



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

DE.a.RE. Project

Gathering Spells - Survey Report

Bernardo Armani – 25/05/2023

Introduction

This report discusses the result of a survey run by the author in the context of the DE.A.RE (DEconstruct and REbuild) project. The project was developed and promoted by BJCEM (Biennale des jeunes créateurs de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée) and co-financed by co-funded by the European Union (Grant Agreement Project 101052900).

DE.a.RE is a three-year long research project supported by the Creative Europe Program. DE.a.RE has the objective of enhancing the competencies of artists, fostering the visibility and circulation of emerging talents and artworks in Europe and beyond and reflecting and debating on the role of artists as vectors of change in contemporary societies.

This survey was conceived and developed as the basis for the participatory educational program *Gathering Spells*. Citing DE.A.RE's website itself, "Gathering spells departs from the multifaceted difficulties and responsibilities cultural organisations face across Europe and the transMediterranean today. We are building a participatory educational platform for fifty cultural agents who wish to contribute to local socio-ecological transformation and trans-local solidarity through their organisations. Beyond the local, how can just, trans-local networks be cultivated sustainably in an era of hypernationalist rhetoric and urgent energy transition? And in terms of a just energy transition, how could the increasing dependence on digital infrastructure for promoting artists and exhibiting art align with the sector's significant carbon footprint? How does increasing online circulation of art and the globalisation of culture impact precarious cultural producers and marginalised sites of artistic production?"

The survey was thus developed to answer these sets of questions, asking workers in the cultural sector about themselves and the organizations they're part of in terms of backgrounds, conditions, practices, needs and claims.



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

Survey methodology

Before turning to the research results, I will briefly discuss the whole research process that led from preliminary conversations around the main topics to be covered by the survey up to this report.

The whole process was structured in different phases:

- 1 – Preparation of the questionnaire and online data-collection tool
- 2 – Dissemination of the survey and online data collection
- 3 – Data exportation, cleaning and importation in the data analysis software
- 4 – Data analysis and processing
- 5 – Report writing.

Phase 1, the preparation of the questionnaire and data-collection tool, began with some conversations between the author and members of BJCEM's executive office and DE.A.RE's scientific committee. During these conversations, we discussed the bases of the survey by focusing on the main topics and establishing their different relevance. We then discussed what ways would be more efficient to measure these concepts, considering eventual methodological pitfalls. This phase involved a process of creative negotiation between the needs imposed by survey methodology and the goals of DE.A.RE's scientific committee.

After the questionnaire was perfected and developed in its final form, I uploaded the questions and answer options on an online data-collection free tool.

Phase 2 was mostly taken care of by BJCEM and DE.A.RE's scientific committee. They diffused the questionnaire through a few formal and informal ways. They mobilized their organizational and non-organizational networks, posted the call for participants on online specialistic platforms like Art & Education and Callsforcurators.

Phase 3 began by exporting the data out of the online data-collection tool. After that, a phase of data cleaning was necessary in order to make the data apt to be analysed through a data-analysis software. This implied a few adjustments, like the harmonization of words' spelling, or ensuring the correct functioning of separators. These were necessary to construct textual variables that were correctly functioning in the data-analysis software, those deriving by multiple-response questions.



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

Once inserted into the data analysis software, phase 4 began. After making sure that all variables had been correctly generated, I then labelled variables and their values to make their presentation more immediately intelligible and recoded them when needed for the same goal (for example, aggregating responses into an “other” category). I then run the necessary commands to obtain descriptive statistics and graphs. For the scope of this document, I will report monovarietal descriptive statistics for every variable.

Results

In this section, I will present the survey results in form of monovarietal descriptive statistics for every variable, divided by sections of the questionnaire.

First, the survey was answered by 123 respondents. 5 respondents, however, responded by not granting informed consent to use their data. These cases, obviously, could then not be conceived as valid participants.

The total number of respondents to the survey, hence, is of N=118 respondents.

The set of respondents is remarkably diverse for the scope of the survey, considering a variety of aspects. These include general sociodemographic as well as characteristics more specifically related with the survey at issue.

Starting from general sociodemographic characteristics, respondents range from 21 to 75 years of age, the average being of 40 years old.

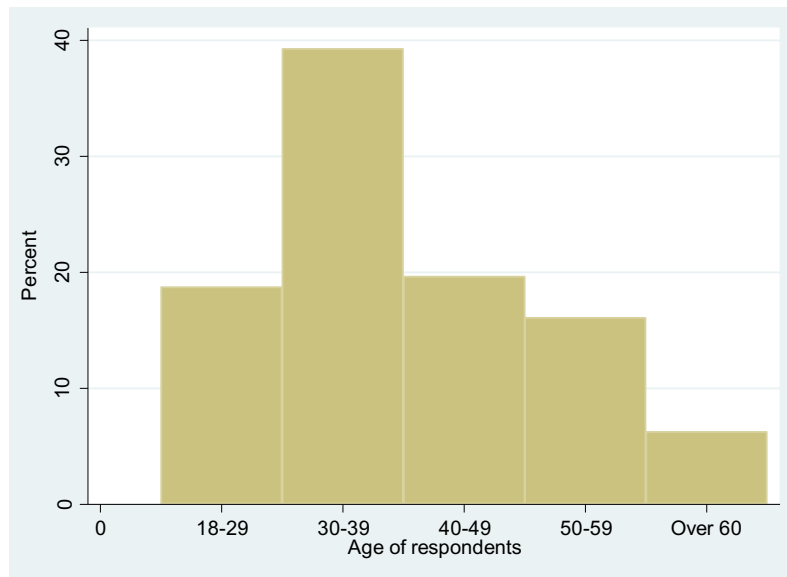


Fig.0 – age of respondents in classes

58% of respondents identified as female, 35% as male, and 7% as non-binary or queer.

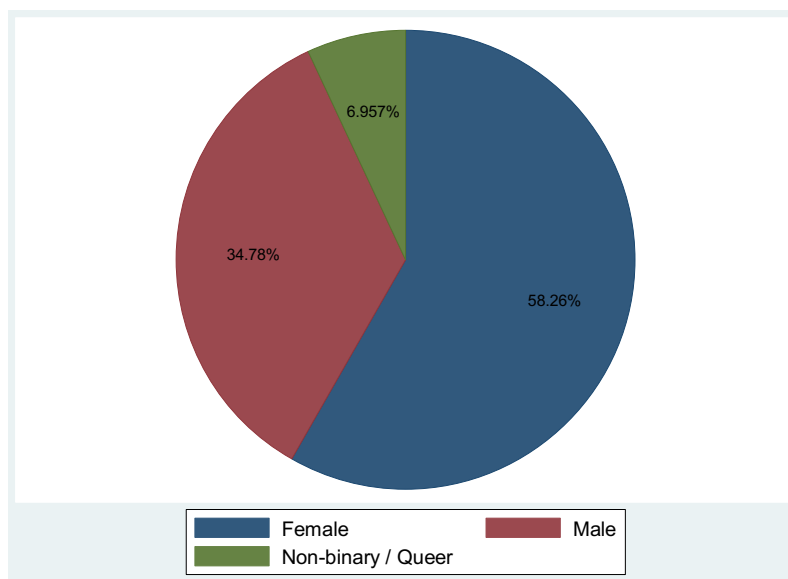


Fig. 1 – gender identification of respondents



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

Respondents have 32 different national citizenships, and reside in 32 different countries, the two not always coinciding. Aside from the case of Italy (36% of respondents are Italian citizens, 37% are residing in Italy), the other nationalities and countries of residence are quite evenly represented (see appendix A, q.37-38).

The distribution of respondents is less balanced when considering the context in which respondents operate in terms of urban or rural environment. In fact, almost 88% of respondents operate in urban environments, 10% in rural environment and 3% gave “other” responses (see appendix A, q.39).

Last, education was unsurprisingly high, if compared to a sample from the broader population, as shown in fig. 2.

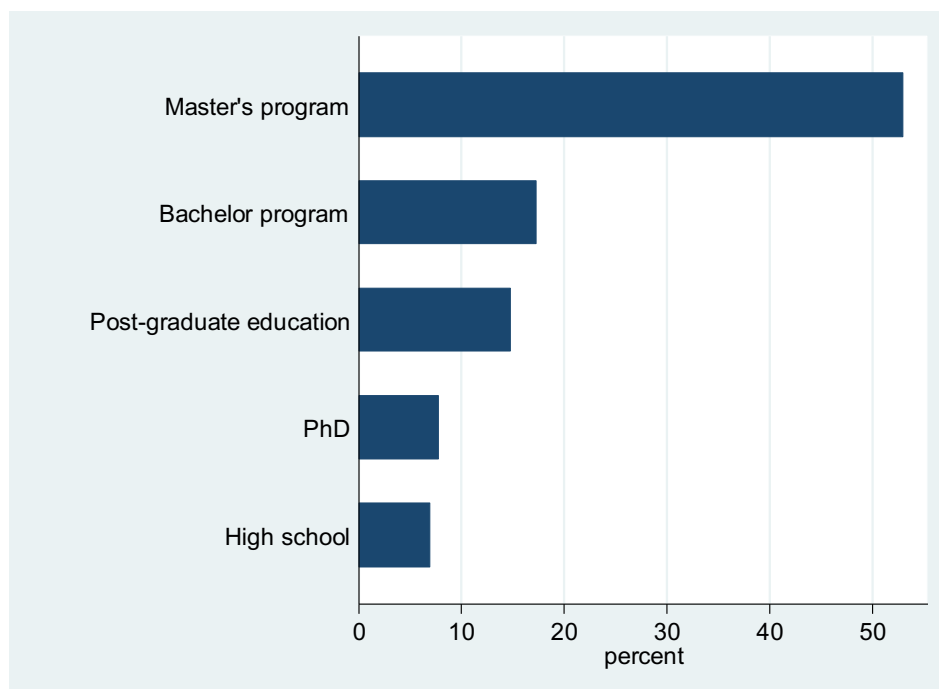


Fig.2 – Formal education of respondents

Individual, Institutional and Social entanglements

Coming more into the specifics of this survey’s topic, we now examine the involvement of respondents in their organizations and in the cultural sector more at large.

Fig. 3 shows the responses to the question “How would you describe your main involvement in the cultural sector?”. As the graph shows (see also q.2 in appendix), Independent cultural workers and employees in cultural institution make around 60% of respondents.

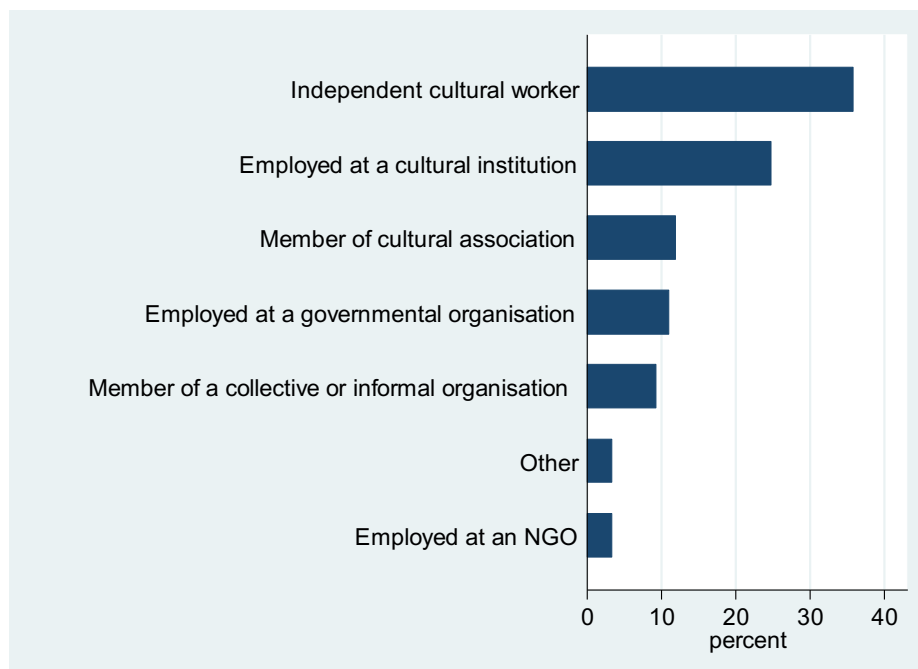


Fig.3 – respondents’ main involvement in the cultural sector

Respondents’ roles in their organizations of reference are also quite diverse, as shown in fig. 4. In this graph, I kept all the options included those input by respondents, not grouping them into an “other” category, so to highlight the diversity of responses.

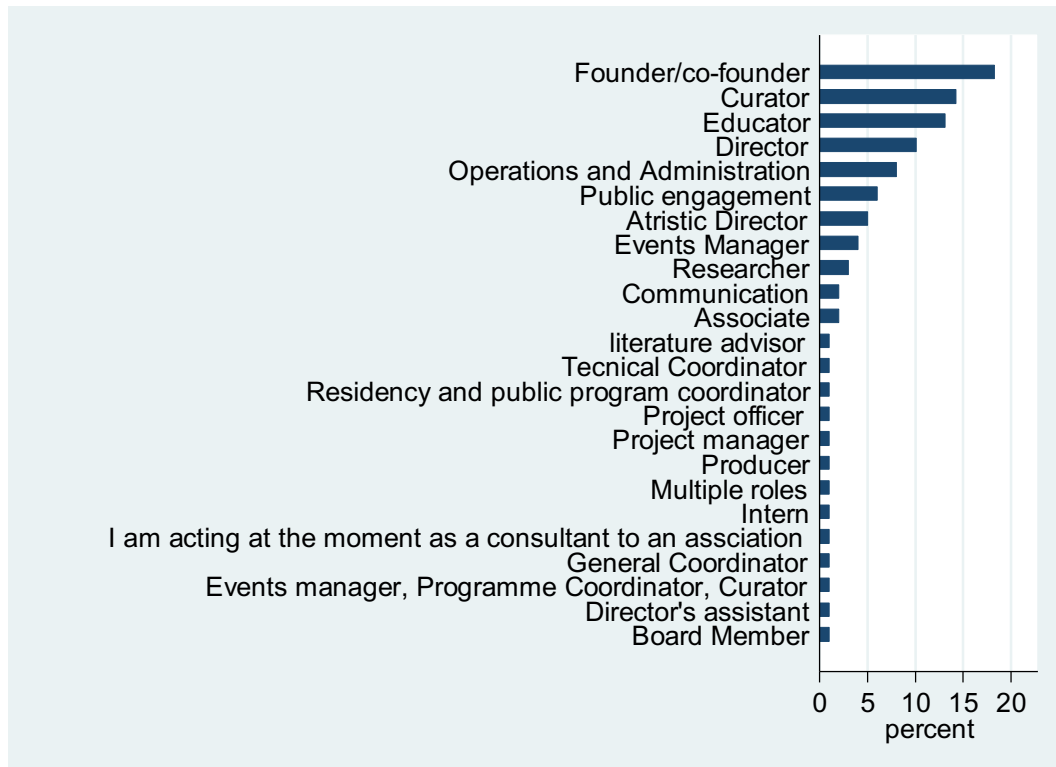


Fig. 4 – role withing the organization, if member of one

It is worth noting that this organizational role is not necessarily professional nor the main source of remuneration for participants to the survey. In fact, for 40% of participants, this is not their main source of income, while the opposite is true for around 60% of them.

Nearly every participant, moreover, does have additional sources of income other than the aforementioned one. In fact, only 8 of the participants who had answered the previous question missed did not answer this one. The additional sources of income declared by participants are shown in fig.5

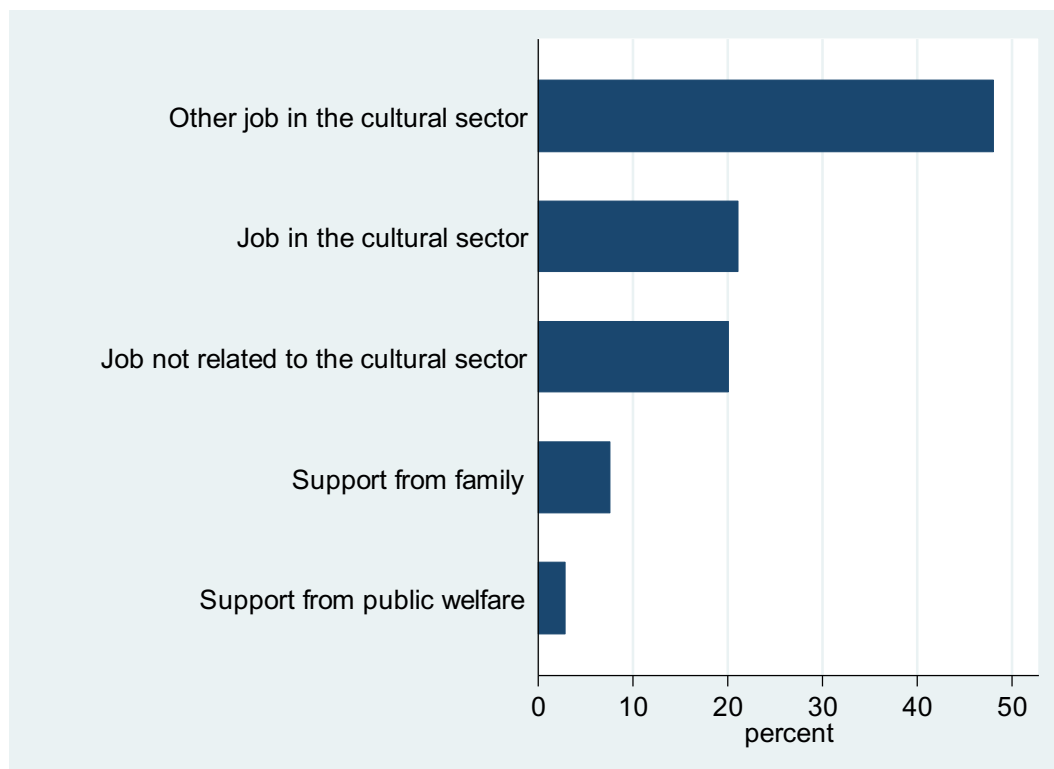


Fig.5 – additional sources of income of respondents, if any

We now turn to a set of questions on participants' social, cultural and economic background. These questions were meant to inquire the diversity of backgrounds workers in the cultural sectors come from, also highlighting issues of often unspoken privilege.

We then asked questions that could be considered as measuring, in a very rough way, something similar to the concepts of cultural, social and economic capital, accumulated in the familiar context. The questions were structured as a Lickert scale, asking, on a scale from 1 to 5, agreement on statements about the familiar background of respondents.

The statements, referred to the familiar context in which respondents grew up, were:

- Has provided you a kind of informal education* (*like books, movies, exhibitions, performances, family conversations, attendance to organized activities, cultural references) that have helped your career in the cultural sector

- Has provided you contacts, or ways to get in touch with certain people, that have helped your career in the cultural sector
- Has provided you solid economic support that has helped your career in the cultural sector

Fig. 6 represents the different means for answers to the three questions, where 1= Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither agree nor disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree. More complete data can be found in appendix A (q.6).

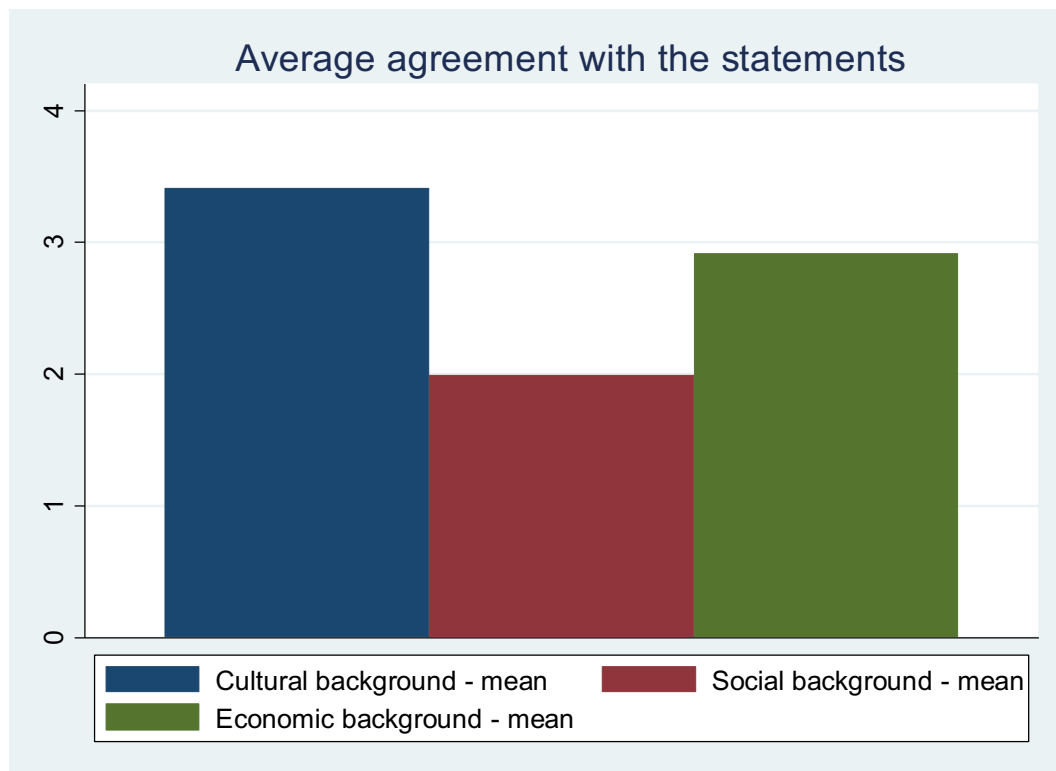


Fig. 6 – Average agreement (1-5) for the statements on familiar background

Fig. 7 shows the same operation done with similarly structured questions, this time regarding different aspects of participants' satisfaction with their job in the cultural sector. The exact phrasing of the statements are:

- I find personal fulfilment from my work
- I am satisfied with my pay
- I feel like my work has a positive impact also beyond the arts sector



Deconstruct and Rebuild

- I feel like my professional situation provides me with a sense of safety and stability
- I often find myself working overtime.

As can be seen in the picture, respondents have, on average a very high level of personal fulfilment from their work (over 4, on a range from 1 to 5), and the same goes for feeling like their work has a positive impact beyond the arts sector.

A different and more problematic interpretation goes with the second highest mean, that of working overtime. In fact, more than 80% of respondents has either agreed or strongly agreed that they do find themselves working overtime often (see q.7 in appendix A).

As for the other two statements, fig.7 shows how respondents have much lower sense of stability and safety, and of satisfaction with the economic aspects of their work.

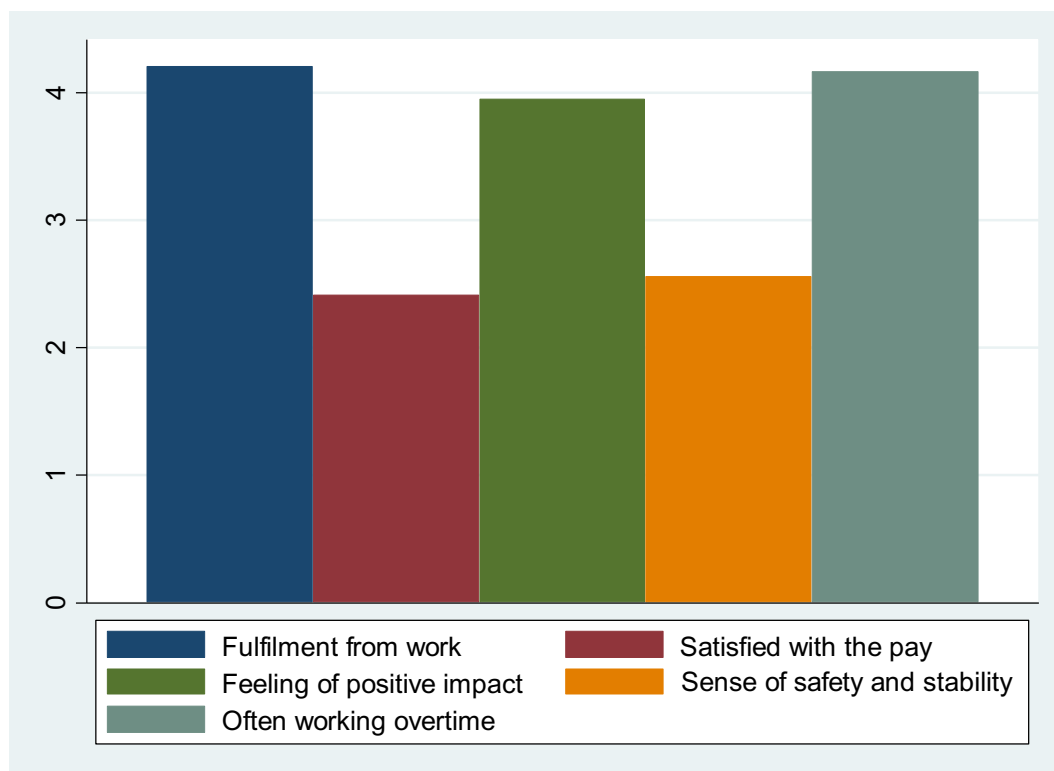


Fig.7 – Average agreement (1-5) for the five statements on job satisfaction



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

The following question is about discrimination in the work environment. We report here the full set of responses, so as to include every option provided by participants through the “other” option.

Grounds of discrimination in the work environment, if any	Freq.	Percent
Ability	2	1.72
Age	7	6.03
Being a parent	6	5.17
Class	7	6.03
Class and Age	1	0.86
Education	2	1.72
Ethnicity	5	4.31
Gender	18	15.52
Gender, Age, Education	1	0.86
I do not feel discriminated	53	45.69
Job position	1	0.86
Living and studying abroad and not in the country where I currently work (which is my home country)	1	0.86
Location, rural, gender & age	1	0.86
Mental health	4	3.45
Migration or citizenship	1	0.86
Political beliefs	1	0.86
Race	1	0.86
Religion	1	0.86



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

as not native speaker in the country			
I live in		1	0.86
	belonging	1	0.86
	geographical position	1	0.86
-----+-----			
	Total	116	100.00

Tab.1 – distribution of responses about discrimination grounds in the work environment

The next question was thought as fully open-ended, to make respondents completely free of expressing their point of view, not restraining them or reducing complexity with provided options. The question at issue is (the answers follow in tab.2):

Do you think cultural workers a (tab.re particularly likely to experience precarity? If yes, why?

In Italy the cultural workers are considered second-class workers. Precariy is havy and strong for us. I went through 9 years of precarety in my carreer.

Maybe

Opening title card, in a film of mine, from a survey,, "An out of work plumber is plumber out of work. An out of work artist is a bum".

yes

Yes, especially in context with no state support for the arts: because of the instability of cultural institutions, having to move from job to job to advance your career, very competitive field, few stable opportunities allowing for growth and evolution, expecting to work extra hours, work environment made for people without strong familial obligations, etc.

Yes, because in Italy, specially in the museum sector, professional are not worthily paid

Yes, for many reasons, among which : financial precarity with the "working for your passion" theory, health precarity (excessive amount of hours worked, the porosity between social and work life and spaces, which also makes space for multiple discrimination and violent behaviors such as sexual and/or moral harrassment, racism, ableism)...

Yes. Not a lot of cultural institutions, limited job openings, nepotism

Because little recognized as a profession

economical issues

overwork, long commitment no rewarding and full dedication expectancy

Because of the immobility of the art sector



Deconstruct and Rebuild

yes. as there are no structured systems to keep them financially safe, nor medical ones and they have no basic income from the state nor social security. there are no protective measures whatsoever and the cultural funds are always those cut first or underfunded in any country

Because it seems there is not other way

due to the lack of recognition of our work and awareness of the importance of culture in a society, due to the informality in which we are placed (and we place ourselves), lack of interest from the government, private entities and decisionmakers

Yes, because of the structure of the labor market, the lack of opportunities and meritocracy, the economic and social system (especially in my country)

Because cultural workers are not recognized as real professional workers

The cultural workers are massively likely to experience precarity, especially in the south of Europe (Sicily, where I work). The sector in Italy has seen some drastic cuts and defunds over the last few years. These were the years I started working into the art and cultural sector.

In this capitalist system of ours art and education related to it does not hold any value apart of investment or career opportunities. Art for art's sake is a dying concept. Art as a vehicle of self-realisation and as a necessity for humans is an unconventional thought by now. sadly that leads to an unstaible environment for those practicing it still.

Yes, because art organizations do not usually have a steady financial influx. This leads to underpaying workers and fluctuations in staff or relying on seasonal workers.

Unstable funding practices, ever changing goalposts and minimal government support means that any role in the cultural sector feels precarious most of the time.

less money for the cultural sector

I think this is also related to the country's uncertain policies

Yes, because arts & culture do not have priority in many societies, the sector is not highly institutionalized and there are not many job alternatives.

Yes, there is little funding available to cultural workers, and the funding generally available it meager.

Cause the sector is often little valued

Yes

Yes, for a multitude of reasons but socially and in some forms legally the cultural sector being seen as unnecessary.

Yes, cultural workers are vulnerable to the economic and political environment. In the current economic downturn, cultural institutions and organisations are going bankrupt and closing down, causing scheduled exhibitions to be cancelled and delayed indefinitely. On the other hand, government policies favouring primary and secondary industries and reducing budgets for cultural construction are all having an impact on cultural workers.

A vast majority of workers in the sector work as self-employed workers with very few benefits and few opportunities. Creative work is not valued or paid in proportion to the effort that a good result requires

Because they are not offered secure and long term contracts as much as in other sectors. And often their work is asked to be for free and to be grateful for the experience/contacts they may get

Yes, because the cultural sector is always somewhere outside the main interests of the government support.



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

Yes, there is a precarity of income, relying on grants and contracts. It can often be difficult to plan ahead long term. Another precarity exists in the knowledge that if I am not well enough to work, I have nothing to fall back on.

In a time of global political uncertainty cultural work is at risk as is cultural job security

Intermittent different jobs with low wages, difficulty finding housing at reasonable prices and weak social protection

Poor interest from private and public economic power

Because there are not significant support systems set up for the cultural sector yet.

Most definitely, yes, mainly due to the country where I'm based, Portugal. When you try to work in a country where you still do not have a strong education for culture, where it lacks of financial support to cultural institutions, where there isn't a real patronage policy or strategy, where there isn't, in the creative fields, an investment in the specialization or diversity of teams, when you lack of social support in case of sickness, maternity or unemployment for cultural professionals, you are most likely to experience precarity right from the beginning of your professional career.

Yes, because artistic labour is hard to 'value', therefore for the ease of operating within cultural institutions decision makers tend to reduce cost where cost/value is not regulated and nonnegotiable (in the same sense as it is with goods, materials, services).

Because independent cultural organizations are often facing economical precarity due to general difficulty of the sector in finding stable sustainable sources of income (grants, memberships, sponsorship, ecc.).

No

Yes, as it is an industry that is being de-funded in the UK, with more people attempting to attain less money. there's no a "status" in law

lack or few positions with long term contracts, project-based mode of working, cultural field more subjected to cuts in a time of (permanent) crisis

Of course since art is considered a surplus

Yes, since the economy is bad. But other sectors are just as likely to experience precarity such as low wage jobs in general.

yes, due to other sectors that are kept in the lime

Perchè non sono riconosciute le professionalità e ci si aspetta che la cultura si gestita da associazioni no profit

Yes, because the issues raised are related to politics, religion or race

Yes, primarily for financial reasons (lack of funding, limited job openings), but also due to the lack of diversity in the field.

yes, there are no actual career paths or jobs or job titles. the value of artistic work is not acknowledged.

Known names get all chances and funds, top-down exploitation, unequal visibility, pressure to be commercially competent in the artistic development, competition in the art market, unfair payments, gender gaps, racism.

No.

Yes- funding being reduced or stopped. Fixed term contracts. Not much job security & minimal benefits unlike other industries.

in Italy museums are still not fully considered places of learning, and museum education as a result is not considered a true profession



Deconstruct and Rebuild

Wages are low, very often more men than women are found at high levels, contracts are precarious and often do not meet what workers are asked to do; it is difficult to grow professionally in my country's cultural institutions and often even to join them

The cultural sector in Italy has been impoverished by several governments in the recent past and the one operating now

They're not always recognized as "real workers"

Because too often culture is considered as a mere plus.

High replaceability due to disproportionate supply and demand in the field

I don't think cultural operators are destined for precariousness

yes. and for a whole number of reasons. for once: the love of the work often tends to leave the artist open to both exploitation, and personally questionable economic choices; second: there is a widespread perception of the general public that art is produced out of love and therefore does not need to be monetarily compensated; third: most cultural workers lack any sort of job security / labor representation. To name a few.

Due to the Italian laws in terms of contracts, and the lack of will of cultural institutions to directly employ workers but to do so through third party cooperatives, the majority of cultural workers (like me) are forced to be an independent worker with partita iva, leading to a precarious condition.

very competitive field

lack of funds

Yes, because the western society is only focused on productivity and competition.

Yes

Yes, they are. The lack of long-term work grant and the reduced access to those who exist play a big role. Also the absence of National collective labour agreements in the cultural sector, all these provide less guarantees for economical stability

Yes, due to current complexity of the field, the competitive environment and often, due to subjectivity nature of artistic practice and research.

overall labour situation on the sector is very precarious, artist and cultural workers had become the experts on precarity and this is unfortunately generally accepted by society and organizations

Yes, the entire system is built on precarity of funds and continuation of projects/spaces/initiative. On the other hand, I also think it is an unavoidable condition from working and engaging with the contemporary. It is ever unfolding and evolving making precarity a framework necessity.

because cultural operators should, as much as they can, be unreachable;

Yes because we do not receive a minimum wage, we are often freelance and the social aspect of cultural jobs also benefits those from higher milieus

because of the structure of the gig economy, and the lack of proper social safety nets in most countries

Yes, because most of them are starting in an already precarious and disadvantaged position, but also because cultural workers in many locations/frameworks are not respected and seen as stable professions.

Yes, mostly due to the instability of projects and related funds. Scholarships or fellowships usually last only a limited amount of time and do not provide long-term life planning.

Yes. There are many so called "systemic" factors, which encourage precarity. One is surely project oriented work, where one focuses on a certain time-limited content projects. Instability of regular income and unstable financial liquidity can also influence the stability of work-position.



Deconstruct and Rebuild

Cultural workers are often in a state of financial and emotional precarity owing to the fact that the industry isn't regulated, there is no support in the way of a union, and are often in positions where the work they are doing and the methodologies required to do the work they do, are not formalised.

Project based work

Yes. Because cultural workers and their contribution to society is not sufficiently recognized, and because it is not capitalistically measurable, it is necessary to develop mechanisms that would improve their position.

Yes, because the fees are very low if any, and the whole infrastructure is built on the idea of exposure

Art organisation usually receive funding either through public support or other institutions which are unstable and often not sufficient.

Because often culturale work is seeing like volunteer work

Sì. Non ci sono abbastanza tutele per i lavoratori dello spettacolo, non sono previste forme di indennità da parte dello stato, e spesso i contratti che vengono applicati non prevedono la copertura della malattia o della cassa integrazione. Non c'è la possibilità di dare continuità ai lavoratori, non viene riconosciuto, in termini economici, il lavoro di ricerca/artistico fondamentale per la creazione di uno spettacolo/progetto musicale.

Very likely to experience precarity - it is one of the places a government makes cuts when there is an economic crisis.

Rather than precarity, instability: there are some extremely busy periods and other ones with no activity at all during months. It's another way of precarity, perhaps.

Yes, it all depends on the particular duty and responsibility but in general the commitment to being a cultural workers involves risk

we can't live on that, at least in Italy.

In my case because I work only on projects and if the Association doesn't receive the grant we don't have a contract

Absolutely yes.

ils ne paraissent pas indispensables dans la mesure où ils ne rapportent pas d'agent

For various reasons, yes; at least, in Italy. Because the sector itself often does not act like any other professional sector, for instance in terms of contractualisation of artists/operators. Because culture is acted by the third sector, which is not stable, a priori. Because the economic investment in the sector is dramatically low. And so on.

Yes, it's a very competitive environment that is not based on merit but who you know.

Yes, salaries are low and there are few opportunities to find work

Yes, because often there is no real support in their efforts to improve various situations at work.

Culture is not valued and is considered complementary work or that should not be paid, often by the cultural institutions themselves

Perhaps we stay in the trouble longer because we are passionate about what we do and economy security etc comes as a second priority

Only if they are self-employed

Yes

Tab. 2 – full set of responses to the open-ended question on the precarity of cultural workers

The following question inquires the background of respondents again. In fact, it asks:
“Which are the contexts that were most formative in your development as a cultural worker?”



Deconstruct and Rebuild

In reading tab.3, summarizing the responses to the question, please consider that this was a multiple choice question, hence most respondents have selected more than one option. The column "percent of responses" measures how many times that option was answered in reference to the total number of answer (including all the preferences given to other options), while the "percent of cases" column measures the percent of respondents who answered that option. This is also why N=240 instead of N=117, and why the percent of cases is way over 100.

More substantially, we can see how the most formative context in the development as a cultural worker has by large been university, followed by community organizing.

Please not that, as for all following questions, some responses have been grouped into the "other" category. These can be found in full form in Appendix A (q.10).

Most formative contexts in the development as a cultural worker			
	Frequency	Percent of responses	Percent of cases
School	10	4.17	8.47
Activist groups	35	14.58	29.66
Community organising	51	21.25	43.22
Family	26	10.83	22.03
Other	28	11.67	23.73
School	11	4.58	9.32
University	79	32.92	66.95
Total	240	100.00	203.39
Valid cases:	118		
Missing cases:	0		

Tab.3 - Most formative contexts in the development as a cultural worker

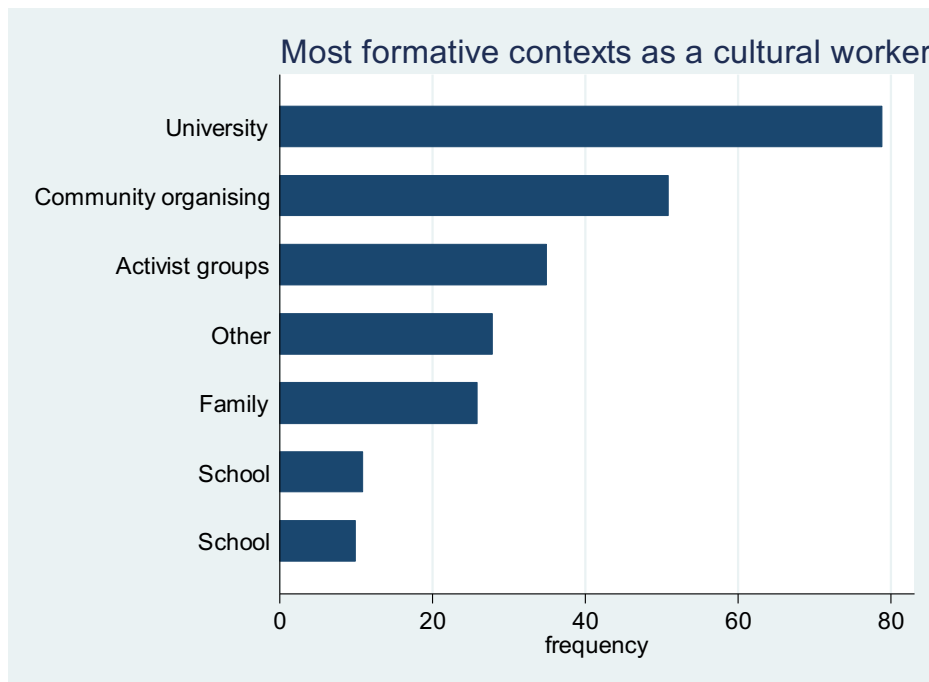


Fig.8 – most formative contexts as a cultural worker

The survey continues with another open-ended question. The reason for choosing this option, for this and following open-ended questions, are the same highlighted above. The question at issue asked respondents is particularly relevant for the elaboration of the Gathering Spells course, and it is the following:

Which needs of yours are not being met as a culture worker, if any?

- In my first career years, stability and money were the biggest troubles.
- My practice and reaserch
- Significance of cultural history of the late 1960s and the rise of feminism and its extensive art work -- in all media -- and its impact in changing women's lives and the culture, yet still not recognized within mainstream cultural institutions.
- opportunities and salary
- Financially for now since I am living in a country in deep economic crisis
- Financial stability
- meritocracy



Deconstruct and Rebuild

- financial needs,
- the need for horizontal and collaborative working processes (in institutional framework),
- need for facilitated networks of artistic and cultural activists national and international communities (intersectional approaches) to put methodologies, practices and tools in common.

Sense of community
an adequate budget

precarity, instability, unknowability
Career fulfilment

enough funding, open calls that are less exclusive on fame, portfolio, innovation - as there are less chances to build something.

Money, since the proportion between how much I work and the amount of money I earn is totally unsustainable (I work in the association I co-founded, based not in a city but in the countryside)

professionalization and technification

Economic stability, career opportunities

financial stability; means to study in a decolonial environment - one that doesn't reproduce white, European narratives; open connector possibilities for people not in the now and within the privileged art bubble

My need for financial stability and artistic independence. Usually I see a deep need to follow trends instead of exploring and creating them.

a higher salary

Economic support, uncertainty of payment

stability, opportunities for training

I live in a rural setting, with little access to a community of other cultural workers.

Salary / schedule

Validation in my work.

Free creation and expression

Specific training needs. Logistical and economic support in some initiatives. Insufficient commitment from superiors

Emotional well-being, working in such contexts is very stressful and competition is very high

The existence of some media, performing arts and experimental institution where people can explore new art ideas and researches with the support of that institution.

stable income, housing, post-working years/ ability savings

Low wages, and weak social protection



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

pay

Lack of safe and stability professionally speaking and, as a result, not developing creatively as supposed in arts and culture fields - there's almost no space for thinking a project. Without the economical support of my family, I wouldn't be able to carry on working in the art and cultural field. None of my needs are met.

Financial stability

financial safty

financial stability, the possibility of escaping a constant competition in looking for fundings

More time and a less toxic environment

equality

Esigenze economiche

financial, health and retirement security

My financial needs, my needs for self-development, my needs for a more egalitarian way of being and working together.

financial and health care -related needs, acknowledgement of my work as meaningful, societally functional/valuable. Because my work is not acknowledged, my agency needs are not being met.

Low monetary compensation of labor hours.

Investigation

Permanent contract, job security- standard benefits.

The enhancement of my professionalism in terms of my job position

In general, I would say that unfortunately there is little recognition of the role of work, as if it is expelled from the social context even in relation to the very knowledge and appreciation of cultural heritage

Decent payments

At the moment, just a little percentage of stability.

Career and economic security

salary too low compared to work commitment

n/a

The need for safety, as I do not have a minimum of income/hours guaranteed, for a fair compensation, for sick leave, for vacation, for overtime wage, and so on.

Since I love what I do, I would wish that more real solidarity is taking place

Financial...

Changing people's perspectives

Financial stability



Deconstruct and Rebuild

The possibility to work as an artist. I spend too much time for my paid job (I am an agricultural worker) and for domestic/reproductive work (I am a mother) because I need to support my life and my studio practice. This doesn't make me competitive enough on the art market, I don't produce enough and don't have enough time to write applications for grants and stipends. All in all, this situation makes me the "Sunday afternoon artist" although I have 8 years of education in the art field.

financial and time stability

survival needs! Basic subsistence

Economic stability.

greater consideration

A wage that is enough for the living standard

stable and secure employment

The stability of fair pay among cultural workers

As an independent cultural worker, I am mostly continuing my research practice on my own while having an unrelated job. Research positions do not really exist or have gatekeeping mechanisms (e.g. level of education). Without an institutional support, it is also difficult to apply for certain open calls as they require funding as simple as a travel grant.

Not enough holidays :)

Support for mental health. Financially.

Recognition for work, opportunities for further development

As an established and internationally recognized writer, I can't even think of living from my writing in my country.

Better educational opportunities and fair pay

Mental health support, a stable income, stability

Tutela da parte dello stato

There is lots of support centered on emerging artists/cultural workers, but this trails off as you hit late 30-40's.

Being able to have a certain stability (house, having my own family, etc)

sustained support

economic independence

Financial

none

acknowledgement



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

it is very difficult to find other job opportunities in other museums in the role of curator. It is difficult to have positions in Italy both in public institutions and in private places. There is no meritocracy
Need to make change and further develop the working environment, cultural policies and conditions.
The specific training and improve language skills in other languages
Salary to afford paying bills all year around
No pension savings, insurance or private daycare is included in my job

Tab.4 – responses to the question on unmet needs as a cultural worker

Structure and approaches – funding structure

Moving to the next section, we have a part of the survey more dedicated to the organizations that participants are members of. It starts with some question on the funding structure of the aforementioned organizations.

First of all, we inquired about the nature of the organizations' funding, in terms of being prevalently structural and continuous, or project-based and intermittent:

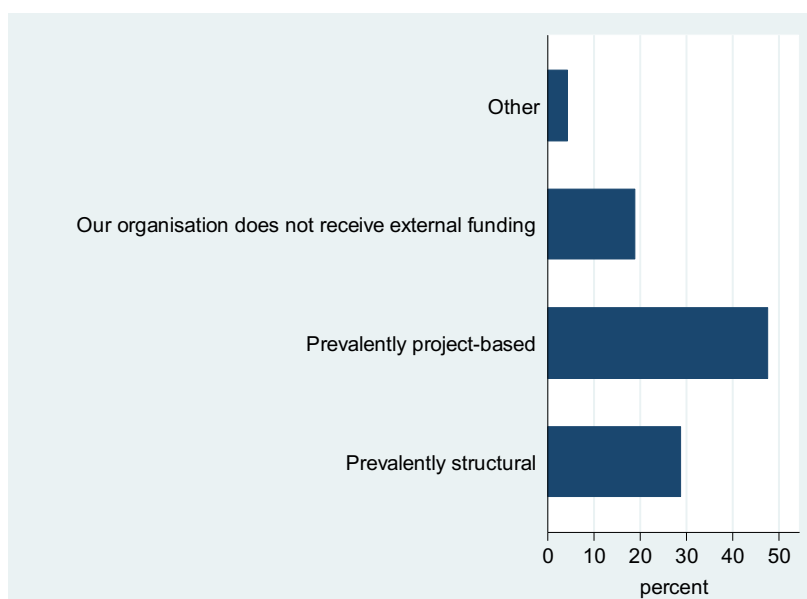


Fig. 9 – Organization funding: prevalently structural or project-based?



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

What are, more in the specifics, the funding sources for participants' organizations? We asked this question to respondents, providing some multiple-choice options as well as an "other" open-ended category. We can see how more than half of responses are concentrated in the "public funding from national or local governmental organizations" category. The following most numerous is "private funding from donors sponsors and foundation", followed by "Internal funds"

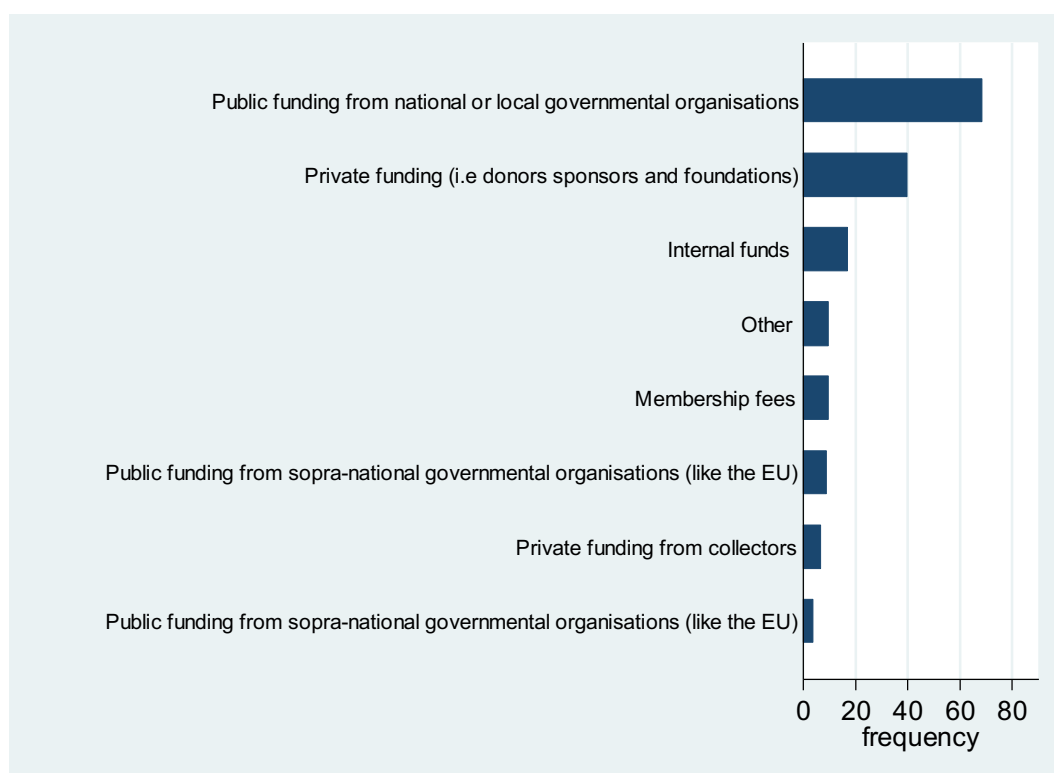


Fig. 10 – Main funding sources for participants' organizations

The same type of question was then asked about a crucial topic to tackle the needs of cultural workers with the Gathering Spells course.

The question is in fact about the challenges organizations faced, according to their members who responded the survey. Fig.11 shows how the most problematic aspect by far is that of bureaucracy and administration, followed by the complexity of grants, perceived lack of governmental support, and excessive competition in the field.

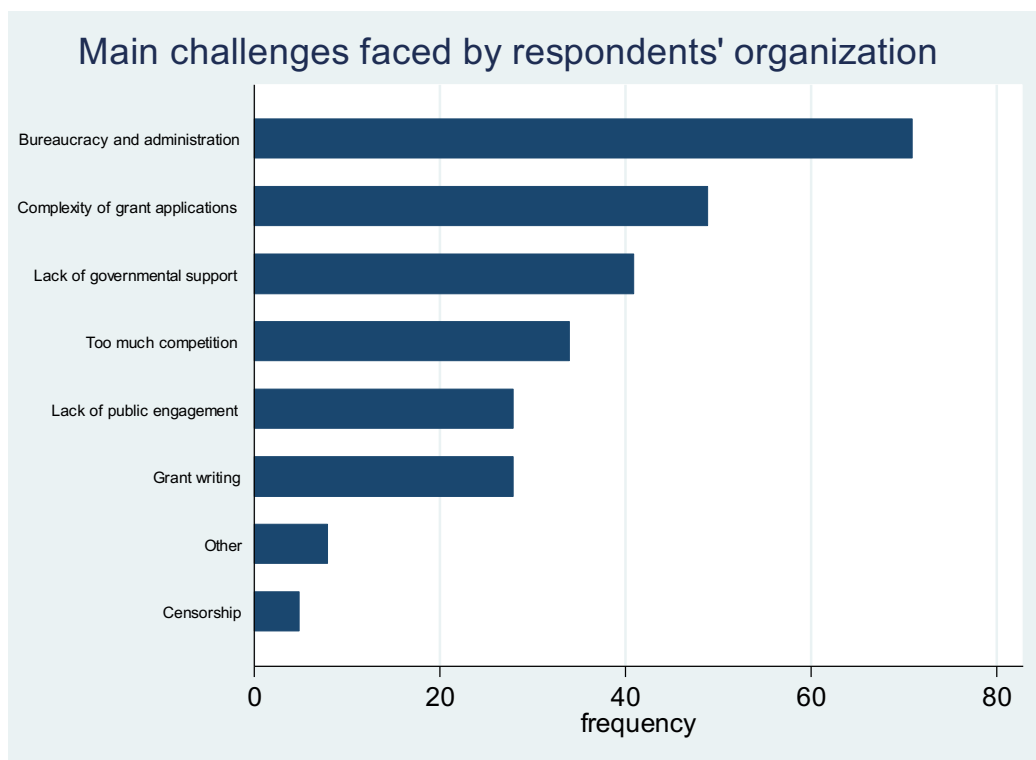


Fig.11 – Main challenges faced by respondents’ organizations

Adding up on the information gathered on funding structures, we asked participants whether they were “currently looking into other types of funding, or working on setting up a different financial model?”. This question was answered by 110 people, of which 55% answered “Yes”, 45% answered “No”.

A similar question was asked about “relying on metrics or indexes of success for your funding (e.g. visitor numbers, previously won grants, etc.)”. This question was answered by 114 people, of which 61% answered “Yes”, 39% answered “No”.



Deconstruct and Rebuild

Structure and approaches – Local Ecosystem

The following questions, within the section on *Structure and approaches*, focus on the local ecosystem that participants to the survey and their organizations are embedded in, to then turn more specifically on the needs and claims of workers in the cultural sectors.

The two following questions are completely open-ended and regard the local arts context of participants, respectively asking about what is missing and what is abundant in such contexts. We report here the full set on answers in tab.7 and tab.8:

In just a few words, what is missing from your local arts context?

- Places places to experiment in freedom, high formation and support for young artists and curators.
- There is no cultural grass root seen, it's cultural diplomacy led by with of oil and gas
- Better administrative skills to assist independent artists. They are all volunteers.
- Interest and funds
- Financial resources, economic and political stability, more exposure to international artists, more opportunities for curators & independant work, retaining talents
- Real, authentic, profound relations as well as understanding of live work and its requirements
- networking between the various internal services
- Opportunities to exchanging and sharing resources
- Synergy
- a network of subjects
- Real interest in looking for diversity
- institutional or governmental support
- Economic support
- interdisciplinarity
- Everything is missing, because there is no "local art context" where we are based and operate. If we consider the local cultural context, what is missing is openness to contemporary modalities, will to experiment with formats, change of staff within bigger, more structured institutions.
- freedom of speech, spaces for participation, connection with society and their needs
- Career opportunities, funds, networking, spaces
- Money for the organization of events for creative young people
- Cordination by the public administration,shared vision, long-term plans



Deconstruct and Rebuild

It kinda misses everything in terms of support for artists, spaces, galleries etc. Sicily is not an easy place to be an art/cultural worker. Infrastructures, resources, lack of political interest in art, very few public funds.

a non classist approach, art discussing decolonialism, financial support for non academics

Structured support in all aspects of the creation process

Most low cost/cost supported/cost-free opportunities for engagement, access and professional development
the arts context lacks human and financial resources and perhaps even public and private interest in growing it

very few funding support, lack of artist studios

Different audiences, actors outside of certain networks, working and exhibition spaces, national/ international visibility

Reliability

Critical mass

Cohesion between groups of different social and class backgrounds.

Lack of commentary on the reality of the environment.

Artistic spaces with high standards. Higher quality and more up-to-date training. A shuttle for artists that integrates advisers, promoters and all the agents involved in the various artistic scenes. Greater cohesion between organizations, institutions and the private sector at a national and international level...

The self engagement and financial support.

Continual public engagement, support of governments (local, provincial, national government funding) for the arts

Diversity

funding, interaction between associations to take advantage of joint communication and joint program development

Public support to beginners

Institutional help, more funding

Genuine public excitement for the change-generating capacity of art and community

Genuine public excitement for the change-generating capacity of art and community

Promoting arts and culture as a essential part of our society (awareness society to the intellectual knowledge and its importance as equal to health or economic system - only this way a country will create thinkers and advanced critical sense, conducting social changes). Patronage policy and strategy - the importance of private support in the arts and culture fields. Specialization and diversity of teams. Simplify bureaucracy and increase flexibility.

A more varied workforce and regulated pay. Only privileged people (those with financial backup) can work in culture within the current conditions, making cultural production inaccessible and unrepresentative of its potential audiences.

Grass roots opportunities, the building infrastructure

cultural education + cultural investments

continuity, solidarity, mutual trust



Deconstruct and Rebuild

A real thriving ecosystem

More participation from the public outside of smaller art circles.

art collectors, cultural education of indigenous and expat population, a program that allow artists to rent a space at an affordable price

Visibilità all'estero, contributi alle imprese.

Education about exploring the potential and local issues around the community. This is missing and makes some programs and artworks not in line with their locality.

Community engagement.

Interdisciplinary research-creation platform outside of academia, creating work opportunities for artists and philosophers.

Money and chances

More support

Development opportunity for new artists. Projects based on excellent skill/ art

Greater coordination between different facilities

The community

Grass roots activity, artists studios

Spaces & possibilities

I would say a real structure for independent scene.

A reasonable way for non-art school graduates to enter the art ecosystem

increased interest from local institutions

interest and money

funding opportunities; multi-scale connectors (connecting the local to the region to national and international discourse)

A framework that protect workers, ensuring they can provide an inclusive practice. If we are not paid enough to survive, it becomes very difficult to find the strength to bring the arts to the wider public.

solidarity

Public Financing, Formation, Diffusion

Economic opportunities

Resources, knowledge transfer, solidarity, connections to outside world, decentralisation

funding opportunities for emerging artists and designers who are engaged with social practices, feminist perspectives and participatory practices who are not local

real cooperation!

More opportunities for mentoring artists and more opportunities to l've leadership impactful feedback.

serius consideration education about arts, instituion, archive and collection

Public involvement and strong community networks even among creatives

national strategy for the independent cultural sector



Deconstruct and Rebuild

More opportunities for the artists to get to know what governmental institutions look from the inside
Financial Support/grant programs for older artists (groups and individuals) emerging onto the scene;
Autodidacts;

A structured network for funding in the same topics of my research.

Access to good infrastructure for cultural production, art market

Government support. Liveable wages for artists.

Stability, engaged agents (collectors, audiences)

If we are talking about local, there is no bookstore (with books) in my town. There is a lack of off-season artistic events. There is a lack of enthusiasm for local art institutions to connect with the community.

Collectors, larger institutions (ie Museums etc) and funding

places which offer a high quality program continuously

Less burocracy and bureaucracy, free spaces

Un posto in cui provare per compagnie teatrali, gruppi musicali,..

Collaborative working, support and knowledge exchange.

Structural funding is difficult

Less endogamy. More willingness to connect with people from different places.

support and acknowledgement seeking grounds of counterculture

meritocracy and economic support

Support structures for different types of art professionals

Nous sommes peu connus. Référencement insuffisant

the strength, the resources and the determination to work synergistically at all levels.

n/a

the curiosity of the people for the exhibitions of not famous artists

better visibility, more financial support, professionalism

permanent financial support

Professionals, more people with appropriate education especially in the field of management in culture, PR in art; strategic planning, coordination with other institutions that share the same type of program...

Tab.7 – What is missing in your local arts context?



Deconstruct and Rebuild

In just a few words, what is abundant in your local arts context?

contacts with other cities (italian and european)

Everything

Wide interest in different art forms

Good critical thinking, key institutions, rich historical art scene

Performative kindness

paperwork

Independent initiatives

Nepotism, Elitism

too many personal initiatives

tokenism

Bad art

long term community commitment

Nothing really, maybe a conservative way of intending culture.

creativity and archetype free thinking

Fairs and festivals

Nothing

Cultural institutions

The willingness of creating something for the community, that is huge. Catania is rich of artists and cultural movements and collectives.

money to private galleries reproducing blank "avant-garde" art by people (male and white usually) that have been raised in the same bubble

Willingness to do unpaid work so that the project gets made

Theatre shows

art designed by tourism department officials, tourism projects that cultivate a taste for kitsch in horrendous exhibitions to stimulate sleepy tourists

diversity in the field of art

actors who rely on networks instead of qualification

Curators

Offer

Efforts to de-border and represent cultural workers, especially artists from abroad.

The research and development of traditional culture.

Cultural spaces without sufficient standards



Deconstruct and Rebuild

Too much vanity among the artists.

Artists, need, ideas

Conservatism

A large cultural community, with good education and a high level of artistic performance

Young people with much talent

Creativeness

People who are looking for something to be interested in

People who are looking for something to be interested in

The help and support between the diverse arts and culture institutions and cultural professionals.

nothing

fine artists

trash

a lot of offers, dispersion of energies

Burocrats

Funding.

art events

Artisti

Issues and problems

Exhibitions that do not bring forward or propose alternatives to systemic and institutional discriminations.

precarious, bypassed/unacknowledged, highly educated artists doing projects with zero funding.

Competition and negligence toward each other

Initiative of participants

Community projects

Different heritages of highest cultural potential

The design

visual art spaces

nothing

Big budgets and private foundations.

Art school graduates

the interest from young local artists

don't know

variety of space; audience; artists

Exploiting practices coming from first and foremost public institutions, and the private sector alike.

competition

Artists



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

Cultural potential

Mediocre cultural production

everything about AI, digital art, material experiments and design products

creativity and ideas

Funds available to pay for leadership salaries.

Politic

Ideas

talent

The awareness of the difficulties the sector is facing, and the effort to give the centre stage to the newest, most innovative, most inclusive performances

support for 35 and under

There are many commercial initiatives tied to heritage or art that are very limited in interests scope and often neglect the relationship with local communities.

Cultural events

Collaboration. Talent. Resilience. Love.

Creativity

International festivals.

Community engagement and support

demand in terms of people trying to find platforms for their work and demand in terms of job searches

Eventi turistici in cui l'obiettivo è il guadagno e non la qualità del progetto

There is both private and public funding strands available, for individual artists and projects.

Fundings for local artists and initiatives to do projects locally.

commercial tokenism

self-reference of the system

Many art professionals, many artist run initiatives

training for children and adolescents

Fragmented actions, mostly of good quality but not effective in terms of impact.

white people

the presence in Museum of school groups

nothing

the lack of free spaces

hiper production

Tab.8 – What is missing in your local arts context?



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

We turned more in the specifics of participants' organization and their relationship with their local context, by asking about the ways in which they develop public engagement. This is another open-ended question and answers are reported in tab.9:

In just a few words, what are the main ways in which your organisation develops public engagement?

by doing literally a lot of activities and exhibitions

Nothing apicial

It has a good community list and announces various activities on a rotating basis.

online projects

Through exhibitions and public programs of different types and targeting different public

social channels, events, targeted educational activities, co-planning with local and proximity realities

Through artistic pedagogic workshops with local school kids, ponctual public events

Accessibility features (ex. Accessible texts, accessible spaces, art mediating)

looking for coordination

Educational department

public programs, exhibitions, screening programs, mentorship program and one to one dialogue

Word mouth

site based and street interventions, engaging difficult topics and co-creation with local communities

Through presence on the territory (which is small and very marginal) and through social media (for the far away community=

direct involvement with the communities - work with local focus groups - development of programs with children

Advocacy, networking, grants and support to artists and cultural professionals

through initiatives for young artists

Public events, projects in the fields of education and training

Our exhibition space is located in San Cristoforo, one of the poorest area of Catania (Sicily). We believe art and photography are for the people. Most of the galleries and spaces in the city live in the city centre and in the richest areas.

Instagram, participatory installations, explanation of contexts, low barriers in terms of language, complexity and physical accessibility

Existing mailing lists, press releases, social media

co-commissioned projects, presentations of work, talks and workshops

Through word of mouth, social media, promotion in magazines and local media

networking, via social media

Using social media, organizing artist talks, events, etc. We also have an arts library open to public.



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

Digital marketing

Through social media, other online presences, and art fairs.

Exhibitions and public education

Through multiple disciplines in the recruitment and visibility of emerging artists

By marketing and word to mouth advertising.

publications, exhibitions

Exhibitions, talks, events publications

With our actions, we organize shows by young creators in all creative areas, nationally and internationally in partnerships such as BJCEM and Portuguese-speaking countries, all itinerant.

Through the exhibitions

Exhibition events, posters, video projections, movies, barbecues, instagram

Exhibition events, posters, video projections, movies, barbecues, instagram

Social Media, digital plataforms and local comunity diffusion - direct engagement

through contacting friends and acquaintances

Supporting artists make risk taking, socially and environmentally aware work with a festival

workshops, publications

Through events.

cultural programs

create workshops and work with the community

If I had an organisation, it would develop public engagement through Open, weekly lectures/rehearsals, artist-talks/sharings, publications, workshops.

We are a union and release regular press emails and organize meetings.

Through projects and activities

Presenting work, community projects

Different initiatives aimed at different audiences

Narrative proposals

community exhibits

educational activities for audiences

development of new relationships

participation

We are still developing this, in a few words I would say direct involvement.

Street action

my organization offers young local artists the opportunity to participate in both national and international events and competitions



Deconstruct and Rebuild

University Art Gallery, students works exhibitions

artist talks; public interventions; targeted artistic research

ideas transported to the public in project based performances

Social Medias

Social media, merchandising

Word of mouth, social and local media, community connections

participatory practices such as workshops, performances and installations and publication activities

social networks and our members communities

communications through mostly social media.

Trying to develop projects open to the public and the public space

Through its many activities (workshops, seminars, presentations, visits to schools)

micro festivals (1 to 4 days) involving public participation

Through a research-based community practice by involving people from the communities to be creators and owners of the research.

It varies from a project to project. we focus on audience development through years and sometimes decades. This means building relationship with your audience. and through use of social media.

Free public moments and showings.

Social media, events

By creating policies that would contribute by providing support to the cultural sector.

By funding and supporting artists amd art organizations/

Social media marketing, public events etc

marketing, events

Carious and miscellanous art projects

Workshop e incontri aperti al pubblico e ai giovani

Education programme, exhibition free of charge, wide marketing

I am actually a freelance visual artist. I collaborate in some projects with a small cultural association run by friends, and our main goal is to connect artistic practices with a non trained public, by bringing them out of the gallery, to the public space.

conversation circles at established cultural institutes that are in the radar of official culture statefunded.

I'm independent critic and curator with no organization behind me

By organizing free public events and by organizing workshops

Online communication

just by echanging with friends, othher artists Sometimes facebook

Project activities with educational, cultural and developmental value and widespread dissemination (through our Committees and clubs). These initiatives can be (with a focus on fragile contexts) meetings, exhibitions, workshops for children, participatory democracy initiatives, concerts, theatre performances, film festivals, community-based projects, ...



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

grants programmes, community outreach
guided tours, thematic cultural events, workshops
exhibitions, public tours, workshops
We are a public organisation
through side projects

Tab.9 - what are the main ways in which your organisation develops public engagement?

The following is another important question for what concerns the implementation of the Gathering Spells course. This is a multiple-choice question, asking participants in which operations or practice they would like assistance with. Fig. 12 summarizes the results.

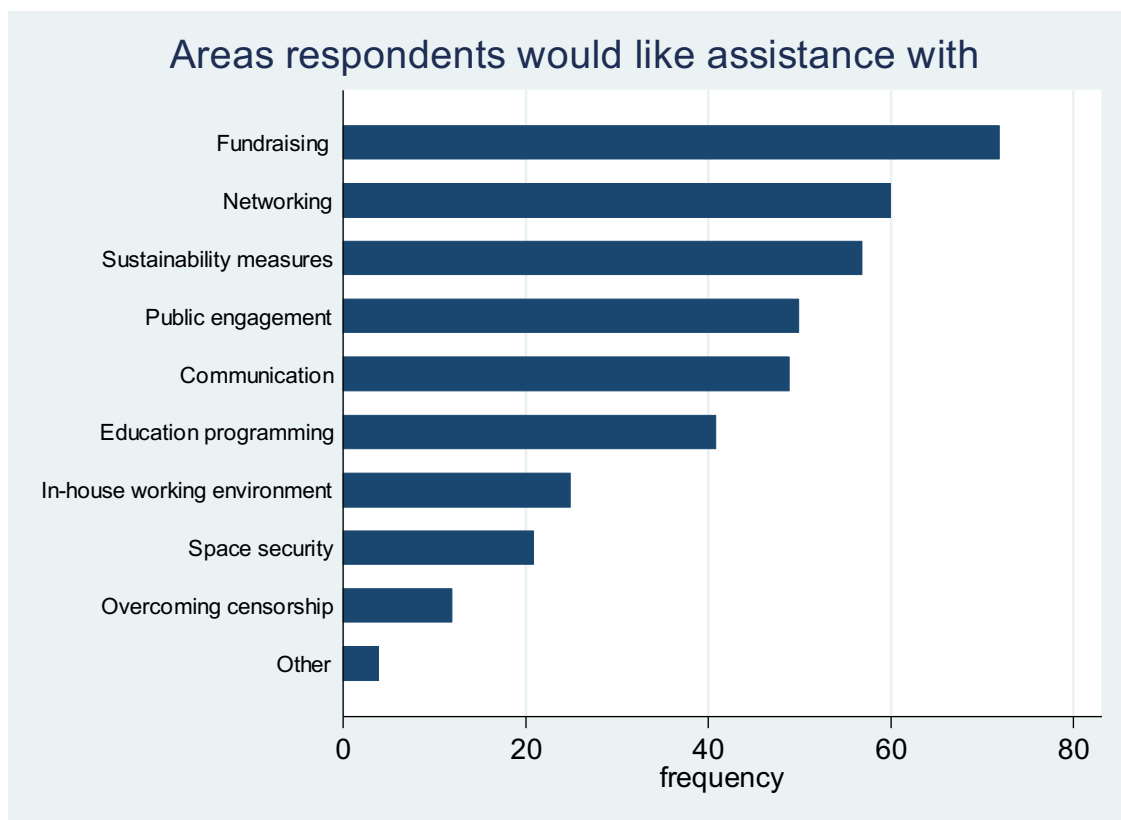


Fig.12 – Areas respondents would like assistance with



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

As is clear from the graph, the different areas are many, and many respondents did select many of the available options. However, the priorities for most seem to be those of fundraising, networking and sustainability measures.

The survey continues with a set of questions about respondents' organizations, by asking again a degree of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements. As for the previous similar scales, we summarize the means for every statement, in fig. 13.

The full statements, referred to in fig.13, are the following:

- Our organisation involves the local community in the programming of events,
- Our organisation responds to urgencies and topics arising in the community,
- Our organisation promotes primarily local artists and cultural workers,
- Our organisation promotes primarily international artists,
- Our organisation considers well-being at the workplace a priority,
- Our organisation provides an inclusive and safe space for all minority and marginalised groups.

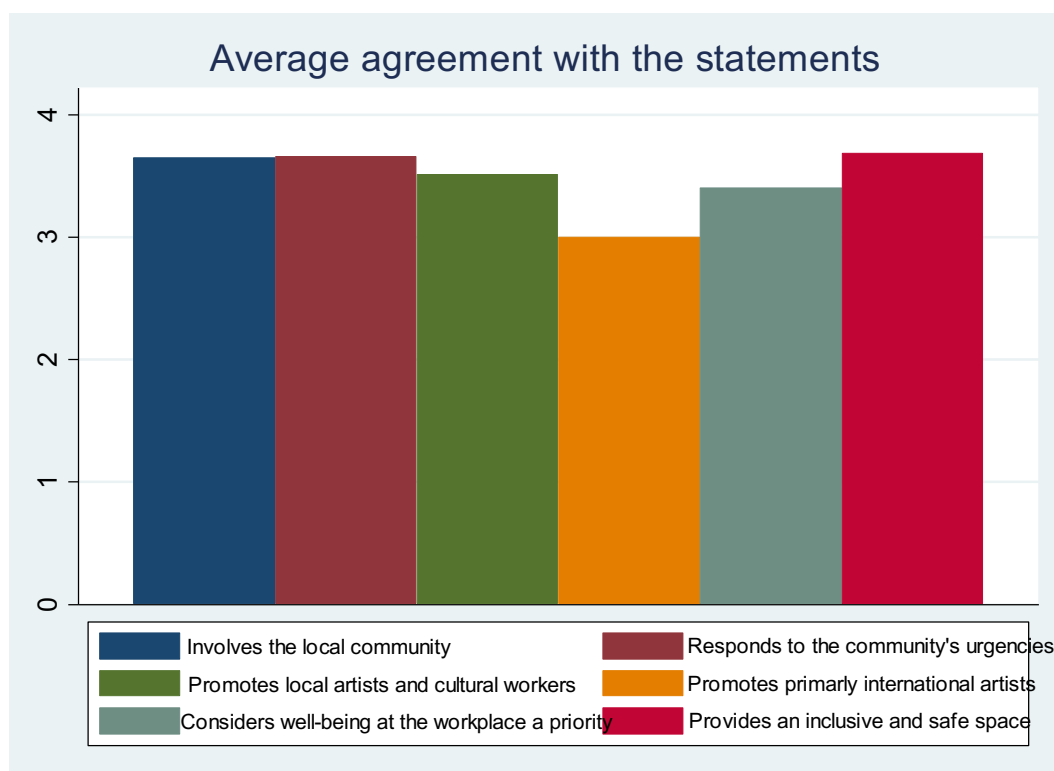


Fig. 13 – Average agreement (1-5) with the statements on respondents' organization



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

We can see from the graph how the average agreement with the statements is quite high, and not so dissimilar between the different statements. The only statement with a sensibly lower average agreement is that on the promotion of international artists, which brings us to the next section.

Structure and approaches - Translocal Alliances

The section on translocal alliances begins with asking whether respondents are members of BJCEM, and if they are members of other networks of cultural organizations. It goes on by asking, if they are not members of any similar network, if they would like to be, and what would be the reasons for this.

Out of 116 respondents to the question, 19 were members of BJCEM, 97 weren't (16% and 84%, respectively).

Regarding the membership to different networks of cultural organizations, out of 115 respondents to the question, 47 were members of other networks of cultural organizations, 68 were not (41% and 59%, respectively).

The question "If not, would you like to be?" was answered by 89 participants, of which 75 answered "Yes", 14 answered "No" (84% and 16%, respectively). These data point out to a strong need or will to intensify the networking efforts of cultural organizations and their international outreach, as also suggested by the graph on fig. 12.

The survey now gets more into the reasons underlying the declared will to be part of a network of cultural associations, or the declared existing affiliation. In fact, the following question asks: "What are the most important reasons for you to be/if you were to become a member?"

This is also a multiple choice question, and the results are shown in fig.14. In this case too, respondents often selected many options at the same time, which is shown by the generally high frequency of responses. As shown in q.26 in appendix A, the two most frequent responses were selected by 86 respondents out of 110 each, meaning 78% of respondents to the question. The third one, "diversity of cultural practice and approaches" was selected by 77 respondents, 70% of respondents to the question.



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

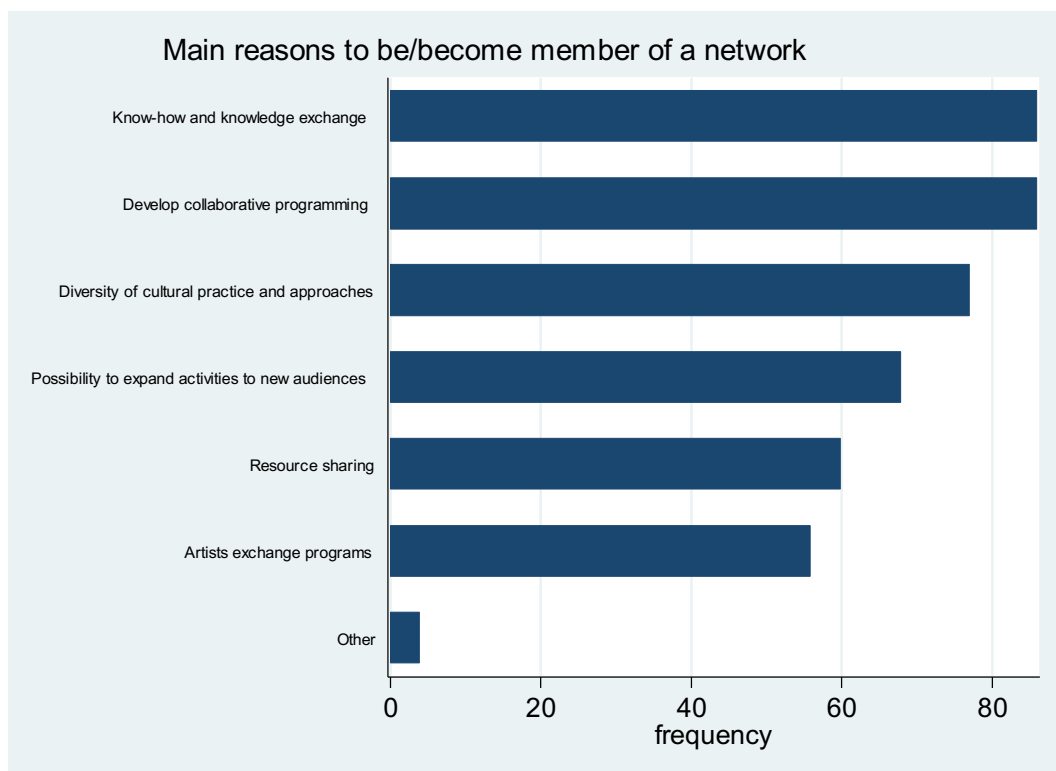


Fig. 14 – Main reasons to be/become member of a network

We then asked respondents to tell us more about the challenges organizations face in connecting with other organizations in different geographical locations. This question provided a very clear picture, with one of the options, Lack of resources (time, funds) being chosen by 65% of respondents.

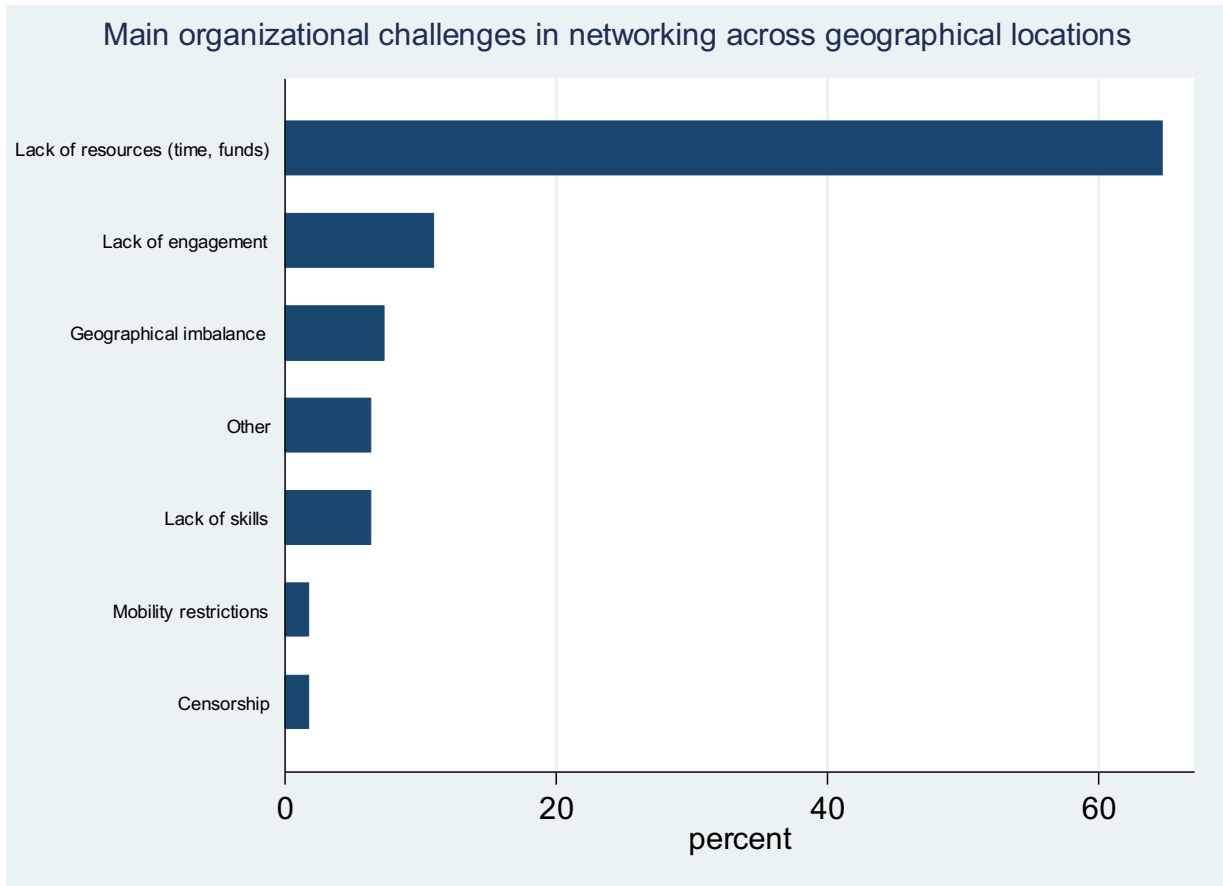


Fig. 15 – Main organizational challenge in networking across geographic locations

The second most frequent option was selected by about 11% of respondents, while all others are below 10%.

The following question, another multiple-choice, closes the section on translocal networks. We asked respondents: “What are the main ways in which your organization cultivates its translocal network?”. The answers are reported in Fig.16.

Online meetings are the most frequent option, selected by over 52% of participants, followed by Joint projects, selected by 45% of participants. Other options were selected by less than 30% of participants, all around 32% except from Assemblies (15%) and Retreats (3%).

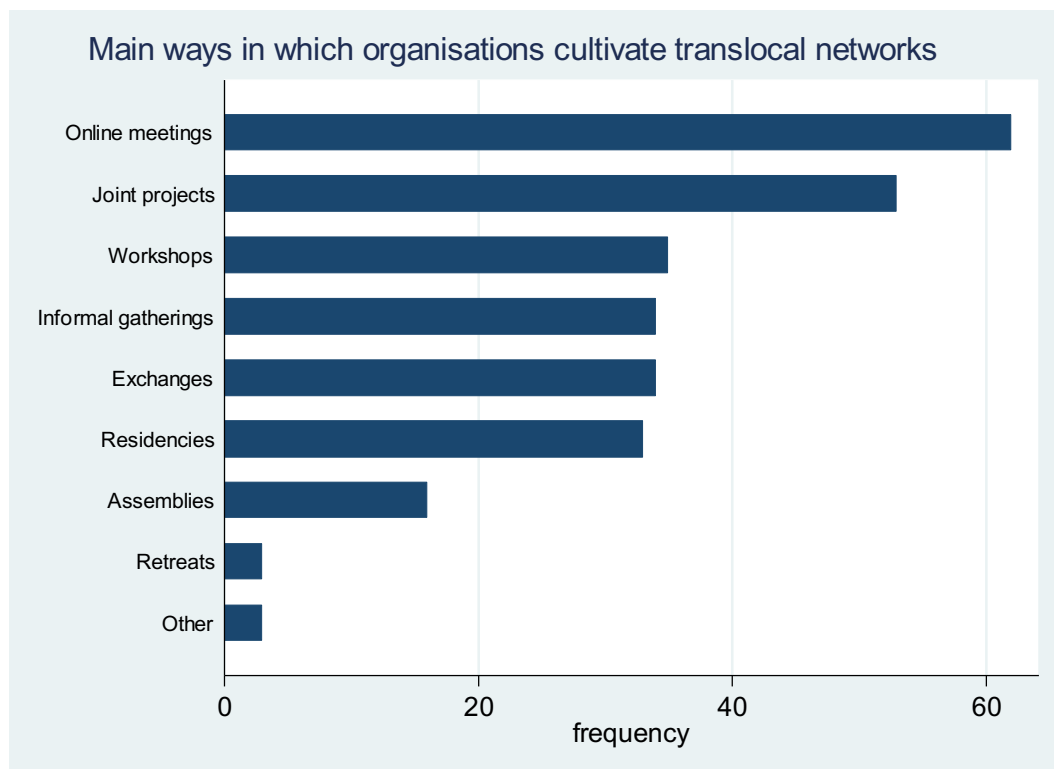


Fig. 16 – Main ways in which organizations cultivate translocal networks

Sustainability practices

In this section the survey tackles the topic of sustainability practices in respondents' organizations. First, there is a 1-5 scale of agreement with a number of statements about participants' organizations' sustainability practices. As for previously shown scales of agreement, I present the average agreement for each item, summarized in fig.17. As for other questions, the full tabulation of results can be found in the appendix A (q.29). It is worth remarking that these questions were not applicable for all participants. A "don't know/not applicable" option was included, counting values from about 6% to about 16% of respondents (see appendix A, q.29).



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

The full list of statements is the following:

- Our organization is taking climate action,
- Our organization is concerned about energy consumption in planning its work,
- Our organization is mindful of the artworks we borrow, commission or produce for exhibitions,
- Our organization is considerate of the food we serve and the shop products we stock,
- Our organization is concerned about reuse of materials and their life-cycle,
- Our organization is in alliance with other climate conscious cultural organizations,
- Our organization is active in raising awareness about climate crisis through its programming,
- Our organization is directly suffering the impacts of the climate crisis.

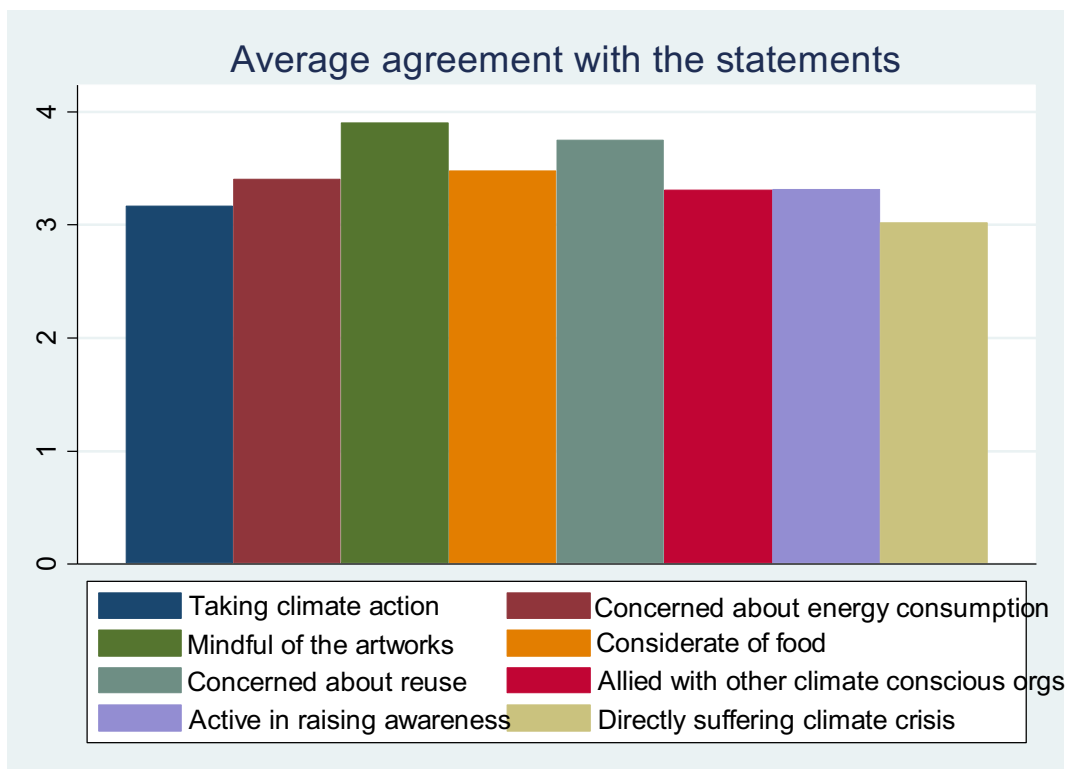


Fig. 17 – Average agreement (1-5) with the statements on organizations' sustainability practices



Deconstruct
and Rebuild

As can be seen from the graph, the average agreement with the statements is quite similar between agreements, between 3 and 4 for all statements, and quite high overall.

After having asked about sustainability practices that participants' organizations do implement, the survey goes on by asking what impedes them from practicing more sustainability in their operations if they want but are unable to.

The following question asks what impedes organizations from having an infrastructure put in place that helps to achieve sustainability guidelines, in case they want but are unable to.

Answers to the two questions are summarized in fig.18 and fig.19.



Fig. 18 – Reasons the organization is unable to practice sustainability in its operations.

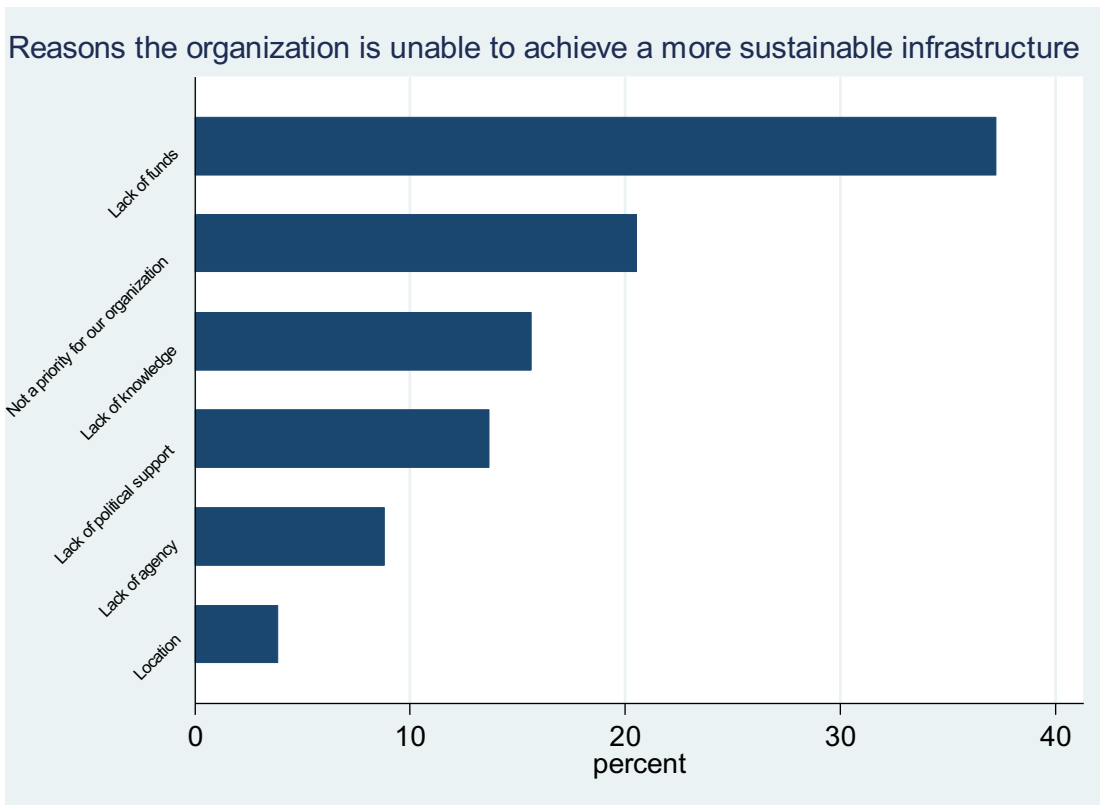


Fig. 19 – Reasons the organization is unable to achieve a more sustainable infrastructure.

While for both questions the lack of funds is indicated as the most relevant reason, the issue not being a priority for the organizations of which participants are members is surely a concerning finding, in both cases being over 20% of responses.

The next question asks again about respondents’ organizations. The question is: “In which area do you feel like your organization is open to suggestions?”

The full set of options to answer this question are:

- Learning how to develop protocols and practices that give back to the community
- Connecting with other cultural innovators and developing translocal alliances
- Join/develop a stable financial model
- Become an agent for a self-determined systems-change work within my context
- Amplifying the great work we’re already doing!

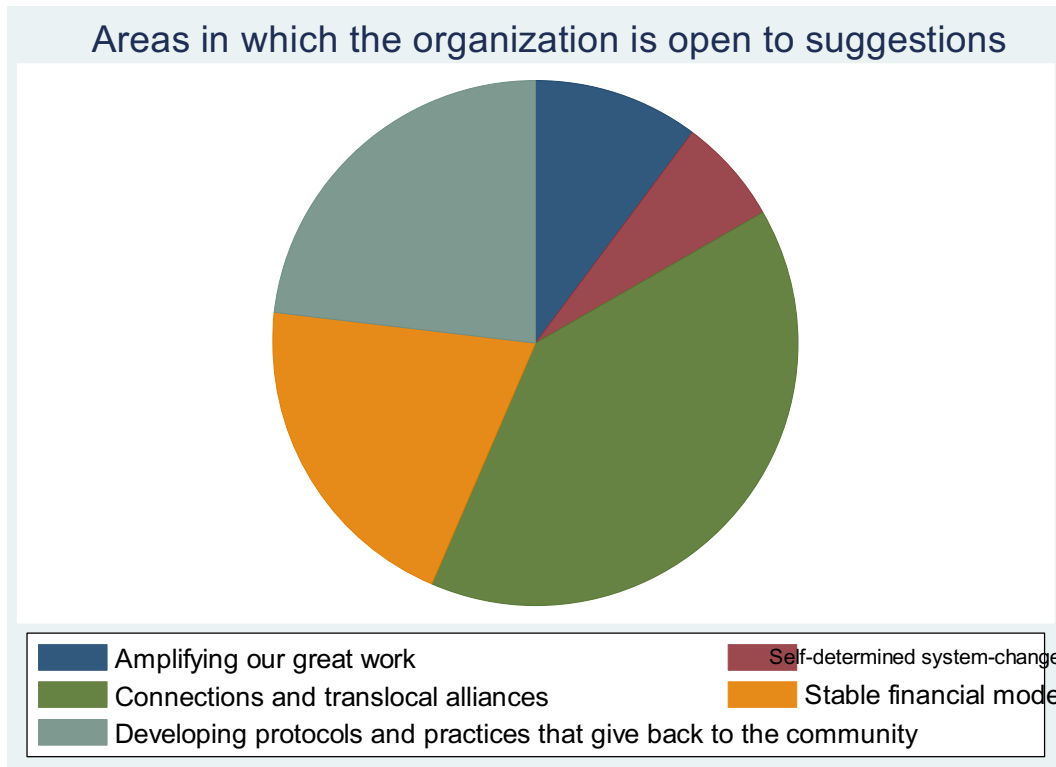


Fig.20 – Areas in which the organization is open to suggestions

The last question is particularly important, because it directly addresses survey participants by asking about their interest in the Gathering Spells course. The question, a multiple choice one, asks: “If you were to participate in the next course (and we invite you to!) on which points would you like us to focus on?”. The results are summarized in tab.10 and fig. 21.



Deconstruct and Rebuild

Most interesting areas if respondents were to join the Gathering Spells course	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Advocacy & Campaigns on culture-relat..	19	17.12	17.12
Education & Workshops on Sustainabili..	24	21.62	38.74
Funding & Resourcing	29	26.13	64.86
Meet Funders & Grantmakers	13	11.71	76.58
Meet artists & creatives	24	21.62	98.20
Other	2	1.80	100.00
Total	111	100.00	

Tab.10 – Most interesting areas if respondents were to join the Gathering Spells course

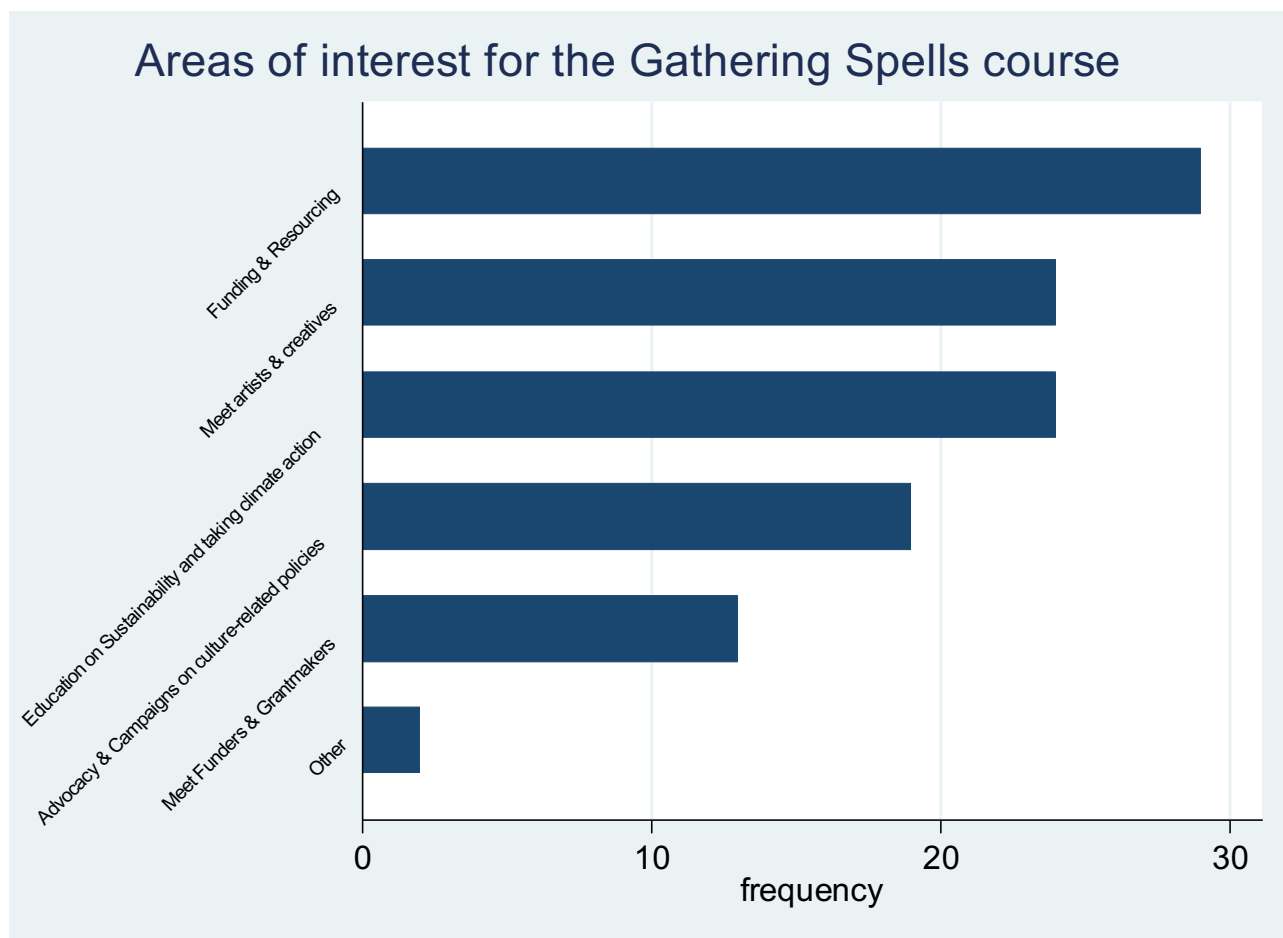


Fig.21 – Most interesting areas if respondents were to join the Gathering Spells course

As is clear from tab.10 and fig.21, the aspect of funding & resourcing is once again of fundamental relevance, with 29 participants (26% of respondents to the question) selecting it as a topic of interest. Meeting artists and creatives, as well as environmental education, were also found as very important topics, with around 22% of participants having an interest in the topic, and Advocacy & campaigns on culture-related topics being selected as the most interesting topic by 17% of participants.

One last question, that can be found in the appendix, asked for any notes, feedback or things participants would have liked to let us know about the survey, the course or the topics at issue.