

Where do we go from here?

**About opportunities
and challenges in the
wake of the pandemic.
Dialogue between
cultural actors in
Skåne.**

Documentation of
dialogue meetings
3 and 10 November
2020



Inledning

On the 3rd and 10th of November 2020, 120 people from the cultural sector in Skåne met to share experiences and learn together about what we can do to deal with the pandemic with creativity, transformation and new collaborations. The energy was high. Many were grateful to be able to easily meet other cultural actors from other industries and from all over Skåne. The importance of this was a theme that grew strongly in the talks; to learn together and work together to find ways forward in this difficult time.

Everyone helped to document the conversations about the challenges and opportunities that took place in the nearly 100 group talks. This documentation highlights parts of these conversations. The dialogues were conducted within the framework of Region Skåne's part in the project Cultural and Creative Spaces and Cities. The project is funded by the EU and explores how cooperation between cultural organisations, citizens, the cultural and creative sector and the public sector can be developed to contribute to solutions to societal challenges.

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Why is it important for you to be here?

Participants on why they participated and what they hoped for in the dialogue meeting.

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We talked about how much better many people have become at listening and working more flexibly. Public administrations, too.

We fear the great loss of skills caused by the pandemic among cultural practitioners. People are forced to leave their art professions and work with other things.

I want to listen to how other cultural actors experience it, as I am mainly interested in how the performing arts are doing. Get inspired and maybe find collaboration with other actors.

What projects can we start building now that will work even post corona? How do we want cultural life and grants to work later? What can we start building now?

I hope for the exchange of ideas on how to implement arrangements based on current restrictions. It is important with tips how others do, inspiration!

Find interaction, we need each other. We need inspiration and hope. A new everyday life!

My goal for the day is to get an overall picture of various municipal forms of support that have been tested, gaining an understanding of what can be considered the best public support at this point.

Is our picture of the situation correct? How can we facilitate for others? Learn from you and tell us about us. We're dependent on each other.



Eight themes to learn about and act on

The discussions were characterised both by frustration, in-depth conversations and a curious exploration. They revolved around eight themes where challenges were seen, but also openings and new solutions emerged. The themes illustrate what's worrying right now, but also what needs to be in place. They provide a basis for cultural actors, decision-makers and other enablers of the exchange that the talks revolved around.

- Develop cross-border dialogue and interaction
- Find ways to deal with the great uncertainty
- Strengthen the role of culture in society
- Secure and flexible agreements and assessments
- Develop and use the new thinking that has been forced
- Support and development of digital solutions
- New forms of expression and audience contact
- Countering digital exclusion



Develop cross-border dialogue and interaction



Meeting across different kinds of borders to be inspired and learn together was highlighted as a key forward. There were concrete proposals in areas of cooperation and how networks and platforms can play a crucial role.

Cooperation between cultural actors and other social actors



What have we learned from the corona that we want to keep? - Build strategy after that and include all actors with capacity. Handshake across block boundaries.

We are all in the same boat - it is good that we share perspectives, that we broaden the understanding of how Covid affects society widely, and how solutions and new opportunities create. We need to think, evaluate and learn together.

Find new ways and forms of cooperation outside your own business, within the administration, the municipality and with cultural actors.

Collaboration preschool/school - performing arts practitioners/actors for increased culture in preschool and school.

Networks, cultural centers and hubs.



Networks also need to be able to be formed bottom-up, not just led by the municipality or the region.

Create a space to spread good examples. Form networks for municipal organisers of public events and people working with cultural associations.

The new cooperation initiated between the cultural centres during the pandemic has given new impetus and a higher quality.

The cultural centres, study associations and other "hubs" are important for long-term joint work.



Working conditions, motivation and energy

In the non-profit sector there is no longer the "reward" - the commitment begins to vanish.

The working environment, the psychological. There's a lot of resignation now. The energy is in planning ahead and now that feels difficult. Thinking long-term is not possible right now.

The motivation is lacking because the work we do is often about creating meeting places and events, which is difficult today.

The crisis makes visible who is at the bottom of the ladder - we need to work to change the conditions for cultural workers and freelancers!

We need to reach the cultural workers and "take their temperature", to explain how they feel, what they need and what the municipality, region and institutions can help with.

Uncertainty over events, visitors and finances

How do we keep motivation up when we don't know what the future looks like? Should we book and plan, or should we digitise from the start?

Economy - The Covid crisis has highlighted the vulnerability of the entire cultural infrastructure, not least in terms of long-term sustainable financing.

Right now there is an acute liquidity shortage for cultural creators and others who sell performances, etc.: the money runs out before next year begins (and possibly "replenishment" of operating aid).

The uncertain time perspective - from the beginning it was an ad hoc state, improvisation and pending, cancelled arrangements, then start looking for temporary solutions. Now we plan based on the restrictions. It is also a change of mindset.

Being able to conduct events corona safe?

What is the emergency plan for the coming years for public events? Even with a vaccine, it can take several months if not years before everyone feels safe to stay in places with a lot of people. What are the guidelines and will we organisers feel that we can safely arrange an event without risking people's health? Good to have a crisis/Corona checklist to work on so that one can feel confident in making safe arrangements.

The width of the effects of the pandemic

The big challenge is the impact of an unfair society. Those with the weakest conditions are hardest hit like cultural workers or others with unsafe employees. Crisis hit the weakest with the smallest margins hardest.

The social security system is uneven and weak for cultural workers.

How does the pandemic challenge NGO democracy? Or, how has the pandemic challenged the democratic processes in the society so far?

Strengthen the role of culture in society

We need to set up a popular movement for culture - civic engagement. Clarify the cultural ecosystem.

Highlight the discussion about the value of culture for social sustainability and for the resilience of society.

The Covid crisis has highlighted the importance of culture to society and that politicians hopefully have a greater understanding and competence in cultural matters.

The crisis and its long-term effects need to be met by a show of force - a cultural boost for culture to regain its important place in society and function in people's lives.

It is important to draw the attention of municipalities and the region to the fact that civil society associations are an inexpensive way to have a vibrant cultural life. This makes the municipality attractive.

The civil society commitment is also the basis of the political parties and thus of democracy.



The whole ecosystem of culture



The pandemic risks destroying a delicate ecosystem, some species may become endangered.

We're talking about the importance of seeing all the needs of the cultural ecosystem - if one falls, everyone falls.

It is important that the arranging/
distributing level works so that the
producers and artists have jobs. It is
important to highlight the width of
cultural life ecosystems so that
everyone can be reached by crisis
support.

The entire value chain has been clarified. And it has become clear how much culture costs.

Safe and flexible agreements and assessments.

1. Adapted aid

Aid that is adapted to the current situation and can fulfil its function even when the conditions are changed.

Increased flexibility in support, guidelines and assessments.

Develop secure agreements and contracts with organisers.

Good agreement to secure the cultural actor's income, whether the event happens or not.

How are we going to follow up on projects and applications, are there possible solutions - and what are the long-term effects of those solutions?

Copyright and trade union agreements have not followed the recent digital developments.

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Develop the new thinking that has been forced.

2. New thinking

Use and build on the new solutions and changed directions that have emerged during the crisis.

We are forced into a "burnt country" where completely new perspectives on the business can emerge. We get time and perspective to think new - which also holds a creative force when we have to seek alternative forms. For example, a play written to be performed via Zoom.

We are becoming good at adapting to rapidly changing conditions - important that we take that competence with us. We need to find ways to develop the "new wheels" together.

How do we make cultural life better after the crisis?

It is very important how capable you are to adjust and being enthusiastic about it. It also requires a new internal learning. Those who mainly have been hoping for crisis aid are doing worse.

Support for and development of digitalisation

The opportunities and challenges of digitisation was the clearest theme of the conversations. New ways to reach out to people engage.

There is a great need for skills and better solutions if digitalisation is really to offer power to the cultural area.

Skills

Difficult for many associations that have difficulty moving to the digital. Great need for training. To strengthen digital skills and get everyone on board the digital wave that is rising now.

Digital literacy – many cultural actors do not have sufficient skills for digital communication. Much that is being done has low quality - how much does actually reach the audience?

Digitisation is not only about recording/ live stream and copyright, it can also be about accessibility and how digital tools can be used to enable new audiences.

Challenges

It's hard to find the digital audience. There's a lot of people in the noise who are seeking attention. Events that usually have large physical audiences have significantly smaller digital audiences. But in some cases, we reach more people when we can both stream and run live.

I feel that the audience is screen-weary. How are we going to work on that? People I meet want to physically come to the theater.

Getting the performances going is priority one. Find ways to arrange digital performing arts, a new art form? How do you find a feeling, in the audience, of presence/participation in digital events?

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Collaborations

Find forms of digital support with both technology and technologies for those in need. Not all support can go to everyone having their own technology.

The associations can be "sponsors" for each other, to help each other to become more digital, develop their associations. You can use Zoom, or other digital meeting places, and then these can also become more national, outside the physical municipal boundaries that otherwise exist in an association.

Mixed

How to combine digital with physical/tactile existence and need? "Mixed" procedure is important, not to let go of the physical meeting where much of the communication and experience takes place.

Use the digital to broaden the audience. Maybe through streaming content in parallel with the physical, but with ticket sales?

Interconnection with several artistic actors and audiences over link. - How can we make an experience digitally interesting and vibrant? Proximity is something we have explored in recent years and now also over digital platforms.

Opportunities

Lasting digital solutions and the positive effects it has: democratic aspects, environment friendly and good for diversity.

Digital solutions to complement your business is a way to reach new audiences and a new audience.

Streaming and digital exhibition spaces are full of possibilities, but the spatial experience will not be quite the same as in an analog art exhibition.

What if this digital could be complemented by mobile bus exhibitions and tours and conversations about these?

Take the opportunity now that it is "digital settler spirit" and the tolerance for "trial and error" is high. Even after the pandemic, we can then reach target groups who normally find it difficult to get to the arenas of culture. It is important to think this into the basic business.

Public administration can play a more active role in facilitating cooperation as they are responsible for such as nursing homes, kindergartens, care, etc.

New forms of expression and audience contact

Creative solutions for connecting with visitors and audiences have been developed. What are the new forms of meetings that can provide powerful experiences at a time of restrictions?

Protect the physical

Physical

It is important that we continue to strongly safeguard the physical meetings. The digital is part of our offering but it can't replace the physical.

Protect the physical meeting post-pandemic. People need to meet each other, create and consume culture together. It is a public health issue.

Outdoor

Outdoor

When culture is forced to "move outdoors", the culture becomes more visible to more people, even those who had never sought it out normally.

Think outside houses/places. Meet audiences in their/other rooms instead of inviting them to your own.

Personalised cultural experiences in the public domain.

Small-scale and spread

Small-scale

Work with more exclusive arrangements and quality in that meeting.

Make smaller arrangements that can be scaled up instead of doing the opposite and having to cancel.

The opportunity to geek themselves in on narrow topics and reach a (relatively) large audience.

Plan a string of small experiences. More short performances on the same night instead of a long one.

Plan in smaller scale and shorter processes. Allow to have a small audience and still continue to play. Shape our goals according to something else than the amount of people we meet.

Countering digital exclusion

There is a risk that digitalisation will exclude certain groups from taking part in culture and the values it creates.

We must solve the digital exclusion that exists in Sweden. The availability of the technology and the ability to use it is the key.

Accessibility and customisation: For example, digital solutions are not available to all audiences. How do we work in a long-term, sustainable and qualitative way for and with our target groups?

Digital exclusion of many elderly people: knowledge and equipment. They miss out on much of what has now gone from physical to digital.

The digital transformation has increased access to culture in many ways. Even people who otherwise have difficulties physically attend a performance, exhibition, lecture or the like have been given a greater opportunity to participate or attend. However, it is important that we take advantage of all the experience gained. That we keep what works and is positive. It is also important to develop common methods for evaluating how many and who have taken part in a digital offering.

What do we bring from this?

At the end of the dialogue meeting, some participants highlighted what they saw as most central in the conversations. They summarised the main themes that emerged from the dialogue.

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The physical meeting is super important! It's a public health issue! People in digital exclusion also need access to culture. We can use the public space to combine the physical and digital.

Many different types of compounds are affected by the Corona pandemic. If people get tired of committing to civil society associations, it is a threat to democracy.

Should we preserve and save as much as we can? Or should we focus on how cultural life evolves forward? Some actors may disappear - it is painful to think about, but inevitable.

We need to think long-term about what new cultural life we want in the long term. The basic conditions for the cultural and creative sector are becoming clearer in the crisis - those who are weakest in the crisis are the ones most affected.

More outdoor arrangements are needed during the pandemic. We need to invest in skills development so that more people have access to the digital.

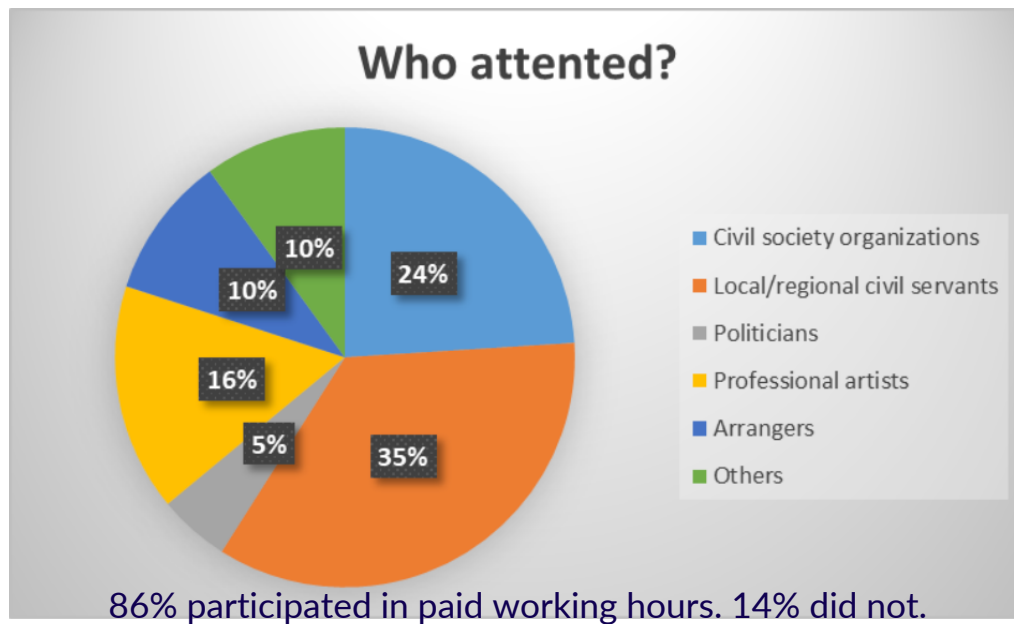
There are examples of making outdoor arrangements. Implement longer-term arrangements to spread people out.

Exclusive events for fewer people - how can we create a greater quality in the meeting? We need to evaluate the values created in smaller groups.

The possibilities of the digital shift. The audience has an obvious understanding that digital meetings need to be produced in a good way. Training is needed in this!

This year has really shown that we need each other! Collaboration is the only way forward.

Who were the participants?





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