in the meetings during the breaks, the artist or facilitator could take the first step, but providing snacks (e.g., a home-made cake) should gradually become the responsibility of the community members.



"Fluxus Labst Courtyard" Project, Dainava District, 2021

Gathering for a specific task

Most of the time, this type of activity gives a relatively quick and positive result. The beautified environment and strengthened community are usually the outcomes of such gatherings. It is important to emphasise that in order for a gathering to promote change in the community, it is important to clarify: what is the purpose of this activity; what part of a wider process does it make. Besides, it is also important to clearly divide responsibilities among the community members and to assess together what has been achieved. It is a great exercise of co-creation and an example of how a common goal can bring a community together for production of tangible results. For example, in the “Parakas” laboratory located in Šančiai district, the gathering was the first impulse that helped to discover the enterprising members of the community, to invite them to a discussion and joint activities, to refine a common vision of the future of the space.

Stories (storytelling)

Stories are important, as they awaken our imagination. Just because community is something that is subjectively felt, experienced, and imagined, narratives are powerful. Stories give meaning, they explain and interpret the reality. They strengthen connections and mobilise people to action. Ultimately, stories give voice, create power, enable negotiation. The community programme “We, the People” employed storytelling as a tool. Stories were created, collected, refined, and reflected, leading to transformations in the communities. Finally, stories meant shared experiences created in different communities.

Specific tasks/homework for community members

During each meeting, it is important to identify specific tasks that are mandatory for the final result of the community project to happen. In this way, participants are encouraged to take responsibility, get directly involved, and continue to actively participate in the creative process. For example, when creating a wall painting in the Centre district, local residents were asked, during their initial meetings with the artists, to collect old photos, remember local stories, and bring symbols (things) that were personally important to them. During the co-creation process, the information collected by the residents was used to create the content of the mural, and the residents willingly took part in the creative process together with the artist.

Celebrating results together: reflecting and summarising

The main indicator illustrating the progress of the work is the created core body of the community, consisting of 3–6 people, motivated to continue the activities independently or with minimal help and support. The feedback from community representatives about the progress of the project, community involvement, benefits of the project for the area, the community or the person himself, the increase in the number of people involved, or the assumption of greater responsibilities are also of great importance. The achieved results can be summarised by organising a joint celebration.

EXPERIMENTATION / ADVENTURE / PLAYFULNESS

The activities carried out with the community usually are meant to solve some integrated, complex, and sensitive problems, ranging from the making of the living space more beautiful and the renewal of the infrastructure to the development of personal relations, cultivation of tolerance for the neighbours or 'the others', integration of socially vulnerable groups, gaining knowledge on the local historical memory. Based on the practical experience of the "Fluxus Labs!", these integrated problems have been addressed through application of the features typical of the Fluxus movement, such as **experimentation, sense of adventure, and playfulness.**

Experimentation

In science, experiments are performed by observing the phenomenon under study. In community activities, this phenomenon is the community itself, while experimentation is aimed at identifying the undiscovered potential of the community, its characteristics, future activities, laws, etc. When experimentation is combined with a different component each time (community + architect, community + clay workshops, community + gathering for a specific task, etc.), one may achieve certain results that can help solve the integrated problems as mentioned above. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that a certain vision and/or goal must be envisaged at the start of the project, but the approach used for achieving the vision or the goal must be based on the spirit of experimentation. This means that one has to be patient and able to stay in a state of uncertainty, because the way how the experiment will develop is not clear. Thus, when experimentation is used in combination with different methods, it can lead to good qualitative results. It is worth noting that experimentation can inspire change only when it is conducted without fearing to test new ways of acting.



Sense of adventure

means an attitude that encourages people to be curious, creative, and open to innovation. When something unexpected happens (experiment), the community becomes attentive, various reactions occur, and dialogue takes place. People are tempted by funny and easy activities that make everyday life more interesting and help them learn or achieve new things (for example, unexpected creative clay and poetry workshops, unconventional excursions to unusual places with tasks to be performed in specific locations, etc.). In each activity, the created spirit of adventure helps to promote active and long-term involvement of people.

Playfulness

means the promise that each activity will not only be an adventure, but will also bring much fun. The elements of playing (e. g., theatrical games, treasure search, story making, creating a dream yard layout, etc.) encourage experimentation or experiencing the spirit of adventure. Through the elements of playing, members of the community learn very important and quite uneasy things: making oneself understood, hearing out, listening, tolerating, communicating, etc.

The “Treasure Map of Garliava”

is a creative project aimed at promoting pride in one’s own district, learning about local history through creativity and play. The idea for the project came from the artist Greta Duobienė, resident of Garliava town. The artists, while interacting with local residents, noticed that both young people and adults knew very little about their residential area, they thought that it was trifling, grey, and had no interesting sights. In order to refute these attitudes, the artist started to explore the town together with local children. Two excursions (10 children each) were organised around Garliava, including visits to various places suggested by the artist, but also those suggested by the youngsters. In the excursions, the children were making notes in their “field notebooks” about what they have noticed, heard, seen, and what has attracted their attention in the visited locations, etc.

Each excursion was followed by a creative workshop with the artist Nerijus Smola and the project author Greta. Each of the groups participated in two creative workshops. In the first workshop, the artists talked about the genre of comics, told how they are created, and discussed publishing of books. The theoretical part was followed by drawing games, sharing observations from the excursions using the ‘field notebooks’. In the second workshop, collages about the treasures of Garliava were created from the materials collected in the previous meetings. Indeed, the treasures of Garliava speak not only about interesting, yet not widely known sites, but also Garliava’s unique residents and creators.

In the creative project, a map of Garliava’s treasures was created together with the children living in the town of Garliava, also a supplementary book about Garliava’s treasures and a board game of Garliava treasures, created by one of the young residents Viktorija (more about the project at www.visikaipvienas.lt).



Moreover, applying the philosophy of playfulness, adventure and experimentation is crucial for creating an environment in which everyone feels safe. Creating and ensuring a safe area is one of the most prominent features of the participatory culture: not every participant must be involved, but everyone must know and feel that at any moment the observer can become a character and that everyone's thoughts will be heard and appreciated.

The mentioned provisions can have a significant impact on the creation of an all-inclusive environment for fostering participatory culture, and this shows its high significance. It is essential to ensure that both cultural institutions and any natural or legal entities joining the community-based activities would receive sufficient information about the activity and would see playfulness, experimentation or adventure not as a threat, but as a potential opportunity.

It can be said that the desire to combine the ideas of the Fluxus movement with the model of working with communities that we aimed to create was exceptionally productive and brought tangible results. Applying these provisions to activities makes it easier and simpler to implement decentralisation of culture and leadership in practice, to talk about the cultivation of participatory culture, broadening one's worldview, and empowering the community.



OTHER PRINCIPLES INSPIRED BY THE FLUXUS MOVEMENT THAT WERE APPLIED IN CREATING WITH COMMUNITY

This chapter elaborates on the eight principles inspired by the Fluxus movement that laid the foundation for the community programme “We, the People”. The application of these principles in community projects made the programme exceptional and unique, focused not only on human connection, but also on the people’s natural ability to enjoy, play, seek adventure, experiment, and not be afraid to make changes, or change themselves.

Combining different disciplines, i. e. when the boundaries between different fields of art and/or life get blurred.

For instance, the “Kartų dialogas” (“Intergenerational Dialogue”) project was developed in Akademija town (Kaunas district) with the support from the “Community Initiatives” project. Several types of activities were combined in the project: collecting grassland flowers and grasses, then using them to produce a herbarium; decorating cotton bags with the remaining unused herbs; the young and the elder were invited for a joint workshop to produce different articles, tell each other local stories, and share recipes for the

garden goods; gathering garden goods in the courtyards of Akademija town to produce different jams and discover the “Taste of Academia”; organising a fair where everyone could give as a gift or buy a herbarium and a jam jar in a unique cotton bag. Later, the authors of the idea developed a social sustainable business project — to bring together local suppliers and open a community shop for selling their products. After a while, the idea came into reality and the community shop “LOKALI: Made in Akademija” was opened in Akademija town as a social sustainable business project. Thus, the project helped to combine different disciplines and activities with a view to achieving the main goal of bringing together different generations, promoting their dialogue and their ability to hear out and keep their traditions alive.

Randomness, i. e. when there is no fear that activities will develop in a different direction than planned or expected (a sincere reaction by people to activities is accepted) and when there are attempts to surprise others or to be surprised by unexpected decisions.

For example, the “Random Gričiupis Mailbox” project was created during the “Fluxus Labs!” activities carried out in Gričiupis district. Mailboxes made according to the model of a mailbox from the inter-war period were placed in different locations in Gričiupis district (marketplace, park, trolleybus, Lithuanian zoo, etc.). Residents were invited to write letters to strangers and leave them in these mailboxes; later, the letters were randomly distributed by the community members to other residents of Gričiupis. The project was aimed at bringing strangers together, in order to encourage them to share their personal stories and feelings about the Gričiupis neighbourhood, as well as surprise each other. The idea of random letters spread further and they were written not only in other districts, but also to other target audiences, such as trolleybus drivers.

Adventure, i. e. when it is intended to involve community members in unexpected activities.

The principle of adventure is well illustrated by Domeikava town in Kaunas district. The community in this area decided to create a live action role-playing game. During the process, true and fictional stories about the town were collected. On the basis of the collected stories, a game in different formats was presented to the community every year. For example, in one year, car orienteering games took place. The game required the participants to travel around Domeikava by car, searching for different locations, to meet the mystical characters of the live action role-playing game, which were impersonated by the local people as well.

It is important to note that the activities of community facilitators sometimes also resemble an adventure: going from door to door, interviewing residents on the street or in the park, discovering unexpected details in a specific area.

The DIY culture and aesthetics, i. e. when it is offered to the community to implement the project on its own and to do everything with their own hands – from the beginning to the very end.

This Fluxus principle is the one that has been most widely used by the community programme. One of the best examples is the “Fluxus Labs! Yard” project. It is based on the idea that everything is done by the community’s own effort: from the moment of submission of an application, meeting with an artist or a creative, to the celebration event upon completion of the project. Together with an artist or a creative, they perform a variety of tasks: create design and visualisations for their project, do the works of digging, hammering, constructing, painting, and drawing, also make tea, bake cakes, etc.

Another example would be preparation of the DIY costumes and decorations for the “Fluxus Festival”.

When developing their sustainability-driven activities, the Lapès community was trying to consider the secondary use of textiles in a creative way. The locals were collecting unnecessary jeans and later, at creative workshops, with the help of the textile artist, used the jeans for sewing hammocks with a view of using them for different community celebrations.

In Linksmakalnis town, community members got involved in the creation of a modern circus performance. The local community established close relationship with the Italian contemporary circus director Roberto Magro. After creating a joint performance, new interpretations were created the following year. Each time the members of the local community, and especially children, were involved in the creation process, participated in rehearsals, and presented the final result at the end of the warm season.

In Ežerėlis town (Kaunas district), the Ežerėlis outdoor gallery was created by connecting the residents, architects, residing artists, and other actors. This is a great example which illustrates how the connections of different disciplines and consistent work (it took about 2 years to create the gallery) can help to independently achieve noteworthy results.

A similar example can be found in Babtai town, which consists of just a few settlements. Due to the previous exclusion of these settlements, we started looking for measures to involve their inhabitants in joint activities and to promote their mutual relations. Indeed, a travelling creative laboratory was established in Babtai, using an old trolleybus for that purpose. All the locals were invited to create it. Such works as decorating the trolleybus, making the interior decorations, creating and adapting the internal infrastructure were needed. The different activities were meant to involve the largest possible proportion of the Babtai population, regardless of the settlement that they belonged to.





Simplicity, i. e. when a miracle can be created from simple daily-use materials and the available local resources.

For all projects, a very important principle is that everything can be created in a simple way. For example, the project “25 million stitches” in Žaliakalnis reveals how the use of simple creative techniques (stitching) that do not require significant financial investment (nearly all the materials, such as fabrics and yarns have been collected from people) can help to address global challenges. In this project, the stitching was accompanied by talking about the refugee crisis, exile, emigration, etc.



Another example is the project “Fluxus Labs! Yard: Rokai”.

The local community was invited to produce signs for their yards that would reflect the history or a special feature of the yard. Ceramic, mosaic, and collage techniques were used to create the signs. These techniques are simple and do not require significant resources. Residents were only encouraged to bring some objects from their homes, the ones they would like to integrate into their sign. Signs placed near the residents’ houses give the passers-by some information about the people of a given house and yard.

The principle of simplicity was also followed for the activities in Samylai neighbourhood. Given the unique landscape of the place, creative activities in this area were developed through the earth art techniques. The community together with artists were creating public art objects from natural resources, and the creative process also led to a dialogue between the local community members.

The constantly changing movement, i. e. when no one and nothing is staying in place, as people, activities, themes, and goals of the project are in continuous change.

Nothing is static. Allowing constant movement enables introduction of new ideas, artists, activities, etc., into community projects as well as diversification of the activities that tend to get 'static', bringing novelty and fun, attracting new people. This principle is perfectly embodied in the activities taking place in the former gunpowder warehouse space "Parakas". Only the fort buildings aged several hundred years can be stable, and everything else (environment, activities, etc.) changes with every new person involved. The "Parakas" space is open to various initiatives and people, and its hosts are continuously looking for new, modern forms, yet not abandoning the existing traditions. Exhibitions, performances, Midsummer fest, concerts, food-tasting, and other type of events are taking place in the "Parakas" space.

Eliminating the line between art and life, i. e. when creation and art penetrate into the everyday life and become a natural part of it.

As an example, let us mention the event "Let's Celebrate the Rivers" — a community-inspired cultural river route. It is an invitation to rediscover the city rivers and their banks through art and culture, to look at Kaunas from a different perspective — both directly from the river (sailing by boat, canoe, etc.) and indirectly (through artistic activities). In the event, artistic performances by various communities, educational/cultural institutions, or professionals take place on the rivers and their banks. The daily-used common space becomes an artistic and creative space for a while.

A similar process can be observed in Ringaudai town. The community of this area decided to create its own almanac. For most of the year, residents participated in various creative workshops (creative writing, photography, etc.) where they created the content of the planned publication. The entire content of the almanac relates to Ringaudai town, stories told by the residents, and to how the local population sees and understands their living environment. In the creative process, the locals of Ringaudai were exploring their environment and organising various creative activities there. Hence, creative practices and implementation of artistic ideas has become an important part of the daily life of the local population.

Another example worth mentioning is Karmėlava town. This place is known for its locations previously used for military purposes (e. g., military missile base and bunkers), also for the uncommonly large *cepelinai* (a Lithuanian national dish made from grated potatoes and meat) served there, and for the Kaunas International Airport (Kaunas Fluxus Airport) located there. In community-based activities carried out in the town, it was decided to look at the local history and the established traditions through the use of modern forms. For example, the residents were invited to vote and select an object to be created in a public space of the town to represent Karmėlava's identity. After the vote, construction of the winner project "The flying *cepelina*" was started. This object can be seen as an example of how the identity of a town can be remembered and embodied in a creative way and by modern tools.



Escaping everyday life and routine, i. e., when residents have a possibility to do something different and unusual, to break down the established routine and try something new: participate in a community meeting or courtyard picnic, contribute to creative redesigning of the yard or creating a sketch of the house wall drawing, take responsibility for organising a yard poetry evening, etc.

All the activities run by the community programme were based on this principle, because even an attempt to ask in public whether a community would like to do something together, is an action destroying its routine.

One of the examples is the “Fluxus Labs! Yards: Ukmergės g.” initiative. A few community members of this district in Kaunas city were inviting the others to create a common garden of plants and to organise and celebrate children’s festivities, picnics, creative workshops (to create artistic objects), etc., in the yard. Indeed, the established order has been constantly ‘disrupted’ by inviting the residents to join, propose ideas, implement them, and thus change the routine.

Some time ago, the routine of Kačerginė town was disturbed by the introduced activities of artistic writing, photography, and talks. Members of the community joined the meetings with a writer and a photographer. The meetings were informal, inviting the audience to share their stories and memories about Kačerginė. Later, based on these stories, a collection of town stories was created. Free meetings with artists in their own town was a new and unusual experience for the residents.

Some people invited the artists to their homes for a cup of coffee or tea. It was easy to notice that such non-binding meetings were of great importance and value to the local population.

In Vilkija town, the story started with the creation of street art works “Wolf”, “Pigeon feeder”, and “Hug”. These works originated on the walls of old buildings and now invite the locals to look at the usual places of the town from a new perspective.

The residents of Kulautuva town were getting together for meetings with the director and local choirs in order to co-create a community performance. This kind of gatherings and the entire process also brought more diversity to the usual life of the town, and served as an inspiration for the emergence of new relationships and traditions.



IMPORTANT! The above-mentioned **principles apply both to working with communities and to involving artists.** In the initial phase of the project, the community independently or jointly with an artist or facilitator were deciding which one(s) of the Fluxus principles will be applied and developed during the project. The principles and tools that worked in one situation would not necessarily work in another. For example, visually similar courtyards of apartment buildings will not necessarily implement analogous projects — residents of different apartment buildings may choose different tools or activities.

It should also be noted that the examples briefly presented in the present section and illustrating one or another principle of Fluxus, reveal only a part of the overall picture. Please use additional links to learn more about each of the communities of Kaunas city or Kaunas district and to find out which Fluxus principles they were following (www.visikaipvienas.eu).

To sum up the experience of the “Kaunas 2022” community programme “We, the People”, it can be stated that the aspiration to combine the ideas of the Fluxus movement with a chosen model of working with communities has proved successful and provided tangible results. The application of the described principles in the activities made it possible to achieve different targets more freely and simply: e. g., implement the decentralisation of culture and leadership in practice, talk about the development of the participatory culture and the worldview, and the empowerment of the community.

Co-creation Tools that Promote Experimentation, ADVENTURE AND PLAYFULNESS

After review of the principles applicable in working with communities, it is worth naming the tools that enable communities to create. This section presents, at first glance, simple but effective tools used for working with communities, which were used and proved successful in the activities of the “Kaunas 2022” community programme.

General local holidays and events

Celebrations of various kinds are extremely important in community activities, and they can be used to achieve various goals. They naturally contain elements of playfulness, as people relax more during their holidays, are in a good mood, give in to playful provocations, find courage to experiment and get involved in creative activities. All of this helps to gather the community, network organisations, and people, conduct research on the residents, stories, and context, or find the like-minded people wishing to contribute to the community activities.



It has to be noted that celebration should not be the goal, except when celebration is intended to summarise the already completed project activities. In other cases, holidays are perceived as a tool that helps to achieve such goals as:

1. *Networking:*

Networking of organisations. Local picnics, fairs, thematic celebrations (pet day, sports festival, etc.) can help residents get to know the organisations operating in the area where they live, and encourage them to develop future mutual cooperation.

Networking of people. At picnics or thematic days, intended only for residents of one yard or block, people get to know, see and hear each other, discover new talents and individuals who want to contribute to community activities.

2. *Research.*

By organising various types of events, research can be done about the people, the history of the area, current stories and myths, local heroes, etc. Such research helps in the development of further projects.

3. *Reflection.*

At the end of a certain stage of the community project, reflection provides an excellent opportunity to bring everyone together again and to assess what has happened, to start planning new activities.

One of the most common holiday formats implemented in the community programme “We, the People” is “**Neighbours and Pets Holidays**”. This format was chosen as a non-binding, open way to invite the residents to meet. Although it might seem that the main target group was pet owners, our practice has shown that the theme of pets is also attractive to a wider audience (for example, families with children). It is important to emphasise that the purpose of these gatherings was not to create a large-format event, but to create conditions for neighbours to meet and discover common interests.

Excursions and hiking trips

It has been observed that this format can attract a lot of people who are not interested in cultural or artistic activities, so it can help to invite people to join community activities and introduce them to the upcoming or already ongoing projects. Performative hiking trips can be distinguished as a separate genre. At such trips, you are invited to get acquainted with non-traditional places, to encourage people to get to know their living environment from an unexpected, non-ordinary perspective, by showing certain performative actions. For example, in the “Yard Signs” project carried out in Rokai dis-

trict, during the walk, the residents were encouraged to think about the place where they live and its extraordinary situation — it is the point where a road, railway and waterway intersect. This encouraged talking about connections, divisions, journeys, and home in the local context during the walk. Representatives of the “Kaunas 2022” team, local residents, and artists joined the hiking trips, and event concepts were often created in such trips. Moreover, involvement of different participants helped not to miss important details — the residents shared their insights with the artists, and vice versa.

Games

are a powerful tool for working with the community. They easily engage and help to relax, or even reconcile people, allowing for unusual experiences. They also provide opportunities to experiment, break up the usual ways of working, the phenomena or relationships, and to construct them in a new way. Learning gets intense through play and this type of learning is a very hands-on approach, easily transferable to a wider community.

Board game meetings, open sports training sessions, etc., can be singled out as a separate tool for working with the community, but it is important that the goals and objectives of these activities were clearly defined. In the context of the community programme “We, the People”, the purpose of such meetings was to explore local identity and stories through informal contact with local residents, to share information about the community initiatives taking place in their living environment, or to discover local experts. In addition, in some activities, the aim was to find local residents who would like to organise similar events themselves voluntarily and help in the activation of the local community. Game evenings in informal spaces frequented by people, such as parks, fountain areas, or children’s playgrounds, proved especially attractive. In order to obtain tangible results in these meetings, it is important to consistently prepare, for example, to plan how the facts or stories heard will be recorded (in a questionnaire, audio recording, map, etc.).

Exploitation of non-traditional spaces

This tool has taken an important place in the community programme “We, the People”. Instead of inviting people to cultural centres, community houses, etc., the aim was to operate in spaces where people gather anyway: to open up private yards and apartment yards to culture, to make use of abandoned buildings, to activate public but less used spaces, markets, or parks. This is especially true when community projects are not focused on a specific location, but are linked to local identity or local themes. In this case, changing the location of meetings or workshops, organising them in different (often non-traditional) spaces, can attract more participants, so a wider part of the community has an opportunity to get to know what is happening in their living environment.





Midsummer Day in "Parakas" Fortification, Šančiai District, 2022

CHALLENGES FACED IN CREATING WITH COMMUNITIES

Human Type *of Challenges*

Engaging with communities is a highly complex process. Often various challenges arise in the process of organisation or implementation of activities. In this part, we try to present and illustrate in a structured way the challenges that we faced most often. It is important to mention that the discovered 'recipes' for the challenges described below were not always the most effective ones. Indeed, attention should also be paid to the fact that the methods offered for their solution were strongly affected by the general context. Nevertheless, we present the identified challenges, as this will allow us to better understand the specificity of working with communities and possibly be able to avoid certain events.

SCEPTICISM

When starting activities with communities, we often face scepticism from one or another member of the community. This may be particularly evident in the first meetings with communities. Sceptical people tend to mistrust the community facilitator, his/her ideas, or vision. Later, we may also face their distrust in the artist, his/her working methodology, competences, etc. In this situation, it is important to hold patient dialogue with sceptical individuals, to explore the causes of their distrust and to find ways of converting hostile or negative attitudes into a wish to take action, to openly communicate with the community facilitator, and to rely on the artist working with the community.

High expectations OF THE RESIDENTS

One may happen to encounter this factor both at the start-up stage and in the implementation of community-based activities. First, after bringing together the community, choosing a direction for the development of activities, discussing potential artists and available finances for the development of activities, the expectations are often very high, as people imagine that their activities will be of a very high quality and will attract high attention from the outside. Sometimes we even face the desire of communities to outdo the other communities. It should be noted that in the context of the “Kaunas 2022” activities, competition between communities was more evident in Kaunas district than in Kaunas city. This could be due to the involvement of the cultural institutions in the project, as they were seeking to prove that they merited more attention from the society and the local government. In other words, the spirit of competing was first noticed not in communities, but in cultural institutions. On the other hand, this was only seen in few neighbourhoods, and intra-community competition in each city or district can be manifested in very different ways.) In such cases, it is important to invite the community to focus not on the final result, but on the process that generates a real value change in the relationship between the members of the community and the surrounding environment.



Challenges *in Building Relations*

Opportunities for community ENGAGEMENT

In the first meetings with the community, it is crucial to get acquainted with the workshop participants and assess whether the planned activities are suitable for them and whether the community is able to achieve the goals. After all, it is possible that the ambitions and goals of the members of the community will initially be very high. Therefore, it is important to adapt them to the physical possibilities of the community. For example, members of the community of one of the neighbourhoods in Kaunas district have set the goal to create sculptures from metal structures. The initiators of the idea were initially highly motivated, but most of the people who created the sculptures were women and, as it turned out in the process of creating the sculptures, working with metal was not acceptable to them. As a result, the motivation of the members of the community to continue working towards the set goal started to decline. Another important factor is the availability of time resources. It should be borne in mind that for community-based activities, people come together in their leisure time, as many of them are working people. For further process to be smooth, it is important to assess the limits of the available time resources in advance. It is important for the community facilitator/coordinator or the artist to involve as many members of the community as possible in the community activities. Thus, the activities need to be adapted according to the possibilities of the participants.



Inclusion of different population GROUPS

It is important to find a balance between different groups of people: the very active and less active ones, new joiners, people with different financial status, less motivated ones, younger and older, with or without permanent jobs, etc. The main challenges in coordinating different groups of people are meeting the needs and expectations of different residents, harmonising their physical and time capabilities. When organising activities, the abilities and opportunities for the participants to get involved should be taken into account, and based on this, different formats should be chosen, ensuring the quality of simultaneous activities of varying intensity and complexity, encouraging participants to help each other and connecting community members into groups or teams made up of the members with different characteristics.

Maintaining community members in the activities AND IN THE PROJECT

Often workshops that take place during various major events attract a large number of visitors/participants, but it is not easy to involve them more actively in other activities planned, initiated, or implemented in the area. This issue can be tackled by creating an open space for community representatives. For example, the project “Kita Neris pusė” (“The Other Side of the River Neris”) has opened up the artists’ workshops to the general public, so that every person visiting the place could feel being a creator of this space and ideas. In such cases, it is also important to maintain contact with the largest possible part of the local population, in order to find out what would encourage them to join the community activities more often.

Communication

Often information reaches only those who are already actively involved in the community activities (they are usually invited personally), so the question is how to attract/get to know a wider audience? Communication tools and methods should be strengthened and developed in order to involve the members of the community more actively in the creative space, allow them to express their ideas and suggestions on how to address the challenges that emerge, also seeking that the persons that receive the information would join as initiators and participants of the activities. It would be good not to limit it to standard communication channels (social media, posters, flyers), but also to try out more creative tools, e. g., leave some clues on the activities in public spaces, talk to people in the streets, parks, events, maintain contact, etc. In the activities, it was noticed that the best tool of communication was spreading the news from lips to lips. Of course, different methods of publicising information can be effective in different areas, so before starting disseminating information to the members of the community, it is important to find out which channels of dissemination are the most effective and can help reach the local community.





Individualistic attitude towards the living ENVIRONMENT

Teamwork during the community activities can be complicated by a strong individualistic attitude towards the living environment coming from the past. It is important to draw attention to whether participants have any experience of co-creating and what does the relationship with other local residents mean to them. During the first meetings, before embarking on larger creative projects, it may be necessary to present and explain the significance of co-creation, why it is important for everyone to be personally involved, to communicate in a warm and open way, to trust one's neighbours and to be active. Often people (regardless of where they live) come back to their place of residence only for rest, they do not have any close contact with the people living in the neighbourhood, their living environment is limited to the walls of the house or the territory of their own courtyard, and/or they often believe that other administrative entities (e.g., municipality or neighbourhood administration) will/should take care of the quality of their living environment outside their private territory. In this case, it is useful to promote the understanding of the value of co-creating, by demonstrating that community-based activities can make a significant contribution to creating and maintaining a common micro-climate in the living environment.



Long-standing CONFLICTS

In joint activities, there may be tensions emerging among the members of the community, and long-standing problems may become apparent (for example, when improvement of the environment by building a sculpture or installation takes place regardless of the opinion of the others). The development of community-based activities with cultural institutions may involve problems related to the internal relations of one or another institution, and even if such problems are not directly linked to the community-based activities, they make organisation and implementation of such activities more difficult. In the case of cultural institutions, it is important for the coordinator/facilitator not to get involved in the internal conflicts and not to give any basis for such internal conflicts of a cultural institution to influence the community-based activities. Looking at the problems among the members of the community that come unresolved from the past, it is important to include all the groupings of the community in decision making and consultations, to hear each person's voice and opinion, and to keep as much objectivity as possible. Active dialogue and discussions with the conflicting neighbours, inviting them to join discussions and jointly look for solutions can lead to communication and dialogue, as well as to changes in attitudes and interactions among the excluded ones.



Fears experienced **BY THE RESIDENTS**

Sometimes members of the community can object to activities in the yard or the settlement. This can happen due to some previously experienced fears and negative experiences (e.g., high level of noise in the yard, too intense level of activity of the young near their place of residence, rubbish after previous activities left around, etc.). It is important to find out and discuss why the activities are opposed and not supported, what are the causes of fears, also to seek compromise through discussion, invite the hostile ones to express their views and jointly find solutions that would help eliminate the existing fears and engage in activities, leading to the influence on the decisions taken.





Very high or very low involvement of COMMUNITY MEMBERS

In the development of community-based activities, one may see that the situation is very different from one location to another, with a very large group of community members active and seeking to join the existing activities in some locations, while elsewhere people are slow to come together and try to achieve community goals. The high level of involvement of the community members can also lead to different problems due to imbalance of the numbers of people of different age groups. For example, when there are many children involved, it is difficult to manage the audience and give sufficient attention to all. You may have to take measures to calm a crowd of children. When organising activities to the community mainly composed of children, it is important to prepare for this: create a team of volunteers; think of the tasks suitable for children; encourage them to invite their parents to the activities; prepare activities that naturally involve children's relatives who could help the little ones.

Another example: as a result of the decision to involve residents of all the apartment buildings around the courtyard, not one house, there were too many participants willing to take part in workshops. The limited team of coordinators had to find leaders among the residents of the courtyard, who would organise smaller working groups composed of their acquaintances, would be able to motivate them, and thus would help maintaining order in the courtyard. In this way, residents of the courtyard had to become coordinators of the workshops. It is also worth trying to search for volunteers and to form a team in advance, prepare for workshops and activities, have clear specific tasks prepared in advance.

When involvement of the members of the community is low, it is worth moving on with patience. However, engaging a larger part of the community in the ongoing processes often takes longer than we desire. It may be necessary to organise permanent activities of different content and oriented to different age groups. Also, we may need to encourage people personally, call and write letters, messages, actively communicate on our social networks, in public groups, regularly organise activities and demonstrate strong leadership that helps to build sincere relations. During the process, it is important to try to know people, their hobbies and attitudes, understand what communication methods would be acceptable, and to respond in a creative way.

The artist's attitude AND MOTIVATION

The attitude and motivation of the artist can have a significant impact on community activities. Before choosing the artist to work with the community, it is very important to find out his/her experience of working with communities. In this process, members of the community must act not as assistants to the artist, but as colleagues who have the same right to develop the creative process and direct its course in one or another direction. Artists working with communities must be flexible, empathetic and listen to the views of the community members, respond to their opinions and comments, and be able to offer rational solutions acceptable to the majority of the community.

Before the start of creative activities, it is important to familiarise the artist with the community and its characteristics, so that he/she knows what can be expected and/or which methods of working with the community would be most appropriate to apply. In addition, the artist must be motivated, willing to share his/her experience with the community, and be able to inspire them in a creative way. If the artist's work with the community is smooth and of high-quality, it is important to thank him/her properly, acknowledge his/her efforts, and let the members of the community show their attention to the artist.

Infrastructural *Challenges*

Lack of spaces

This problem is common to both urban and suburban communities. In the city, community-based activities are usually carried out by groups of people without legal status and an available space for planning and implementing the community activities. Urban communities often have gatherings, for example, in the nearest library. Nevertheless, there is a lack of spaces in which communities could meet informally and would not depend on the working hours of other institutions or on their possibilities to let community members have meetings in their premises. But in Kaunas district, cultural centres and leisure halls can mobilise the communities for joint activities. Meetings are often held at the premises of local budgetary institutions. However, as they operate according to their work schedule, communities do not have possibilities to meet at any time convenient for them, and it often requires a responsible person of the institution to be present in order community members could be admitted to the premises at non-working hours. In some areas of Kaunas district, there are no spaces at all where local communities could meet, or the existing spaces cannot be used for such meetings. This is very relevant in areas with a large number of settlers, as new residents may be willing to carry out joint activities, but there is no dedicated space near their homes, and the only available option is to have such meetings held at private homes of the community members or to meet in public spaces in the open air, which is not always convenient. Thus, this problem needs to be addressed considering the specificity of the area

and the needs of the community — perhaps it is worth creating a new space, but it may be more appropriate to activate the existing unused/unexploited spaces.

Clean up and adjust abandoned spaces

In order to activate unconventional, unused spaces, they need to be cleaned and made safe. Before commencing to adapt the abandoned, unused spaces to community activities, it is worth making sure that a larger part of the community also supports the idea of activating the chosen space. Otherwise, it will be difficult to prepare the space and you may need to seek help from the outside or organise a gathering for the cleaning task.

Communities of multi-apartment buildings do not have their own plots of land

In workshops, when a multi-apartment house is constructed on the state-owned land, it is complicated to work on construction of new objects that require laying foundations. In order for the community to realise a long-term small architectural object, the community has to pass the procedure of obtaining a specific plot of land for the multi-apartment building or it has to obtain a permission for building temporary objects in the courtyard, if that does not require excavation works. Thus, before

launching the project, it is advisable to find out whether the community has its own plot. If not, it would be useful to adapt the activities to the existing situation.

Complicated works that cannot be done at gatherings

It should be noted that not all artistic or technical works can be carried out by organising gatherings (e. g., electrical installation works), which means they can be delayed and require additional

resources. When planning activities and long-term artworks that may require external assistance, it is important to plan more time for completion of the works and to consider in advance who should, if necessary, be contacted for assistance, to plan financial resources. One of the neighbourhoods in Kaunas district was planning to implement an outdoor gallery project. When the initial financial plan of the project was created, no resources were foreseen for electrical services, and it appeared later that such services were inevitable in this process. The project developers had to re-establish a financial plan for the outdoor gallery.



Administrative *and Management- Related Challenges*

Selecting and planning activities

It may take a long time before the community can choose its specific activities and acceptable formats. After having chosen the activities and their formats, it is worth taking time for their consistent planning and implementation. It happens that when the process of planning and implementation is lasting too long, motivation of the community members starts decreasing, as they want the result to be visible sooner. Or, if the processes are too speedy, the community members do not have an opportunity to attend the meetings necessary for achieving the desired result, if they are too frequent. Extra active incentives to get the communities mobilised and take up jobs can also negatively affect their motivation. It is therefore essential to consider the possibilities of each community and the artist when selecting activities and organising their implementation.

Coordinating workshops and activities

At workshops and in all other activities, it is essential to look for a balance in the composition of the community groups, i. e., between the more active ones and the less active ones, who may be the newcomers, sometimes living in a less favourable condition, less motivated, as well as the younger and the older, the ones with permanent jobs and those unemployed, etc. The main challenges faced when it comes to coordinating different groups of people are: meeting

different needs and expectations of the residents, coordinating their possibilities (physical/time). The activities should therefore be organised in a variety of formats, taking into account the talents possessed by the residents and their possibilities for engagement, also ensuring the quality of the activities of various intensity and complexity that are taking place at the same time, encouraging participants to assist each other, and bringing together community members into groups or teams made up of the community members with different personal characteristics.

Meetings with communities

Frequency and schedule of meetings. When meetings happen very seldom, there is a risk that too many questions will have to be discussed in a meeting, and time will be lacking for discussions, conversations, and closer acquaintances. Although the content of such meetings may be of high quality, they often are held in a hurry, trying to keep within the time limit. It is advisable to conduct meetings on a regular basis, but their frequency should be decided for each community individually. It is important to hold the meetings regularly even when it seems that there are no specific issues to be discussed at the meeting. In such cases, time can be devoted to informal conversations, strengthening the team, etc.

Preparing and obtaining permits

Implementation of community-based activities often requires obtaining different permits from the self-government institutions. Permits may be required for building a public object on state land, organising an event, producing street art works on the walls of public buildings, etc. Members of the community can sometimes lack knowledge on how to prepare a permit application and whether officials at the self-government institutions could/should be addressed for such a matter. When activities are carried out with cultural institutions, this challenge can often be avoided, as employees of cultural institutions are normally familiar with the entire system and the applied procedure. When communities act independently without the involvement of a legal entity, it is important to explain to them how the necessary permits can be obtained. Another possible solution to this problem is to decide in advance who in the team will be responsible for obtaining the necessary permits — whether a coordinator or a community member(s). If it is obvious that permits will be required, a workshop on the development of administrative skills can be organised.

Responsibilities and accountability

This is one of the most common challenges, an exceptionally significant one. The process of developing and implementing the activities is complex, often involving emergence of unforeseen needs, tasks, tiredness faced by the community members and coordinators, as well as changes in the level of motivation. With a view of avoiding internal conflicts, it is essential that all the responsibilities were clearly shared in advance. In the case of Kaunas district, as already mentioned in the section “Responsibilities, accountability and administrative implementation of the project”, responsibilities and accountability were defined in cooperation contracts. Nevertheless, contracts are often treated as formality, therefore, it is important for everyone to understand that their responsibility and accountability as defined in the contract are not just meaningless information. In Kaunas, there were no contracts signed between the city and the communities, so the question of responsibilities and accountability was even more relevant. Both urban and suburban communities often seek to act independently and are reluctant to undertake formal tasks (e. g., reporting), that is why, at the start of activities, it is important to explain why accountability is also an important part of the project. until he/she feels well aware of the project would be advisable.

Staff turnover in institutions

This challenge is often encountered in the development of the community-based activities jointly with cultural institutions (cultural centres, leisure halls). As discussed in the previous chapters presenting the project “Contemporary Neighbourhoods” and the responsibilities and accountability arising in this project, an employee appointed by each cultural institutions was responsible for mobilising communities and implementing activities. Resignation of this member of staff created difficulties, undermining the smooth implementation of activities. It took time for a new employee to get acquainted with the works already done, to understand their causes and the desired results. This has often led to a slowdown of certain community-based activities, or they were implemented in a different way than foreseen in the plan. Speaking about staff turnover, it is useful to have general descriptions prepared on the project and the neighbourhood involved in the project, also a summary of the completed works. More intensive communication with the new employee until he/she feels well aware of the project would be advisable.





2
1
4

Unpredictable *Challenges*

Turnover of participants

In the planning of periodic activities, it is often considered that they will be implemented in a usual way: during the first three meetings dedicated to getting acquainted and creating a safe atmosphere, an active group of participants will be formed and creative work will be continued with this group in the next stages. Indeed, the participants in community activities happen to change frequently, and it is not always possible to ensure continuous involvement of one or another person and uninterrupted fulfilment of responsibilities. In the community activities organised by “Kaunas 2022”, the number of participants was changing all the time, as each time there were new people coming, interested in the idea of taking part in the community-based activities. Some other participants, due to various reasons, used to take part only in some of the activities. Aiming to solve the problem of frequent change of participants and expecting to ensure effective work, acquaintance with each participant was made in a personal way. However, it appeared that the creative process was slower than expected and that the changing number of participants prevented from achieving all the planned results. Nevertheless, in the process of development of community-based activities, the turnover of participants is inevitable. Accordingly, when planning activities and choosing their formats, it is worth considering

which parts of the activities could be further developed by the active part of the community, regularly present in community activities, and which parts would be better carried out by the participants who join periodically or only once.

Changing weather conditions

This factor may become a problem if the activity is planned in an open air. Eventually, if the number of people coming for the activities is decreasing, we may need to replan them, which means a longer process. In order to avoid this, it would be useful to have a workshop space arranged indoors or have tents outside where activities could take place, also to inform participants about the meetings and/or the related changes, and to remind them to have weather appropriate clothing.

Consumption of alcohol during daily activities

Participants with problems of alcohol consumption may disrupt the planned process and have a negative impact at the workshops. Thus, during the briefings, it is important to inform the future members that their team or community members can be treated in a variety of other, healthy ways, and that they are welcome if sober.

Sudden political and social change

Like any other person, participants in community activities can get exposed to sudden political, social, and cultural changes. For instance, a change in a governing party in the country may lead to internal disagreements. The COVID-19

pandemic and the topic of vaccination is a good example of how quickly the society can split into opposing groups. In many cases, such sudden changes are difficult to predict, therefore, when developing community-based activities, it would always be worth considering the unexpectedness factor that might affect the course of activities, the number of participants, etc.



THE REAL RESULT — ARTWORK

The
summary
section

To sum up the experience of the community programme “We, the People” described above, we wish to highlight several important aspects.

The First *Aspect*

relates to the community way of thinking that was adopted in this programme, and how it has affected the results achieved.

As already mentioned in Section “Community — what is it?”, the community can be seen in at least two ways — as an object or a structure with clear boundaries and clear members, or as a phenomenon emerging from working with people. From this perspective, the community, if seen as a phenomenon, is not only a process, but also a subjectively constructed experience. Similarly, if the community is understood as a relatively stable structure in the first case, then in the second one, the community is a network composed of individual people, groups, relationships, attitudes, ideas, and identities, which is experiencing continuous circulation and transformation. This network is flowing and dynamic, it gets refreshed, adapted, it changes its shape.

When working with such a network, as confirmed by the experience of the programme “We, the People”, the attention must be focused on the circulation. It is the circulation of ideas, relations, identities, and initiatives in the community that is the most important factor. Hence, an emerging practical challenge makes us think of how we could do impact on an entity that is more apt to be experienced than is there as an object, furthermore, is constantly changing? The name of the programme and its links with the Fluxus movement are suggesting the answer: one needs to work with the community and adapt to its context, as it is essential to explore and understand it. The deeper the understanding of the community context, the more closely we may adapt to it and propose ideas, activities, changes, or projects tailored to a specific community network. The ability to act flexibly, creatively, boldly, and freely becomes essential. Flexibility is not enough, as influence on complex and constantly

changing systems (and the community is such a system) can be achieved only through feedback. Specific projects, regardless of their content (creative actions, improvement of local environment, or other type of initiatives), are merely a means of 'connecting' to the community network and bringing one's own contribution which will form part of the community network and will be able to make unpredicted impact on a wide range of areas of community life.

Flexibility and fluidity (Fluxus) alone are not enough. This approach to the community, when the community is seen as a changing network, and its inherent way of strengthening communities, is a challenge for the traditional ways of working with people, managing resources and planning. When working with communities in this way, we must ensure proper support for the initiatives that may look most bizarre at first sight, and provide sufficient freedom to the people of the community and the facilitators working with them for choosing and improvising. Freedom is necessary not only in the planning of activities, but also in their implementation, as communities tend to change, which means that we may regularly need to adjust the activities and even change the plans significantly.

The Second *Aspect*

relates to the competence of the facilitators who have worked in the programme.

For facilitators, it is not enough to have organisational or human skills or knowledge. As experience with this programme shows, they need specific inner preparedness in terms of courage, flexibility, creativity, and communicativeness. Facilitators must be able to refrain from creating on behalf of people, as they are expected to act side by side, together with people, and to strengthen their initiative, instead of being attached to the details of a planned project or a plan as if it were carved in stone. Thus, trust must be given to the potential, goodwill, and initiative of the people of the community, even in the absence of clear evidence. Trust is becoming a very important lever that encourages people in the community to engage, commit, and achieve results.

The other very important features demonstrating the preparedness of facilitators are curiosity, ability to explore and reveal the distinctive features of a particular community, and to understand the context. Only by being able to accommodate the most diverse aspects of the community context in their imagination, facilitators can be able to make influence on the community through concrete projects. This requires facilitators to have diverse experience and a high level of curiosity.

For facilitators, the ability to manage at least a few of the tools of working with communities (see them discussed below) is a must.

Courage merits a special mention. In the community programme, courage was regarded primarily as the ability of facilitators to experiment, play, engage in adventures with people, without necessarily envisaging the final result or all the possible conclusions.

The Third *Aspect*

relates to the unique tools of working with communities designed and widely employed in the programme.

It is worth discussing them in more detail, because if the community is perceived as a dynamic, self-regulatory and constantly changing network that requires flexible access, then the tools of working with the community have to be quite flexible as well. That means the tools that allow quick contact with a wide variety of people, successful planning in conditions of high uncertainty, bold engagement in experimenting, and flexible attitude to changes in the activities.

In our work with communities, we have distinguished at least 4 tools that are more widely used to influence the community, i. e., games, stories (storytelling), planning, and events. Each of these tools or combinations of them can be specifically adapted to the context of a particular community. We will elaborate more on 4 tools.

STORIES



PLANS



TOOLS
OF WORKING
WITH
COMMUNITIES



GAMES



EVENTS



...?

Games – are seen as one of the most important tools, widely used in the programme and adapted to the context of individual communities (from principles to specific activities in individual communities). Games are a powerful tool for working with the community, as they are attractive and can help engage people in an easy way, they help achieve reconciliation, help the ones feeling tense to relax, and enable bringing new, unusual experiences. They also offer opportunities to experiment, ‘dismantle’, deconstruct the usual methods of action, phenomena, relations, and construct them in a new, unusual way. Games relate to intensive learning, and this learning is very practical, as it is a new experience that is easy to transfer to a wider field of community life. However, as mentioned above, the community programme has not only employed games as a tool, but has also adapted this tool in a unique way. A good game in the community is based on a lively, meaningful story related to the context of the community. Next, a good game in the community is associated with adventure, novelty, and is somehow reminiscent of a gift. Finally, a good game brings the community a challenge, difficulty, or obstacle to eventually make it stronger. When they overcome it and have the new experience discussed and explored (reflection) in an attractive way, they grow.

Another tool widely used in the programme is **stories (storytelling)**. Storytelling is important because it employs imagination. Just because community is something that we can feel, experience, and imagine in a subjective way, storytelling can have a big effect. Storytelling brings meaning to the reality, it helps explain and interpret it. Storytelling unites, it strengthens relations and mobilises people to act. Eventually, storytelling gives a voice, creates power, allows negotiation. The programme (again, on an individual basis) has employed storytelling as a tool. Stories were created, compiled, edited. They were serving as a tool to design, concentrate, and to oppose or extend support. In our programme, stories were reflecting and transforming communities. And finally, in our programme, stories served as a tool to spread the experience created in different communities.

Games and storytelling, as central tools, have been employed in one of the key orientations of working with communities, i. e., community development (or cultivating the community potential).

Another tool to discuss is **planning**. Planning, especially if carried out in partnership with the community, helps to create and strengthen hope, encourage engagement, and show concrete opportunities to engage in joint activities. Further, plans define the change and organise a wide range of resources for it. However, such effects of planning only occur under a number of important conditions that were ensured by our programme. First, the community itself must be actively involved in planning. Otherwise, the community will treat plans as components from the outside, and people will be slow to join. At the same time, people's engagement is not possible without extensive and diverse contacts with a wide range of people in the community, with organisations, informal groups, and initiatives. These contacts must be established, and mutual trust must be achieved — only then one may expect that people will participate in the project. Planning is only useful if the process is followed in a flexible way and without avoiding a critical approach. Only in this way will planning become a tool that is inclusive, well targeted, and empowering.

One more tool used in the programme is **events**. It is one of the most widely used tools for community-based work in practice. Why events? Because inviting to events is simple; events bring people together and are often neutral, i. e., involve a wide variety of people with all kinds of views, habits, statuses, etc. Events inspire people and make it easy (fun) to share ideas. The programme (again, on an individual basis) has adapted events as a tool for its own purposes — events were playfully provoking to experiment and play, leading to serious change being initiated in a simple way. Events served to mobilise for action and create new relations.

Ultimately, what final result can be achieved, if community is considered to be a social phenomenon (something that can be experienced, imagined, and is in constant change), rather than an object; if there is a strong focus on exploring and understanding the context of the community, on adapting activities to the unique context of a particular community flexibly and smoothly; if the programme is implemented by brave, flexible, creative facilitators who have confidence in the power of communities and people; if tools for working with the community, such as games, storytelling, planning, and events, are employed in a targeted and unique way?

To conclude, the final result of the project consists of changes evident in at least three areas. More precisely, a unique combination of changes in at least three different areas is what we call the final result of the project.

First, this specific combination changes the **worldview of the local people** in a unique way. They become more open, wider-looking, and curious. They find space for more diverse people, ideas, possibilities, and this diversity gives the foundation for unexpected creative solutions. When people work together and achieve significant results, they tend to start trusting their own power and the surrounding community, which in turn changes the worldview from passive (a victim) to proactive (a community member showing initiative). This combination of acting methods also **changes the mutual relations within the community**. As people get to know each other and build personal contacts of high quality, the community network grows (hence, the community texture is getting thicker). Different activities create a forum where not only random members of the community meet, but also those members of the community who would normally not meet because of their different habits, attitudes, statuses, or unresolved conflicts. Their meetings make it possible to make

the community network stronger. Consequently, mutual relations get more extensive, more diverse, and stronger (more personal). Finally, such a combination of principles and activities applied in the community helps strengthen the community circulation. Accordingly, the exchange of ideas, resources, support, curiosity, power, initiatives, information, and other relevant elements within the community gets more intense and powerful. It is precisely this kind of exchange that constitutes a growing **community circulation**, and it is exactly the circulation that ensures unique community solutions, unexpected ideas, flexibility, and creativity, and helps to combine the things that, at first glance, look incompatible. However, changes in the worldview, mutual relations, and circulation are possible only with the **support** (administration) mentioned above, i.e., when functioning of the community is supported by a programme that is sufficiently independent to be able to avoid blind attachment to the anticipated results, provides at least minimal resources for strengthening the community, is flexible enough to support both the direct community initiatives and the development of people who work with the community (facilitators).



PEOPLE'S
WORLDVIEW

COMMUNITY
CIRCULATION

COMMUNITY
RELATIONS

This is the way how critical, vigilant, sensitive, and mindful communities can be created and grown. We mean the communities where a strong skill to act proactively is combined with a dense, diverse, and rich network of people, organisations, and informal groups, as well as the communities where a variety of initiatives and a rich network helps to grow and enhance the exchange of ideas, needs, and assistance.

Such communities are called resilient **(flexible and dynamic) communities**. When resilient communities grow up and get transformed, they in turn reinforce three essential qualities (abilities) that are particularly relevant to and exist in all the layers of life in the community. Firstly, such communities become able to notice the emerging challenges and opportunities in time. In this case, 'in time' means that challenges are recognised before they turn into problems or dramatic consequences. Opportunities are also perceived early and used earlier than in fragile and fragmented communities. Secondly, for resilient communities, it is easier to overcome even dramatic and unexpected affects. They can recover from crises more quickly and can implement serious changes more easily and with less significant consequences. Thirdly, resilient communities are capable of accumulating their own experience and learning from it. They reflect on their experience and adjust their ways of acting accordingly.

*The gift of
community
resilience cannot
be created in
any other way
of working with
communities.*





2
3
2

“We, the
People”

*programme
team*

It was a living proof that in simple things there is miracle, strength, and change.

From a professional point of view, I am glad to have met the people who could grow by learning from me and made me grow by learning from them, later becoming leaders for the others. The leaders burning with love for humanity, communion, and culture.

Ultimately, for me as a human being, the greatest discovery was the Fluxus principles that we have created and tested in practice with our team. Even without noticing how it happened, I started applying the Fluxus principles in my own life and will surely do that for a long time, as life is a joke, and each day can bring us lots of funny and unusual things. Indeed, the “Fluxus Labs!” have turned my life by 360 degrees and showed me myself as a personality with much more colours inside.

**GRETA KLIMAVIČIŪTĖ-
MINKŠTIMIENĖ**

“Fluxus Labs!” curator





STEFANIJA
PAULAUŠKAITĖ

"Fluxus Labs!" coordinator

The "Fluxus Labs!" was one big surprise. It involved unexpected joys and unexpected pains that have merged into one unique change in life. And that change happened together with hundreds of people who were brave enough to come back to the very beginnings, namely spending time and creating with the community. Indeed, in the community.

We were working with various communities, often in the districts of Kaunas city, so the “Fluxus Labs!” was where I met a lot of different people with different worldviews.

This has helped me, as a human, to see different perspectives of vision, different lives and attitudes, and I have become much more open, tolerant, and empathetic towards other people. And of course, all this goes in hand with an immeasurable amount of new lessons and endless opportunities for professional growth!

**SIMONA
SAVICKAITĖ**

“Fluxus Labs!” coordinator





AUSTĖJA BLIUMKYTĖ-
PADGURSKIENĖ

“Fluxus Labs!” coordinator

The “Fluxus Labs!” adventure was worth to be involved:

Because of new opportunities for action: I deepened my understanding of communality, got used to applying the Fluxus principles in the activities, and acquired a new profession of the community facilitator;

Because of the people that I met: they helped me broaden my circle of like-minded and co-working people, and I even became a colleague of the people that were always my best examples to follow;

Because of good emotions: in 5 years, I could feel and see so much warmth, friendliness, care, attention, open hearts and hands.

Fluxus was what enabled me to experience that every person that we meet have unique and interesting ideas in their heads, and when we greet each other in a creative Lab, wonderful things start happening, involving hundreds, and sometimes even thousands of people. Kaunas is full of culture and creative personalities in every courtyard!

AISTĖ PTAŠINSKAITĖ-
PAUKŠTĖ

“Fluxus Labs!” curator



Art can be created by everyone, and art belongs to everyone. Our team has not only tested these ideas of the Fluxus movement in practice, but also supplemented them with a valuable component — the joy of creating together. The biggest discovery for me was the active and creative Kaunas people as well as the unique spaces that they build up and offer for communities.

GODA
KACILEVIČIŪTĖ

“Fluxus Labs!” coordinator



The “Fluxus Labs!” gave me the freedom and courage to observe, explore, and tame (get connected with) the most complex layer of Kaunas city – the communities. The layer so abundant in rich stories. And the truth which was reminded us by the fox, has happened: “You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed.

**GODA
POMERANCEVA**

“Fluxus Labs!” coordinator





MONIKA
VALENTUKONYTĖ

“Fluxus Labs!” coordinator

*What the “Fluxus Labs!” has
given to me was the people —*

those that are real, creating, believing in their city, breaking standards, and going beyond the norms of the society. No surprise, a COMMUNITY was exactly what the Community programme has given to me.



GODA
KARBONSKYTĖ

“Fluxus Labs!” coordinator

Being part of the “Fluxus Labs!” community programme was a possibility to employ my skills, and with the existing strategy and extra effort, I could fully engage myself in a one-year long celebration of the city’s culture.

Through this experience, I could develop my skills of working with communities, as well as observe the existing opportunities for cooperation and the extent of networking within cultural communities. The programme has also revived the city’s life, touching many people, including me. I am glad I was part of it!

Programme

In Kaunas district



VILTĖ MIGONYTĖ-
PETRULIENĖ

Curator

Working with the community of Kaunas district meant a total exit from the comfort zone, accompanied by many challenges — not only professional, but also personal ones.

At the end of the year of the capital of culture, my heart is filled with an endless sense of gratitude for the friendship, openness, meaningful discussions, support, opportunity to get acquainted and to learn. I will always do my best to make sure that the creativity of the people of Kaunas district is noticed and appreciated, and that the entire Europe would come and learn from the best practice of Kaunas district.



MILDA
RUTKAUSKAITĖ

Curator

*It is hard to put everything I want
to say in a few sentences.*

I think that the entire period of the “Contemporary Neighbourhoods” project has revealed how strong and unique the communities of Kaunas district are. Indeed, this has been noticed not only on the local, but also on the international level. Today we are speaking about this project as an example of good practice, but it would not have happened without the communities of Kaunas district, and I am most grateful to all of them for their determination, efforts, creativity, and so many inspiring lessons. I believe that the residents and cultural operators of Kaunas district are now much bolder than before, and they will prove this many times in the future, inviting us to their vibrant celebrations of communality and culture!

The friendship with Kaunas district communities seems to have created so many extraordinary experiences.

Indeed, the mere network of institutions created in five years, is a good indicator that it was worth working long hours. Contacts and horizons of ideas expanded with each business trip, each training, and each experiment at events. And yet, I do think that we ourselves have learned just as much from the people we met.

AUGUSTINA
KALESNIKIENĖ

Curator



Working with communities has opened a completely different picture of the neighbourhoods of Kaunas district for me —

I found each of them distinctive and rich in personalities. It is good to see how people come together, generate ideas, and implement them — this is how local cultural initiatives are created, next to the newly established friendly relations and the increased self-confidence of the communities for creating and taking action.

LAURA
AUKSUTYTĖ

Coordinator





GEDIMINAS BANAITIS-
SKRANDIS

Curator

*For me, creative activities in
Kaunas district seem meaningful
due to several aspects:*

new acquaintances with people and the places that they create, discoveries of the uniqueness and authenticity of the village or town, a sense of natural remoteness, non-commercial motivation, and the charm of simplicity. In Kaunas district, we can easily find ourselves fascinated by the small distances between people (and between their relations), by simple and direct interaction with local leaders, by people's great interest in new things, and by cosy, sometimes even modest first times. The exchange of experiences and knowledge as well as the decentralisation of culture was the best thing that could have ever happened to those living in Kaunas district and to me, privileged to be their guest.

Working with communities and promoting contact with them has always been and is worth doing, just because the people of Kaunas district are the body of Kaunas district.

Without their creativity, their love for their land, and their unity, the territories around Kaunas city would be nothing more than a puzzle of forests, fields, roads, and towns. Thanks to the communities, we can preserve our traditions, develop our creativity, and make the name of Kaunas district famous. But most importantly — we can show that Kaunas district is the best, most creative, and most interesting district of all.

LUKAS
ALSYS

Curator



*Let us keep in
contact:*

NGO "Bendruomenių laboratorijos"
E-mail: fluxuslabas@gmail.com

Kaunas District Municipality,
Division of Culture, Education and Sports
E-mail: lukas.alsys@krs.lt

More information available at
www.visikaipvienas.eu

„WE THE PEOPLE“
THANK YOU FOR
PARTNERSHIP

Adelija Martinaitienė	Barbora Valiukevičiūtė	Eglė Ivanavičienė	Gražvyda Andrijauskaitė
Adrian Carlo Bibiano	Benediktas Mikuckis	Eglė Juozapavičienė	Gražvydas Jovaiša
Agata Wozniczka	Birutė Vidauskaitė - Andziulienė	Eglė Motiekaitė	Greta Duobienė
Agnė Medėkšaitė	Boris Ceko	Eglė Patinskaitė	Greta Varnaitė - Venskienė
Agnė Nemanytė	Brigita Staniulienė	Eglė Targanskienė	Guoda Andriuškevičiūtė
Agnė Vodžicvienė	Burbulų dėdė	Eglė Valadkevičiūtė	Hana Šumilaitė
Agnietė Janušaitė - Vitkūnienė	Camilla Sandri Bellezza	Eglė Vitkutė	YeS Duet
Agnietė Lisičkinaitė	Clara Giambino	Eimantas Kukta	Ieva Laučkaitė
Aida Povilaitytė	Claudia Janke	Eimutis Kvosčiauskas	Ieva Olimpija Voroneckytė
Aistė Ežerskė	Dainė Rinkevičiūtė	Elena Kovėrienė	Ignas Kazlauskas
Aistė Ivanovaitė - Petraitenė	Dainius Paplauskas	Elijus Kniežauskas	Ignas Lapienis
Aistė Nomeikaitė	Daiva Bulotienė	Ema Senkuvienė	Ina Kunavičiūtė - Mikučionienė
Aistė Ramunaitė	Daiva Gavrilėikė	Emilija Sidaraitė	Indrė Aleksandravičiūtė
Akvilė Brazauskaitė	Daiva Klimavičienė	Enrika Striogaitė	Indrė Engelkytė - Iršė
Albinas Pugevičius	Daiva Nevardauskienė	Erika Jurevičiūtė	Indrė Mačiulytė
Aldona Čiūtienė	Daiva Price	Ernestas Gelčys	Indrė Puišytė - Šidlauskienė
Algimantas Grigas	Daiva Pugevičienė	Eva Smoriginaitė	Indrė Spitrytė
Algimantas Šlapikas	Daiva Ramoškaitė	Evaldas Jocius	Inga Dagilė
Algirdas Ramonas	Daiva Štarevičiūtė	Evelina Kaveckienė	Inga Janulevičienė
Algirdas Stančius	Daiva Vaišnorienė	Evelina Šimkutė	Inga Kaminskė
Algirdas Šapoka	Dalia Michelevičiūtė	Evelina Šmukštelytė	Inga Šarakauskė
Alina Butrimė	Dalia Narkevičiūtė	Felicitia Marcelli	Ingas Venslavičius
Alla Čeres	Danguolė Kasparienė	Flash Voyage	Ingrida Kazlauskienė
Alma Pauželienė	Danguolė Mikalauskienė	Gabija Blochina	Ingrida Povilaitienė
Alma Stočkūnaitė	Daniela Piangjolino	Gabriela Kowalska	Irena Leliugienė
Alma Zagurskienė	Danielius Naruskas ir būgnininkų bendruomenė	Gabrielė Janilionytė	Irmantas Venskys
Alvydas Sveikauskas	Danielius Sodeika	Gaila Akelienė	Iza Rutkowska
Andrius Aleksandravičius	Danutė Ilgakojienė	Gaudenis Satkus	Jason Atomic
Andrius Jurkša	Danutė Varkalienė	Gaudrė Znutaitė	Jelena Škulienė
Andrius Sarapinas	Darius Daraška	Gediminas Kasparavičius	Jogailė Adomaitytė
Andžela Mickutė	Darius Petrulis	Gediminas Kubilius	Jokūbas Bateika
Anna Szafucka	Deimantė Meilutė	Gediminas Zujus	Jolanta Bačėnienė
Antanas Endziulis	Ganusauskienė	Gerda Giedrė Šeirė	Jolanta Jurkonienė
Antanas Venskūnas	Deividas Jotautis	Germanas Daškevičius	Jolanta Marmienė
Arkadijus Gotesmanas	Deividas Pileckas	Giedrė Aleksandravičiūtė	Jolanta Sidabrienė
Arminas Raugevičius	Deividas Šatikas	Giedrė Baltakytė	Jolanta Zizienė
Arūnas Adomaitis	Dileta Mozūraitytė	Giedrė Bartusevičiūtė - Rimkienė	Jolanta Padgurskas
Arūnas Kricena	Dominyka Ginelevičiūtė	Giedrė Misevičiūtė	Jonas Danielevičius
Arūnas Matulis	Dominykas Babikas	Giedrė Nenortienė	Jonas Jačiunskis
Arūnas Mozūraitis	Dominykas Vaitiekūnas	Giedrė Palevičiūtė	Jonas Oškėnis
Arūnas Sniečkus	Donatas Medzevičius	Giedrius Balbieris ir G - Trio	Jonas Praškevičius
Asta Bokertienė	Donatas Stankevičius	Giedrius Bučas	Jonas Vitlipas
Asta Petrauskienė	Dovilė Klimavičienė	Giedrius Liubinas	Judita Einikytė
Asta Tamonienė	Džiugas Karalius	Gildas Aleksa	Julija Karaliūnaitė
Augustinas Gipas	Džiugas Kunsmanas	Gintaras Zubrius	Julius Balašaitis
Aurėja Jucevičiūtė	Džiugas Širvys	Gintarė Bagdonienė	Julius Šlapkauskas
Aurelija Prašmuntaitė	Edita Bružikaitė	Gintarė Bauerytė	Juozas Žilonis
Aurika Laurinaitienė	Edita Butkuvienė	Gintarė Kapočiūtė	Jūratė Jurevičiūtė
Aušra Junevičė	Edita Niciūtė	Gintautas Lukauskas	Jūratė Mazur
Aušra Lukošienė	Edita Simonaitienė	Gintautas Velykis	Jūratė Miliutienė
Aušra Šumakerienė	Edita Štreimikienė	Gita Balžekaitė	Jūratė Tutlytė
Aušra Žukaitė - Kupčiūnienė	Edmundas Balasevičius	Gitana Lapienienė	Jurga Marmaitė
	Egidijus Bagdonas	Gytis Dovydaitis	Jurgita Bonkevičiūtė
	Egidijus Gasiūnas	Goda Laurinavičiūtė	Jurgita Bukauskienė
	Eglė Baltrėnienė	Goda Verikaitė	Jurgita Kelpšienė
	Eglė Česonytė		Jurgita Underlikienė

Justas Tertelis	Martynas Aužbikavičius	Rita Kaupelienė	Vaida Bubnytė
Justina Sutkutė	Martynas Plepys	Rita Levickienė	Vaida Trofimišienė
Justinas Kalinauskas	Mateusz Adamczyk	Robertas Danilovaitė	Vaida Virbickaitė
Justinas Kisieliuskas	Matteo Lanfranchi	Robertas Balčiūnas	Vaidas Bernotas
Karolina Aleškevičiūtė	Merkys Šimkus	Robertas Juknevičius	Vaiva Butkienė
Karolina Mint	Miglė Andrejeva	Rodica Morari	Vaiva Marija Bružaitė
Karolis Grubis	Miglė Remeikaitė	Rokas Jurkus	Vakarė Urbaitė
Karolis Pročkys	Milda Ablingė	Rolanda Girskienė	Valda Verikaitė
Kastytis Laužadis	Milda Gineikaitė	Rolandas Vaizgėla	Valdas Dautartas
Kazimieras Masiulionis	Milda Laužikaitė	Romena Puikytė	Vicente Cabrera
Kazys Bačėnas	Milėja Stankevičiūtė	Rūta Butkuvienė	Vida Bliumkienė
Kęstutis Daugėla	Milena Lapajienė	Rūta Martinavičiūtė	Vydas Zabulionis
Kęstutis Kalkauskas	Mindaugas Kirstukas	Rūta Mur	Vidmantė Šlepikaitė
Kęstutis Markevičius	Mindaugas Lukošius	Rūta Reutaitė	Vykintas Gervė
Kęstutis Žižys	Mindaugas Venskūnas	Rūta Slivickienė	Viktorija Gotovtienė
Kostas Klimavičius	Monika Briedienė	Rūta Šveiterytė	Viktorija Jevdokimova
Kristina Alšauskienė	Monika Leitanė	Sandra Valavičiūtė	Viktorija Vaitilavičiūtė
Kristina Čivilytė	Monika Mašanauskaitė	Sandra Veprauskienė	Vilius Marma
Kristina Jankauskienė	Monika Peldavičiūtė	Saulius Gasiūnas	Vilius Vyšniauskas
Kristina Jaskūnienė	Monika Stirbienė	Saulius Kriščiukaitis	Vilma Garlinskienė
Kristina Šiožinienė	Nerija Krugliakovienė	Saulius Patackas	Vilma Litvaitienė
Kristina Štaupaitė	Nerijus Samola	Saulius Šimkus	Vilma Maročkienė
Laima Borovaja	Neringa Bukauskaitė	Sébastien Canard - Volland	Viltė Želvytė
Laima Mačiulaitytė	Neringa Daniulaitienė	Sergejus Zareckis	Vincas Skripka
Laura Auksutytė	Neringa Kulik	Severija Žukauskytė	Virginija Brazauskienė
Laura Eskertaitė	Oksana Kušner	Sigita Grabliauskaitė	Virginija Pūrienė
Laura Garšvaitė	Olesė Kekiėnė	Sigita Podeckienė	Virginija Tamašauskienė
Laura Katinienė	Ovidijus Jurkša	Simona Nakrošiūtė	Virginijus Kacilevičius
Laura Luišaitytė	Paulina Ružauskaitė	Simona Norkienė	Virginijus Verpauskas
Laura Lukenskė	Paulius Berūkštis	Simona Šidlauskas	Vita Valantukonytė
Laura Slavinskaitė	Paulius Godvadas	Skirmantas Nominaitis	Vitalija Adomaitienė
Laura Starevičienė	Paulius Žiūkas	Skirmantė Valutienė	Vitalija Kuršienė
Laurita Peleniūtė	Perpetua Dumšienė	Solveiga Dambrauskaitė - Bakutienė	Vitalis Orentas
Lewis Biggs	Petras Vyšniauskas	Sonata Gasiūnienė	Vytautas Juozapavičius
Lina Mišeikienė	Pijus Ūeikauskas	Stasė Mickutė	Vytautas V. Landsbergis
Lina Sinkevičienė	Polina Butkienė	Stasys Juškevičius	Vytautė Trijonytė
Lina Šavirienė	Povilas Vincentas Jankūnas	Stefanija Novosovaitė	Vytenis Danielius
Linas Kazuilionis	Raimonda Kimbraitė	Stepas Galkinas	Vytenis Jakas
Linas Ūsas	Raimonda Narsejeva	Steputė Račauskienė	Vytis Lasys
Linas Žemgulis	Raimonda Šiudeikytė	Šarūnė Baltrušaitienė	Vytis Mantrimavičius
Liucija Dervinytė	Ramūnas Navickas	Tadas Česna	Vladas Bagdonas
Liukrecija Navickienė	Ramūnas Vaicekauskas	Tadas Dešukas	Žaneta Danauskienė
Loreta Maliukevičienė	Ramunė Kiaunienė	Tadas Mikštavičius	Židrija Janušaitė
Loreta Ūsienė	Ramunė Mikelskienė	Tadas Montrimas	Žydrūnas Šalasaivičius
Loreta Valantiejienė	Ramunė Savickytė	Tadas Šimkus	Žydrūnė Petrauskienė
Lukas Karvelis	Rasa Endriukaitienė	Tadas Valutis	Žygimantas Kudirka
Lukas Tomaševičius	Rasa Grubevičiūtė	Tadas Zaranka	Žygimantas Šarakauskas
Mantas Butrimas	Rasa Melinienė	Takatsuna Mukai	Žilvinas Rinkšelis
Mantas Liutikus	Rasa Ragaliauskė	Tautvydas Žvirblis	Živilė Bekerienė
Mantas Tabačinskas	Rasa Staskonytė	Teidė Gasiūnaitė	Živilė Juknevičienė
Marija Kacilevičiūtė	Rasma Noreikytė	Timotiejus Norvila - Morfai	Živilė Jurgaitienė
Marijus Gvildys	Regimantas Gilvickas	Tomas Erbrėderis	Živilė Katkauskė
Marius Mackevičius	Regimantas Visockis	Ugnė Marija Andrijauskaitė	Živilė Kubiliūtė - Stanislavičienė
Marius Paplauskas	Remigijus Ščerbauskas	Ugnius Naraukas	Živilė Muraškienė
Marius Paulikas	Rimantas Stankus	Vaclovas Žvirblis	Živilė Vaičiukynienė
Marius Pinigis	Rimantė Adomaitytė		Živilė Zablackaitė
Marius Stavaris			

ORGANISATIONS

14 stotelė	Youth center Omnia It was us	Kauno valstybinis muzikinis teatras	Narsiečių bendruomenė
A. ir J. Juškų etninės kultūros muziejaus padalinys	Jachtklubas	Kauno vandenys	No Name studio
A. Martinaičio dailės mokykla	Jaunimo centras „Veikama“	Kauno zoologijos sodas	Noreikiškių lopšelis - darželis „Ažuolėlis“
Academy of the Unfulfilled	Jazz Academy	Kedrostubūras	Ortopedijos muziejus
Akademijos bendruomenės centras	Jazz House	Keramikos akademija	Pagnybės bendruomenės centras
Akademijos seniūnija	Jukka's Orchestra	Kiemo galerija	Panevėžiuo kaimo bendruomenė
Aktyvus laisvalaikio jaunimas	Juragių bendruomenės centras	Kylantis Kaunas	Parakas
Aleksoto bendruomenės centras	Kačerginės miestelio bendruomenės centras „Vizija“	Kita Neries pusė	Pasaga
Alytaus jaunimo centro dramos studija „Skrajokliai“	Kačerginės mokykla - daugiafunkcis centras	KTU Modance	Pasaulio gėlės
Alytus 2022	Kačerginės seniūnija	KTU žygeivių klubas „Ažuolas“	Peikko Lietuva
Arkliai galia	Karmėlavos Balio Buračo gimnazija	Kuhne	Pelėdų kava
Artscape	Karmėlavos lopšelis - darželis „Žilvitis“	Kūjeliai	Petrašiūnų bendruomenės centras
Atominis bunkeris	Karmėlavos seniūnija	Kulautuvos bendruomenės centras	Phil Tuba consulting
Atrast	Karmėlavos Šv. Onos parapija	Kulautuvos seniūnija	Piliarožė
Aura	Kastytis	Kūrybos kampas 360	Potiomkinas
B. ir V. Sruogų namai - muziejus	Kaukita	Kūrybos namai „K.I.N.A.S Panemunė“	Prabudimo orkestras
Babtų bendruomenės centras	Kaunas Pilnas Kultūros	Lapių laisvalaikio salė	Profesinio meistriškumo akademija
Babtų kultūros centras	Kauno apskrities viešoji biblioteka	Lapių pagrindinė mokykla	Radikių kaimo bendruomenė
Babtų seniūnija	Kauno bendruomenių centrų asociacija	Lapių seniūnija	Ramučių kultūros centras
Bangpūrys	Kauno bienalė	Lėlių teatras	Ratelinis
BudCud	Kauno dailės gimnazija	Liaudiškos muzikos ansamblis „Svirbė“	Ratilėlis
Cirko Sapiens	Kauno detalės	Lietuvių etninės kultūros draugijos Kauno teritorinis padalinys	Raudondvario dvaras
Dairidis	Kauno energija	Lietuvos architektų sąjungos Kauno skyrius	Raudondvario gimnazija
Domeikavos gimnazija	Kauno fotografijos galerija	Lietuvos Aviacijos muziejus	Raudondvario kaimo bendruomenės centras
Domeikavos kaimo bendruomenės centras	Kauno kapucinų vienuolynas	Lietuvos dailininkų sąjunga, Kauno skyrius	Raudondvario kultūros centras
Domeikavos laisvalaikio salė	Kauno kolegijos menų fakultetas	Lietuvos liaudies buities muziejus	Raudondvario seniūnija
Domeikavos seniūnija	Kauno kultūros centras	LikeBike	Restoranas „DU“
Etnopaveldžio bendruomenė „Kauno Veršva“	Kauno ledo rūmai	Linksmakalnio kaimo bendruomenė	Ringaudų bendruomenės centras
Ežerėlio kultūros centras	Kauno lopšelis - darželis „Drevinukas“	Linksmakalnio laisvalaikio salė	Ringaudų laisvalaikio salė
Ežerėlio seniūnija	Kauno marių regioninis parkas	Linksmakalnio mokykla - darželis	Ringaudų pradinė mokykla
Fortūna	Kauno menininkų namai	Linksmakalnio seniūnija	Ringaudų seniūnija
Garliavos apylinkių „Sanašos“ bendruomenė	Kauno miesto muziejus	M. Petrausko scenos menų mokykla	Ritmas Kitaip
Garliavos apylinkių seniūnija	Kauno miesto simfoninis orkestras	Maironio lietuvių literatūros muziejus	Robaksai
Girionių darželis	Kauno miškų ir aplinkos inžinerijos kolegija	Manana.lt	Rokų laisvalaikio salė
Girstutis	Kauno policijos bendruomenės pareigūnai	Mano būstas	Rokų seniūnija
GiverTag	Kauno r. savivaldybės viešoji biblioteka	Maprema	Samylų kultūros centras
Glow Factory	Kauno rajono turizmo ir verslo informacijos centras	Marina Taste Gallery	Samylų seniūnija
GM Gyvai	Kauno tvirtovės parkas	MG šokių studija	Santarvės bendruomenė
God's Entertainment	Kauno V. Kudirkos viešoji biblioteka	Minam kartu	Saugi pradžia
Gražinkime Kauną	Kauno V. Kudirkos viešoji biblioteka	Moderni Laumė	Scenos ir estetikos mokykla
Guboja	Kauno vaikų darželis „Rudnosiukas“	Monikaze	Sitkūnų bendruomenė
IL Senso	Kauno Valdorfo mokykla	Moterų erdvės	Skirtbike
Ilgakiemio laisvalaikio salė		Muilo laboratorija	Slackline Lietuva
Impro Kaunas		Mūsų Odiseja	Starna
Inovatyvūs kūrybiniai sprendimai		Nacionalinis Kauno dramos teatras	Strings of Earth Orchestra
			Stuba
			Šilelio bendruomenės centras
			Šiuolaikinio šokio asociacija
			Šlamutis

Šlienavos pagrindinė
mokykla
Šv. Vincento Pauliečio
bažnyčia
T. Ivanausko „Obelynės“
sodybos padalinys
Teatras P
Tigrasa
Ukrainos kamerinis
ansamblis Lyatoshinsky Trio
Ulna šokių studija
Universitetų moterų
sambūris
Urmas
Už švrią Lietuvą
Užuovėja
V. Kudirkos viešoji
biblioteka
VDU Botanikos sodas
VDU Ugnės Karvelis
gimnazija
Veiklių mamų klubas
Vertimų stovyklavietė
Viena Linija
Viljampolės bendruomenės
centras „Veršva“
Vilkijos gimnazija
Vilkijos kultūros centras
Vilkijos neįgaliųjų sąjunga
Vilkijos seniūnija
Vivus fortus
Voškonių bendruomenė
Voškonių laisvalaikio salė
Wake Up
Žaisa
Žemuogių pievelė

List of *Photographs*

Andrius Aleksandravičius

22, 30, 41, 79, 113, 114–115, 118–119, 127,
138–139, 152, 166–167, 172–173, 187

Gražvydas Jovaiša

124, 143, 158–159, 171, 182–183, 197,
213, 226–227

Martynas Plepys

9, 19, 27, 34, 36, 44–45, 46–47, 50,
56–57, 62, 68, 82, 84–85, 87, 90, 109,
117, 122–123, 130–131, 132–133, 144,
148–149, 159, 167, 190, 208–209, 213,
223

Linas Žemgulis

53, 75, 93, 121, 140

Sebastijonas Petkus

63

Eitvydas Kinaitis

177

Kaunas –
European Capital
of Culture 2022

COMMUNITY PROGRAMME
METODOLOGY

Bibliographic information is available
on the Lithuanian Integral Library
Information System (LIBIS) portal
ibiblioteka.lt

ISBN 978-609-8317-09-1

Publisher

Kaunas 2022

Compiled by

*Greta Klimavičiūtė - Minkštimienė
Aistė Ptašinskaitė - Paukštė
Milda Rutkauskaitė*

Authors of the texts

*Paulius Godvadas
Greta Klimavičiūtė - Minkštimienė
Aistė Ptašinskaitė - Paukštė
Milda Rutkauskaitė*

Layout editor

Viltė Migonytė-Petrulienė

English language editors

*Daiva Jeremičienė
Eglė Bangaitienė*

Design

*Eglė Simonavičiūtė
Tadas Bujanauskas*

Translation

Daiva Jeremičienė

Paper

*Munken Lynx 300
Munken Lynx 150*

Typefaces in use

*Founders Grotesk
SangBleu Kingdom*

Printed by

KOPA

Print run: 250 copies

Kaunas 2023

The five years of co-working in the international project “Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022” brought unique experiences of continuous teaching and learning. For competence development, the “Tempo Academy of Culture” programme was established in the framework of the project and was aimed at both specialised training and practical workshops covering such topics as creative freedom, active community, open cultural networking, and sustainable solutions for the city. The tools mastered by the local residents enabled them to fulfil their dreams and create that type of Kaunas and Kaunas district that hundreds of people were dreaming about, bringing the feeling of pride about their local place. We have in mind different communities, active youth, seniors, representatives of cultural institutions and various nations, professionals and enthusiasts of architecture, design, heritage. The lessons learned – both personal and collective – reflect the values that we feel obliged to share with the others: our personal values and the ones shared by the entire Europe. The trilogy of our methodological publications reflects the experiences and achievements gained during the years of our activity. The three publications are dedicated to everyone seeking positive change and caring about their city, their community, and their neighbour.

Other Series Publications:

Volunteering Programme Methodology,
ed. Marija Pulokaitė, Kaunas, 2023, p. 254.

Youth Programme Methodology,
ed. Vaiva Marija Bružaitė, Sandra Karnilavičiūtė,
Aurelija Prašmuntaitė, Kaunas, 2023, p. 164.

