ANITA KANGAS

REMOVING BARRIERS

PARTICIPATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN KUULTO ACTION RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

KUULTO action research (Activating cultural participation in local communities) was implemented in 2013–2015 and it included 22 cases in the Finnish municipalities. Local actors in municipalities, cultural organizations, researchers and an expert group were collaborators and put the action research into practice. The project was funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture.

The observed inequality in people's opportunity to participate in cultural activities was the practical problem for which KUULTO aimed to find solutions by improving and transforming practices in cultural organizations. Additionally, a critical analysis of current participation practices in cultural policy processes was carried out. The action research served as a laboratory for the development of the kind of methods which could during and after the process be transferred to other municipalities.

This publication asks what kinds of means/actions did the local actors come up with and implement in their efforts to remove barriers to participation and increase the opportunities of people/local residents to take part in cultural activities. Secondly, the publication analyses what kinds of methods and (sustainable) practices were created to activate people/the local residents to participate in the actions and the related decision making. Thirdly, the publication examines the policy implications resulting from the findings of particular KUULTO cases. The results are grounded in the experiences of the communities involved.

FOREWORD

Cultural participation has been a key concept of national cultural policies. The Finnish cultural policy strategy till 2025, recently published by Ministry of Education and Culture emphasizes the participation being important factor for increasing equality and accessibility in the society. Also the research about effectiveness of cultural policy and local culture done in Cupore stresses the participation and equality in many ways.

This Removing Barriers publication by Anita Kangas illuminates analytically how action research can be used to promote broad change in the cultural participation policies. Like Anita Kangas writes, "...the starting point of the KUULTO was the following normative goal: to increase the accessibility of cultural activities. Both basic values such as democracy, equality and equity, and research results of the impacts of arts were legitimating that aim. Action research as a collaborative process intended to create change. Collaboration for empowerment was used to identify problems (barriers to cultural participation), in seeking to solve problems in their context and pursuing social change in politicized context."

KUULTO Action Research carried out by the University of Jyväskylä in 2012–2015 and financed by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture finally presented 22 different local cases where participative cultural activities were tried and tested. It was targeted at increasing cultural participation in localities where the level of municipal cultural funding was low.

The research project continued in Cupore and takes part with a case study in an international research project "Testing innovative methods to evaluate cultural and creative spillovers in Europe".

The research and publication at hand is a result of long and outstanding research of professor Anita Kangas. Her commitment has inspired other colleagues to go on with important topic. On the behalf of Cupore and Anita Kangas I would like to give undivided thanks to Susan Heiskanen for fluent English translations and Tiina Paju for excellent layout for the publication. Many thanks also for commenting the publication to Olli Jakonen, Kirsi Kaunisharju, Minna Ruusuvirta and Pier Luigi Sacco.

Marjo Mäenpää

director

Center for Cultural
Policy Research
Cupore

CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION

The background of the establishment of the KUULTO (Activating Cultural Participation in Local Communities) project ties in with various research results and assessments in administrative reports that have shown growing inequalities among Finns in opportunities to participate in cultural activities. Numerous regional, social and economic barriers have been identified that hinder cultural participation. KUULTO set out to solve this problem through an action research approach, interlinking action and research. The aim was to achieve change in people's modes of action and to investigate the potential changes as well as the processes that led to the realization or failure to bring about the needed changes. On the practical side of solving these problems emphasis was placed on systematic dialogue between practice and theory.

A total of 22 local actors from different parts of Finland, the researchers and the expert group were committed to the work of producing and investigating change, funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. It was the local actors who ultimately got to define the concept of cultural activity in these contexts, and since the actors' frame of reference was contact with the municipal cultural sector, cultural heritage, art and art-oriented activities featured high in the contents of the planned activities.

This publication is based on critical reflection on the practices involved and its aim is to depict and analyze the different stages of the KUULTO action research and to seek answers to the following questions:

1. What kinds of means/actions did the local actors come up with and implement in their efforts to remove barriers to participation and increase the opportunities of people/local residents to take part in cultural activities?

2. What kinds of methods and practices were created to activate people/the local residents to participate in the actions and the related decision making?

3. Were sustainable practices achieved; and

4. What kinds of development needs for cultural policy were revealed by the KUULTO process?

The entitlement to solve the main problem is ultimately grounded in the Constitution of Finland and various ratified international conventions. (Kangas 2015, 52-53.) Underlying all these are the concepts of equality, equitability and democracy. For example, according to Section 16 of Chapter 2 of the Constitution of Finland (Educational rights), "the public authorities shall, as provided in more detail by an Act, guarantee for everyone equal opportunity to receive other educational services in accordance with their ability and special needs, as well as the opportunity to develop themselves without being prevented by economic hardship." Other sections in the Constitution, such as 11 (Freedom of religion and conscience), 12 (Freedom of expression), 13 (Freedom of assembly and freedom of association), 17 (Right to one's language and culture), and 22 (Protection of basic rights and liberties) also endeavor to ensure that everyone has the right to develop her/himself.

The actions taken by public authorities to ensure people's right to develop themselves apply, for example, to access to information, scientific and artistic activities and opportunities to enjoy arts and practice physical activities. Public authorities carry out their responsibility to guarantee these rights by, among other things, maintaining and supporting libraries and cultural and sports institutions as well as by subsidizing the practice of science, arts and sports.

Cultural rights, such as, for example, everyone's right to participate in cultural life, are protected by a number of international conventions. Among them are e.g. the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (6/1976), the Convention on the Rights of a Child (which Finland ratified in 1991, 60/1991) and, as the most recent, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (which Finland ratified in 2007).

Finland ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1975 and it includes an accession (61976), which entered into force on 3 January 1976. Article 15 of the accession is central to the goals of the local KUULTO projects:

1.   The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone:

    a) To take part in cultural life:

    b) To enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications;

    c) To benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

2.   The steps to be taken by the States Parties to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include those necessary for the conservation, the development and the diffusion of science and culture.

3.   The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to respect the freedom indispensable for scientific research and creative activity.

4.   The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the benefits to be derived from the encouragement and development of international contacts and co-operation in the scientific and cultural fields.

This publication has the following structure:

Chapter 2 examines how equal opportunities in cultural participation has been shaped and strengthened as a Finnish cultural policy goal. International organizations in their active role as definers and "modelers" of the goal have had a marked impact on the contents of national cultural policies.

Chapter 3 concretizes the different stages of the KUULTO action research. A detailed description of how these stages were realized not only illustrates the diversity of the data gathered for the research and in the range of the implemented actions but also contains an evaluation of the reliability of the research.

Chapter 4 inquires what kind of local operating environments enabled and enhanced the embedding of the change produced through the actions into permanent (sustainable) practices and what kind of operating environments presented barriers to the formation of permanent practices.

Chapter 5 ties in with an analysis of the local action plans and their implementation. The target of change was the activation of local residents and their participation in cultural activities through the work of the local actors.

Chapter 6 presents the local actors and the members of the KUULTO expert group as actors engaged in the making of cultural policy who, making use of the new,

reflexive information produced by the change-oriented action research, create a cultural policy agenda for more equal opportunities to participate in cultural activities. The pursuit of common good is collaboratively generated by the local actors and the experts in administration.

Chapter 7 is a discussion on how the action research approach was applied in KUULTO. It also addresses some research ethical questions, on the basis of which the reliability of the research can be evaluated.

This publication is based partly on the material collected in the publication *Kangas, Anita (2015), Koetellut kulttuuritoiminnot – KUULTO-toimintatutkimuksen tulokset* and partly on the descriptions of empirical case studies published in Kangas, Jakonen & Havimäki, 2014, *Osallistumista ja aktivointia – KUULTO-toimintakokeilun matkassa*. Susan Heiskanen has translated these texts into English.

2.   CULTURAL PARTICIPATION AS AN AIM IN FINNISH CULTURAL POLICY

Enabling participation in culture for all is a longstanding question for cultural policy throughout the world. Already in the 1960s international organizations (such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe) as well as researchers (cultural sociology, leisure studies, the Frankfurt School and critical research) started addressing the issue that people did not have equal opportunities to participate in culture.

   Back then the term "cultural activity" was used in reference to activities based on the contents of arts and cultural heritage, which from an administrative view-point extended across the mandates of various ministries. A conference organized by UNESCO in Monaco (1967) concretized the scope of cultural policy and the variation in administrative practices between different countries:

> The following, in order of frequency, are the sectors put together in the countries considered: the narrowest grouping combines the traditional sectors of literature, arts and music in respect of the functions of creation, distribution and preservation (theatre, concerts, museums, libraries).
>
> Broadening progressively in scope, the ministry of cultural affairs may also cover: art education (at school, informal, professional); preservation of the national heritage (ancient monuments, sites, archives, of the written word

or sound recordings); cinema, books ; radio and television; adult education; organization of leisure-time activities and cultural tourism; town planning and architectural design; industrial design; popular science; sport. (UNESCO, 1969, p. 37.)

Cultural participation was defined to include cultural practices that may involve consumption as well as activities that are undertaken within the community, reflecting quality of life, traditions and beliefs. It includes attendance at formal and for-fee events, such as going to a movie or to a concert, as well as informal cultural action, such as participating in community cultural activities and amateur artistic productions or everyday activities like reading a book. Cultural participation covers both active and passive behaviour. It includes the person who is listening to a concert and the person who practices music. The spread of digital technologies will make possible widespread cultural participation and interaction that previously could not have existed on the same scale. Digital technology could also make the values of a democratic culture salient to us because it offers the technological possibility of widespread cultural participation.

These were the premises for the hegemonic narrative that international organizations and their strong member states (in this case France and the US) produced to serve as the basis for the development of national cultural policies.

New concepts were introduced in international discussion (cultural development, democratization of culture, cultural democracy, socio-cultural animation, cultural rights), alongside new practices through which attempts were made to strengthen the status of culture (arts and cultural heritage) and cultural policy in nation states. One key goal was to work towards equality in access to and participation in cultural activities. National cultural policies pursued the goal by paying attention to the removal of barriers to participation caused by regional and social factors.

In the course of the development of welfare states measures for enhancing the quality of leisure time and increasing the opportunities for the consumption of culture gained momentum. Subsequently, a separate public service system was constructed for the culture sector, especially in Nordic countries and Western Europe. This was also the case in Finland, where a strong emphasis on the availability and accessibility of cultural services at the end of the 1970s strengthened and reformed cultural services and activities both locally and at regional and national level. At that time the Finnish Government, for example, appointed more than 30 parliamentary committees or working groups with the task of developing art and cultural institutions and schools as well as the art and culture administration to better look after the dissemination of cultural services and enhance equality in access to the services. A key objective was to enable the participation of audiences in the development of the content of cultural activities as well.

A clear shift also took place in both the private and public economy of culture, which strengthened the field. As the economic upswing continued in Finland well into the 1980s, structural reforms could be carried out, which led to the birth of new structures and a consequent emergence of new actors in the cultural sector. New laws were enacted: The Municipal Cultural Activities Act was passed in 1980, and laws that aimed to regularize basic education in arts and the operations and administration of art institutions were adopted in 1992. They bolstered local cultural policies and the roles of actors in the cultural sector. Various studies and statistics (Ajankäyttötutkimus, 2009; Liikkanen, 2006) have showed that after that period of vigorous actions Finns started to present themselves as active consumers of culture.

The economic depression in the 1990s, alongside administrative reforms of various kind (new public management and new governance), had a profound impact on public service structures at large. In 1994 Finland joined the EU and started to utilize EU funding in various forms. The ideological shift towards project society was visibly reflected in project funding, program-based planning, management by results, reliance on framework legislation, a new kind of entwinement of the private and the public sector and in the replacement of hierarchies with networks (Heiskanen, 2001; Rantala & Sulkunen, 2006, 8–9). Concretely the shift was reflected as operations at all levels of administration, including municipal cultural sectors (Kangas, Heiskanen & Hirvonen, 2002; Saukkonen, 2014; Kangas & Pirnes, 2015).

The next economic downturn at the end of the 2000s, coupled with various new municipal reforms, brought about many changes especially in municipal cultural services. Structures weakened as small and even some of the medium-sized municipalities started to cut back staff in their cultural departments and endeavored to make their service organizations more effective by incorporating different sectors concerned with service provision. Emphasis was increasingly placed on the importance of different levies and fees in the funding of operations and activities. The financial problems had of course already emerged during the last recession, but their effects remained smaller. This can largely be explained by the fact that a significant part of the support for culture in Finland is funded by revenues from Veikkaus, the Finnish national betting agency, and they are distributed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. These revenues grew during the recession and partly made up for the cuts in the ministry's budget. Now inequality and differentiation in the organization of cultural activities increased between the municipalities. The rise of levies in, for example, basic education in arts for children and young people, which was regarded as important in cultural policy agendas, was rapidly reflected as a decline in participation and eroded equal access among children and young people. (Kangas & Ruokolainen, 2012; Taiteen perusopetuksen alueellinen saavutettavuus, 2012, 2014; Kangas & Halonen, 2015.)

Finnish national cultural policy is committed in its goals to attempting to solve an equation where the random variables are participation in culture and cultural rights, art education, professional artists, professional cultural and art institutions, cultural heritage and sustainability of culture, cultural entrepreneurship and export, and cultural economy with its various constituents.

Finding solutions to the equation means balancing attention to different viewpoints – the principal tensions being the promotion of art on the basis of the ideal of 'art for art's sake' on the one hand and the enhancement of the economic and welfare impacts of art and culture through the instrumentalizing approach, on the other. National cultural policy measures are articulated in legislation, strategies/agendas and programs prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture, in annual budget proposals at different administrative levels and as political decisions taken by the Minister of Culture and Education. In the background of all these there may be memos and reports prepared through the work of different expert groups. Extensive work in the framework of committees where different political viewpoints are integrated and large-scale schemes with comprehensive action plans bringing together different societal points of view are proposed have today become rare.

The general national strategies that are most central to local and regional cultural policies were outlined for the first time in 1974, when the report of the Committee on Cultural Activities was published (Kulttuuritoimintakomitean mietintö, 1974). It reaffirmed the principles of welfare state based cultural policy, with an emphasis on equality. Cultural services were defined as social services and every municipality was required to establish its own cultural administration to produce the service. The state took part in the effort by (partially) funding the service. The status of professionals in the cultural field was strengthened as the number of study places available in cultural education was increased significantly in universities and polytechnics (although the number started to strongly decline already in the 2010s). These measures concretized the cultural political efforts of the state towards ensuring that at municipality level all residents had the opportunity to access and participate in culture.

The goals of national cultural policy have later been reformed based on the information produced by different committees, expert groups or government reports. In many cases international agendas were to be found in the background, expressed in, for example, the recommendations and agreements produced at the international conferences of, for example, UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the European Union, which were sometimes materialized in legislation (directives). The produced materials served for their own part as bases for the cultural policy goals entered in the programs of the Government of Finland.

One example of a report that brought notable changes to earlier cultural policy goals was the Kupoli report published in 1992 (Kulttuuripolitiikan linjat -toimikunta,

1992), which sought solutions to questions connected to the economic recession and measures to enhance internationalization. It endeavored to conceptualize the change and, through its proposals and by recognizing the seedlings of project society, to some degree to also change the administrative structures of old institutions.

The reports published in the early 2000s centered on reflections striving to renew practices in the field of art and culture from the viewpoint of content and digitalization. There was especially strong faith in the positive effects of digitalization on increasing equal opportunities for participation in culture. A strategy and action plan extending to 2010 with goals concerning the role of culture in information society (Kulttuuria tietoyhteiskunnassa – Strategia, 2010 ja toimintaohjelma; 2003) was prepared by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. The concepts of creativity and creative economy, which were gaining ground in international agendas, also rose to the fore in Finnish cultural policy discussion in 2003, and the national Creativity Strategy prepared by the Finnish Government was completed in 2006. (Luovuusstrategiatyön yhteistyöryhmä, 2005, 2006.) These instruments were accompanied with measures aimed at developing cultural export.

Concurrently with these broad-scale reforms, the Minister of Culture initiated a project for mapping the ethical dimensions of cultural policy from the premise of cultural rights and formulating guidelines for evaluating the ethics of cultural policy and developing tools for the assessment. The report "Fair ethics? Ethical dimension of cultural policy and cultural rights" (2006) paved the way for discussion. Linking in with this discussion, the accessibility of arts and culture was reflected on in a committee that prepared an action plan for the Ministry of Education and Culture for 2006–2010. The committees' report played an important role in specifying definitions of key concepts in cultural policy:

> Cultural supply is accessible when different communities can use it and participate in it as easily, with as few obstacles as possible... Accessibility also means equal treatment of people and nondiscrimination. No person can be placed in a worse position due to origin, age, gender, disability or other personal characteristic. In the case of minority and special groups it may be necessary to use positive special treatment to ensure that true equality is realized with these groups.

> The accessibility of culture can be improved by removing obstacles to participation.

> The obstacles may concern sensory capabilities, the provision of information, difficulties with understanding, attitudes, physical or financial factors and shortcomings in decision making. A precondition for good accessibility is that producers and financiers of cultural services and those who decide about the funding are aware of the existing obstacles and means to remove them. Most

of the obstacles exist due to ignorance and unintentional attitudes. .. (Taiteen ja kulttuurin saavutettavuus, 2006, 11.)

In effect, the themes of cultural participation stemming from the 1960s and 1970s reemerged in the 2000s. The Member States of UNESCO adopted the Cultural Diversity Declaration at the General Conference in November 2001. In the area of content the discussion focused on cultural rights and cultural diversity:

Cultural rights are an integral part of human rights, which are universal, indivisible and interdependent.... All persons have therefore the right to express themselves and to create and disseminate their work in the language of their choice, and particularly in their mother tongue; all persons are entitled to quality education and training that fully respect their cultural identity; and all persons have the right to participate in the cultural life of their choice and conduct their own cultural practices, subject to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Cultural participation was included in the idea of cultural diversity and cultural rights. The Cultural Diversity Convention encouraged an intense debate at international level on the issues of cultural diversity and cultural rights. However, at that time those dimensions were given notably less attention than, for example, the themes of creativity and creative economy, and their derivatives.

3. CONSTRUCTION OF THE KUULTO ACTION RESEARCH

The KUULTO (Activating Cultural Participation in Local Communities) project was initiated as a cultural policy measure by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture in 2011. The bases for its reasoning were the reports of the Ministry of Education and Culture (e.g. Kangas & Kivistö, 2011; Kulttuuritoimijoiden, luovan talouden ja palvelutuotannon toimintaedellytykset Suomessa alueittain 2011), various other investigations and researches connected to the wellbeing impacts of arts and culture (e.g. Konlaan, 2001; Liikanen, 2003, 2010; Hyyppä & Liikanen, 2005; Staricoff, 2006; Kilroy, Garner, Parkinson, Kagan & Senior, 2007; Belfiore & Bennett, 2007; Tavano Blessi, Grossi, Sacco, Pieretti & Ferilli, 2016) and an initiative taken by the researchers at the University of Jyväskylä.

The aims of KUULTO were to increase people's participation in cultural activities, remove various obstacles to participation and solve problems related to them, interlinking action and research. The obstacles were seen as connected to increasing inequality between regions or as caused by social and financial problems/factors in people's lives. Another important objective was to offer municipal residents opportunities to participate in decision making concerning cultural activities and services and in the development of cultural activities through different systems of feedback provision.

Action research is an approach that endeavors to induce change in social practices and to study these changes and the processes that have led to successes and failures in bringing change into effect. The research is systematic dialogue between practice and theory aimed at solving a practical problem. (Lewin, 1948, 1951; Stringer, 2007; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Greenwood & Levin, 1998.) Action research involves various important ethical questions that need to be kept in mind throughout the process (Boser, 2006). In the KUULTO action research the following questions

were defined: Whose need for change does the research proceed from? Who defines the need for change? Who prepares the action plan? What is the role of the participants in the preparation of the action plan? Who assesses the results, from whose perspective are the results evaluated? Does the action research remain at the level of mere legitimization of an action plan defined and prepared by administration?

The observed inequality in people's opportunity to participate in cultural activities was the practical problem for which the KUULTO project, as an action research, sought solutions. As an action research, KUULTO largely joined in with the research tradition of "organization development" (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). It was a systematic learning process where actors at different levels and in different positions worked purposefully and methodologically, while applying critical reflection and maintaining their openness to unexpected, even surprising situations that arise in the action. The situations of assessment sought to achieve new kind of insight, development and change in the context of the action.

As the goal was to enhance the participation of municipal residents in the development and decision making concerning the content of cultural activities, measures were applied that were methodologically based on Freire's theories of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1972) and Boal's ideas of The Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, 1985). It was a question of finding ways to activate people by means of art (theatre, dance or visual expression), proceeding from people's everyday lives and needs in the construction of motivation to participate. The action occurred at grassroots level and was based on dialogue. Oral tradition, social/collective memory and politics of memory also became important frameworks for new ways to activate people. (Anastasio, 2012; Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003; Ritchie, 2003.)

Action research is practice-oriented and problem-centered. It is also politically and socially conscious. (Hilsen, 2006.) Its effect also extends beyond the groups of people that are directly involved in a given research project. This was also the case with KUULTO, as it served as a laboratory for the development of the kind of methods which could during and after the process be transferred to other municipalities.

KUULTO had an expert group established for the project, a fulltime coordinator and part-time employees designated to the research, and they each had their own specific roles. The members of the expert group were working at the ministries (Education and Culture, Finance, Economic Affairs and Employment), National Board of Antiquities, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities or Federation of Swedish Municipalities in Ostrobothnia for Education and Culture. The expert group was hoped to have an active role as the project proceeded and seek solutions for the problems faced by the local actors during the action research. As the group was made up of public officials and experts, the potential solutions in the KUULTO action research were expected to especially concern new practices relating to restrictive administrative obstacles and their removal. This role of active

experts was hoped to inspire the local cases to seek out genuinely new solutions and models in their action plans.

The coordinator served as a liaison for the practical actions. The research team was responsible for the overall action research entity and, together with the participants in the local action plans, sought solutions for the problems arising in practice through discussion and development, using the assistance of the expert group and information based on research.

In the process of action research the stages of planning, action, analysis and reflection cyclically follow one another, with the aim of developing and assessing the action on each round (Lewin, 1948; Kangas, 1979; Kemmis &McTaggart, 1988).

The figure below depicts the process of the KUULTO action research by presenting its stages during the time period 2011–2015.

FIGURE 1. *Stages of action research in KUULTO*
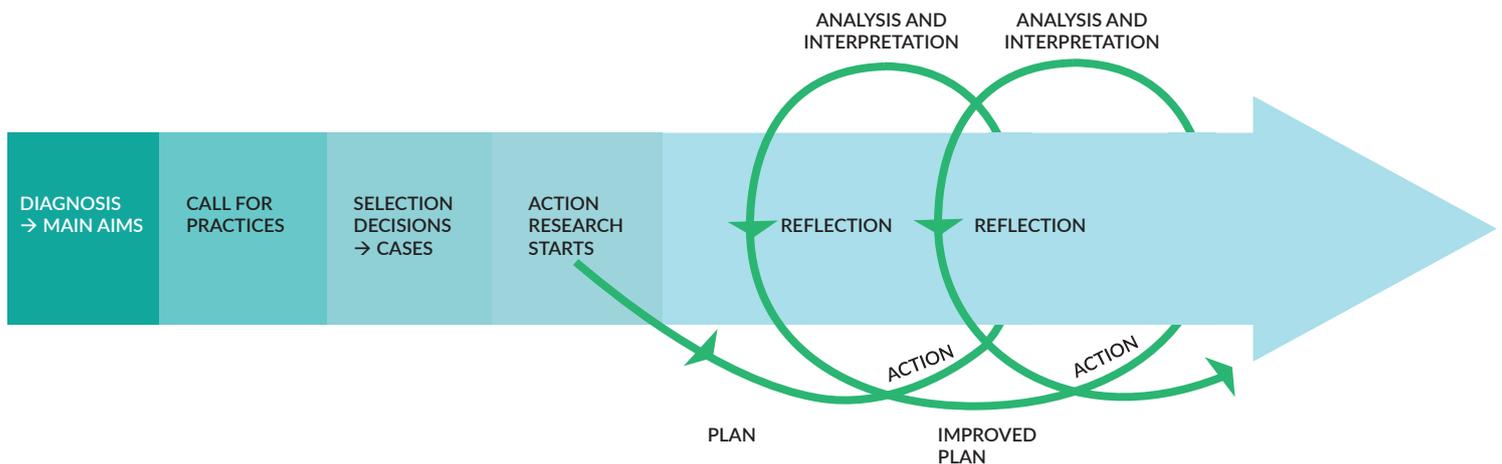
In the following chapters we offer a brief overview of the stages.

3.1   Diagnosis

As was remarked, KUULTO was preceded by several analyses in which the problems relating to regional cultural activities were outlined through research and in reports. They brought into attention the fact that there were growing inequalities in cultural participation. Hence a government report on the future of culture from 2010 (Valtioneuvoston selonteko, 2011), as an example, proposed a number of measures for renewing production practices in the area of cultural activities and in the operations of art and cultural institutions, alongside strengthening the role of artists, to enable equal opportunities for municipal residents.

According to a report on cultural subsidy and development polices in Finnish municipalities (Kuntien kulttuuritoiminnan tuki- ja kehittämispolitiikka, 2011) by Anita Kangas and Kalevi Kivistö, the financial resources for culture varied greatly between different municipalities. There was also a clear difference in cultural participation between residents of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area and other bigger cities in the regional centers and residents of other municipalities (densely populated and rural municipalities). The main problem in promoting local cultural activities was the marginal position of culture in local policies. Culture was included in municipal strategies, but proposals were not concretized in policy practice. There were also challenges in the development of cooperation between different administrative sectors. The report suggested a number of measures for strengthening policies on supporting and developing cultural activities in municipalities from the starting point that cultural services are basic and local public services for municipal residents and their accessibility needs to be ensured in municipalities.

Besides the national analyses, the diagnosis relied strongly on the local discussions that took place in the municipalities and/or associations and regions that applied to take part in the KUULTO project before the applications were written. There the problems of accessibility of and access to cultural services were approached locally and very concretely. The local applicants reflected on and suggested solutions that would encourage local actors to start up the development of activities. The applicants subsequently wrote down their suggestions in their applications. At this stage they also started defining the contents and emphases for the concepts of culture and cultural activities.

3.2   The application processes

The KUULTO project started at the beginning of December 2011. The Ministry of Education and Culture approved the project plan prepared at the University of Jyväskylä and the action research began. The first measure was a call for applications issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture for funding. The call was open for both municipalities and actors in the third and private sectors, who were hoped to

apply for funding and show an interest in developing local cultural policy, cultural activities and wider participation by the residents. The application criteria were presented as follows:

> The action should especially focus on municipalities where the expenditure per resident on the production of public cultural services has been low. Other municipalities may also apply if they are cooperating with the target municipalities.

> The applicants should create cooperation between the municipal cultural administration and other municipal administration sectors (social and health, youth, sports, library, basic education in arts etc.); between different municipalities; between municipalities and art and cultural institutions; and between the public and third and/or private sector.

> The applicant need not be a municipality but can be an actor of some other type. Cooperation with the municipal cultural administration and its commitment to the project as well the goal of increasing the accessibility of and access to services are necessary conditions for selection.

Before the application period ended KUULTO organized, together with the Ministry of Education and Culture, a widely publicized seminar (Vauhtia kulttuuriin/ Speed up Culture! 12 January 2012) where actors in the field of culture were invited from a broad range. A remarkably high number of participants (employees of regional and municipal organizations and associations, artists, researchers, representatives of ministries and central agencies etc.) attended the seminar, which confirmed the need to undertake a project of this kind. The guidelines connected to the application process, presented at the seminar and revised based on the comments received, were published at the KUULTO website to offer guidance to the applicants.

The applications were sent to the University of Jyväskylä, addressed to the KUULTO project. The application period ended on 20 January 2012, and the project received a total of 188 applications from all around of Finland. It seemed that the call for applications had reached an extensive spread throughout Finland; even though the highest number of applications came from the Uusimaa region, very many applications were also sent in from all the other regions of the country.

3.3   Selection decisions

An extensive expert group was selected for the KUULTO project (see p. 18), whose first task was to select the cases. The expert group carried out the selection of the local or regional cases for the KUULTO action research in two stages:

The group was first divided into thematic panels, which made their proposals on a limited number (7-12) of cases to be funded. To support their decision making,

the panels also invited experts to be consulted on the special themes mentioned in the applications. In the first stage the expert group chose altogether 32 ideas for further development. The decisions were guided by jointly laid out criteria.

> Special attention should be paid on the following aspects in the assessment of the application ideas and in the allocation of funding:
>
> – How does the activity affect the accessibility of and access to cultural services?
>
> – How and to what extent are the residents empowered in the action research?
>
> – Sustainability , i.e. what kind of possibilities are there for the activity to continue after the action research?
>
> – Does the applicant have partners that are relevant and committed to the realization of the project?
>
> – How innovative is the action plan?
>
> – How feasible is the plan and is it based on a diagnosed need; is the budget realistic considering the goals and does it contain a self-funding share?

In the second stage the expert group chose 22 local or regional cases out of the 32 applicants from the first stage. The University of Jyväskylä/KUULTO made written agreements with them where the principal objectives, operating models and size of the funding grant were defined. Emphasis was placed on the notion that in action research local actors should be in a central role in the development of novel measures, locally and through their own input. In other words, the local and regional actors were expected to produce change. They would set out to change their own practices and seek tools for increasing the municipal residents' opportunities to participate in cultural activities and to activate them to participate and develop new kinds of systems for feedback provision. The aim was to create new, sustainable practices for producing and organizing cultural activities and to produce models that could be applied also in other municipalities.

KUULTO turned into a unique action research consisting 22 case studies realized by different kinds of actors in 44 municipalities throughout Finland (Figure 2).

The main contents and evaluation of the KUULTO action research are published in two reports published in Finnish. "Osallistumista ja aktivointia; Kuulto-toimintakokeilun matkassa" (2014) and "Koetellut kulttuuritoiminnot – KUULTO-toimintatutkimuksen tulokset" (2015).

FIGURE 2 *KUULTO action research – geographical location of cases*
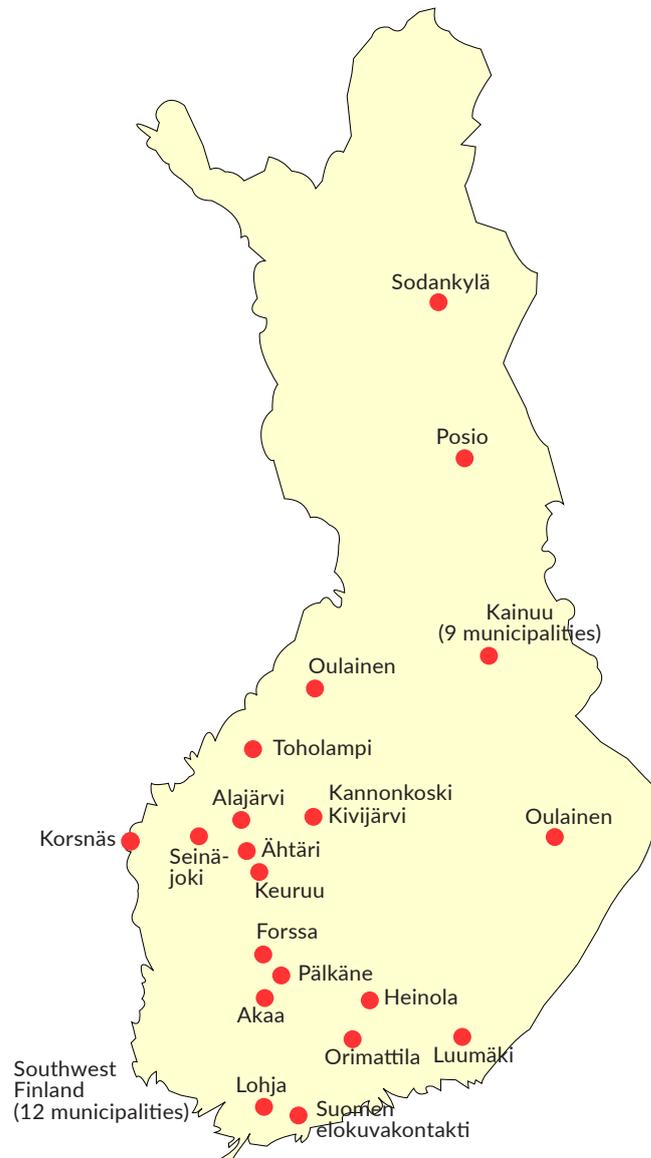
3.4   Starting the action research as practice and research

The local activities began at the beginning on June 2012. In most cases the local actors had an active role in preparing the application, diagnosing the problems and developing solutions for them already. When the decision came the practical work could fully begin. In four of the selected cases, however, an application process was undertaken to employ a person for the realization of the project, under the title of coordinator or cultural producer. The realization of entirely new activities with

clearly outlined content naturally wasn't an easy task for the people who came to work on the project either from other duties or straight from polytechnics or universities. The period was too short for fully grasping the overall objective and operating on full scale.

The action research begun by giving guidelines to the local actors on gathering data for the research: they were asked to produce journals where they would record all the applied measures (planning of different activities, actions, funding, partners, results, reflection and self-assessment). These data enabled continuous interaction between the local actors, the coordinator and the research. The local actors were also requested to document (photographs, videos, written reports, newspaper clippings) the efforts towards change and to use the potentials of social media (websites, Facebook, blogs, Twitter etc.) in sharing contents and experiences.

The first round of assessment and critical reflection regarding the ongoing action plans took place in Jyväskylä during 6–7 November 2012. During the two-day seminar the local actors presented the contents of their action plans and explained the reasons why they had come up with the particular concept, to be commented on by the other actors, the KUULTO expert group and the researchers. The discussions especially focused on the expected effects of the applied measures on achieving the goals set for the action research. What became evident at the seminar was the large extent to which the contents, the personals attitudes and competencies of the engaged actors and the operating environments and methods differed from project to project. Methods or good practices born through the different action plans were shared. The seminar served, however, first and foremost as a platform where the local actors could get feedback on their own activities.

Ethical questions were also raised in the discussions. Reflection was given to how the local residents should be approached, how certain interventions could be justified in the communities and whether private entrepreneurs engaged in the action research should be excepted to reveal their methods at the seminar, as the methods are an integral part of their own product and/or service business strategies.

The action research cases are briefly examined in this chapter by grouping the applied measures according to what kind of obstructions to the participation of local residents they aimed to remove. The principle objectives were to reduce different structural obstacles connected to the municipal administration, and to thereby enhance opportunities for residents to participate in municipal cultural services and the development of the municipality at large. The removal of geographical and social barriers in local cultural participation was the key goal of the KUULTO action research and many of the measures were focused on it (Table 1).

TABLE 1 *Breaking down barriers through the KUULTO action research*

Structural barriers	Cooperation with other sectors of municipal administration (social and health, education, planning and development)
	Cooperation with associations and cooperatives
	New resources for and new ways of e.g. hiring artists
	Using action research as a tool in development work
Barriers to finding ways of empowerment	Strengthening new forms of resident-led cultural activity: outreach cultural work, socio-cultural animation, cultural planning
	Artist, art instructor, cultural coordinator, cultural consultant etc. to activate people
	Diverse use of social media
	Organization of grassroots activities (working groups, associations, local community, etc.)
	Developing new ways to empower residents (culture probe, citizen panels) and developing new methods for feedback and assessing activities (culture card)
Geographic barriers	Bringing cultural activities and performances to villages and suburbs
	Traveling culture bus, including a library and events (exhibitions, music and theatre performances)
	Engaging professional artists (monitoring, directing, activating, interventions) in villages and suburbs
	Engaging community artists and e.g. cultural coaches, ambassadors, companions
	Collaborations with art and cultural institutions (organized, regular performances through either bus transportation or traveling performances)
Social barriers	Cultural activities to retirement homes, health care centers, daycare centers and for children and elderly people in home care
	Engagement of professional artists
	Organizing intergenerational activities and events
	Organizing cultural activities in remote areas
	Increasing wellbeing in the workplace through cultural activities
	Using cultural activities to strengthen community in municipalities that have undergone municipal mergers

3.5   Analysis and reflection on the actions after the first year

An overall assessment of the first year was carried out in May 2013 and it took place in the municipalities involved. The assessment data included the diaries kept by the actors, different administrative documents and descriptions of the actions, and the local actors' responses gathered through two questionnaires. In the municipalities the discussions were attended by all the parties that took part in the realization of the action research at local level, a researcher and coordinator from the University of Jyväskylä and, in a few municipalities, also municipal residents who participated in the activities. As the action research strived to develop measures and instruments to increase the accessibility of and participation in local cultural services and enhance the role of municipal residents in determining and locally developing the contents of cultural activities, the actors who were locally engaged in the actions had a lead role in the discussion. The action research in KUULTO meant that the assessment was based on dialogue between practice and research, between local actors and researchers.

The assessment concentrated on discussion on how and why the goals chosen for KUULTO were achieved and what spillover effects the activities may have had. The question why some of the goals were not achieved was also central. Reflection was given to how the action plan could be improved so that the goals could be achieved, and new plans were made, paying special attention to the problem areas from the perspective of the goal. KUULTO funding could not be used for the second action plan, which meant that it also involved preparing a funding plan for the continued activities.

The making of the new action plans in 2014 clearly showed what kind of sustainable practices KUULTO managed to generate; in other words, what kinds of new operating models could be developed and rooted in terms of their funding basis, and could thus be carried on in years to come without separate funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture.

This is a question that has often been left unexplored in projects and researches. Usually only the results gained during the project funding period are included in the final reports, to present grounds for continued project funding. A new, innovative project may receive funding and often even be started at the same time with a project/projects in their final stage, in which case reporting on the old project has to be minimized because the resources need to the focused on the new project. What follows from this pattern is that information and expertise is not aggregated through the project to be used by, for example, the municipal cultural sector. One could even claim that constantly changing projects may erode established structures because the new projects may be seen to replace certain basic functions and justify their discontinuation. For continuously developed/conceived new and innovative projects to be able to strengthen municipal cultural sectors, as an example, a strong

basic structure and strong actors are in the end a precondition for effective results from the projects.

3.6   Realizing and assessing the second action plan

New action and funding plans were prepared for autumn 2013 and the year 2014. The assessment of the actions was carried out in two phases at the turn of 2014 and 2015. It was based on dialogue between local actors, the expert group and researchers. The following steps were taken.

1. A questionnaire was sent to all the 22 local actors in the KUULTO action research. They were asked to describe, on the basis of their experiences, the operability and impacts (or effects) of the tested models (actions). They were also requested to analyze the challenges related to municipal cultural services in the short and in the long term and to reflect on how to respond to them. For example, how will municipal cultural activities be organized in the future and what different possibilities are there for ministries and regional administrations to support them? Furthermore, they were asked to reflect on what kind of expertise will the realization and development of cultural activities in municipalities require in the future?

2. A second set of data was gathered using the Delphi method (Linstone & Turoff, 1975; Donohoe & Needham, 2009). The Delphi panel was made up of officials at various ministries (Culture and Education, Social Affairs and Health, Economic Affairs and Employment), most of whom were members of the KUULTO expert group. The responses obtained by the questionnaire (above) sent to the local actors were taken as the starting point for the panel to reflect on the question of how cultural policy and cultural administration can serve to develop and expand on the changes achieved and measures applied through KUULTO and to find solutions to problems encountered in the local cases. The answers were gathered by sending an email questionnaire to the members of the panel. Analysis of the gained responses (anonymity guaranteed) served as a basis for the panel discussion at the meeting of the Delphi panel.

The panel discussion (and two group works) was expected to produce, with a future-oriented outlook and within its competencies, suggestions for changes that could enable people's participation in cultural activities by solving the described problems, and to prioritize the proposed measures. The results of the working groups were compiled for the panel to give feedback on, with the aim of reaching a consensus. The results are presented in the Chapter 6 of this publication.

4. IMPLEMENTING ACTION RESEARCH

4.1 Local actors and institutional change

The KUULTO action research purposefully sought to achieve change and turn the developed models into permanent practices in municipalities. According to the force field model introduced by Kurt Lewin (1958), planned processes of change usually consist of three changes: unfreeze, change and refreeze. The unfreeze stage is about getting to a point of understanding that change is necessary. In the change stage new ways to do things are sought out and an approach that seems promising is chosen. It is a transition towards something new and development of new operating models. In the refreeze stage the new operating model is realized and rooted in practice. All the three stages are pivotal to the success of change. The processes in the KUULTO action research can be seen to have proceeded according to this model.

The fundamental question in the assessment of KUULTO the change in action and the problems in achieving change is what factors affected the successful achievement of change.

According to Mahoney and Thelen (2010), what is essential to achieving change is, first, the veto-power of the defenders of the status quo in the political context of an institution's operating environment and, second, the extent to which the institution allows discretion for the proponents of change. Thelen (2004) examines gradual change and its consequences by categorizing it into four types: (1) if the environment has little veto power and the actors have little discretion, the change occurs in the form of 'layering', new tasks are added on top of old ones; (2) if the environment uses veto power but also allows discretion, the changes occur through a 'drift' in the environment; (3) if the environment does not exercise veto power but discretion is

not felt to be possible, the old institution is replaced with a new one through 'displacement'; and (4) if the environment does not exercise veto power and there is discretion, 'conversion', the interpretation of rules in a new way, may take place.

The point of departure is that change is a natural condition for institutions. As society changes the survival on an institution depends on how well it can adapt to changes in society, politics and markets (Thelen 2004). In institutionalism theories the concept of "path dependence" (Mahoney 2000) is used to describe a kind of momentum of slowness to explain why the institutional systems do not adapt to changes fast. Local action is embedded as a kind of method of governance, which is institutionalization of the interactive relationships between politics and administration. For example, the municipal institution has its own operating logic, methods of governance, which is not born alone from the actions of the individuals that are part of the institution but from the formal rules, standards, traditions, hierarchy formations, informal practices, courses of events and the emergence of collective action connected to the institution. The path dependence of these institutional arrangements can, according to Mahoney (2000), be explained through four different aspects: the increasing returns for the institution from the viewpoint of the participating actors; its functionality in relation to a broader context; exercise of power, which ensures the continuity of the institution; and legitimacy, based on which the institution is reformed. This makes it more complicated to find alternative solutions. There is resistance to change because change threatens the individuals' sense of security, disrupts routines and requires learning of new things. Change is expensive and difficult. Change often results from a brief crisis, a relaxation of rules or external intervention, and is followed by a longer trajectory of path dependence. (Powell 1991, 183–203; Jepperson & Meyer 1991.)

Institutional theories offer a useful basis for approaching the municipal institution and the contextual focus of this research project, the field of cultural activities and services. The KUULTO action research endeavored to produce change. A structural question (how can the participation of municipal residents in cultural activities and services be increased) had been presented through the reports prepared for the Ministry and Education and Culture and through various researches and statistics, for which the local actors in KUULTO were hoped to find solutions. In the past decades local municipal administration has undergone many changes where the objective has been to organize the cultural activities and services in new ways, similarly to other municipal services and to increase the accessibility of the activities and services. The trend has been to replace the traditional operating models of the municipal institution with more dynamic forms based on interaction between the private and the public sector. The change has been slow. The emphasis on supply in the developed solutions, which have mainly centered on increasing the services provided for the residents and/or focusing them differently, has also been problematic.

The goal of cultural democracy entails participation by the residents in the development of the activities and empowering them in the processing of cultural content. KUULTO pursued these objectives by encouraging municipal cultural sectors to develop new kinds of cooperation relationships and seek new vehicles for cultural participation through the engagement of artists.

Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell (1991, 67–74) explain the change that takes place in an organization through the concept of institutional isomorphism. Coercive isomorphism is caused by pressures exerted by other organizations on which the organization is dependent and by the expectations placed by society on how the organization should function. In mimetic processes organizations in turn model themselves on other organizations in order to, for example, correct their shortcomings. Normative pressures, in turn, the authors associate with the influences the professionals working in organizations derive from their own backgrounds and networks.

In all the KUULTO municipalities measures of various kinds were applied with the aim of enabling the residents' participation in cultural activities and decision making concerning the development of cultural activities. The funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture was a strong signal for the actors who were chosen to realize the action research. From the perspective of change it is very important how and to what extent the activities continued after the separate funding for the project ended. Based on the data on the KUULTO case studies, the defreeze and change can be said to have happened but there were problems in some cases when it came to refreeze.

The local cases can be categorized into five types according to the extent to which the activities have become embedded and funding has been secured:

1. Actor continues, action continues as core activity and funding is increased.

2. Actor continues, action continues and becomes embedded along with new cooperation relationships.

3. Action continues partially and through the municipal organization's internal solutions.

4. Action continues as the adoption and establishment of good work practices.

5. Action continues in that the measures are still in effect but in practice "the project fizzled out after the funding ended."

In the last two types the problems of continuing the activity were associated with reduced financial and staff resources. The activities were however seen to have benefited local cultural work. In some cases the activities continued, but they didn't receive support from the municipality, so they were continued alongside other activities.

Because the municipality did not have the will to continue. Cooperation with the municipal cultural administration was difficult throughout our whole project. One of the reasons why the activities ended was that many of the officials with whom we had started the cooperation left office and others took their place.

Continuing the activities would require a great deal of coordination, which we don't have the resources for.

The municipality had to make serious budget cuts and the entire municipal staff will be laid off in 2015. Due to the cut backs and lay-offs it is practically impossible to hire outside staff. The work carried out by the community will continue. The activities will be outsourced.

The only reason why the activities ended was the poor economic situation. The permanently employed cultural coordinator was on vacation and not there to speak up for the project, pitch it and reason in favor of it when the budget was being prepared.

Even though the activities did not continue, the KUULTO action research benefited the area in many ways. It introduced new work models which are still being employed, and highlighted the need to change the emphases of the local cultural policy. We discovered a new and important audience group. We identified remote areas that fell outside the cultural services in the town center and found new ways to bring art there.

Kuulto opened eyes to using new, open-minded methods in other spheres of cultural work as well.

4.2   Changes and sustainable practices – four types of actors

In the following chapters we categorize the KUULTO local cases by type, based on data derived from the assessment discussions and the actors' responses to the questionnaire. Drawing on Mahoney and Thelen's analyses, we assume that the actors' experiences regarding the degree of discretion they were allowed in the planning and realization of the activities and how the environment related to their operations affected whether and to what extent the activities were continued after the separate funding ended. The question about the degree of discretion for the actors to develop the activities and how the operating environment related to the undertaking (impeding or supportive) integrally ties in with use of power. The actors who felt like the environment impeded change (used 'veto power') and allowed them little discretion

were the most hard pressed, while the actors who felt that the environment did not impede change and allowed them a high degree discretion were in the best situation.

Based on these variables, and the ability of the local cases to produce models leading to sustainable practices, the cases were categorized into four types (fourfold table). The described types are constructions and some of the cases showed characteristics of more than one type (Table 2).

TABLE 2 *Four types of the cases*

		OPERATING ENVIRONMENT	
		SUPPORTS	IMPEDES
EXTENT OF DISCRETION	HIGH	**SUCCESS**	**INNOVATOR**
	LOW	**INHIBITED**	**DOER**

1. Doer

As was mentioned above, the local actors who felt that the operating environment impeded changes strongly and allowed them a low degree of discretion were in the most problematic situation. Three of the KUULTO cases represent this type. Their activity did not continue after the action research. The actors did their best to achieve the goals of the action research and succeeded at creating new measures that reached audiences. The financial resources for the operations were low and in some cases also conflicts among the municipal staff and problems with taking responsibility in agreements had an impact on the discontinuation of the activities. The actors in the project were however well aware of their responsibilities and did good work in carrying out the action plans.

2. Innovator

The actors who felt like they were allowed a high degree of discretion (possibilities to develop and try out new models in their operations) but felt like the operating environment clearly impeded change were a challenging group from the viewpoint of the Kuulto action research. They were innovators, they achieved a lot, they received very good feedback on their work from the municipal residents and they produced many new operating models. The other actors in the operating environment did not support the started activity concretely. Implementing and maintaining rigid administrative practices, they found it hard to make room for new practices. A defensive

attitude stood in the way. There were six cases in KUULTO that represented this type and only one of them (where the environment was felt as less impeding and whose activity was based on a network) partially continued after the action research.

3. Inhibited

The third type included actors who had possibilities to enact a new mode of operation and root it, as they did not feel like the environment was impeding it. They felt however that they were not allowed discretion. There were many things that they felt were restricting their use of discretion (different operating cultures of the parties they were cooperating with, lack of appreciation of the activity they were realizing, insufficient information from the users). The actors also saw their own inadequate knowledge of how the municipal organization functioned as a restriction. This group is characterized as "inhibited" because the operating environment supported the activity and hoped that new models could be found to achieve the goals of KUULTO, but the actors' own internal feelings of inadequacy strongly stood in the way of an active and independent approach. There were four cases of this type, and with three of them the activity still continues partially.

4. Success

The fourth type were actors who felt like they were allowed discretion and that the operating environment did not impede their work. The cooperation between the municipalities and the different municipal administrative sectors worked smoothly. The actors felt like the operating environment supported the activity and wanted/ required for them to develop new work models, and this was enabled by flexibility in the administration and financial resources. There were about nine "successes", and all these became so firmly embedded that they were able to continue the activity, with support from the municipality as well, in autumn 2013, throughout 2014, and from there on.

5. ACTION RESEARCH
– CASES FROM PRACTICE

5.1. Diversification of production models in cultural activities

The provision of cultural activities is often articulated through the concept of production. The result of the activity is a product (content in the cultural field), service or, often, a combination of both; it is a commodity that satisfies people's needs. The typical divisions in how production is defined are public and market production, product and service production, and group, batch (serial) and one-of-a-kind production.

Productization, i.e. planning and defining the qualities of a product so that a same product can be produced in several copies or several times, is an essential aspect in this context, as is value formation in the production chains.

In the KUULTO action research it is, through the special features of the project, a question of public production of services/content, which is mostly realized as one-of-a-kind or serial production. Here too, productization has an important role, while value formation and the logic of revenue generation are also significant. Production links in and is expected to meet with the demands of economic efficiency.

The KUULTO cases were realized in municipalities where the expenditure on cultural activities was below or clearly below average. The local actors aimed to produce sustainable practices and the separate funding for the action plans enabled

reformation in modes production. The applications and action plans often referred to cooperation with cultural entrepreneurs and the third sector. The aim was to bring about change in ways (in production, provision and organization) to enable access to activities and services for all municipal residents.

The following examples stand out among the successful outcomes of KUULTO, by introducing new models of operation and strengthening cross-sector cooperation in the municipalities:

1. Culture Bus, which was based on seamless cooperation between the municipal library and cultural sector. The competencies in both the library and the cultural field offered good basic resources for developing the activity. The diverse basis of the activity enriched the services provided by the bus, and the experiences in the bus inspired municipal residents to seek other activities offered by the cultural institutions. As the activity gained ground, the social and health sector also became interested in the concept, hoping to bring the bus to use in their service units as well. Moreover, the general municipal administration saw the bus as a possibility to distribute information about different municipal services and activities to the residents.

2. The KUULTO action research produced successful practices for cooperation between the municipal cultural administration, the social and health care administration (elderly services in various forms), educational sector (early childhood education and schools) and the municipal planning department (zoning, village development etc.). At best the activity was concretized to the extent that an expert group was established in the municipalities for the KUULTO project, with 2-3 representatives chosen from each sector, who shared the responsibility of the realization of the planned activities. The most clearly positive results were achieved when the directors of the different sectors facilitated change in their own domains, felt that the project was important and also publicly expressed it. In these cases all the parties involved saw the cooperation as something positive and inspiring also in terms of development of their own sectors. But at the same time the actors felt burdened by the cooperation, since the changes in the participating units were implemented as new tasks, without introducing other changes in the operating culture and the division of work and responsibility. This often meant an increase in the work load and could even lead to a reversion to old practices. In these cases the persons in charge would have needed to do a lot of committed work to support the change.

KUULTO also enabled the *formation of public-private partnerships*. Municipal cultural sectors have for many years already been applying different *PPP (public-private partnership) models*, partnerships based on the concept of new public

management, carried out through agreements between private and public sector actors. From the perspective of municipal economies these kinds of partnerships are of course useful in, for example, projects for construction of infrastructure where the competence and capitals of private companies can clearly be made use of. But also in different fields of culture developers of creative economy have worked towards developing partnership agreements.

Especially the following models and practices were tested in the cultural (service, content) production within KUULTO.

1. *Preparing texts for agreements between municipal cultural administrations and associations.* The applied agreement procedures were not regarded as a good model. What was however experienced as a positive aspect of the process was the gained learning concerning questions that should be asked in the preparation of agreement texts. What is the scope of the activity? How many actors are involved? What kind of prior experience of cooperation do they have? How much money does the agreement pertain to? What kinds of financial risks are there?

The agreement procedure was felt as cumbersome. The actors remarked that agreeing about the contents of the texts and preparing the agreement was too time-consuming. The contents need to be flexible. It would be useful to the actors if agreements would be modeled and simulated and results would be recorded and publicized at the websites of different networks and at the websites of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, focused at individual actors, enterprises (private and social enterprises) and third sector actors.

2. *The KUULTO project was realized by a private sector actor, for whom the municipal cultural sector had been outsourced entirely.* This proved to be an effective model in situations where there was strong trust between all the partners. It allowed the actor flexibility in hearing and activating the municipal residents and in organizing and developing the activity. With this model problems may however arise in defining and pricing the volumes of the activity as articulated in the agreement text. It may be difficult to, for example, take into account so called grassroots outreach work, which in itself is a complex dimension to define. The municipal administration needs to have an understanding of its overall responsibility in the functioning of the cultural sector even if the activity is realized by a private sector actor.

3. *Outsourcing certain parts of the KUULTO project to a private sector actor.* This model entailed many positive aspects but also certain problems. When private actors (cooperatives, private artists and producers) took part in the project already in the application phase and there was a strong basis of cooperation built

on past experiences the model worked very well. The private actors brought in new contents and had an activating effect, developed new forms of participation and changed practices in the cultural sector. They received excellent feedback from the other actors and participants and managed to increase the residents' and municipalities' commitment to the activity.

When problems were encountered in a few of the municipalities after the action research had ended it was because the municipal cultural sector had not managed to embed the realized activities into permanent practice. There were problems in finding the funding required for the continuation of the activity due to a downturn in the municipal economies. It became increasingly difficult to include the new activities born through change into the existing agendas, and it would have required giving up on some of the traditional modes of operation.

4. *Operatively diverse cooperation with the third sector*. There was a high degree of cooperation with the third sector – nearly all the cases engaged in it. Several successful forms of this kind of cooperation could be identified:

a) Cinema performances were held in the facilities of different associations in the municipality's villages. The associations provided refreshments and accompanied the performances with small exhibitions on the theme featuring products from the time the film was set in, etc. Continuation of activities of this kind presupposes that there are active associations with appropriate facilities in the villages.

b) The associations and villages/city districts organized events in alternating years, through which the residents from different parts of the municipality could get to know each other. Activities of this kind seem to have good potential to continue, as they do not require a commitment to organize an event every year and because the main interest is to introduce local activities to residents of other villages or city districts. This kind of activity can be compared to gift economy with its related cultural rituals. The activity is not based on direct benefit.

c) Change in the associations' operations and taking on responsibility for producing services. In one of the tested solutions a separate professionally operating group was formed inside the association who financed its operation through project work and service fees. This form of operation is not however uncomplicated from the viewpoint of voluntary work. Professional engagement in the project may easily distance the members and volunteers who join in from the association's core activity. As the number of employed professionals grows or the operations expand towards the production of payable services, changes may occur in the status of the members of the main association and the volunteers.

This issue was reflected on in the KUULTO assessment discussions and general questions concerning the principles of work in associations were raised: Is the voluntary work within the association still, as initially defined, based on force-lessness and civic motivation or does it appear that the employed professional project workers within the association are aiming to define the form and boundaries of the association's overall operations? It was emphasized that for the professionalization of associations to function effectively the association has to have a strong and committed team of core actors around it. The associations need, on the other hand, to ensure that the ideological drive and sense of responsibility of the voluntary actors committed to the project do not result in exhaustion or take away the pleasure of doing when efforts are made to professionalize the activity.

It was also pointed out in the assessment discussions that the professionalization of activities also entails the risk of increased hierarchization and bureaucracy. Practical questions relating to budgeting were also brought under reassessment.

Paku is an interesting example of how an association can respond to the need of a professionally produced service. Independent cultural producer Paku is a professionally operating instrument of its background association, Mikkolan Navetta and Muodonmuutoksia, a working group that collaborates with municipalities and the Aitoo education center. Paku was described as an actor floating above the association, meaning that neither one could operate swiftly enough alone in a complex network of cooperation. Paku is needed. On the other hand, it was described as a node actor that keeps in contact with different actors, individuals, communities, institutions, municipalities, the regional administration etc.

How can a group like this be separated from its mother organization towards more professional operations, to function more like a cultural producer? Thus far Paku has operated through the association's bookkeeping and funding. The association has, in other words, constantly been carrying out certain projects. A more permanent operating model inevitably needs to be created, but how? Along with Paku, the association's operations have expanded and their sources of potential funding have diversified. In a financial sense this shift has been very significant to the association.

Mikkolan Navetta has considered whether the current activity should continue under the association or should a different path be pursued. Will the purpose of the mother association change if the activity continues and expands there? ¨Do things need to change? Nobody wants to throw Paku out of the association. Certainly not.

There are however people engaged in the association who are not cultural actors and the emphases in the content tend to vary according to who happens to be on the board. Strategic clarification of the operations will be needed in the future.

5.2 Artists – new roles

One of the most important results of the KUULTO action research and its findings had to do with the productive impact of the work of artists in the local cases. The engagement of artists played a very central role in the cases in Kainuu, Kontionlahti, Posio, Pirkanmaa and Southwest Finland. The "new cultural policy" of the 1970s in Finland, which culminated in an articulation of cultural policy based on the welfare state, aimed to activate people towards different forms of cultural activity: to participate in cultural performances and practice culture themselves and to take part in the development of cultural activities in the form of defining contents and planning measures. The goal was based on two grounds: (1) regional dissemination of cultural services is not a stand-alone policy measure, people's interest in culture needs to be increased and enhanced; (2) participation in cultural activities encourages people to also participate in the development of their living environment more generally. "Culture for all and a culture of all" was the motto that summed up the core of the new cultural policy, which aimed through action for cultural democratization and cultural democracy. Socio-cultural animation as a concept held within the goal of activating people, and here the artists had an important role. They were brought out of institutions to interact with people directly. (Kangas, 2004.)

The goals of the KUULTO action research are akin to that approach, and similar principles were applied in many of the action plans by employing artists to activate people and take part in the development of content for the cultural activities. The tools the artists used for increasing cultural participation among municipal residents and the specific target groups were purposefully defined and analyzed in the assessment meetings. The conclusion was that art is an important frame of reference for the applied tools. The activation methods and development of cultural activities took place in the communities (villages and city districts, retirement homes, with young people and with children in family daycare). The artists' own artistic work and their interaction with the communities interlinked. The artists' work methods were also characterized by cooperation/partnerships with members of other professions.

5.2.1 Activating people in the community

Posio

In the municipality of **Posio** the goal was to activate the residents of one village, Sirniö, to participate in cultural activities. The village was going through a strong stage of transition in the population structure, which also entailed a threat of economic stagnation. The local actors hoped to come up with tools for enhancing the residents' wellbeing. The community artists settled down in the village and started to create, together with the residents, possibilities for different types of cultural activities. What presented itself as the most central platform for bringing the community

together was the production of a musical drawing from local history and oral tradition (Miekka-Jussi). The artists wrote the script in the village, living and breathing it there; together with the villagers they gathered cultural heritage material and adapted it for the musical. They organized workshops in different fields of art. The community house was also renovated and brought to use in its freshened-up form. A belief that anything can be done in the village was born. The interaction between the villagers and the artists was diverse:

> We concretely lived in the village of Sirniö. In the community house we concretely grabbed brushes into our hands and painted the walls; reviving tradition/village culture for our own part. The Sirniö community house looks like it was straight out of a Kaurismäki movie, it's such an amazing place and the villagers themselves are gradually starting to realize it, too. Before the performances of the musical the villagers came over to clean up the house and so we got to know them. And when we were cleaning up the place again after the performance we asked what kind of things had taken place in the house in the past, and so it all started. We sat there for an hour and a half and went through the history of the house. It had kind of been forgotten and now it came back. It was a lively situation, with all the older villagers around to tell their stories. It was important that the house had been brought back to life, and we suggested, based on the stories we heard, that the performances should be followed by a dance, which used to be common practice in the community house in the past.

The community artists described their own work method and its principles as follows:

> My point of departure as an artist is that the community has resources within itself. Employing an outsider, some professional skill from outside the community, offers, in a positive sense, a fresh pair of eyes. We can introduce new practices that may have been used somewhere else, offer them as an alternative.

> Our work concretely begins by getting to know the place and talking with the people who live there. It is a task of mapping the possibilities available in the place, the village, where we are. The village musical was the frame for our action; the schedule of KUULTO focused our activities. We lived in the village, in the reality that the musical is about.

> The artist also benefits from this kind of work, it's not just something you give out, and you get to pass on your own enthusiasm. As an outsider in the community my task is to highlight the wonderful things and people there and be inspired by them.

The most important thing was that the artists forged a faith in the residents that just about anything can be done in the village, as long as there is incentive. Even though we are working on a fictional performance, the interaction and encounters with people are real and empower us also in everyday life.

We didn't set out to reach those who were already doing things, but started at the very grassroots level, trying to reach the people who had not taken part in cultural activities before. In a small locality it's like a snowball, the way in which things work, by slowly building up participation. The practical task and the idea proceed almost on their own and more people have joined in all the time.

The artists tried to work in a way that the activity wasn't entirely dependent on them, in other words, in the course of the KUULTO action research they would, optimally, become redundant. When the project ended the artists moved out. They did however take part in the establishment of a new group in the municipality, through which the educational and performance activities continue. The villagers have been activated and they believe that the village can utilize the results of KUULTO also in the future.

The people of Posio have been continuing the activities independently after the separate project funding ended, supported by different municipal administrative sectors, the cultural department, the adult education center and the library.

Akaa

The city of Akaa, located near the regional capital, Tampere, was born in 2007 through a municipal merger. The city's new name, Akaa, has divided opinions among the residents; some of them prefer not to use the name at all, but speak of the different city districts instead. The city districts make up a divided operating environment where the volume of available culture services varies. The KUULTO project in Akaa had, besides its principal goal, also a specific goal, to strengthen municipal identity through participation in cultural activities.

The community art project "Kolme toivomusta Akaasta" (Three Wishes on Akaa) set out to explore the residents wishes and dreams about their shared place of residence. The project consisted three performing arts workshops and three culture clubs held during autumn 2012 and spring 2013. Inspired by the methods of Augusto Boal's "The Theatre of the Oppressed", the Kiito cultural cooperative organized a workshop in three urban areas in Akaa (Toijala, Viiala, Kylmäkoski), where the participants' hopes and dreams concerning Akaa were put in the form of a performance, using methods of collaborative scriptwriting. Each workshop culminated in a performance at a culture club. The clubs, which were held once in each district, were open

to audiences of all ages and the performers included, besides the workshop group, also local skilled performers across district boundaries. The audience's wishes were heard and seen when the municipal residents were invited to write them down in a "book of wishes", which was presented to the decision makers of the City of Akaa at the end of the year of the KUULTO project.

The artists described the emphases of their work, and the connected reasoning in the frame of reference of community art, as well as the applied work methods and content of the practical work in these words:

Community art is activity coached by a community artist, which looks like the community it represents and has its own ways and rules of play. In community art the process is usually more important than the end result. A theme important to the community is dealt with by means of art. The artistic means, the frame, are designed by the artist, but the content arises from the participants. In community art the publicizing of the outcome can take place amidst the authors or a selected audience, or even expanded into a full-scale public performance.
Of the community art methods I am most familiar with the methods of drama and I have mostly used Boalian techniques.

A community art workshop always begins with a drama agreement, in which I briefly explain the work and stress the voluntary nature of participation and the notion that watching is (also) participation. The tools of drama are powerful and you have to be alert when using them. A drama workshop usually proceeds in the following pattern: Start, raising of energy flow, actual content, laying back and final acting out. It is important to allow the participants moments of rest where they can reflect on and present themes. In work like this the role of the artist changes: you have to listen more. You have to be interested in the community you are working with. You have to be conscious of your own role. I always stress that I'm not a therapist, I'm an artist. When the rules of play are clear to everybody it is safer to work together.

The methods of drama developed by Augusto Boal are close to my heart. What I like about Boalian drama is the concreteness and clarity. It aims for change. Change is perceived as possible and drama techniques are devised to support change. Boalian drama is focused on a given subject. It examines the conditions and tries to render hidden things visible. I believe that the fictive frame and the double reality created through it make the participants freer to formulate their own experiences than they would be in a "mere" discussion setting. This work method also enables the engagement of all members of the community, children and old people as well, as the community artist is obliged to design the activity so that it is possible

for everyone to participate. And only by working together with people can one achieve something that is authentic from their point of view.

In the workshops we'd enact the dreams of the given city district as "dream bubbles". Dream bubbles are performative dreams.
The participants in the workshops got to define themselves whether they wanted the outcome to be public, whether they would present it at the club.

The outcomes are performed at the clubs; the outcomes of the different workshops are rendered visible.

People can't be forced to make culture/art. We need to reach the people who are interested but we need to also hang back. Lower the threshold for them. We have been quite successful at reaching them.

The successful results of the action research were enabled by the engagement of a group with a strong background in professional art. The continuation of the work is important from the perspective of activation. This question was also reflected on in the KUULTO assessment discussion in Akaa:

This kind of a community art approach is very essential explicitly to the development of cooperation between the local social and health sector and the cultural sector and also to the development of the area at large. Also other areas nearby will be able to benefit from Akaa's experiences, which have shown that culture has no boundaries. There is talk about new municipal mergers all the time. In these situations cultural activities are ingredients for the construction of community.

It is difficult to understand others. We are always strange to each other and we have different conceptions of reality. We can however sometimes experience something together and thereby reach a momentary understanding. If you have influenced the birth of the experience yourself, had an active role in it, the impact of that moment is even deeper. That's what I believe.

People's relationships to the word are today often strongly dictated by what goes on inside our heads. We all have a whole bunch of learnt prejudices, fears and thoughts. Physicality, and doing things ourselves – concretizing things with our own bodies, there we fall short. There is a lack of spaces where we could formulate our own feelings and experiences so that they become visible to others. It is these kinds of spaces that I want, for my own part, to enable and produce. And I feel that methods of community art lend themselves well to these purposes.

Kontiolahti

In the municipality of Kontiolahti a similarly oriented role as that of community artists was taken on by a village researcher. The basic premise of the action plan was to activate the villagers through identification of cultural heritage, by strengthening it and using it. The basic idea was to chart out culture in the villages and to offer tools for processing it. People's memories and finding possibilities to share them were the starting point. "Culture" was not brought to the villages; the aim was, instead, to strengthen existing, possibly even hidden, local cultures.

The researcher described the premises of the activities, which in an interesting way bound different generations together to discuss the cultural heritage connected to their village:

> The Selkie village association and school have since 2008 been reviving the tradition of storytelling in the context of village names. Even though there are similarities in place names throughout our whole big country, each village has its special features, and together the names form a story landscape.

> When the KUULTO funding came in in 2012 we expanded the activities to new villages and started developing them further. In the village of Paihola we applied an entirely new approach. First we organized a storytelling evening dealing with the place names. There the older and younger generations in the village met and exchanged their stories. Next, we tried out an even more advanced step in the renewal of the tradition. Some of the place names had been drowned under the construction of a hydroelectric plant and were in danger of being forgotten completely. Furthermore, Paihola has been a site for fishing landlocked salmon, a species that is rare even on a worldwide scale, and has become extremely endangered in the area after the construction of the plant.

> The idea was born that the village could start painting its own history and locations. So in spring 2013 we organized together with the Kontiolahti case in KUULTO a painting course inspired by nature photographer Matti Pihlatie's photographs taken in and around Paihola and by Pielisjoki River. The villagers painted places that were important to them personally and the children who took part in the course painted their own local routes and meaningful places in the village.

> An art exhibition was held at the schoolhouse in April 2013 and it was a big success. The exhibition moved from the schoolhouse to the Kontiolahti Library. Thus reflection on remembered and forgotten histories took

on entirely new forms as the villagers painted and came to deal with the theme of success and change that way.

During the KUULTO project we organized similar storytelling evenings on place names in the villages of Puntarikoski and Kunnasniemi, where stories also started to pour out.

– Our story landscape came to life again.

Here the basis of activating people is connected to the idea of finding universal points of identification and common denominators, with special features that may even be subject to debate among the local residents. The chains of meanings connected to them may have changed in different times along with changes in the contexts of the discussions around them.

Stories related to place names proved to be a good starting point in activating people, as through them the villagers also found new, special meanings for the names. The cooperation across generations brought another level to the discussion: the children's perceptions on the places they found meaningful inspired new significances and comments and responses from members of the older generation.

The activation work placed emphasis on the village's own resources and empowerment:

The villages need to get their voices heard. If the activity is evidenced in the village, it works. It has to proceed from the village's own reality. The reality told through the place names is present in this moment. Different realities; the lives people have lived, the space defined by administrations. An empty landscape – a lived landscape; the story landscape. All this is not production periphery.

5.2.2 Socio-cultural cooperation

The impacts of culture on people's wellbeing have been analyzed in numerous studies (see Chapter 3), and collaboration between the field of culture and the social and health sector has been seen to play an important part in this context. Elderly people, children and young people are among the groups that are often brought into attention in reflections on the wellbeing impacts of culture. Also in the KUULTO action research activation to engage with culture was seen as especially important with these groups. Artists often had a key role in the realization of these projects.

Kontiolahti

The action plans in the municipality of Kontiolahti took on as their objective to create a form of activity where culture becomes a permanent part of the care and wellbeing of elderly people and problem prevention in this area. Culture was integrated into their care plans, while the project aimed to develop new methods of working with elderly people by means of art. The KUULTO application was prepared in collaboration with the Kulttuurikulkurit (Culture Wanderers) group made up of members from different fields of art. The artists designed the activity into a form where they would work in pairs. When continued funding after KUULTO was discussed the methods of working as pairs was raised as a central objective and the local administration changed its suggestion of employing one artist fulltime to employing two part-time artists.

In designing the contents of the activity attention was paid to bringing together the worlds of experience of elderly people and children. The work method was workshops held in service homes and daycare centers.

> *What especially is new about this work is reciprocity and interaction and collaboration across generations. The children in the daycare center were told a story conceptualized together with the elderly people. Peppi the dog, who stood out as the main character, then started to adventure in drawings made by the children. The drawings in turn were given to the elderly people to look at; paintings were made on the theme, as well as a big soft toy dog to which anyone could add their own felted piece as it traveled in the service homes, day activity centers and daycare centers with the artists. After that the dog traveled with the artists to many other kinds of places and was also seen at various events held in the municipal center.*

In the assessment discussion connected to the action research the Kulttuurikulkurit group gave this description of their work at the service home:

> *We start by greeting the participants, using movement and music to awaken them, the stimulation starts to "do its trick"; music, movement, dancing together using panted strips of cloth. Then we move on to discuss the subject/theme of the day, hearing out all the participants' own experiences and sentiments.*

> *After the discussion the actual activity is easy to begin. The theme of an actual session contains the makings of activation on a wide range, from creative dance to different means of visual art, or even baking in different forms, or whatever we come up with, like, for example, making a mandala out of fir cones.*

Works of community art have a key role, because they easily become experiential, even though the contribution of a single participant may not be very big. One example is the Thread of Life mobile, a work of community art collaboratively realized by the residents and staff at the service home. While they were making it the discussions about life that took place as they threaded beads became the central "artistic" tool. The completed work offered its makers and others who got to experience it an opportunity for multisensory experiences; when you dive through the work your sight gets to bathe in colors, your hearing gets to enjoy the rustle of beads, your sense of touch and feeling of movement are stimulated in their own ways.

We usually end a session with a feedback discussion and, pretty often, with a relaxing massage or, for example, by softly stroking the face with a paint brush.

Another aspect that was seen as important was that workshops based on art-oriented methods were organized for members of the service home staff. Their objective was to illustrate the work and methods of the artists in an energizing setting, offering the staff practical resources for their work. The interest showed by the staff varied between the units, largely on the basis of working conditions and schedules.

Southwest Finland

The Oikeesti jotakin (Really Something) case in the Southwest Finland region was an example of network-based activity: in it 12 different municipalities aimed to reach children in family daycare or home care and children living outside the municipal centers, who are often excluded from municipal local cultural services, especially in the smaller municipalities in the network. When the KUULTO application was prepared this group was diagnosed as falling out of the scope of many forms of cultural service.

The project set as its goal to concretely bring culture to very small units and, whenever feasible, to remote parts of the municipality. The decision was made to employ artists to realize the project. It was a new kind of job description for artists and careful consideration was given to what their title in the project would be, with the idea that it should communicate working in a capacity that highlights the sociocultural approach:

We were looking for "coach artists" who could bring the activity to challenging places. We felt that since the job description would most likely be somewhat fragmented, the work could fall under the title "coach artist". It might have also been possible to offer more long-term employment within the municipal organization.

We were looking for artists who could productize art activity days for a specific target group. The aim was to create products that would be suitable for the target audience and activate children. In other words, it meant more than just artist visits. The activities also needed to be easily transferable.

The hiring process of artists took place through an open call. Altogether 19 applications were submitted, from which a team of two artists was chosen. The decision was made by a jury consisting of representatives of the following organizations: The Regional Arts Council of Arts of Southwest Finland, Promotion Centre Finland, and open daycare services/early childhood education and the KUULTO project as a local actor. According to the jury, they learnt a lot from the recruitment process itself. As part of the process they came to, for example, compile an artist databank, which immediately proved useful to the municipal cultural services, although its future remains unclear as no coordinating party could be found for it, at least not during the action research.

The jury assessed its own work concerning the recruitment process at a KUULTO assessment discussion. They felt that they had succeeded well for the most part, but an apparent area of development was identified: In the future the applicants should be more clearly informed in the application process about the schedules and possibilities of continued funding connected to the contents of the desired activity. The jury should also discuss more distinctly in advance the question of how to articulate the ideas of 'entirely new' and 'high quality artistic activity' as concrete criteria. They also suggested that the next recruitment process would be carried out with a new kind of jury: audiences and people who took part in the activity should also be represented.

The new model developed in the KUULTO action research proved, in spite of some difficulties, to be effective and useful. A key goal was that nearby municipalities and regions would learn to collaborate and pool resources. The activities were diversely dispersed over the 12 participating municipalities; the small municipalities received the same services as the bigger actors in the region. Closer cooperation between the municipal cultural sectors diversified the limited supply of cultural services in the smaller municipalities.

The family daycare givers, who are often unable to attend the activities centered in daycare centers and schools, were very excited about the coach artist approach; they felt like they had gained a new boost and new ideas for their work.

After the KUULTO project had ended there was a strong wish to establish the employment of coach artists as a regional practice. The municipalities were committed to continuing the activity, but financial problems stood in the way. The question was asked whether all the municipalities involved had the funds, either in the

cultural sector or in the organizations responsible for day care or care for the elderly, to provide the new supply.

Commentaries on the continuation of the activity in the KUULTO assessment discussion showed how coming up with even a small sum of money (17 000 euros) can be a major challenge even within a large municipal network.

> *Lack of funds is a problem. Three municipalities may say that we have a thousand euros to put into this, but then nearly ten municipalities say they haven't got a thousand euros. Money could maybe be found if we used population-based criteria (xx euro/resident) in determining the funding responsibility. But then the discussion would turn into a big political decision, which is very complicated because the services will be equally divided, in the end.*

Kainuu

Another KUULTO case based on cross-municipal cooperation was realized in the Kainuu region. The region covered an area of approximately 25 000 km2 in 2012, and the distances between the municipal centers are considerably long. The main goal of the action research was to bring cultural services to places where, due to distances or other reasons, people did not have possibilities to take part in regularly organized or even random cultural events. Members of the Generaattori community, the Routa Open Dance Company, the Kajaani Amateur Theatre and the G-voima culture cooperative were entered in the application as realizers of the activity. The main applicant was an association, Elias Lönnrot-seura. The principal aim of the action plan was to "go to the periphery, meet people who live there and settle down with them in the context of art and culture."

The local actors spoke about outreach activities. The key vehicles in it were workshops led by artists. They went to the villages and joined the groups that were already actively working there and set up the workshops with them. The idea was to extend the activities to villages where there were no cultural activities. They discovered that the training that took place in the workshops and engaging one artist in the amateur theatre of one village, where people from neighboring villages were invited, also reactivated the dwindled amateur theatre activities in a neighboring village.

> *At first we as artists were vexed by the idea of going to remote villages and seeking out people who were not participating in the activity yet. We decided to try to draw them into existing active groups operating in or near the villages. We held workshops with these groups, where they gained tools to maintain their motivation, as well as new ideas. These meetings leftskill capital behind in these municipalities/villages. We, as artists, also gained a lot. As we coordinated the workshop in pairs, and the pairs would*

change, we learned new things from the new pair, and learned together how to be with different groups. The workshops have been reported and photographed in journals. A documentary film will be made of the completed project, featuring all the realized workshops. A copy of the film will be sent to all the participating municipalities and workshops. Toolkits have been made for care givers in the participating daycare centers as documentation and a reminder of what was done in the workshops.

5.3 Participation

In the Kuulto action research local participation was a central denominator in the design of the actions. The action research as a whole aimed to increase participation in cultural activities among the local residents. In the practice of the action research participation was therefore realized at two levels:

1. In the implementation of local measures the local actors made it possible for municipal residents to participate in the planning and prioritizing of the measures. To this end they used, for example, different surveys (e.g. research into the residents' wishes, lifestyles and values). They also established new planning units based on resident representation, used key representatives of the relevant associations in the communication of opinions or activated residents in various ways to engage in cultural activities.

2. The action research endeavored as a whole to develop the local units responsible for the organization of cultural activities. The local actors, the researchers, the coordinators and the expert group together planned and implemented the measures for increasing resident participation.

5.3.1 Enabling participation by the residents and resident groups

Participation and enabling participation are concepts that have been under a lot of discussion lately, underpinned by discussions on the crisis of representative democracy, which has awakened interest among researchers in participatory (deliberative) experiments of various kinds. In practice these have often only been manifested as measures and models where space and opportunities for citizen participation are given 'from above', but the citizens' possibilities to exert influence have remained as a mere formality.

It is important that we look at participation both in terms of the individual and the structures. The starting point is purposeful human action, but the frames, the societal mechanisms that enable participation, are equally important. Anttiroiko (2003,

19) characterizes participation as social action performed together with other actors. He differentiates the exercise of influence as action where the aim is to achieve change in social and political processes. These two concepts of action are often referred to as synonymous.

Siisiäinen (2010) regards the concept of 'interest' as strategic in the definition of participation, since it serves as a factor that motivates and guides participation. In his mind, the theoretical definition of participation requires an understanding (1) of the interest actor and the actor's framework of interpretation; (2) of the actor's resources on the whole (the economic, cultural and social capital as defined by Bourdieu (1986)); (3) of the association, movement or political instance where the potential participation is expected to take place; and (4) of the actor's personal framework of interpretation (habitus) and how it coincides with the collective frame of interpretation of the potential participation environment. The use of the actor's resources and its appropriateness in the given operating field make up the actor's interest position from where the actual interest arises and which determines the terms and probabilities of its realization. Participation is self-prompted action generated by the actors themselves, and thereby – ideally – voluntary. Increasing participation relates to participative mechanisms where the initiator and implementer of the action is some other party, for example, a public institution. The concept 'empowerment' describes a process where the aim is to strengthen the power to act when it is felt to be lacking by underscoring the role of the participator as an active subject.

For example, participation practices in urban regeneration processes should have ensured the combined pursuit of economic and social growth goals with objectives of social cohesion and integration of marginalized areas and communities planning. Ferilli, Sacco and Blessi (2016, 96) found two contradictory orientations in those practices: first, a powerful push from minorities and marginalized communities to let their voice be heard, and their narratives and representations be accepted as legitimate and relevant, and second, a difficulty in making space for a truly inclusive public discourse on urban development and regeneration when the main drivers of such processes are mostly in the hands of powerful elites focused on their particular interests. New strategies of community empowerment are needed.

Arnstein (1969, 216-224) has developed a laddered model of power relations in citizen participation based on eight types. The eight types are arranged in a ladder pattern with each rung corresponding to the extent of citizens' power in determining the end product.

The two bottom rungs of the ladder (manipulation and therapy) mainly describe situations and events where the participants are educated, instructed or cured. They are not participation per se but are typified as 'non-participation'. The next two rungs (informing and consultation) describe actions where the participants are informed and heard in various ways (attitude surveys, neighborhood meetings

and public hearings). The participants do not however have possibilities to become convinced that their opinions would influence decisions. These actions are described with the term 'tokenism'. 'Placation' is simply a higher level of tokenism where hearing the participants' advice may become visible, but the power remains with the powerholders. The participants may serve in the municipality as members of e.g. advisory and planning committees and other public bodies like the board of housing, education, culture, etc. They allow citizens to advice or plan ad infinitum but retain for powerholders the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice.

According to Arnstein, participation isn't concretized until in the three topmost rungs of her typology, 'partnership', delegated power' and 'citizen control' are reached. The strongest form, 'citizen control', means that participants can govern a program or an institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects.

Typologies are always problematic and categorizing clear cases in terms of level of participation is always negotiable. When in the following sections we take a look at how participation became and was made possible in the local KUULTO cases, special attention is paid to forms of citizen participation/participative mechanisms in the separate cases. In KUULTO the goal was to increase the possibilities of the municipal residents to participate in the development of content for the action plans and in the related decision making. Applying Arnstein's typology in the analysis of the cases enables reflective discussion. More detailed information on the selected cases is compiled in the publications Kangas, 2015, Koetellut kulttuuritoiminnot– KUULTO-toimintatutkimuksen tulokset; and Kangas, Jakonen & Havimäki, 2014, Osallistumista ja aktivointia – KUULTO-toimintakokeilun matkassa.

Manipulation, informing and consultation

In the context of KUULTO manipulation refers to situations where efforts are made to engage the focus groups in the activity through, for example, regular blog writings, separate "marketing events" and newspaper articles and ads. These reveal the strong own interest of the local organizational and coordinative actors, often based on reasoning related to the health and wellbeing effects of culture. The actors did not especially bring up the viewpoint of the focus group for participation.

Informing and consultation are forms of participative measures that lead to "token" participation, and many of the KUULTO cases fell under this categorization. In all the local cases information was distributed through local newspapers and the municipalities' own newsletters. E-mailing lists and the associations' bulletin boards were also used, as well as different kinds of marketing gimmicks.

> *In one case the local actors thought that culture and arts were too unfamiliar concepts for many of the members of the focus group, and efforts to inform them about the action should include an element of positive surprise. They participated in an event day to bring the residents of the*

municipality and its neighboring municipalities together. There they set up a quiet and relaxing "oasis", an experience chair, in the heart of the events. The person sitting in the chair was given a headset through which they could listen to sounds of nature. The relaxing effect was enhanced with hand massages. The experience chair was however also a means to market the KUULTO project. As they prepared the visitors for the relaxing moment, the staff members responsible for the experience chair told them about the KUULTO project. At the same time the visitors were asked to give feedback on the existing municipal cultural activities and offer suggestions on what types of arts and culture they would like to see in the municipality. The suggestions numbered high, although many of the respondents found it hard to name the desired forms of activity.

According to the staff members who were present at the event, the experience chair turned out very popular and there wasn't enough time to offer the experience to all the people who wanted to try it out. People were waiting to get to sit in the chair both before the event had started and after it had ended.

An additional attraction was devised to encourage children and young people to participate in cultural activities: A giant softtoy that traveled in the schools, gave out leaflets advertising events, offered information about the activities and finally served as a raffle prize at the final event.

Some of the local actors in KUULTO appeared to have a rather idealistic and positive conception of how well the informing worked or how well the ideas and wishes of the residents were translated into the development of the activities.

Here the threshold to get in touch, to be heard, is low. The residents are heard, in the form of direct feedback, at e.g. the library. Residents were invited to voice their opinions through the municipal newsletter, which is published eight times a year. At the start of the KUULTO project people were encouraged to tell us their ideas and to participate.

There have been opportunities to meet the actors in person and the wishes and feedbacks from the field have been taken into consideration in the planning of the program.

In practice residents have been heard throughout the entire action research period, and their wishes have been fulfilled as far as the resources have allowed.

I have mostly gathered oral feedback, since I've attended all the events. And I've tried to realize the suggested activities, within the confines of the given resources.

In the local cases where the activity was based on cooperation between different administrative sectors, the activities chosen to be realized were reasoned with the officials' experience-based knowledge of the behavior and wishes of the different participant groups. Similarly, cooperation with associations served to communicate the residents' wishes to the implementers.

The events within the project have been designed in cooperation with municipal employees who work with the focus groups (elderly people and children). The coordinators have gathered oral feedback from the elderly people and written feedback (plus feedback in the form of pictures) from the children.

The activities aimed at small children were designed with an audience-led approach, drawing on the knowledge of professionals in early childhood education. Family daycare givers were asked for feedback through e-mail inquiries and it will be taken into account in the next action plan.

Culture probe – more than consultation

In the KUULTO action research the actors aimed to develop survey analysis on the factors affecting participation and for mapping out the participants' wishes (which most typically relates to consultation-level participation), with the new idea of finding a more versatile method for hearing the opinions of the municipal residents.

One example was a culture bus and culture card:

At the early stage of the action experiment we prepared an overview of the residents' cultural needs and opportunities to use culture. At the stops of the culture bus, the main instrument of the experiment, people were invited to participate in the planning of the event supply and to come up with ideas of new places where the bus could stop.

We also developed a culture card to be used alongside the library card. The idea was to gain feedback data on the users of cultural services through the card. We wanted to develop the culture card into a tool for lobbying for culture in the town. It could provide grounds for presenting the residents' views regarding the budget estimates and action plans.

We were hoping that in some years from now there'd be enough holders of the culture card that the system would create a channel for hearing the residents' wishes and developing activities on its basis. It would thus

*enable us to better serve and inform the residents and convey their wishes
to the decision makers.*

At first the residents felt suspicious about the card.

*They suspected that using the card would weaken their privacy, because
through it their participation in cultural events could be tracked. This was
not seen as a good thing. In hopes of eradicating suspicions, the culture and
library units published information about the card in the local newspaper,
bringing into attention, firstly, how the residents could benefit from
the card (obtain information about even ts, receive inquiries about their
wishes, be rewarded for actively using the card) and, second, of the bene-
fits to the officials and decision makers (connection to the municipal res-
idents, hearing the residents, developing activities to match the residents'
needs, establishing the activities of the municipal cultural sector on a stra-
tegically more sustainable foundation.) Apparently the efforts to inform
the public were effective, since people started signing up for the cards.*

A second example was one local actor who produced especially effective solutions,
as it aimed to increase participation in cultural activities among families with young
children by including them in the planning of cultural activities. The objective was to
develop contents for the events and increase visitor numbers by creating a partnership
model based on cooperation between cultural institutions and local associations.
Culture probes were used as an instrument for hearing the residents' viewpoints.

*The Wahren Center is responsible for the city's cultural activities and it
consists of five recreational service units. The five units are the adult edu-
cation center, the city library, the visual arts school, the art museum and
the music school, which each have their own managers. The units are inde-
pendently responsible for their own basic activities and their development,
including e.g. organizing cultural events, managing cultural facilities,
organizing the city's exhibition activities and cooperating with other cul-
tural actors in the area.*

*The KUULTO project was focused on developing the center's "Family
Saturday" event. The actors responsible for the event wanted to activate
new participants and hear the citizens' opinions on how the contents of
the event could be further developed. Instead of a survey study, a method
typically applied in situations like these, the actors decided to try out the
use of the 'culture probe', as the goal was to encourage participation among
the residents, local families, and to gain more information regarding their
value basis and the desired contents explicitly based on the focus group's*

own world of experience. The results and the experience accumulated from the culture probe process were hoped to facilitate the development of cultural services for the residents of the city of Forssa also on a broader range.

In general, the aim of the probe is for it to be sent out to unknown areas from where it would in time send the information and material it has collected back to the researchers (Oluikpe, 2014; Gaver, Boucher, Pennington & Walker, 2004). In this case what was expressly seen as the unknown area was the everyday life of families as they themselves experience it.

The probe was made up of a probe package which families selected from five municipalities fetched from the library. On these occasions personal contact could be established to the participating families. The probe package consisted of five weekly tasks and a task that could be performed over the course of a month. The responses could be prepared either by individual members of the family or jointly. When the families returned their packages many of them wondered how the municipality had managed to approach them in such a sympathetic way.

The culture probe included the following weekly tasks:

1. Map. The package contained a map in which the respondents were asked to mark with stickers the places where the family or any of its members had been during the past week, during the past year or at some point in their lives. They were also asked to list which places were memorable and which were disappointing, explain why a certain member of the family had wanted to go to a certain place and to describe what is there.

2. Photography task. The families were asked to photograph things, experiences and sites they found important. 15 themes (treasure, eyes on the future, landscape, in need of repair, blue melody, something red, black on white etc.) were given to inspire the photos. 15 photos independent of the theme could also be included. The photos were returned to the library in a USB stick.

3. Compiling a photo album. The photos were developed and returned to the families. The families then arranged them according to the photography task themes in an album of 15 photos. The families were requested to add explanatory texts under the photos and supplement them with additional photos if they so wished.

4. Tree. A concept map tree made up of an A3-size sheet of paper and an envelope containing 150 words printed on self-adhesive paper. The envelope contained many different words relating to culture and cultural activities (listening to music, cultural heritage, art etc.), words concerning the city's strategy (e.g. child-friendly) and words describing family relations. Sketched on the attached sheet of paper was a tree with branches, and the branches were named "Good life", "Ideal pastime", "Identity" and "Vitality". The task was to glue concepts on the tree, i.e. place words the family found meaningful on the branches. The families were allowed to also add in words that were not on the lists.

5. Calendar task. Each family was given a calendar page for a different month and they were asked to mark down the most important events and describe memorable moments in the month.
The probe package also included tasks that could be performed over the course of the month.

6. Postcards. Each family was given seven cards with stamps on them and questions written on them. There were altogether 15 different questions, such as: When is life especially enjoyable? What does child-friendly mean? What kind of music can the whole family listen to together? What stories have stayed in their mind? When is it easy to go someplace with the children, what places are they? The families were asked to answer the questions and return the cards either by mail or at the final meeting by the latest.

7. Diary. The families also kept diaries during the month. The guidelines were rather flexible. The families were asked to write down their thoughts during the culture probe process, either concerning their wishes as regards cultural services or their everyday life. Different questions regarding the daily schedule were of special importance.

8. Scrapbook. Each probe package contained an A4-size folder with white paper and small exercises designed for children in particular. The scrapbook included e.g. blank "friend pages" to be filled by each member of the family, stickers next to which they could write short stories and TOP 10 lists where especially the adolescents could rank their favorite music, games, movies etc. (Oluikpe 2014)

When the materials produced by the families had been collected, the managers of the Wahren center and the KUULTO researcher got together to analyze the results and make conclusions, with the aim of developing the organization of the Family Saturday event and the city's cultural services at large. It was a rich set of material and it gave way to a multifarious discussion on what kinds of events people would like to participate in and what they saw as obstacles to their participation. Answers were also gained to questions regarding how the families searched for cultural services and what kind of contents and what types of activities they saw as important. Furthermore, the material also produced a lot of information about the factors that

brought enjoyment to or burdened the families' everyday lives, and about their attitudes and values regarding pastime activities.

At the end of the assessment discussion a selection was made of the photos taken by the families, which was compiled into a KUULTO photo exhibition. The "Our Kuulto Photos" (Meidän Kuulto-kuvat) exhibition toured in all the five home municipalities of the families that took part in the culture probe analysis. The exhibitions gave rise to discussions where the participants not only recounted their experience of taking part in the project but also reflected on the emotions awakened by the photos on display.

The culture probe proved to be an excellent method for gathering information on the everyday lives of families and their participation in culture. It produced a large amount of qualitative data/material reflecting the everyday life of families and its stimuli. People's everyday life, with its low and high points, as well as the experiences and feedbacks and the factors behind them, gave rise to a great deal of reflection at the assessment meeting. How could the Family Saturdays reach out to the parents and children and produce meaningful experiences for them?

Another issue that strongly surfaced in the KUULTO assessment discussion were the difficulties with using the material produced with the culture probe in the municipal strategic development work. Using mainly qualitative experiential data required a new kind of mindset from the actors. They were used to referring to the resident surveys of their respective units, which, as quantitative questionnaire surveys, were unambiguous. The common response in the assessment discussion could be summed up as follows: the data obtained with the culture probe reinforced earlier preconceptions of the families' situation but it also offered new and even surprising information on time use in families and a wider premise for discussion on collaboration between authorities and the grounds for it. That was as far as the new information was allowed to serve as a basis for designing the activities.

The city's central administration became interested in the innovative way in which the probe had been used and considered using it for gathering information in other sectors, too.

Placation

At the level of 'placation' KUULTO involved measures that enabled citizens' participation and clear influence on the planning of content in certain activities.

> *In the regional case the municipal cultural units took part in the selection of focus groups for the workshops in their respective municipalities. In the workshops the focus groups took part in the selection of appropriate forms of art/culture for their workshops. During the workshops the participants had a chance to affect the activity through their wishes and ideas. The coordinators of the workshops also wrote down and gave feedback on their*

work, how it had proceded, the problems and successes it had entailed. The workshops were documented and the material was used for training.

In the second (local) case, the partners (associations) in cooperation could choose the films to be screened and the screening venues. They also gathered feedback from the audiences both orally and through a questionnaire.

In the third case, the association and the youth council chose the films to be screened. The local KUULTO actors involved (social and cultural sectors, the library, youth work, daycare and schools and one association) gathered feedback after the event. They analyzed the feedback together.

Partnership, delegated power and citizen control

According to Arnstein, not until the levels of partnership, delegated power and citizen control have been reached can one speak of actual participation. Among the KUULTO cases there were a few examples where participation was made possible in this sense.

In one of the municipalities the organization of municipal cultural services had been outsourced to a small (two-person) firm. The firm was also a KUULTO actor. In order to enhance resident participation in the development of services, the actor founded a group called Käskassara, which served as a liaison and link to the municipal residents and the associations, and from there to the municipality and the KUULTO action research. The group included representatives of the various associations. The objective was to produce a new model of cooperation to respond to the challenges regarding local cultural activities through collaboration and to give influence to the opinions of the municipal residents. The members of the groups hoped to have a role with a low threshold for feedback. They hoped that the residents would both in their daily affairs (in shops, banks etc.) and in their pastime activities articulate their wishes concerning services and the members of the group could convey them to the KUULTO actors. The members were selected for the group with the idea that the group would develop itself over the course of time. Already during the action research it became evident that young people were underrepresented in the composition of the group and thus the group got in touch with school councils to find young members.

At least during the action research the group worked very effectively, with a strongly interactive approach. Challenges may however arise in the future with regard to the group's status in the municipal system, the selection of new members and the specification of the group's tasks.

Another local case set out to solve the problem of lacking access to cultural activities. The group, Kulkurit, visited service home communities and small villages, and especially carers of family members and elderly people living alone. The activities were planned together with social sector employees, the carers and the elderly people. Some of the activities also centered on encounters between elderly people and children in a spirit of cultural exchange. Word about the activities and the Kulkurit group spread and trust in the activities grew. The need for such activities was noticed and the work of the group was extended further. The group gathered feedback and new ideas were born along with the actions and cooperation. A new working ground was formed between the social and cultural sectors during the action research.

In the third example traditional media, briefings, cultural events, websites and social media were used in attempts to encourage municipal residents to join so-called action groups. A few of the action groups became rooted and started operating very independently, planning and realizing activities on their own. They received funding support.

KUULTO also included activation work, where experience was gained through methods of community art. The aim was to map out the dreams of the residents of a municipality restructured through a municipal merger as regards where they would like to live. These local cases were built on the engagement of participants by means of community art, with the purpose of finding alternatives to an objictifying approach. (See Chapter 5.2.1)

5.3.2 The action research in practice and participation

A main goal defined for the KUULTO action research was to address a problem shown by various studies and reports: There are numerous geographic, social and structural barriers that reduce participation in cultural activities. In these studies the concept of cultural activity has often been framed in the context of high culture but it also includes elements of omnivorousness, i.e. combinations of high culture and popular culture (Warde, Wright & Gayo-Cal, 2007).

In the KUULTO action research the approach of interlinking theory with practice was hoped to change conditions by developing new measures that would increase participation in culture. The starting point was to make the municipal cultural organizations change their practices and develop new methods, which they could assess together with the researchers. The work towards change was to be linked in with interaction, dialogue with the municipal residents, hearing their opinions and enabling them to take part in the decision making within the development process. The power to define the concept of the cultural activities within KUULTO remained with the local actors.

The goal that lays emphasis on participation has also been inscribed in the strategies of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, which is why the ministry

speeded up the endeavor by granting KUULTO an additional appropriation, which made it possible to carry out the action research. When municipal cultural units (altogether 188) became interested in the grant and started the application processes, they wrote down different needs for change in their application grounds. The applications set off an 'unfreezing' stage within the municipal organization, i.e. acknowledgment of the need to change (Lewin, 1958). The 22 local and regional actors that were selected for the project embarked on a stage of change connected to the action research, and the interactive process could begin.

For the local actors and the researchers the interactive approach was challenging. For the local actors the operating environments, including traditional organizational structures, made up the framework of interpretation (Goffman, 1986, Geertz, 1973) for how they developed their ideas or reasoned and realized their choices regarding the action plans; for the researchers the framework of interpretation was made up of research and theoretical information regarding access and participation and non-participation in culture, the characteristics of the fields of culture and arts, the functioning of municipalities and democratizing processes.

Following an action research she carried out in 1976–1978, Kangas (1988) points out that there are always objectifying power relations in societal reality and it is difficult for a researcher to place her/himself in free communication with the research subjects. The degree of participation among the subjects is always low if it is simplified into a relationship between the researcher and the subjects based on obtaining information by means of traditional research methods. Problems are also caused by the fact that there are always hierarchical relationships among the subjects as well; they are objects of power or holders of power.

Action research proceeds from the philosophy of democratic, collaborative working with people (traditionally viewed as participants) and regarding them as co-researchers. This viewpoint is especially reflected in the research data as well as its analysis and in the implementation of the different phases of the action research. Theory should not dictate but function as an agent to guide participants from misinterpreting or abusing the data based on pure subjectivities like individual feelings and preferences.

In the implementation of the KUULTO action research the common interest of all the actors was in the goal as defined. In action research collaborating through forms of talking and writing is salient to establishing an authentic voice and outcomes, and encouraging a conversation with many voices (Stringer 2007). The purpose is to build social relationships that can embody a principle of equality for all participants. (Gustavsen, 2001.)

The research data of the KUULTO action research were triangulated, with the aim of enabling the role of the participants in the different research phases. In practice this took place at a few working seminars. The first one was a meeting where

the local actors in the action research, the expert group and the research were all represented, so that the common goal and the first action plans could be discussed and the shared concepts (language) formulated together.

After that, during the first stage of change, the tasks of studying the diaries, commenting on them and receiving responses to the comments as well as various phone and email conversations served as a catalyst for the local actors to reinvent and transform the measures they had undertaken in order to reach the goal. Moreover, the research team stressed to the local actors that the expert group on the action research was also there to help them if they needed administrative expertise in bringing about the change; the purpose was to strengthen the actors' belief in their own capabilities and possibilities to act and thereby encourage new practices and actions.

The assessment discussions following the first stage of change were held on site in all the case municipalities and regions. They were preceded by information gathered via a questionnaire, which was analyzed to serve as a premise for discussion. This approach brought together action and reflection, theory and practice. Questions were raised on how the goal has been pursued and reached, what kind of desired or undesired changes were brought about, and if no changes had occurred, why? How to continue from here, how should the goal and/or practices be changed if no changes have been achieved and the goal hasn't been reached? Who were the partners in the activity and how were the possibilities of the local participants to take part in and influence the development of activities increased? Which measures became embedded and what kind of spillovers occurred?

6. KUULTO AS A POLICY SETTING ACTOR

In the former chapters we have analyzed the results of the KUULTO action research with the following questions in the focus: How were the contents of the cultural activities defined? What kinds of measures were developed to remove barriers to participation in cultural activities? What forms did the participation take in the different stages of the research and action? Of the local actions, what types continued as established activities after the separate funding ended?

The main actors in the KUULTO action research were the local actors, the researchers and the coordinator. Mainly officials from the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment took part in the commenting through the expert group. Further into the project also expertise from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health played an important role and contact with its officials contributed significantly to the local activities.

In the final assessment discussions that took place a year after the separately funded KUULTO activities had been undertaken, the specifically policy-oriented objective in the action research was to identify local actors' expertise in the development of local cultural policies also generally. The actors were asked to specify future challenges concerning the municipal cultural sector and to present suggestions based on the KUULTO action research and their experiences to the ministries on how to find solutions to the problems identified during their projects. This was important because, even though the local actors were able to create many new methods and means to increase the participation in cultural activities among the residents,

embedding them and disseminating them into sustainable practices proved problematic. The possibility of finding solutions to the problems was however not only dependent on local cultural policies but also on the national cultural policy and culture-related policies implemented by the ministries.

Nearly all the local actors responded to the questions very thoroughly. It was interesting to see how similar their answers to the questions in many respects were; the actors really seemed to share the same world of experience. The small differences in the answers diversified the general picture of the challenges and ways to solve them, and of the potentials of cultural policy to support local actions.

The answers of the local actors, and their analysis, served as a basis for the work towards finding a shared understanding between the different levels of governance on the framework of local cultural policy. The analysis was based on Delphi methodology, with the objective of bringing the local actors and the representatives of ministries in the expert group into dialogue.

The Delphi panels were established in the action research to seek solutions for the problem areas revealed by the local projects and to come up with ideas for measures that could enhance local cultural activities.

The following chapters review, first, the experiences and assessments of the local actors in the KUULTO action research, and then the results of the Delphi panels.

6.1 Challenges and development needs in local cultural activities

The local actors identified a number of future challenges and development needs concerning municipal cultural activities. They were largely concerned with the status of culture as a municipal sector and area of expertise and with the financial resources allocated to cultural activities through the municipal economy. Many of the actors had experienced the discouraging mindset towards culture within the municipal administration as a major general challenge. Municipal decision makers and officials didn't seem to have faith in the momentum of art and culture or in the idea that they could be a significant pull factor for the municipality, although they had been defined as such in the municipal strategies.

In the actors' responses cultural activities were defined as municipal basic public services. The Municipal Cultural Activities Act from 1980 was of central importance here. It was regarded as the foundation from which measures for better equality in cultural participation could be enacted. It is not however enough to repeatedly refer to the law and the term "basic public service" if it isn't concurrently noted that the service is something that people want. The contact with the municipal residents should be active and information on the felt need for the service should be conveyed to the relevant parties.

Many general structural problems were seen to present major challenges to the organization of cultural activities. It was, for example, remarked that a separate appropriation would be needed for the organization of cultural activities in sparsely populated areas, as the problems there are different compared to the municipal centers and cities. Here it was also pointed out that comparisons with the other municipal sectors (e.g. school, social service and health care sectors) and the financial problems they were facing reinforced the need to defend the provision of cultural activities as complementary to the work carried out in the other sectors and significant in the prevention of social problems.

Structural challenges were especially linked to problems relating to the municipal economy. Fears were voiced that they may result in a detrimental decline in cultural activities. Impacts of cut-backs in the cultural sector on the municipal economy were seen as dismal, the bigger problem lies in how they undermine the credibility of the cultural sector/activities.

The role envisioned for the cultural sector in the future was to serve more strongly as an enabler and a weaver of different kinds of networks. In their emphases the responses also resonated so-called multi-stakeholder partnership policies and governance which lay emphasis on the cooperation model of citizens – communities – non-profit organizations – businesses. Many unsolved problems do however still remain with regard to leadership and responsibilities in this constellation. The role of the municipal cultural sectors should be more carefully articulated in relation to the need to build partnerships with associations and businesses. As regards potential partners, it was remarked that cultural professionals operating in a business setting could already be found in the municipalities themselves. Some of the respondents pointed out that associations should assume a more professional attitude. A major challenge characteristic of the cultural sector is the need of staff resources, and especially employees who possess diverse skills and are able to build networks for the sector.

> We need people with multiple skills who know how to seek diverse funding channels, productize services and network with the right people. They need to be well versed in project work and keep an eye out for international funding channels as well. We also need stronger and more long-term projects and commitment to the goal of finding resources also after the project has ended.

> We need special expertise in cultural work, coupled with the courage to cross boundaries and experiment.

> The realization and development of cultural activities in municipalities call for cross-disciplinary cooperation between the municipal officials, the decision makers, the third sector and the residents. The most important

thing here is a courageous, active and innovative attitude that can open new paths of action. We need new operating concepts, information about them and support for developing them.

In the turmoil of municipal reforms we need spokespeople for culture and operating models embedded in the structures that cannot be "swept out" of the service production on light grounds. We need clearer means to justify, prove and measure the role of culture as a preventive welfare service.

For culture to survive at municipal level we need networks at regional level and national guardians of interest.

The connection between tourism and culture should be considerably stronger.

Cultural workers need to constantly keep abreast with the times, more information is needed.

6.2   How should the Ministry of Education and Culture and other ministries support municipal cultural activities?

In Finland the development and implementation of municipal services have traditionally occurred in the framework of cooperation between municipalities and the state. The state's task is to partially finance the services and regulate them according to pertinent laws and regulations. The municipalities in turn are the producers and organizers of the services, as well as (increasingly) their co-financiers.

Cultural services are built on this same principle. In the KUULTO action research the local actors were asked to present, based on their experiences, wishes to the Ministry of Education and Culture and other ministries. They were invited to reflect on the question of how, as solutions were found to problems in the local cases, new operating concepts could be rooted to benefit other municipalities, and to how the ministries could support them in strengthening and enabling these concepts. Approximately one half of the respondents made very concrete suggestions to the ministries.

The Ministry of Education and Culture was generally hoped to take on a stronger role as a guardian of interests and advocate for culture, and in the dissemination of information in various forms that would support the development of cultural work. The respondents also wished for databanks (factual information to justify the work, funding application models and examples of reference material, assessment models, regional communities of practice etc.), easily available information to serve as grounds and bases for their own work, information on the ministry's cultural policy measures, and longer-term project subsidies for already tested

activities, with smaller self-financing shares for the municipalities, implemented as, for example, collaborations between different ministries.

> *Cooperation between municipalities and the actors should be supported so that local activities that have already been proven effective could receive continued funding for longer, for example, three-year periods. Money is more easily on offer for new experiments, even from a variety of sources. There is less funding interest in forms of cooperation that have already been tested and proven good, projects that are tried and tested but not quite new and haven't established their funding basis yet.*

The Ministry of Education and Culture was also hoped to extend its standardization and regulation practices in relation to the funding and support.

> *The Municipal Cultural Activities Act needs to be revised in order to ensure equal conditions for cultural activities throughout the country.*

> *In order to secure the continuation of activities, it is more than necessary to standardize funding for culture and the number of persons employed in general cultural work.*

> *An up-to-date supply of education is important, same as joint meetings among local cultural actors where good practices can be shared.*

> *The share of municipal self-financing in the development projects carried out with funding from the ministry should be reduced: especially in small municipalities it is uncertain whether additional appropriations will be received from the municipal council for the self-financing share, and covering the share from the operational expenditure for cultural services can hinder other activities.*

Also other ministries than the Ministry of Education and Culture play an important role in organizing municipal cultural activities. The measures implemented by these ministries can be referred to under the concept of latent or implicit cultural policy, meaning that not only cultural policies but also, for example, social welfare, employment and industrial policies, alongside economic policies at large, have a wide range of impacts on the field of cultural activities.

One of the clear goals of KUULTO was to generate cross-sectoral collaboration within the municipalities. This happened in many cases, and many of the local cases continued engaging in and fortifying collaboration also after the separate funding had ended. The local actors hoped that the ministries could find ways of cooperating with each other so that the very concept of cross-sectoral cooperation would spread more effectively to local level as well.

The local actors in one of the KUULTO cases articulated very poignantly the roles of different ministries in advancing cultural activities:

There is indisputable evidence of the impact of culture in the prevention of marginalization, and of its positive effects on people's health. So being, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health should promote efforts to extend culture and the arts to the realm of social and health services. There has been much talk and several reports have been written on this issue, but the level of practice is still in its infancy. Ministries could earmark funds for or at least obligate municipal service homes to use funds on culture and art due to their positive effects on wellbeing and health. Physical wellness through sports and mental wellness and meaning into life through culture!

The ministry could finance research-based training for employees in the social welfare and health sector, ranging from management to people directly working at grassroots level with the residents/customers.

Large-scale regional projects should include not only assessments of impacts on industry and the environment but also the assessment of cultural impacts to explore, for example, whether a project offers possibilities to enhance access to culture and highlight regional cultural heritage.

Different kinds of "percent for art" projects are important and guidelines should be developed for them through cross-ministerial cooperation.

The Ministry of Finance should see culture as more than just a bottomless "Moloch's mouth". The recession will not be overcome by cutbacks in appropriations for culture!

The emergence of the creativity rhetoric in economic and socio-political discussion in the early 2000s challenged the different ministries to focus and develop their measures in the realm of creative economy, which was being defined as a concept around that time. This also had perceivable impacts on local policies. Correspondingly, also the local actors in KUULTO recognized the potentials of creative industries in the development of cultural activities.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment should support business activities in creative industries that complement municipal services in different regions.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment could launch a campaign where private funding would be sought for cultural endeavors also in small localities. The ministry could also organize guidance and funding

for professionally operating artists and associations who aim to create and realize cultural services for people in rural areas, where the market is too small for the work to offer a sufficient income.

6.3. Delphi panels developing cultural policy measures

The data produced by the local KUULTO cases as described before were reported to serve as a basis for development work based on Delphi methodology. A group of officials was selected from the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to form a Delphi panel to reflect on the future.

The Delphi method is one of the many methods created to forecast development possibilities. Linstone and Turoff (1975) offered a loose definition for the method: "The technique is designed as a group communication process which aims to achieve a convergence of opinion on a specific real-world issue." The basic idea is that a group of experts work together on the theme under analysis. It is not enough to just collect different opinions, arguments and perceptions; they need to also be brought into mutual dialogue. This takes place in an expert panel consisting of members selected on the basis of the research objective either as a large group (technological forecast) or as a small group (argumentative Delphi).

When the Delphi methodology was developed the key focus in implementing the Delphi processes was initially on reporting on the experts' consensus in the construction of future strategies. Currently however the emphasis is no longer on the consensus of the experts but, to the contrary, on the plurality of their opinions. The idea is not to merge all the different opinions into a singular truth. Rather than finding the best argument, the aim is to generate contrasting arguments, and thereby benefit from a creative multitude of voices.

Kuusi (2002) differentiates the argumentative Delphi technique as a separate variant of policy Delphi. Where the policy Delphi focuses on exploring a probable and preferred future, in argumentative Delphi the participants are expected to argue together in order to bring out their thoughts about the future. Opinions alone aren't enough; also the grounds behind them are essential. Argumentation-based information is important as, for example, background information for better decision making.

The objective is to have experts on the expert panels who are (1) at the cutting edge of their field of expertise; (2) interested in different disciplines; (3) equipped to see connections between national and international, present and future development; (4) able to view problems also from unusual perspectives; and (5) interested in doing something new (Kuusi, 1999).

In the KUULTO action research the Delphi technique was used to facilitate the formulation and assessment of the local action plans and for the production of

material to support decision making. As an action research, KUULTO aimed to bring the members of the panel into dialogue not only with each other but also, through research, with the local actors. At the start of the Delphi process there were thus two panels for gathering information; the panel made up of local actors, whose results were analyzed and served as the basis for the establishment of the second, expert panel. As the Delphi method is a method oriented towards future actions "through seers and doers", the KUULTO expert panel meet with these criteria. They were persons employed in the ministries, experts with long experience of their respective fields. Some of them were also members of the KUULTO expert group formed in the beginning of the KUULTO action research.

The Delphi method was applied in KUULTO through the following stages:

1. The local actors presented their grounded perceptions on the future challenges for municipal cultural activities and made, based on their experiences, suggestions to the different ministries for ways to enhance municipal cultural activities and find solutions to the problems relating to them. These results were then analyzed.

2. The expert panel was selected from among officials in the different ministries and the first panel round was started: the members of the panel were sent an email containing a description of the method as well as a list of questions on themes that had arisen from the material gathered from the local actors and its analysis.

    The questions aimed to compile advice and ideas from the members of the panel on how the activities modelled in the KUULTO local cases could be embedded in other municipalities and on how solutions could be found to the problems identified during the work. The objective was to seek means and solutions through the expertise from the ministries and a potential consensus among the experts.

    At this first stage (email) the experts were informed that the respondents' anonymity would be ensured. In practice it meant that the responses were analyzed and the arguments built on their basis were presented to the panel without mentioning the names of the persons who had produced the assessment.

3. The expert panel was convened and the members were presented the results of the email questionnaire. A four-hour workshop was organized with the aims of gathering as many suggestions as possible on developing cultural activities at local and regional levels and of achieving a consensus on measures for the future. The work in the workshop was divided into two groups whose members were randomly selected from among the experts on the panel.

4. The contents of the measures and the underlying grounds were agreed upon in the workshop. Special attention was paid to measures requiring cross-ministerial cooperation.

6.4. Variety of opinions among the experts

The email sent to the expert panel was the second stage of the Delphi analysis. The questions were accompanied with brief analyses of the responses of the questions presented to the local actors.

The responses from the experts clearly reflected a wide range of viewpoints regarding the contents connected to KUULTO. The responses could be clearly grouped under four theme categories, the first of which was *education*, which was seen to make up the foundation for cultural activities and people's will and need to participate in them.

The strongest means for building up cultural activities and supporting local cultural work is sound general education and bringing culture into school curricula that way. It is also important to enable the versatile use of school facilities outside school hours.

Sharing the responsibilities for the prepared cultural education plans; children's right to arts and culture is realized when the morning and afternoon activities as well as club activities and other activities in schools are developed together with different actors, organizations and cultural institutions in the operating environment.

The state transfers to municipalities for basic arts education based on hours of teaching are important because they make it possible for the engaged units to function properly. The system should strive to assemble schools offering basic arts education into larger entities to ensure teaching that is of best possible quality and sufficiently diverse.

Professional arts education needs to be diversified. Collaborative projects in this area could be developed together with, for example, the social service and health sector. Good local practices will spread through networks among the schools and through training.

Artists are an integral resource for these activities and therefore it is important to strengthen the status of artists and increase opportunities to receive training connected to the new forms of cultural work, especially designed and aimed for artists. Many artists would surely be interested.

Secondly, hopes were expressed for defining *a framework of standards on basic resources and infrastructures for cultural work*. This was seen to encourage discussion on what kind of measures would be needed to reach the goal of equal opportunities for municipal residents to use cultural services, which was prevalent in the KUULTO action research. According to the experts, the following measures could be helpful in this area:

> *Every municipality should have a person/people responsible for organizing and developing cultural activities, and they should be engaged in cross-sectorial networks on a more versatile basis.*

> *The municipal actors should be more systematically provided information on the reasons behind and practices of promoting the activity, its connections to other municipal service sectors, and on good administrative practices. It is important to create top-quality updating education opportunities to respond to the new challenges of cultural work.*

> *Digital technology and electronic service platforms should be brought into so-called normal use because they are key tools for the distribution and interactive production and operation of cultural services as well as for education in the field.*

> *Launching a system of income support for work carried out in non-profit organizations/work banks/ social businesses to strengthen actorship and ensure the continuity of voluntary work, which is an important framework in the development of new forms of cultural work.*

> *The flexible, versatile use of the facilities available in the municipality should be increased through collaborations between the owners, the users and the planners and implementers of the activities.*

Third, the experts hoped that the ministries would find more possibilities to increase and secure resources for *cross-ministerial cooperation* in the organization of cultural activities. In their answers they pointed out that the importance of collaborations between the ministries had been articulated in various strategy papers, but now it was time to reflect on what can concrete forms it should take.

> *The aim is that collaboration between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health would cover the entire country and good practices would be spread and actively disseminated.*

> *We need to reflect on what term should be used to describe this kind of cooperation and activity. Could it be "cultural work for wellbeing?" It could be concretized as a goal, and an indicator for measuring*

the successfulness of the work could be developed on its basis and then included in the wellbeing reports prepared by municipal administrations.

A new platform should be conceived for the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, a forum where the responsibilities and measures for organizing the activities could be agreed on contractually (c.f. performance agreements) for three-year periods. This model should be addressed in the Municipal Cultural Activities Act, at least, whereby it would be recognized as a state subsidy criterion.

Four, the experts remarked that *regional policies* regarding arts and cultural activities mean paying attention to the status of regional actors and their relationship to each other and to the local municipalities. The experts saw this as a challenge. According to the future review of the Ministry of Education and Culture on the creation of welfare through skills and creativity, "in order to safeguard the status of local and regional cultural governance we need to review various options for the provision of arts and cultural services across municipal, sectoral and organizational boundaries as regional or local services and the necessity of revising the Act on Municipal Cultural Activities." (Osaamisella ja luovuudella hyvinvointia. Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriön tulevaisuuskatsaus, 2014, 18, 16.) The experts recognized the need for a review of this kind but at the same time stressed the role of the ministry in information steering.

Questions that are timely for regional cultural policies need to be reviewed and measures that support municipal activities through information and practices should be strengthened. Cultural and arts institutions, regional centers engaged in arts and the roles of Arts Promotion Centre Finland (Taike) should be clarified as providers of regional services and disseminators of information.

The Municipal Cultural Activities Act is badly in need of reform. Its key goal for the art field in all its diversity is to enable participation for all citizens. The goal is very important in terms of the inequalities present in the supply of services and in the organization and distribution of services enabled by technological innovations, which can serve towards better equality. According to the Act, municipalities are responsible for organizing the services, but the Act needs to be updated in terms of defining where the responsibility for production lies.

It would be very important to define common goals for the municipalities within a region as regards overall regional development.

It is important to promote various forms of business in the field of culture from a regional standpoint.

At the second Delphi stage the experts were presented a question regarding the goal of "culture for all". How do they and how in their opinion does the cultural administration in general define "culture for all"? Is the goal realistic? At the beginning of this publication it was pointed out that that the goal was of key significance in outlining the "new cultural policies" of the turn of the 1960s and 1970s. Numerous committee notes, working group reports and strategy papers have been written and indicators have been developed over several decades to concretize and achieve the goal. Many national measures have also been carried out, resulting in e.g. a strengthening of the traditional library system at regional level, the Municipal Cultural Activities Act established in 1982, the development of regional activities of arts and cultural institutions and the financing of the Culture for All Service. The National Broadcast Company is another central actor in this framework.

One of the Delphi experts remarked that "culture for all" is a good, provocative slogan. In pursuit of the goal people have to take a stand on what culture is and who are excluded from cultural participation. Other experts reflected on the conception contained in the question from the viewpoint of how realistic the goal is:

I don't know if it's realistic, but it needs to remain as a goal. It's a whole other question to realistically consider in what kind of a timeframe the goal could be realized. What is the criterion for sufficient opportunities to participate in culture? Participating in a cultural event once a year, or something else? Can criteria like these be established (c.f. criteria of sufficient exercise in the context of physical activity)? Maybe not, but the issue still needs to be discussed.

Optimistically viewed, it should be a realistic starting point, but in practice things may be different, especially since the economic situation in Finland doesn't seem to be crucially improving. E-services could however help, if resources can be directed into their development. They can't replace live events etc. but they can bring services to places where they haven't been available before (on, for example, the condition that broadband connections are functioning properly).

Some improvement may have been achieved through separate projects, but many of them have remained as isolated efforts; the projects don't always continue or become integrated into regular activities. The impacts remain small.

6.5.   Common perceptions on supporting cultural activities

The fourth stage of the Delphi analysis was discussion with the aim of reaching a common perception on which public measures would be most justified and possible when endeavoring to provide more equal opportunities for people to participate in culture. The objective was to find answers to the questions presented to the experts from the different ministries (Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Ministry of Employment and the Economy) that were formulated on the basis of the results from the KUULTO case studies.

The work of the Delphi panel took place in two phases: the members were first divided into two working groups (stage 3) and then the most central proposals for measures were selected in a joint discussion (stage 4). The persons who conducted the research did not take part in the working groups or the final discussion in any other capacity than that of recording the answers. The questions of who would be responsible for the concretization of the proposed measures or which authority or level of administration should be responsible for this work were not emphasized in the discussion. Many of the persons sitting around the table, with their contacts and networks, were people who implement measures of this kind as part of their work. The main idea was to reflect on how the ministries could, through information steering, promotional efforts and subsidizing policies influence and enhance equality in cultural participation.

Ten focal areas were narrowed down as a result of these reflections. They were areas in which the panel members shared a consensus and which were seen as most essential in light of the KUULTO goals. The panel did not want to prioritize the focal areas. They were all seen as highly important.

1.   *Enabling conditions for cultural activities in the form of facilities and venues.* Physical sites, operating premises, digital platforms and other infrastructure services fall in this area. Shared use of municipal facilities should become a permanent practice and regulations that hinder it need to be revised.

2.   *Increasing cultural welfare.* This requires structural solutions, and thus the following issues call for negotiation, development of measures and planning of resources:

a)   Managers of care and cultural institutions should be committed to the activity, which means that the tasks of producing contents for the activity and producing the activity in practice are reflected in the staff responsibilities and in budgeting related to costs produced by the units organizing the activity;

b) Conditions should be created for the employment of artists in institutions. Attention should be paid to solving (attitudinal and practical) obstacles. It should however be born in mind that the presence of professionals in the arts in the institution doesn't give grounds for reducing nursing staff;

c) The differences in the various forms of social work and social care (basic activities, preventive work, and rehabilitation) need to be separately examined. The required standards can be consequently defined. The place and form of cultural activities can be discussed and the needed funding solutions can be explored and discovered.

d) Appropriate training needs to be developed both as artist training and as training in the fields of social service and health care (e.g. a diploma linked to a separate study program, updating education, realizing the principle of lifelong learning).

e) Cross-sectoral cooperation groups should be established for different levels of administration in order to establish and assess the activities. It would be the groups' task to focus on development in these mentioned areas and on the dissemination of information on the related practical measures (operating models, funding, education, and management).

3. *The Municipal Cultural Activities Act needs to be revised.* The Act is very important but in its present form it does not correspond to the new needs in the operating environment.

4. *An approach that proceeds from the input from the residents and the local action itself is needed.* There should be less municipal management from above, and, in accordance with the new Local Government Act, the local residents should be given the opportunity to influence the contents of the activities and service forms. The needs and wishes of the residents should be better channeled into the development of services and the development work should be action-oriented. The KUULTO cases illustrated many new ways to enable participation by local residents with a bottom-up approach.

5. *Organizing regional arts and cultural activities in new ways is a key issue.* New operating models are needed for how access to cultural activities could be increased through regional cultural policy measures and how municipal residents could be empowered. Regional arts and cultural institutions are expensive to run, and they would be well advised to build up regional cooperation networks and cross-sectoral cooperation to strengthen their own operations. New forms of cooperation are also a challenge to the institutions and play an important role in increasing

cultural participation. Undertaking strategy work for the development of regional policies on culture is of utmost importance. The State Regional Administration Reform, which started in Finland in 2016, presents new challenges to the development of cultural policies. A key question will be how to straighten out the general structures of regional cultural policy.

6. *The administration of national sectoral ministries should, through their own good example, encourage and steer municipalities towards cross-sectoral cooperation.* Diverse networks of cooperation are pivotal to the cultural sector. Spaces for culture can be born if, for example, schools and libraries join forces, benefiting from opportunities to fluently use facilities for multiple purposes. The central partner in efforts to enhance wellbeing is the social service and health sector. Environmental issues, construction and zoning, coupled with the assessment of sustainable development from the perspective of culture, are essential to the cultural sector, as well as business connected with the core activities of cultural industry. The viewpoint of industry also links in with questions concerning the professionalization of the third sector and the growth in social business. An operating environment where small creative businesses can work together and enable work of optimally high quality is a key strength of the creative sector. Building bridges between people is important. Cross-sectoral cooperation makes it possible to form new kinds of operating environments where different businesses, especially businesses in the creative sector (bookshops, photography shops etc.), and artists can meet. The panel stressed the importance of encouraging and inspiring this approach.

7. *Cultural activities should be supported by maintaining different information and knowledge bases.* Members of the panel noted that there has been a considerable reduction in the supply of updating training, which is essential to the strengthening of municipal arts and cultural activities, and it needs to be enhanced through new means. The local actors also expressed a serious need to strengthen their own areas of knowledge and skills. Changes in the operating environment, administrative reforms, different development and leadership paradigms, plural actorship, inter-professional collaboration, technological innovations, resident and action led planning and feedback systems etc. are challenges that that need to be integrated into cultural administration and work.

8. *The responsibility for organizing cultural activities at municipal level requires committed staff resources.* Since a variety of goals are set for cultural activities today, the responsibilities should be shared beyond

the job description of one person alone. Since culture is diffused into different forms of cooperation, the tasks and responsibilities should also be divided between different actors. This also means that more people would be committed to the contents of the work and activity. The post of cultural planner established by the City of Helsinki, jointly funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, was presented as a positive example. Similar systems of co-funding were hoped to expand to different parts of the country. Organizers of municipal cultural activities should seek cross-administrative solutions with other sectors as well.

9. *Possibilities of businesses to finance culture should be enhanced.* This was a wish shared by the entire panel. Good examples have already been seen as isolated cases, but more are needed, in a concretized form. Examples of operating forms: (a) instead of paying dividends a company puts a certain percentage of the profits into common good and development (to enable cultural activities); (b) a social business credits its service income to the production of cultural services; (c) increased pro bono work through which businesses take part in the social development of their operating environments; (d) tax exemptions to those who donate money to work in the culture and welfare sector; and e) realizing the "percentage for art" principle. For example, in the newly developed Kangas district of the city of Jyväskylä around one percent of proceeds from building lot sales and different types of construction costs are directed to cultural activities in the district.

10. The experts remarked that considerably *more research and methods are needed for the assessment of the impacts of culture,* and they need to also be effectively reported to the decision makers, accompanied with the development of appropriate channels and divisions of responsibility.

7. DISCUSSION

In the previous chapters we have interpreted the stages and results of the KUULTO action research. The results has been produced through dialogue within a change-oriented research. One purpose of the action research is to respond to local and practical concerns while producing practical knowledge useful to organizations and communities. KUULTO largely draws on the research tradition of 'organization development' (Lewin, 1951; Burnes & Cooke, 2012, 1395–1429). According to Lewin (1947), a change is effective if it takes place at the group level and includes a participative and collaborative process of discussion, debate and action that involves all of those concerned. His three-step change model (unfreezing, changing and refreezing) is used in the KUULTO action research especially in the analysis of the sustainability of the tested actions after the separate project funding had ended.

KUULTO also had an interest in, for example, activating people who live far away from the municipal centers or in care institutions and in enabling their participation in cultural activities. The frame of participatory action research offered means to understand these cases and the role of the local actors. Application of this intent can be found from Paulo Freire (1972) who promotes the concepts of 'conscientizacao' (critical consciousness) and 'dialogical action', which encourage members of the community to develop new ways of seeing and communicating as well as new contexts of action in which they may express themselves and act. Residents

become aware of the contradictions in the social structures and situation in which they live, in order to change such structures and situations. This occurs through the unity of reflection (by using artistic work and research) and action. In Freire's writings dialogical action refers to the relationship between power and oppression in the practices of teaching and learning. Finding a way to engage in meaningful dialogue across power differentials means that by letting themes emerge from the lives of people cultural workers or artists, for example, could co-create a partnership for working together to act, reflect, and transform practices.

In the action research the researcher can be seen as a change agent. This approach sees those who would normally constitute 'the researched' as actively involved in defining the questions, in data collection and analysis, and in interpreting and taking action based on the research findings. It is a democratic relationship in which both sides exercise power and shared control over decision making as well as interpretation. Within this framework, researchers act as committed facilitators, participants, and learners rather than distanced, neutral observers, analysts or manipulators (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Through exploring how power is played out in the project, the researchers and participants will have to open up to critique on how power is embodied, played out, or used to influence the project. Action research also raises a number of practical challenges for the would-be action researcher. Rapoport (1970) brings up the risk of the researcher becoming over-involved in the situation or of being used as a tool in organizational politics. This might be a particular difficulty for the insider action researcher who is simultaneously a researcher and an organizational member.

Ethical issues arise in unique ways at each point in an action research process. Based on the definitions presented above, we aim in the following sections to examine the KUULTO action research from the viewpoint of research ethical reasoning. In very many ways the issue that arises as central is power. It is not just a question of someone having more power than the other; the question surfaces in all relations of interaction throughout the action research process. In Foucault's (1982) conception power is a mode of action. It is more a strategy than a possession. Power is a relation of action and influence between the actors, i.e. subjects. It is tactical and strategic by nature. Power is a relation where the actions and objectives of A influence the actions and objectives of B.

In this publication we explore some central research ethical questions, asking whose need for change came into focus in KUULTO, whose agendas were central in the local actions and who assessed the outcomes, in other words, who had different legitimacies to define the action and what kind of possibilities did the local actors have to participate in the action and the research (cogeneration). These questions are in many ways questions of power.

Whose need for change? The first stage of the action research proceeded from the initial diagnosis. The decision to undertake the project was made by the Finnish

Ministry of Education and Culture. The decision was grounded in several studies and reports that have given evidence to a concerning increase in inequalities in opportunities to participate in cultural activities. It is a principal goal and task of cultural policy to enable cultural participation for all. The consequent need for change was identified based on studies, reports, statistics, working group memos and international guidelines as well as national legislation: all people have the right to participate in cultural life both as users and as actors with full powers. David Stevenson has analyzed measures targeted at the same goal (in the context of Scottish cultural policy) and he raises an issue that is of interest also from the viewpoint of the KUULTO action research: "However, nested within this problem representation is a further, but less explicit one: the failure to engage with those cultural activities that receive state support." (Stevenson, 2013, 78.)

Government working in or valuing the arts themselves and seeing the arts as a vital and invigorating part of the public space has been challenged in policy documents over the last twenty years and the debate focusing on measurable impacts of the arts has taken place. Belfiore & Bennett (2007, 140) remind that "the views of how the arts relate to society and views of their transformative powers have always been at the centre of highly politicised debates." By analyzing the work of over 150 philosophers, writers, intellectuals, poets, artists etc. they found three main strands of philosophical elaboration around the effects of the arts: the "negative tradition" (the arts are a corrupting or distracting force in society), the "positive tradition" (the arts have a number of different beneficial effects) and the autonomy tradition that rejects such pragmatic understandings of art, and maintains that the value of the arts should rely on aesthetic considerations alone (Belfiore & Bennett, 2007, 141–147).

In KUULTO the need for change and to find solutions to the addressed problem was recognized by very many of the local and regional actors in the field of arts and culture. The need for change was acknowledged and clearly legible in the KUULTO applications. The applications also concretely pointed out specific groups and articulated the local residents' experiences of the problems relating to the accessibility of services. On the other hand, the enthusiasm expressed in the applications could however partly be explained by concern over threats regarding the financing of municipal cultural sectors due to problems faced by general municipal economies. There was thus a solid need for project funding in any shape or form.

When the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture decided to undertake the project there were two aspects to the decision: a promise to offer funding for local actions in line with the mentioned goals and the agreement to start an action research to analyze the actions. The briefing on how to apply for the funding held at the Ministry attracted a large and diverse audience of potential applicants and local actors, and the subsequent call for applications brought forth 188 applications from different parts of the country.

Through the application process, which consisted of several stages, 22 local or regional actors were selected. Their articulations of the need for change (diagnosis) were concretized and localized, and the drafts for the first action plans were born. The action research began, which meant that the project coordinator and researcher became a 'co-actor' in the process, and the expert groups appointed by the Ministry were to serve as a discussion – and when necessary – actor partner. The close contact between the coordinator and researcher with the local actors was born through phone and email conversations, joint workshops and case-specific meetings focused on reflection and assessment of the planned activity. The contact was strengthened by weekend diaries sent in by the local actors, going through them and commenting on the activity on their basis. The fact that the parties brought together locally or regionally by the activity were 1) actors who had received education in the cultural field and 2) a researcher who had studied municipal cultural activities over a long time made it in many cases easier to find a common language and common concepts. In a few of the cases several sessions of dialogue were required for specifying the contents of the activities, in which the researcher made suggestions about, for example, methodological details entailed by the activities and the coordinator about how specific details of the activity could be addressed. Discussions, even debates, took place around how the contents of the activity should be defined, on the question whether a certain activity fell under the concept of cultural activity. Since the starting point was not only to increase cultural participation but to also activate local residents, the audience-led methods extended the contents to, for example, crafts, physical activities and nature education. They were seen as a way to inspire people that would have spillover effects also on cultural participation. The multiplicity of cultural heritage was also highlighted in the contents of the activities. These dialogues were important means to articulate the activity and reflect on the possible impacts of the different forms the activity might take. The next following step was decisions taken at local level either by the project leader, a steering group or the local cultural committee or other some similar body.

All these aspects had an impact on the actors' commitment and agreement to carry out the local actions and to try to create changes in the practices of their respective organizations with the aim of increased cultural participation. They also made it possible for the researcher to try to share power in knowledge generation, which on the other hand presents certain research ethical challenges.

Ospina et al. (2004, 66) have discussed tensions around authority, trust, cohesion and power in a co-research group involving community leaders and academic action researchers. They concluded that "we have learned that a mutual inquiry space requires a very honest conversation about roles, tasks, boundaries, authority, and power in the context of each particular project and as relationships are being built."

Whose action plan? When the local actions began the goal was to achieve change for the better and to do it so that all the organizational actors who had made the application would have an active role. Moreover, attention needed to be paid to ensuring that the local residents' wishes, desires and needs would be conveyed to the development of the activity. When the action research started a key goal was to create genuinely new modes of operations for the organizations. In other words, to take big steps in increasing cultural participation. The research process took place in iterative cycles of research, action and reflection within democratic process.

The power of planning and implementation rested with the local actors. In the practical implementation the research served as a platform of support and – when needed – as an interpreter and "buffer" representing the overall goal. As pointed out in the previous chapters, the local actors succeeded for the most part at creating practices and measures through which they were well able to engage all the relevant organizational actors and the residents of the municipalities, villages and care institutions as well as children, young people and senior citizens. For example, cooperation with care institutions produced successful experiences, and some of the activities in this realm continued after the separate funding ended. But information was also gained on reasons behind the failures, explaining why this form of cooperation is still seeking concrete models generally suited for use in institutions. There were also some examples where a few local actors took on the responsibility of cross-sectoral cooperation; for one year they were able to meet the schedule and adapt their operational practices for the benefit of the other actors, but in the second year it was no longer possible. They had to return to their regular practices.

A few of the local actors encountered obvious problems in the preparation and implementation of the action plans and the activities. Conflicted situations arose that led to a quick termination of the activity after the separate KUULTO funding ended, even to a point that a local actor withdraw in the middle of the project. The most apparent reason seemed to be lack of trust between the local actors. In one of the cases, even though the group of organizations acting in the municipalities was able to create an excellent KUULTO application together and thus show that they met the criterion of cooperation, after funding was granted to the project, the responsibility for the implementation of the activity was passed on solely to the coordinator hired for the purpose. In similar cases the cooperating parties entered in the application remained just as nominal partners and the whole group wasn't assembled even once during the planning, implementation and assessment of the project. In some cases the first gathering of the group was the reflection/assessment meeting held after the first year of operations, where the members stated that they had been too busy to take an active role and the implementation of the activities had been assigned to the person hired for the purpose. In these cases also the commitment to new modes of operation (e.g. finding flexibility in the schedules of the

administration and the centers of activity) by the parties entered in the application was never realized in practice.

To our surprise, we also received comments in which the municipal cultural sectors regarded the KUULTO actors as competitors. The KUULTO actions, aimed at the development of new modes of operation and practices, were seen as a threat to so-called normal operations. The defensive attitude probably stemmed from the notion that in the face of growing economic difficulties the possible new activities would force the sectors the make changes in the funding of already existing activities. Even though the world has changed since, for example, the Municipal Cultural Activities Act was enforced in the early 1980s to strengthen and organize local cultural activities, the familiar, 'normal' practices that were adopted at the time are difficult to change. The municipal organization is rigid when it comes to adopting new modes of operation (Haveri, 2006; Airaksinen 2009).

Similarly, the third sector did not present itself as open to reform in a situation where a professionally acting group sought to legitimize its actions amidst an environment of strong associations. In one of the cases the operations of a group that received payment for its work, on the one hand, and an association based on traditional voluntary work, one the other, didn't seem to support each other. The challenge was how to get the operations of the professionally acting group to strengthen the core activities and ideological principal goal of the association and not change them.

Details on the forms of participation, needs, desires and feedbacks of the local residents who took part in the action were communicated to the research processes through the local actors. The researcher took part in the analysis of the material produced by the culture probe, which proved to be an empathetic way to generate and gather diverse data on the daily life of families with children and to engage them in the planning of cultural activities. Drawing on Freirean and Boalian methods, the community artists articulated their experiences of success and used the concept of empowerment in the interpretation of the results of their work. Similar forms of community activation were also achieved by applying cultural heritage (e.g. place names, memories) based methods, memory politics.

These methods managed to reach people of different ages living in remote villages and care institutions and to increase their participation in cultural activities. The evidence of these results is based on assessment interviews, newspaper articles, diaries, Facebook accounts and websites on the activities and separate reports requested from the local actors.

Research practices can be liberating and increase people's capacity to influence their own environments and implement solutions to their own, experienced problems, or they can confirm stereotypes and constricting images of people, and so render people less able to change their environments.

The research strived towards a multiplicity of perspectives; the local actors conceived and implemented many different kinds of operative solutions and gave birth to theory formation on a diverse range. The assessments of and reflection on the first action plans were reported in a publication where the analyzed data were based on diaries, workshop records, assessment and reflection discussions and data gathered through a questionnaire. The conclusions of the publication overviewed the positive results and experienced problems and outlined the action plans of the second year and their funding. The contents of the report especially highlighted the local actors' own descriptions of the applied measures.

Among the key criteria in carrying out an action research is also transparency (Boser, 2006). One ethical question is whose version of reality will inform the public. Because of the potential to privilege the voices of those involved in developing the written details and speaking publicly, participants must ensure that multiple perspectives are involved in crafting and/or approving public documents.

When KUULTO began, the project received a fair amount of newspaper coverage and the local actors were hoping that interviews and descriptions on the contents of the activities would appear in local newspapers, radio and television as well. This happened. Many of the local actors realized websites that reflected their special character, some of them joined Facebook, and others kept blogs. After the initial activation the actors tended however to get tired further down the line and neglect updating the sites. Both the coordinator and the researcher took part in national seminars and presented the upcoming contents of the action research. The local actors, the researcher and the coordinator endeavored to pass on information and preliminary results to and obtain comments on them from participants in different seminars and conferences. The action research was also discussed at university doctoral seminars and workshops centered on participation. The reflections on the concepts and methodological details that took place in these settings were very useful.

When the mentioned first research report was published it was presented in national seminars which also some of the local KUULTO actors attended to share their own experiences of the project. The same occurred with the second publication; the researcher and the coordinator presented the results of the action research to a wide audience at a seminar where some of local actors also described their successes and problems in implementing the measures. The seminar ended with a panel discussion in which the researcher, three local actors and two external cultural operators took part. The objective of the discussion was to discuss the feasibility of utilizing the experiences gained from the KUULTO action research in other municipalities and the financial resources required by the activities. The seminar was documented on video and linked to, for example, the KUULTO website (https://www.jyu.fi/ytk/laitokset/yfi/oppiaineet/kup/tutkimus/tutkprojhank/kuulto). The website also

includes presentations of the 11 local cases that have continued to operate in the longer run. The presentations were written by the actors themselves.

Transparency was a key objective in the part of the action research where the local actors assessed on the basis of their experiences how the different ministries could help with solving the problems that surfaced in carrying out the actions. The local actors' responses were passed on to the Delphi panel as a source of reflection on measures that could potentially solve the identified problems. In addition to evaluating the second round of the action research, the second KUULTO research report also analyzed the results of the Delphi panel. The local actors and the experts from the ministries came to realize that they all represented "common good". They had a shared conception of what "common good" meant, with an emphasis on the importance of cultural participation. In reality Finnish cultural policy discussion cannot be perceived through only one concept of common good, since the understanding of the concept itself is often conflicted.

The most recent measure connected to the KUULTO action research has been a spillover analysis conducted for four years after the project started. The analysis has been restricted to six local cases through which the researchers started to map out and articulate the spillover effects of the actions (Sokka, Jakonen, Karttunen & Kangas 2017).

The starting point of the KUULTO was the following normative goal: to increase the accessibility of cultural activities. Both basic values such as democracy, equality and equity, and research results of the impacts of arts were legitimating that aim. Action research as a collaborative process intended to create change. Collaboration for empowerment, was used to identify problems (barriers to cultural participation), in seeking to solve problems in their context and pursuing social change in politicized context.

The processes varied while exhibiting the use of iterative cycles that alternated between action and reflection, thereby integrating practice and theory. In this vein, action research can serve as a methodological tool that can serve not only to define problems, but also to make a real difference in people's lives and practices of organisations. Analytically, knowledge generated in action research can be used to promote broad change in the cultural participation policies.

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