YOUTH AT THE CENTRE OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION

Engage!

A GUIDE TO IMPROVING INTERACTION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND PROMOTING ACTIVE CULTURAL PARTICIPATION

INTRODUCTION

The project Engage! Young Producers, co-financed by the European Union's Creative Europe programme, is led by **PEN Català** and relies on the participation of three partners: **Det Fria Ordets Hus** (Växjö, Sweden), **Krakowskie Biuro Festiwalowe** (Kraków, Poland) and the **National Centre for Writing** (Norwich, United Kingdom), in addition to the collaboration of the international networks **PEN International**, **International Cities of Refuge Network** (ICORN) and **UNESCO Creative Cities Network** (UCCN).

With the goal of **promoting the cultural participation of young people through literature**, with special attention to under-represented groups, Engage! seeks to improve equality in terms of their access to and inclusion in cultural life, as well as optimizing the impact of literary organisations' activities on their personal development. In this framework, the guide aims to be a **tool of support for all organisations who wish to work on the design of their project**s, using the methods of cultural co-production, in order to improve their interaction with young people.

Specifically, the guide addresses all small to medium-sized literary organisations in the European sphere, whether public, private, or third sector.

At the same time, this document may also be of interest to cultural and educational organisations, such as education administrations or departments, learning centres, theatres, or creative workshops, among others.

This document has been drawn up based on a review of the bibliography, an analysis of the more than 40 initiatives coming from ten countries (collected on the project's website), and ten interviews with the people in charge of the following projects and organisations: the projects *First Literary Dates*, *DeBAT a BAT*, *Escritura en Vivo* (all three in Barcelona) and the *Proyecto Mandarache* (Múrcia); the organisations Scottish Book Trust, National Centre for Writing and The Roundhouse (United Kingdom); the institution Det Fria Ordets Hus (Sweden); the association Turfu les éditions (France) and the organisation Scomodo (Italy). The theoretical framework of this research, which includes the analysis of the main concepts, and the bibliography can be consulted in the extensive version.

Finally, **this guide also seeks to be a point of connection for all the organisations** who work in this same field. Thus, all the organisations who have participated directly and indirectly in the drafting of this document can easily find each other throughout the text and in the bibliography.

THE PROJECT

How should I use this guide?

A good definition and planning of the project allows for faster development and facilitates the monitoring of activities and evaluation of objectives. In addition, it avoids the loss of interest that occurs when one doesn't have what is necessary at a given time, favouring better performance of the people who participate, and generating good expectations.

The guide, then, suggests various **strategies to improve interaction with the youth population** and promotes their cultural participation through literature. It does so through the following sections:

1. DESIGN

The time for diagnosis and proposals for action, when we decide the agents will work with, trying to ensure the participation of youth, how we will develop the selected skills and competencies, and the evaluation we will carry out.

- · **What concerns me?**
- · **What is my goal?**
- · **What are the issues I will deal with?**
- · **Who do I want to reach? And how?**
- · **How will I achieve my goal?**
- · **How do I prepare? What to keep in mind**

2. IMPLEMENTATION

The stage in which we carry out the process planned in the previous phase, with the agreed tasks and responsibilities, such as mechanisms of reviewing the project and its closure.

- · **How do young people participate?**
- · **What is my role as an organisation?**
- · **Networking**
    - **- Why do I need to look for partners?**
    - **- How do I network?**

3. EVALUATION

The phase of reflection and assessment of the objectives of the project, as well as learning and methodological and organisational aspects. During the design we will have already established the mechanisms of review that will be used before, during, and at the completion of the project.

- · **Why is evaluation necessary?**
- · **How do I carry out an evaluation?**
- · **Examples of evaluation**
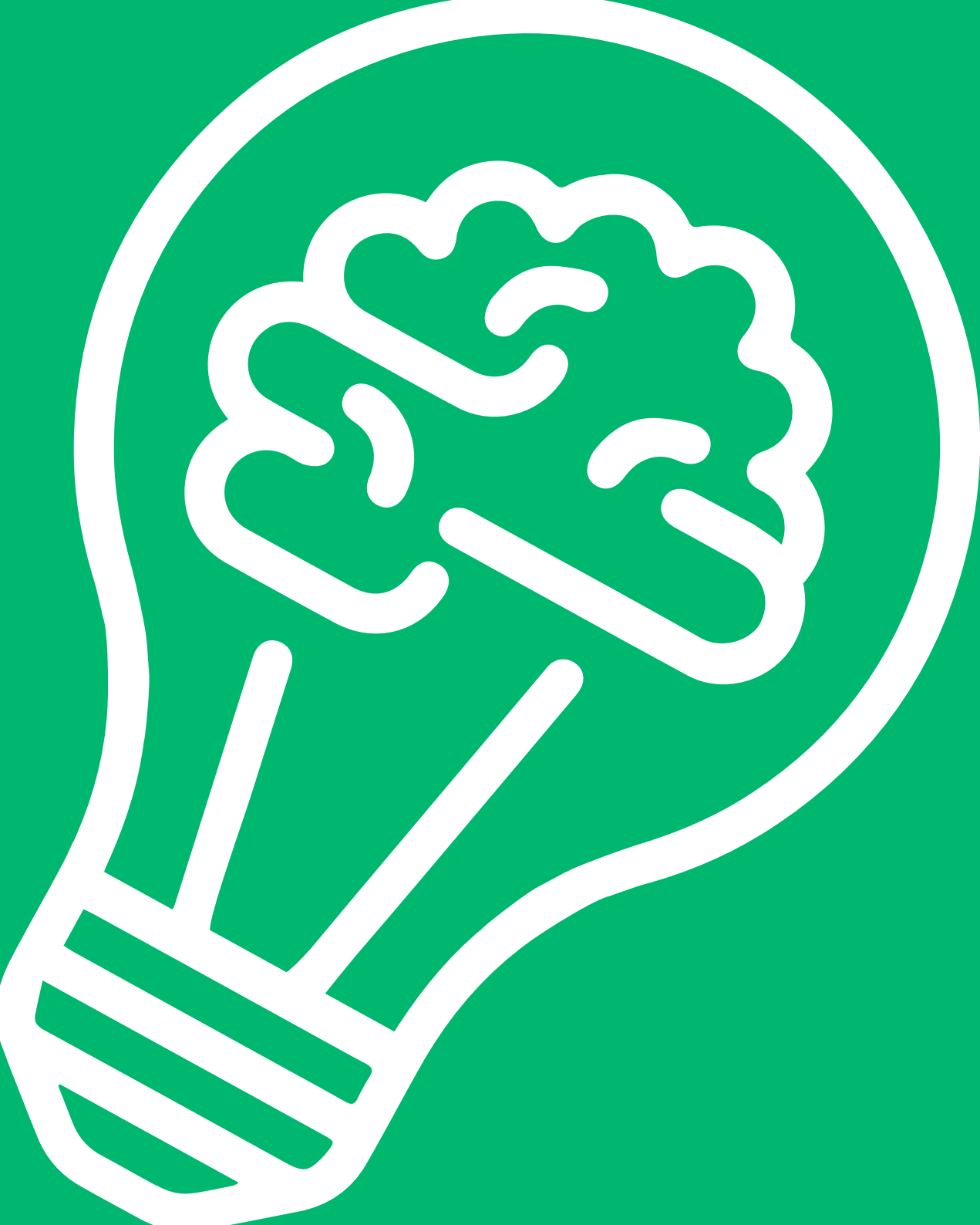
1.DESIGN

DESIGN

The first phase of the project allows us to diagnose the situation and think of possible proposals for action, a stage in which participatory processes are important, because they allow for different points of view. In the specific field of the arts, furthermore, divergent thought is a great help, because it can help us formulate very enriching proposals (Vallvé, 2014, p. 18).

What should we keep in mind?

1 It is necessary **to decide on the agents we will share this phase with**. As for young people, while we consider their involvement very positive, their degree of implication may vary depending on the context of each organization.

2 We can **carry out consultation processes**, for example by speaking with other organisations who might be experts in the field where we want to work, or reviewing the evaluations of previous projects. This was the case with *What's Your Story?*, which modelled itself on examples of previous projects (mentoring, writing retreats, etc.).

3 Consider **feedback and the sustainability of the project**, that is, the set of mechanisms that may facilitate the transfer of knowledge within the same project. *DeBAT a BAT*, for example, a three-year project, does so as follows: the first year, each library receives three boxes (containing the material for the activity) and the support of a library; the second, they receive two boxes so that the third is designed in a co-creative way; and the third year they sponsor a library as it begins the project.

The design of the *Proyecto Mandarache* had the input of the people who would participate in the project (secondary school teachers, library teams and youth workers) to launch a pilot project. *What's Your Story?*, on the other hand, spoke to youth with whom they had worked before, but also others who hadn't been involved.

What's Your Story?

Youth at the Centre of Cultural Production

What concerns me?

The first step is analyse the initial situation to see what we want to change or what we want to respond to.

We find a very clear example of this in the _ART31_ project (The Gulbenkian):

As the Arts and Culture director of the University of Kent explains (ART31 Kent, 2017a), the ART31 project was created when it became clear that, although a right, in reality article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was not being applied. Meanwhile, everything related to youth arts in Kent was primarily decided by adults, without young people giving any input. This is why ART31 was created, "to give young people a voice and empower them to lead the process". Their motto is "no decision about us without us" (AMA Culture Hive, 2016).

The _Proyecto Mandarache_ was also forged on the basis of a context analysis:

According to Alberto Soler himself, coordinator of the initiative, all the studies about citizen participation and critical thinking show that, without a society that reads, it is difficult to have an active citizenry, capable of understanding an increasingly complex political discourse that requires more nuanced responses. Thus they opted to do language training and encourage reading.

Once we have a clear idea of what concerns us, **these needs should be connected to actions** (how I will do it). This whole process of change can be considered in a complete cycle of four phases (which we will see in greater depth in the Evaluation section: detection of needs and problems (needs assessment); review of the bibliography on previous projects, or, if they don't exist, formulating measurable objectives; design of main actions and strategies (with process and development indicators for the project); and, finally, evaluation of the intervention, based on appraising results or efficacy (Chinman et al., 2004, in Ariza and López, 2017, p. 7).

What is my goal?

Once the diagnosis is made, it is easier to define objectives, which can be very diverse[1].

1 At this moment of implementation, especially at the beginning of a project, it is important to **establish minimum objectives** for the project to be worthwhile and rewarding. Over time, we will continue to incorporate new goals.

2 The recipients of the activity must be kept in mind, since the specific aims, and actions to achieve them, will vary in function of who these people are.

Taking _First Literary Dates_ as an example:

The specific goals were defined based on the detection of student priorities: relationships between students, the technological/audio-visual question, and the freedom to choose readings (hence, the project groups readings in a book "menu", from the most canonical classics to more commercial books, among others).

> _From the first I had it all thought out (the idea was a bit strange and made me a little embarrassed). Plus, when you do something new, you have to be cautious because there's a lot of pressure. I had everything I wanted in mind, but I wasn't aware it was so ambitious and, as it got close, I saw that I'd have to give up many goals. Over the years, many goals were solidified. One thing is the ideal goal and another the reality_

(Rosalía Delgado, creator of _First Literary Dates_).

[1] In fact, although we mention it only briefly here, the Analytical Report, linked to this study, collects the goals of the projects presented at the Engage! portal; some have a mainly social aspect, others prioritise promoting creativity or encouraging interdisciplinarity.

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→ What is my goal?

As examples of goals, consider those that seek to:

1. Broaden access to culture and encourage participation in cultural life:

- *School of Reading*, in addition to promoting reading skills and reading itself, aims to provide tools for easy and effective access to culture, encouraging participants to join into literary life.

- *Livet Bitch!* seeks to strengthen the position and opportunities of young women, as well as increasing their participation in cultural life.

- *Letras y Fútbol* has the goal of increasing cultural consumption among the usual audiences of football, via meetings with writers, various activities and campaigns to encourage reading with young people, and the publication of football stories, among other initiatives.

2. **Empower youth**, whether creatively, making the right of expression theirs, or in terms of writing or communication skills.

- Such as with *Young Muslim Writers Award*. The Lava space (Kulturhuset, Estocolm), aimed at youth from 13 to 25 years old, redesigned itself with the goal of promoting youth culture in the whole city and empowering young artists and professionals to use their right of expression.

3. **Encourage reading and writing**.

- Such as in the projects *Lectura Jove*, *Literapolisbcn* o *Escritura en Vivo*, which seek to liberate writing, and convey that writing is cool, releasing everything that blocks us, in the words of Marcos Xalabarder, head of the project.

What are the issues I will deal with?

We also need to specify the issues that we will prioritise, that is, the content of the project.

Three factors can increase youth involvement:

1 When **young people have been able to choose the issues** that will be addressed and/or the topics respond to problems that surround and affect them, increasing motivation and sense of responsibility.

2 When **they can connect emotionally**, when passion plays an important role and they can share how they feel and how they are, and when the links between young participants or the various people involved are reinforced.

3 When **the content is related to their key interests**, which might be sports (*Letras y Fútbol* project), social networks or mobile devices (*Literapolisbcn* project), or artistic languages they are used to and share with people in their generation (*Versembrant* or *The Hip-hop Shakespeare Company* projects).

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The Hip-hop Shakespeare Company

→ What are the issues I will deal with?

As recommendations, we present four large groups of issues, many of which are present in the projects gathered on the Engage! website:

1. Social inclusion:

- *The Poetry Project* works on empathy between refugees and the population of Berlin, as well as giving voice to all the issues that concern them and surround them: fear, abandonment, nostalgia, and loneliness.

- *Livet Bitch!* works on strengthening the position and opportunities of young women in cultural life. Some of the topics of the workshops are sexism, sexuality, homophobia, and feminism.

- The Gulbenkian encourages the transfer of decision-making power to very diverse profiles, such as refugees, asylum-seekers, and people with autism, among others.

2. Critical thinking:

- *Versembrant* encourages critical and reflexive awareness through analysis of discriminatory situations such as sexism, homophobia, racism, or the far-right boom.

- Det Fria Ordets Hus, starting from topics of artistic freedom or freedom of expression, deals with issues like literary heritage, feminism, gender equality, racism, and migration, as well as democracy and prejudice.

- Other examples are *Writing and Solidarity*, which promotes knowledge and reflection about social inequality through reading, or Scomodo, which visualizes social and cultural alternatives in Rome.

3. Expressivity and emotions:

- As for expressivity, *Taller de Lectura Jove* works on oral expression in debates based on specific readings; *Grectubers*, on the other hand, has a wider focus, in which each youth participant makes a theatrical recommendation based on personal experience, with total freedom; and the Lava space makes a place for empowering young artists and professionals in their artistic expression.

- Regarding emotional work, the "jams" of *Escritura en Vivo* tend to have an emotional and expressive nature, about how we are and how we feel, while *Tomorrow is Never a New Day* connects writing with the personal experience of growing up in poverty in Nordic countries.

4. Topics of interest and current events:

- *First Literary Dates* links literature with topics of interest to young people, such as climate change, fascism, and feminism. *Versembrant* also deals with current and especially influential topics of interest, such as drug consumption, social networks, bullying, and gender roles.

- *The Hip-hop Shakespeare Company* addresses issues such as African culture and history, human rights, racism, and history, including the history of hip hop and the legacy of slavery. In general, the project reflects on education today, as well as on consciousness. Other topics might be violence, war, poverty, and greed.

- *Searching for Nadia* explored radicalization processes, social injustice, belonging, and what it means to be a young person in contemporary societies, as well as religious beliefs and human values in today's society.

Who do I want to reach? And how?

During the design process we also have to specify who we are steering towards, who the project's target audiences are. Depending on the population with whom we want to work, how to go forward will vary. _The Orwell Youth Prize_**, for example, places emphasis on the youth who face disadvantaged educational situations outside of London. Thus, we should ask ourselves if we are addressing a specific profile or a wider sector of the population, and if the decision we make is realistic according to the context of our organisation.**

We have various strategies to reach young people:

1 **Social media:** as they say at _ART31_, the digital realm is the principle (young people are more likely to see Facebook ads than city billboards) (AMA Culture Hive, 2016).

2 **Face to face:** while social media is key, face to face meetings are possibly better in terms of transmitting passion about a project. As Arthur Besnard (Turfu les éditions), says, when it comes to meeting and working with young people (though this is applicable to anybody), one must be capable of connection, of being an involved leader.

3 **Educational centres:** keeping in mind that this is the space that brings together the entire youth population (during the stage of obligatory education), workshops in educational centres are very positive incentives for involvement.

Examples:

1. The _Handover Festival_, in order to create a diverse group of young people, carried out the following steps:

a. They contacted schools, sending letters to the directorial staff.

b. They conducted meetings with the student body, where it was difficult to find a way to capture their attention, since it wasn't easy for them to understand what a literature festival is and to know whether they wanted to be involved. The theme of the festival was breakthrough (social activism and freedom of expression), which generated many enthusiastic responses.

c. They made a selection of the different candidates, reviewing and choosing those who they believed seemed most committed and who, at the same time, seemed to have big ideas.

2. The library Punkt127 segmented the institutional audience (a strategy that Kulturhuset, Stockholm, also developed) by announcing themselves as a library for children and youth, where they could feel listened to and respected. One factor they consider key to their success was the profile of the librarians, who, as well as knowing how to connect to the youth population, established relationships of trust that often extended to their family environment. Their keys for success (PEN Català, 2018):

a. Trust: building a mutually trusting relationship with young people makes them feel safe and is the best way to avoid conflicts.

b. Rules: indicating from the beginning what they can and can't do.

c. Reward: everyone who complies with the rules should be rewarded, they should know what they gain.

d. Recognition: giving back to young people a positive image of themselves, which empowers them and gives them security.

e. Dialogue: it is necessary to listen, if we want to build a relationship based on dialogue and agreement.

Lastly, it should be remembered that it is essential to **establish the appropriate selection criteria for accessing our project**, since this can sometimes be a barrier. A long text in an enrolment process, for example, can be an obstacle for some people, and a brief form can provide a higher number of registrations, if this is our goal.

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How will I achieve my objective?

The next step will be to **execute the project**, the set of actions that we will carry out to achieve the objectives, such as a workshop (which might be for writing or reading), or a creative or co-creative project, among other options.

The *Premi de Literatura Protagonista Jove*, for example, with the goal of stimulating imaginative reading, creates a jury formed by boys and girls. Specifically, to ensure that the largest possible number of young people read the selected books, they create juries within each learning centre, book store or library. They present and defend the books in front of their peers, carry out the voting and, among themselves, choose the book they think is the best (Consell Català del Llibre Infantil i Juvenil, 2019).

Depending on the project developed, the **personal, interpersonal and sociocultural skills being fostered** (those that have to do with the reality around us, its analysis and how we relate to it) will be different, as we can see in the following types of projects[2]:

1 **Writing workshops:** from a personal point of view, they mainly focus on reading comprehension, oral and written expression, and creativity, favouring trust, imagination, leadership, and collaboration.

2 **Reading workshops**: in addition to affecting reading comprehension and oral expression, they very directly stimulate listening and dialectical skills.

3 **Creative and co-creative projects:** from a personal point of view, they promote creativity and innovation, as well as developing reflection and analysis of the reality around us. Meanwhile, they allow for role reversal and thus encourage a multitude of skills (such as technology when editing a video clip). From the interpersonal point of view, these processes encourage interaction between various people, and empathy, since switching roles allows us to shed our usual behaviour, see ourselves in a new way, and put ourselves in another's place. As for the sociocultural dimension, these projects entail a new way of relating to culture and the specific area of their work, the acquisition of a new language, and a new way of understanding our surroundings, which increases sensitivity to the reality around us.

4 **Live and improvisational art projects:** in addition to encouraging reading and writing in an original way (since each process is unique and different from the last), they promote improvisation and rapid adaption to changing contexts (due to different challenges and dynamics), as well as live performance in front of an audience.

Livet Bitch!, which has as one of its goals to strengthen the position and opportunities of young women (increasing their practical and cultural life), is based on their participation in the whole process of creating a play, as well as putting on school workshops.

Livet Bitch!

How do I prepare?

What to keep in mind

To start, we highlight two considerations:

We must guarantee the active participation of all:

a. On one hand, we must be able to **design different strategies to increase active participation** of young people throughout the project, including decision-making. As they explain at The Roundhouse, there is often the myth that participants will come and "it will just happen", but everything needs to be planned, each session, with the aim of achieving the project's final objective.

The Bitch Council (*Livet Bitch!*), for example, consists of a group of girls who bring suggestions and desires for the content of the project, as well as being involved and participating in the control of design and management.

Strategies of *DeBAT a BAT* for active participation:
- **Active listening**: what we say is as important as what others say.
- **Dialogue**: through open questions (the art of asking).
- **Oral narration**: the need to tell and share stories.
- **Play**: reflect and learn by playing.
- **Reading out loud**.

b. On the other hand, we have to **respond to diversity**: as Joan Bustos, creator of the *Projecte Lectura Jove*, explains, "it will be necessary to combine different learning styles, different abilities, and especially in adolescence, different degrees of personal maturity" (Bustos, 2015). Likewise, in the words of Marcos Xalabarder, "each person who participates has a literary voice and we have to give them the space to express it".

The *What's Your Story?* project foresees three different ways of participating:
1. Ambassadors programme: in addition to a retreat, they participate in the preparation of the Young Writer's Convention.
2. Young Writer's Convention: a one or two-day event in which everyone can participate in different ways.
3. Magazine: the publications in this online space, by and for young people, receive feedback from master's students in literature at the University of Stirling.

When it is time to prepare, we have to keep in mind all the phases of the project, as well as the characteristics of each. This is especially important if the project is developed in collaboration with an educational centre (due to the academic burden, especially in the last year of secondary school).

Specifically, we should:

1 **Make a calendar for the project:** establishing a series of events for the project, in order to be able to define times and spaces.

a. In the first place, we have to s**pecify the necessary amount of time needed for each phase** and for the whole of the project, keeping in mind actual availability.

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b. In second place, we should **establish the place where we will carry out our activities**. Those projects that are begun within the school setting but that evolve outside of it, for example, often have difficulty when it comes to finding locations. Also, it must be a space where everyone can feel comfortable (participants and organisation).

c. Finally, we should also **agree on the regularity of meetings**, which will depend on the age of the youth, due to different priorities and obligations. According to the experience of the NCW, regular meetings are best, since they help to establish links and cohere the group (especially at first).

2 Plan the actions, keeping in mind that:

a. It will be necessary to establish the mechanisms by which the youth **can acquire the skills they will develop** throughout the project.

b. It is also important to **leave spaces for oversight**, the moments when we will reflect, sharing feelings and impressions of the process, and when we will consider if changing strategies is necessary.

c. Finally, we should also **establish areas**

of involvement in the decision-making process, the opportunities there will be during the development of the project for participants to get involved.

3 Distribute tasks and responsibilities: that is, define who will do what at each moment.

a. Youth: assigning a specific role to each person means, among other things, the individual assumption of responsibility, as well as facilitating individual specialisation and cooperation when it's time to work. Further, it makes us aware of the consequences of delays or the fact that somebody is not doing their assigned task. It also might be considered viable to organise in committees.

b. On the project level: we should think about the agents with whom we will share the development of the project, whether at a certain moment or throughout the whole process, as we will see in the Networking section of the guide.

4 Use familiar language and channels: bearing in mind what we described for social media.

a. With *Grectubers*, for example, a young person recommends a play from the Grec festival in Barcelona in video format on YouTube, and encourages other young people to see it.

b. *The Hip-hop Shakespeare Company* chooses hip-hop music, which can be familiar to many young people, to work with the literature of Shakespeare, which is often not such a familiar language but one that they frequently encounter in school, especially in the United Kingdom.

Handover Festival

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2. IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION

The second phase is the development of the set of actions planned during the design phase, where we have decided the structure of the whole project, tasks and responsibilities (to ensure the participation of all) and the places of action. More specifically, we will also have to ensure the necessary mechanisms for continuous monitoring of the project, which contributes to better continuity of the initiative. As we will see in the Evaluation section, this monitoring is closely connected to the project's overall evaluation strategy.

Very often, this phase also includes an event that culminates the process carried out, which is why it is important to keep in mind the following:

- Although the process is often more important than the show or final result of the work (if any), **it is appropriate to conclude this phase with something that can document what has been experienced**, such as a blog or web page (*Tomorrow is Never a New Day* culminated with the publication of a book compiling all the texts produced).

- When a **final event for closure and celebration** is organised, which may be a different part of the process, it is appropriate to **invite all the people who have participated**, "to thank them and especially to make ourselves aware of the collaborations that have made the process and learning possible" (Vallvé, 2014.

The *Handover Festival*, to be sure that everyone had access, regardless of circumstances, decided to apply the "pay what you can" policy. Thus, the cost of the different events was staggered: £8, £5 or £3.

Rhyme workshop at *Versembrant*:

1. Introduction to the origin of the problem they'll confront (sexism, racism...).

2. Introduction to the history of the hip-hop and rap movement.

3. Elements of analysis of verse and rhyme as a base for gaining resources and skill.

4. Mix of musical and linguistic elements, the eternal form/content struggle.

5. Conclusions and reflections.

6. Conception of an instrumental song, applying some of the resources studied.

7. Recording the theme or public performance (with microphone and team of voices).

(Versembrant, 2017, p. 7)

Versembrant

As an example of this phase, we show the development of the _Projecte Lectura Jove_, in which the students, in groups, had to create a book trailer for a reading selection.

It developed throughout the school year in four different stages (Projecte Lectura Jove, s. d.):

1. Stage 1 (December): activities/fair at the Pompeu Fabra library in Mataró (project participant).
This moment, which was the first contact with the centre and the list of books, includes tasks like the creation of a group project (evaluated in the classroom the following January) and the selection of readings. To finish the process, during the following trimester they should read two books at minimum (to be able to choose as a group what they would base their book trailer on.

2. Stage 2 (January and February): the sessions are held in the classroom with the themes of the books and different ways of telling stories.
Besides having time to read, the teamwork is planned and each group creates a specific blog, where they make a collection of work guidelines and trajectories, as well as gathering the book trailers that result at the end.

3. Stage 3 (March): also in the classroom, different resources for filming the trailer are explained. Thus, students are familiarised with topics, technical requirements, and previous results (created by students of previous courses) to be able to later employ these in the work of production, filming, and postproduction. Therefore, "students are then able to attribute meaning, in a holistic way, to strategies learned in different curricular areas: summary in language classes, time management for tutoring, bodily expression in physical education, the design of storyboards in visual and plastic arts..." (Bustos, 2015).

4. Stage 4 (April): delivery of the book trailers and awarding of prizes.
What is considered most important is "to find their own voice and use it in front of their peers, based on stories that excite them, intrigue them, make them think. But it is a twenty-first century formula. Images, words, music: expression. All shared online" (Bustos, 2015). The prizes, whether from the audience or jury, are supported by the sponsorships that have been found over the years and are awarded in the Pompeu Fabra library, as well as being minimally covered by local media. They might be books donated by publishing houses, vouchers from neighbourhood shops, or cinema tickets, for example (PEN Català, 2019).

How do young people participate?

Before describing the strategies that favour the participation of young people, we note two considerations:

1. **Freedom, trust, and inclusion:** young people need to feel safe and comfortable, as well as valued, and need to feel a sense of belonging to what they are doing and the community they work with. Trusting them allows them to take the project very seriously (as the creator of *First Literary Dates* explains), and making them aware of their potential helps them grow (in the words of Mon Mas, creator of the material for *DeBAT a BAT*).

"

The students of Turfu les éditions who work on the project are alone (in a good sense). When we have a question, we ask it, but we execute the project alone. We have confidence and it's encouraging. This freedom is captivating.

(Arthur Besnard, Turfu les éditions).

2. **Creation and co-creation:** we highlight these processes because they have a higher probability of achieving greater involvement and active participation. In fact, the advantages of both processes are that the students are in charge and the protagonists of the whole process and final result, if foreseen, and this favours greater involvement (as we see in *EN RESiDÈNCiA*, *Versembrant* or *The Hip-hop Shakespeare Company*).

Specifically, creative projects, whether individual or collective, have the goal of creating pieces of new work (which may be literary), arising from personal reflection. They may rely on mentors who are doing support tasks throughout the process (*Young Company Writers*, *Writing and Solidarity*, *Livet Bitch!*). This process is accentuated in co-creation projects, when a group, together with an artist, carries out the whole process of creating an artwork.

Writing and Solidarity

To **create incentives for young people to participate actively, we can employ various strategies:**

1 **Giving them the power of decision:**

a. **Give a certain responsibility within a project.**

In the *Proyecto Mandarache* or *Premi de Literatura Protagonista Jove*, for example, the power of decision is given to young participants as members of the prize jury, which promotes their sense of responsibility.

b. **Include young members in decision-making entities.**

At The Roundhouse, besides relying on the youth advisory council (it advises the institution in making decisions), two of these council members are included in the main board of the institution as full-fledged members.

c. **Promote self-managed projects**, since independence and autonomy favour involvement and responsibility.

A clear example is Turfu les éditions, a publishing house managed by young people but that began as a school project. We can also me Scomodo, while the project began in the hands of two young people, they created a self-managed and independent youth organisation.

> "At Roundhouse, we believe that listening to youth is just the start. Taking what they say seriously means that we can then work with the youth, not just for them. And we believe that any cultural organisation that wants to develop itself, promote progressive attitudes, and continue to be relevant has to include youth in its decision-making processes.

(The Roundhouse)

2 Strengthening links:

a. Collaborating with institutions in the area gives youth incentive to participate because it implies new stimuli and new dynamics, such as leaving a familiar environment or meeting with people who have a different profile than usual.

Projecte Lectura Jove works with the municipal library, holding workshops with an external narrator (teacher and linguist) who helps the boys and girls "to narratively articulate the product that they must create in teams".

b. Meeting with youth outside the usual group is also a great incentive.

As shown by the meetings of *Proyecto Mandarache* or the final session of *First Literary Dates*, in which different educational centres who have participated in the project meet. As Mon Mas (creator of *DeBAT a BAT*), explains, the idea of the social circuit of a book is that it's an excuse to meet with one other.

c. Connecting youth of different age groups is another way to incentivise participation.

As Rosalía Delgado (*First Literary Dates*), explains, the A-level to secondary mentorship was very important in the school, and mobilised students through books. Contributing to their self-esteem, it impowered older students to serve as cultural referents for the younger students, who had a reference within the school.

d. Promoting a network of people with likeminded ideas.

Like *Young Ambassadors* ((in which fifteen young people are designated ambassadors during a year and, through their activities, meet people with the same interests), also encourages active involvement. Another example of this is the *Young Company Writers*, of the Royal Exchange Company (Manchester), in which young people from the ages of 16 to 25 years participated.

e. Identifying people who can be references for the youth, people who allow us to capture their attention quickly, is also a strong draw.

Letras y Fútbol, besides debates on the relationship between football and literature, commits members of the Athletic Club of Bilbao to reading the books that fans or readers have chosen for them. And *Young People's Laureate* chooses a young poet to inspire and get the youth population of London involved.

Young People's Laureate

3

Changing group dynamics:

a. **Working collectively**, as a group, in contrast to individual work, strengthens the links between participants, encouraging more active participation.

At *Escritura en Vivo* improvised, collectively written compositions are created, the works being the result of the contributions of each participant, which, according to the organisation, brings them together.

> How do they break the ice at *Escritura en Vivo*?
> - Wireless keyboard: after passing the keyboard you anonymously write whatever comes to mind.
> - BIOwriting: you can let yourself go and write everything you want and how you want, with no limits, but if someone comes and touches your back, you have to give up the keyboard.
> - Appeal to its innate attraction: no need to force, but to encourage participation. An atmosphere of respect and celebration helps a lot.
> - Respectfully and without demands: just write, don't make it perfect.
> In short, first dance, then work on technique.

b. **Encouraging role-reversal** is also a stimulus, since it allows for developing skills that might be different than usual, a feature that can attract interest. As for *EN RESiDÈNCiA*, this makes new ways of seeing oneself appear, new ways to present oneself and to interact with others (also seen in *Versembrant* or *The Hip-hop Shakespeare Company*). Role-reversal, which occurs various times during a creative process, can also allow what is unseen to emerge, that is, everyone can find the areas or skills where they feel most comfortable and at home.

c. **Defining spaces of reflection in common**, where everyone can feel free to express themselves (in spaces like workshops and debates), also encourages dialogue, active listening, and oral narration.

DeBAT a BAT, for example, poses several questions to the young people to guide this process of analysis and understanding. The format of workshops and debates favours expression and the ability to explain oneself in a participatory way, as well as active listening and dialogue.

> Mon Mas (*DeBAT a BAT*) explained that in many cases youth have stopped conversing (they eat in front of the television), such that they need to find space to tell stories and debate, to take the time to know how we are and how we feel.

d. **Reducing the groups and making them smaller**, while depending on the specific circumstances of each project, allows an equitable distribution of the facilitator's attention and generates positive competition among the groups, according the National Centre for Writing experience.

4

Developing skills that will be useful in the workforce:

a. **Setting out to resolve problems that are part of the professional sphere**, such as compliance with deadlines, performance prediction, or searching for materials, attracts a lot of attention and also encourages participation (Bustos, 2015).

Turfu les éditions, for example, blurs the distinction between school and outside school, connecting students to the world of work. In the words of Arthur Besnard, the project "has the ability to connect with people outside the school setting, giving us more opportunities".

b. Recognising their work as professionals in the sector is a second factor.

The Royal Exchange Company values young artists as members of the professional company, announcing their productions together with the main season. The *ART31* project also fights so for youth, instead of being considered the "audience of the future", to be treated already as "artists, producers, programmers, technicians and activists" (AMA *Culture Hive, 2016)*.

5 Setting challenges and new stimuli:

a. Changing the usual way of doing things might make us suddenly notice something that we hadn't before, as at _Projecte Lectura Jove_, which converts what is read into images (which can be a powerful stimulus for reading). Thus, the predisposition of some people changes if the proposal becomes a challenge with different coordinates, and takes on contrasting dynamics (PEN Català, 2019).

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Projecte Lectura Jove: the release of the book trailers and the awarding of prizes is the moment of showing the work that has been done, with the bonus of requiring it be done in front of the rest of the students. According to Joan Bustos, "what we've never lost sight of is the community aspect of the resulting work, which, in contrast to a monograph or a comprehension test on a reading, only exists in function of the audience, who wants to see their fellow students acting, in character, in non-school contexts, telling stories they might not know and which they might also end up feeling close to."

(PEN Català, 2019)

b. Using new technologies or social media (everyday habits for youth) can also be a stimulus in the literary realm.

Searching for Nadia, for example, created an online debate space for young people around Europe to compare impressions, while _Literapolisbcn_ promotes literature through gamified learning.

c. Opening the option to win a prize, as we have seen in various projects, is another possibility.

Literapolisbcn offers discounts and tickets to visit spaces related to the novels, while _Writing and Solidarity_ gives devices loaded with contemporary e-books.

d. Holding a final celebration or show is often a moment or event in the project that many people affirm that they enjoy, since it means a time of meeting with other youth and celebrating the project (where there are multiple options). However, we should point out that one of the current debates in the culture-education relationship is whether or not to have a final show (and, if necessary, what is its justification and design). Bearing in mind that often the process is the raison d'etre of the project, the need for a result-event of a creative process is questioned, since it might influence the process.

DESIGN · **IMPLEMENTATION** · EVALUATION

What is my role as an organisation?

The main way to improve interaction with young people is **to generate the context that gives them space and thus makes possible the co-design and co-development of a project** (the support of the organisation will vary according to the degree of co-design).

To make the transfer of leadership effective, as they explain from the National Centre for Writing, a connection of trust is necessary (it allows you to take a step back and let them work), so that they make the majority of decisions while we as an organisation have an eye on the overall goal of the project.

A second key aspect, in the words of Alberto Soler, is that we as an organisation should know how to **inspire energy, focus on enthusiasm, and do it in a very horizontal way**, relating it to "the snowball effect". Therefore, once again connection is key.

Proyecto Mandarache, in fact, has two levels of leadership: the youth council, in charge of coordination and transmission of readiness and enthusiasm; and the agents that materialise the project (library teams, teaching staff, and mediation team), who know how to inspire.

We make a detailed analysis of the features that facilitate our role as an organisation:

1 **Lead by example:** one of the main challenges is to be a model for the youth. Therefore, we need **to be very clear about the design, goals, and evaluation**, even when resources are scarce (then all planning can be simple and straightforward). At the same time, bear in mind that we need to foresee spaces for review and mechanisms for evaluation during the development of the project.

> *In education, the goal is often confused in literature class, since being a literature teacher implies hundreds of things. In my case, the goal, among others, was to encourage the love of reading, to introduce them to the cultural world, and to link reading with their world, in order to awaken interest and curiosity.*
>
> (Rosalía Delgado, creator of *First Literary Dates*).

2 **Keep the context in mind:** for the project to develop correctly, we must be aware of the social, economic, and administrative context.

During the first year of *First Literary Dates*, for example, Rosalía Delgado told us that she "was alone" and that she turned the classroom into a kind of set thanks to the help of the students and her team. Still, as the years have passed and the project has grown, it's been possible to spread out the work and the tasks and responsibilities have been distributed more evenly among the agents.

The Scottish Book Trust is conscious that Scotland is very geographically diverse (there are many islands, for example), and since this hinders journeys (time and resources) they must keep it mind when planning for the number of openings available for a project, among other aspects.

Scottish Book Trust

3 **Teamwork:** : most often, various people intervene in the organisation and support of a project, so it is necessary to make clear distributions of responsibilities and tasks, with empathy and respect. This is especially important in cases where the person or team will work side by side with youth. In these cases, it will be necessary to make the appropriate selection of the profile, defining the characteristics of the task and establishing selection mechanisms. As the youth will have to work collectively, we will also be a point of reference for this. In the words of Joan Bustos, "if the students see an involved team guiding them throughout the process, they will understand that there is no time for ongoing, individual fights".

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EN RESiDÈNCiA has a managing board, fulfilled jointly by experts from two local administrations (the Culture Institute and Education Consortium of Barcelona). They take on the functions of oversight of the project, adherence to objectives, opening of common spaces and work for various agents, ensuring the continuity of the project and its suitability in respective institutions, among others.

(Creadors *EN RESiDÈNCiA*, 2019)

4 **Consider training:** many initiatives, to ensure their correct development, require that the people involved acquire new skills and abilities. This can be done with training, as at *Literapolisbcn*, which offers teaching staff a training workshop recognised by the Education Consortium (in order to deepen knowledge of the proposal and its operation); or, indirectly, through material or support staff.

Literapolisbcn, for example, offers a support team during the project's fulfilment in classrooms and for managing writers' visits to schools, while *The Orwell Youth Prize* makes various resources available to teachers and students, which can be accessed on their web page.

Det Fria Ordets Hus

5 **Recognise skills borne out of experience:** according to some organisations (such as the Scottish Book Trust and Det Fria Ordets Hus), a balance should be found between the transfer of decision-making power to youth and the experience of the organisation itself, and to do so they should work together to evaluate the most realistic options. In fact, the youth themselves at Turfu les éditions comment that it is positive to have someone who can teach you how something works, to be surrounded by experience, and at the same time, to not be afraid to ask questions.

6 **Ensure inclusive participation:** we have to be able to ensure that everyone participates in the design and development of the project, having different strategies to respond to the diversity of profiles (as we have seen in the previous section). At the same time, throughout the process, we must also be able to guarantee their participation in the review and follow-up of the actions.

DiESIGN · **IMPLEMENTATION** · EVALUATION

Some **recommendations and advice from organisations** that already work with young people:

1. Become a huge reader: as Alberto Soler asserts, the only person who can create readers is another reader, which is why it is necessary to do a lot of research and train yourself (in this case, everything having to do with youth and literature.

2. Rely on experience: as at *Projecte Lectura Jove*, the students starting now already have the project in their imagination, as it's already been ten years since it began. This means they already know someone who has participated and that they're eager to join (PEN Català, 2019). Meanwhile, establishing mechanisms for the transfer of knowledge between participants of different years helps the continuity of expertise.

3. Let yourself be changed: in the words of Alberto Soler, "what we have discovered is that we, the project teams for mediation, promotion, and coordination, are the ones who have changed the most. Over sixteen years, the project has transformed us".

DeBAT a BAT is also an example of this, since a project does not only involve the people who work directly with young people, but also has implications for all the team members: besides the librarians, the entire staff had to be aware that young people would arrive, so that every action had a positive impact (giving as an example the welcome staff, who receives the group).

4. Do pedagogy: not everyone might like changes, and thus we need to work to inspire and convince the maximum number of people in an organisation.

An example is the Swiss library Punkt 127, where some colleagues often complain that they have turned into a youth centre. Punkt 127, however, has become "an institution of reference and a model of coexistence with some surprising figures: last year, it received more than 100,000 visitors" (PEN Català, 2018).

5. Be curious: we need to be very aware that many young writers write as a form of relief (for example, in mental health cases). In the words of Allan Berry (Scottish Book Trust), "we felt that we had to protect the young people and our team so that everyone felt safe (perhaps through strategies of anonymity when it was time to write)". Therefore, we need to be prepared to know how to manage situations that might stir up feelings, emotions, or experiences for the group.

6. Remember that we are working with minors, so you need to check the legislation of every country and have the relevent documentation (in Spain, for example, the sex offender certificate). In addition, a protocol for prevention, detection, and protection in harassment cases, for example, should be established. Institutions like the National Centre for Writing, as well as having people in charge of this area, do training for the entire team (so that everyone knows how to act in case of need).

> *At one point in a session of DeBAT a BAT, a participant shared something unexpected. In addition to the importance of the role of the facilitator (knowing how to see what the group needed), the good news is that enough of a trusting space was created that the student felt able to share it. Your role as facilitator is like watching to make sure a gigantic bubble doesn't pop, that no air gets in.*
>
> (Mon Mas, *DeBAT a BAT*).

Networking

Why do I need to look for partners?

First of all, **networking allows us to incorporate different views on the same topic**, enriching the resulting project and broadening the implications for involvement, as well as making it more effective and more likely to succeed.

This is especially important the first times that an organisation works with a young population, because other experienced agents can give you a hand. Even in cases where a project is considered self-sufficient, it is always good to work collaboratively (the areas of a young person's life involve many agents).

As an example, we can cite *Literapolisbcn*, which emerged from the relationship between two local administrations (the Culture Institute and the Education Consortium of Barcelona). The project is directed from the Barcelona office of UNESCO City of Literature (Culture Institute) and has the complicity of publishers, literary agents, bookstores, libraries, and authors, who validate the content and combine reading encouragement, pedagogical elements, and games. Meanwhile, the project has also worked with a specialised company that developed the literary app.

Allan Berry (Scottish Book Trust) emphasized the fact that, when working throughout Scotland, networking with local agents was very important, as they have a much deeper knowledge of their immediate context, which improves the overall quality of the project.

These are other reasons to look for partners:

1. **No one is an expert in everything**, so that by distributing responsibilities each is able to develop the task most appropriate for them.

At in *EN RESiDÈNCiA* (project among different administrations and agents), besides the students and creator, the teaching staff orients the residency in terms of the group's learning, the mediation team coordinates and commissions the projects, and MACBA and the Design Museum give contextualised tours.

2. **It allows you to share resources and learning:**

Mon Mas (*DeBAT a BAT*), despite having the option to execute the initiative herself, was interested in the idea of more people becoming familiar this way of working, thus library teams are the ones to execute the project.

3. **It opens up new options for financing:**

As an example, the case of the Scottish Book Trust which also works in collaboration with different specialised groups and, thus, has more financing options than if they were always seeking funding by themselves.

4. **You can spread word of the project:**

The project *Young Muslim Writers Awards*, for example, retransmits the final ceremony through an Islamic channel, official partner from the beginning of the contest.

5. **It gives you access to certain material resources:**

The Orwell Youth Prize, in collaboration with Penguin, is able to give a copy of Orwell's essays to each participant. This also occurs at *Projecte Lectura Jove*, where the municipal library, a project partner, locates the books through the library network so everyone can have a copy of the reading.

The Orwell Youth Prize
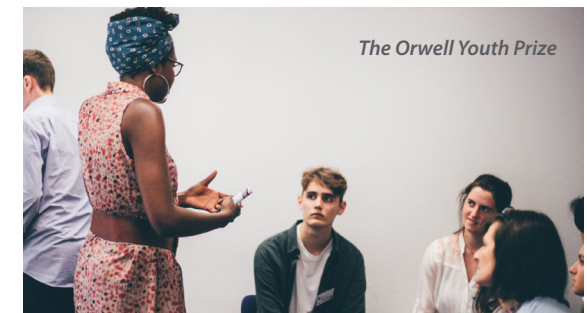
How do I network?

First, it is necessary to **establish a principle of collaboration**: working together and joining forces must benefit all participants of the network. Furthermore, we often need a phase of becoming aware of different interests and thought processes, which we should be able to understand by keeping an open mind, since "recognising the strengths of each member of the network broadens possibilities for the projects" (Gijón, 2013, p. 23).

Then:

1. **Explore the resources of the area nearby**, as we will often by surprised by the "amount of materials, skills, or tools that the closest people can contribute to a project if we are able to inspire them" (Vallvé, 2014, p. 23). You can ask participants, families, or staff of the organisation. Proximity, although it often depends on each project, can often facilitate things.

2. **Share your own enthusiasm to get others excited**. As Rosalía Delgado says, "having other teachers working on the same project creates friendships that you miss when you're alone in the classroom. This feeling of all being in the same boat is very positive, that from our personal baggage and experience we all can contribute".

3. **Work with perseverance**, stabilising and caring for our project partners, so we will be able to develop long-term projects. Thus it is important to "establish sustainable links, which allow us to repeat the experience and also incorporate improvements" (Vallvé, 2014, p. 23). Achieving a balanced relationship between the agents benefits everyone and makes it easier for them to work together again.

> ❝
>
> *At Proyecto Mandarache we got in touch with people we know and trust (either close to us or recommended): very active people, with a strong sense of vocation (the start of the project required a lot of enthusiasm).*
>
> (Alberto Soler, *Proyecto Mandarache*)

In a briefer format, we can also develop our network:

4. **Through workshops, conferences, and meetings:** it is very likely we can meet people and organisations with whom we can establish links. It may often be necessary for someone to be assigned this task.

5. **Using social media:** we can find projects or people interested in our project in the field in which we work, and we can easily write them a message.

6. **Have a defined profile:** we share the case of the National Centre for Writing, where the fact of adding the word National to the name attracted the attention of the media and helped establish new contacts.

7. **The success of a project and its impact:** this results in other agents being the ones to contact your organisation in order to develop projects together.

Once contact is established, we recommend designing the project together, reaching consensus from the different points of view (some can provide specific knowledge in the field of literature, others may know more about the people you want to work with). At *Versembrant*, for example, together with the centres with which they work, they "determine the values and social problems that they want to work on", in addition to taking into account the needs of each group (Versembrant, 2017, p. 4).

3. EVALUATION

EVALUATION

Evaluation is aimed at assessing and reflecting on objectives, what has been learned, the functioning of the group, and feelings and experiences, as well as organisational or methodological aspects. First, however, we should define what we want to evaluate, to see what has and hasn't gone well, regulating the process to adapt it to reality and reorienting it when necessary

Why is evaluation necessary?

By way of introduction, we should **endorse assessment as an integral phase of any project**. From the interviews carried out to prepare this guide, as well as the review of the bibliography, we have been able to confirm that completed projects are not always evaluated. In the words of Barbieri (2017, p. 190):

Evaluate, fearlessly and rigorously, the public value of the programmes and actions deployed. Let's ask ourselves if they have met collective needs, if they have managed to generate cooperation between different agents and if they have done so in a fair way. Analyse the development, implementation, results, and effects of our policies. We evaluate to increase transparency, be accountable, and examine results. But fundamentally, to learn and share the knowledge that has been gained. Let us do so respecting the autonomy of the people involved. Try to practice a kind of evaluation that contributes to action.

In addition to being important for the organisation and facilitation team, the assessment **should also be used to "strengthen the self-esteem of the boys and girls**, and to recognise the effort they have made", as well as celebrating the success of the project. In fact, the review allows us "to absorb the meaning of the project we have participated in

and be aware of the impact it has had on the community, the group, and also the individual" (Martín, 2012, p. 22).

> *Of course we must evaluate, although we need to review what we evaluate. Do I need the number of youth who came? What do we want to achieve? If we want to make people more curious, surely yes.*
>
> (Mon Mas, *DeBAT a BAT*)
>
> *Evaluation is important because it makes you do what you are not accustomed to doing, it forces you to innovate. It is also important to have an external view.*
>
> (Arthur Besnard, *Turfu les éditions*)

At the same time, monitoring the project and its results allows us to have a record of everything that has been done, giving project leaders convincing material and providing evidence of what has worked. Thus, it serves to justify the allocation of resources and as a source of information when it comes time to find new resources.

How do I carry out an evaluation?

In the first place, it is important to **rely on the participation of the entire group of agents who have participated in the project**, because it allows us to have different views and be more effective. As for the young people, they should not only be involved as participants, but also as designers of the project.

Based on fieldwork, to carry out the evaluation we will need:

1 **To have clear objectives and results,** even in the cases where financing is scarce, as they can be easily described.

2 **To define the spaces and times** in which the experience will be reviewed: before, during, and at the end.

3 **To have different review dynamics available,** such as reflexive writing or debates (and specify if they will be individual, collective, or other).

4 **To conceive of the project as a whole,** analysing its objectives, acquisition of knowledge and the efficacy of the intervention (to absorb the most from what we've learned).

Regarding the participants, we should be able to **evaluate the competencies and abilities worked on**, among other things. Taking as an example a creative research process: "the capacity of observation, experimentation, reflection and analysis, expression, critical interpretation of cultural references, and the ability to collect, document, expose, and publicise the work. When it is time to evaluate, the participants could do a self-evaluation as a complement to the evaluation of the facilitation team (Vallvé, 2014, p. 25).

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Versembrant:

Through a questionnaire for the participants, we evaluate the degree of satisfaction with the workshops as well as the degree to which objectives were achieved. The evaluation is sent to the heads of the participating centres and serves to "be able both to evaluate the activity and determine its impact on young people".
(Versembrant, 2017, p. 6)

However, we should note that there are aspects that are difficult to evaluate, such as the love of reading or increase in self-confidence. In fact, in the words of R. Delgado (*First Literary Dates*), while in Catalunya cultural projects in the school setting are evaluated more by competencies (in secondary, from age 12 to

16), in the higher levels they still are not, which makes evaluation of these items difficult, above all keeping in mind that the process and experience are so important.

Recommendation:

Proposed project structure in four phases, since it is advisable to plan the evaluation at the same time as the project is being designed and developed[3]:

1 **Detection of needs: diagnosis and prioritisation:**
Definition of the problem in which you want to intervene: after specifying how we will collect the data, we choose the goal of the project.

2 **Review and definition of objectives:**
In addition to a review of the bibliography and of previous projects, the conceptual framework should be clear. Then, we can set the objectives of the project:

1) one or two general goals
2) specific goals
3) operational goals

3 **Assessment of the intervention's implementation:**
This allows us to evaluate the process through parameters such as:

- **Coverage:** referring to the profile of the participants, which can be very useful when it comes to evaluating from the point of view of equity, since "interventions can have different effects depending on the social groups receiving them" (Signal, 2008, in Ariza i López, 2017, p. 11).

- **Satisfaction:** assessed by the participants and by those who perform the intervention, can be accomplished with brief surveys (they give a mark to the procedures and resources used).

4 **Assessment of the fulfilment of the intervention's objectives:**
This consists in evaluating the results, to see if we have fulfilled the planned objectives. To do so, indicators much be defined for each specific objective and an evaluation completed before and after the project.

As a recommendation, we can define the objectives according to the **SMART** nomenclature:

"The goals should be **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic**, keeping in mind the resources we have, and Time-bound, achievable in the time frame we have available."

(Ariza, López, 2017, p.10)

DESIGN · IMPLEMENTATION · **EVALUATION**

³ For more information, consult the source document: Ariza i López, 2017.

28

Youth at the Centre of Cultural Production

Examples of evaluation

1. National Centre for Writing**:**

  - Younger participants (from 4 to 11-12 years): they write something they've learned on a post-it.

  - Older participants: they write an anonymous case study (one or two pages), freely and without guidance.

  - Organisation: they produce a report to see how it all worked (also in cases of partnership) and analyse the data to see, among other things, if they have arrived where they wanted to be.

2. *DeBAT a BAT***:**

  - Youth: as for the workshops, the evaluation takes place at any of the activities; and, while there is no overall evaluation of the project, at the beginning and end of the sessions there is a space for sharing impressions.

  - Library (which executes the project): they can ask for an evaluation from the schools (done by the teachers). While not obligatory, it's often required by the institutions.

  - Driving group (which designs and monitors the project): the evaluation is made in conversation, evaluating the development of the project, although there is a protocol enabling memory retrieval.

  - "Bategades" group (virtual space for all those involved): the library team makes a report (open) after each session with a group, which often includes information about the evaluation of the session by the young people (writing is a common tool for evaluation).

  - Training sessions: all have an evaluation space (conversational, qualitative). At the same time, the facilitator evaluates the session with the entity responsible for the project (the meeting is included in the minutes).

3. *Projecte Mandarache***:**

  - Participants: although they don't participate in the evaluation, the team of educators endeavours to have a general impression of the project's development.

  - Volunteer team: they fill out questionnaires of a general nature, which ask about logistical aspects and their relationship with volunteering (how it went, how they felt...).

  - Driving group: in addition to continuously evaluating the project (at each meeting), the group members fill out a form at the end of the academic year (prior to the final evaluation meeting).

  - Creative workshop *Libreta Mandarache***:** the workshop participants respond on a form (20-30 questions), participate in an evaluation session on their expectations, collect proposals and advice for future participants, and give their opinion on the design of the project (the spaces, the call process, activities, content, workshop leaders, etc.). This assessment is done from the council, with the support of J. Berenguer (specialist in youth policies), who directs the first intensive session of this workshop.

  - Proyecto Mandarache: currently an impact analysis of the project has been commissioned, although reports have been made since the first edition. At the beginning, they were to produce accounts at an internal level, but since the agreement with the Directorate General of the Book and Reading Promotion at the Ministry of Culture, they are much more detailed.

Projecte Mandarache

DON'T FORGET

FACTORS TO KEEP IN MIND

Based on the interviews, we have compiled the learnings and challenges most frequently shared among the various organisations:

1 **Recognise and listen to young people:** to discover new ways of approaching youth, first we have to be open to listening to and learning from other perspectives, including the recognition of their literary life and championing their knowledge.

Thanks to *First Literary Dates*, for example, the person in charge of the project has encountered previously unread literary genres. In the words of the participants of *ART31* (between ages 13 and 25), "you don't ask for ideas and then just ignore them; we don't want you to ask our opinion, we want you to listen to us" (AMA Culture Hive, 2016). Kulturhuset, for example, included elements of the library spaces based on the suggestions of the youth; and they emphasise "the importance of knowing this audience and making it the protagonist of the spaces and activities", so that "the

youth feel much more drawn in and involved" (PEN Català, 2018).

2 **Be aware of equality.**
As Victoria Maitland (National Centre for Writing), explains, the children of private schools have the time and resources to come (to the NCW), while getting families from more disadvantaged environments to come and participate is more difficult. This is why efforts to reach everyone are important, reducing inequality.

As an example, two proposals from the NCW:

a. Workshops with young children in rural primary schools (mostly public): the goal is to incorporate new future possibilities into their imagination (if you don't know it, you can't imagine it).

b. Representative leader group: the leader group of one of the projects was able to get a mixture of people from different social contexts, which was key for reaching different segments of the population. At the NCW they agree it can be difficult to find the first people, but getting the right references, good ambassadors, can be a key factor in reaching everybody.

3 **Welcome the diversity of interests:** we need to identify the concerns and needs of young people, bearing in mind that one young person does not represent the whole group, which is not homogeneous. Everyone is needed, and we have to be able to respond to different realities, offering a multitude of participation options. According to Joan Bustos, the projects that have this in mind are "an unequivocal tool for inclusion: everyone can participate in doing any of the many subsidiary tasks", which "empowers the self-esteem of all who are involved" (Bustos, 2015).

First Literary Dates, for example, promotes talking about cultural issues by fleeing from the academic idea with which they are associated and turning it into an informal and natural conversation.

4 **Promote cultural involvement:** As they remind us from *EN RESiDÈNCiA*, we should insist to students "on the fact that they should get involved in the cultural system, insofar as they are invited to be active agents, with reciprocal duties and responsibilities". In fact, the links that can trigger a creative project with a participating artist "amplify and expand the project and contribute to fulfilling the right to participate in cultural life, and the construction of active cultural citizens,", since the ties between education and culture, adding value to the project, are scarce in both directions (Creadors iN RESiDENCE, 2019).

5 **Remember that the world of literature is very wide:** on one hand, we should work with literature in a broad sense, not just what is called youth literature, when cultivating a love for literature.

As Alberto Soles ays, the books at *Proyecto Mandarache* are not specifically designed for the youth set, not just readings that are meant to please them, but that try to put them in another place, which includes juvenile literary art but also many other things. On the other hand, literature can be worked on from many perspectives, as *The Hip-hop Shakespeare Company* or *Versembrant*: demonstrate: in the first, they learn the basic concepts of rap, rhythm, and literary resources to later set the text to music, while in the second, they create new pieces with the lyric language of Shakespeare and the rhythms of hip-hop.

6 **Cultivate motivation and a good environment:** many projects and participants underline the importance of everyone feeling comfortable in the space and in the moment to be able to share their opinion. And they stress motivation as central for going ahead with a project.

As Arthur Besnard explains, Turfu les éditions was at first a game. to build an association so they could learn how, but the result was what it was (an association) because everyone was very motivated. And it's worth saying that all of the students were motivated because "it was a large and interesting project, as well as encouraging when the project works".

Check out this guide's bibliography

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