



# CULTURE GUIDES

2nd edition

European  
handbook

edited by Daniel Carpenter



## Culture Guides – the European Handbook

Second edition

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Edited by Daniel Carpenter  
with a preface by Bente von Schindel

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*An electronic version of  
this handbook is  
available to download  
from the Culture Guides  
website at  
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*Bente von Schindel,  
General Secretary, the  
National Association of  
Cultural Councils in  
Denmark*

## Preface

**Modern welfare states have as an important objective to ensure free and equal access to art and culture for all, because the experience of art and culture can enliven and enlighten people and change their lives for the better. Art and culture have positive consequences for both the individual and for society.**

At the National Association of Cultural Councils in Denmark (KSD) we saw a need to enhance access to art and culture for socially marginalised groups, and we felt that the most appropriate means to fulfil this need, and promote cultural sustainability, would be to use the idea of 'people helping people'. State and municipalities can support such initiatives, but they cannot do it alone - the effort depends on volunteers.

We therefore elaborated on research by the Danish Ministry of Culture called 'The Cultural Habits of the Danes 2012'. It turned out that part of the Danish population do not regularly (or ever) go to the theatre or concerts, read books or go to art exhibitions etc. The reasons for not choosing art and culture were varied, and included involvement in other interests and priorities, lack of geographical and financial availability and cultural barriers.

Also, the cultural consumption of immigrants and refugees was mapped in the research and here were also found marginalised

**Opposite:**  
*Culture Guides project in  
Slovenia*

groups. This lack of cultural consumption of immigrants and refugees led to a group of volunteers in Copenhagen creating a corps of voluntary culture guides whose ambition was:

- to introduce children (and their families) from social housing districts of Copenhagen to cultural activities (museums, theatres, film etc.) – both as audience and as participants;
- to prevent marginalisation and ensure equal access to cultural activities by 'bridging' between the residents and the cultural institutions;
- to ensure that cultural institutions and associations met new audiences and developed new exhibitions/activities in correspondence with their interests and demands.



The research of the Ministry of Culture and the culture guide project in Copenhagen inspired KSD to launch a Culture Guide model in order to find out whether it would be possible to develop cultural volunteers in local cultural associations - themselves being extremely engaged in their activities - to help disseminate culture to all. The idea became a Danish, as well as a European, project.

In cooperation with European partners, KSD applied for, and was awarded, funding for an EU Grundtvig multilateral project that would focus on methods of how to include marginalised groups in art and culture. The six project partners are partners from Denmark, Holland, Slovenia, Hungary and the UK, and all partners have had their views on how and with what methods the Culture Guide idea could be implemented in their own country.

All examples can be found in this Handbook, and we hope they will be an inspiration for other people, organisations and countries to provide free and equal access to art and culture for citizens all over EU.



***Bente von Schindel, København, May 2015***

***Opposite:***

*Culture Guides bilateral visit to Gjethuset cultural centre in Frederiksværk, Halsnæs, Denmark*



## Introduction

For people in socially-marginalised communities, cultural participation can help to counteract some of the difficulties they commonly have to deal with (such as isolation, poor health, low self-esteem and depression), giving them new motivation, renewing their relationships with other people and with society, and helping them to achieve stability by bringing new perspectives on their lives.

It is therefore important that all citizens have the opportunity to participate in art and culture. However, this is not currently the case. The socially marginalised - including the elderly, disabled and members of migrant communities - are not often involved in art and culture. The reasons may be many, but it is important that something is done about it.

There is much that voluntary arts and cultural associations can do to reach out and help enable these social marginalised groups to engage. They need, through cooperation and partnerships with local agencies, to create a framework in which volunteers can convey art and culture to socially marginalised groups in an accessible manner.

This project sets out to create this framework by using the idea of 'citizen-helps-citizen', whereby volunteer Culture Guides in local areas - supported by local project teams of facilitators chosen from

**Opposite:**  
*Culture Guides project in  
Hungary*

a number of stakeholder organisations - act as mentors or guides to help end-users to access arts and culture offerings in their locality.

This may include visits to professional art offerings, including theatre, art exhibitions, concerts, dance performances, culture heritage activities or museums, or participation in amateur art or voluntary culture activities, such as choirs, theatre, music groups, dancing groups or storytelling.

The project is grounded in the belief that using volunteers - with relevant support from partners in stakeholder organisations including local government, cultural institutions, voluntary associations and health and social care organizations - can be a sustainable means of encouraging this type of beneficial engagement.

“ *The best moment of the project for me was meeting the Culture Guides and being reinvigorated by their enthusiasm.* ”

**Local partnership  
team member,  
Torfaen, UK**

## The European context

The partner countries involved in this project, along with other EU member states, have as one of the major aims of their cultural policy to promote art and culture to the entire population. At the same time, these countries often experience the recurring problem of having large residual groups of non-users, especially among socially-marginalised communities.

Many countries, as well as the Nordic Council of Ministers, identify the need to involve voluntary associations and volunteers in meeting this challenge. The stated aim is to promote a 'sustainable culture', with reference to a civil society context, where 'citizen helps citizen' in an inclusive and cohesive manner.

The same message has characterised major EU policies in the past fifteen years. The 'Memorandum on Lifelong Learning' that the European Commission presented in 2000, and the revised communication 'Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality' from 2001, emphasised that the main aims of lifelong learning were active citizenship, social inclusion, cultural cohesion and personal development, as well as a means for empowerment and improved employability. Furthermore, the EU designated 2010 as the European year for combating poverty and social exclusion, 2011 as the European year of volunteering, 2012 as the European year for active ageing and solidarity between generations, and 2013 as the European year of citizens.

EU countries need to find new ways to involve the civil society element of voluntary arts and culture, where a vast number of cultural and educational associations provide learning activities for around 20 to 30 per cent of the populations of the member states. Voluntary arts and culture is, next to amateur sport, the biggest sector in the field of European volunteering, and the sector with the current highest rate of expansion in members and new associations.

### The partners

The partnership circle shares an aim of providing better arts and culture access for all citizens. They hold the common view that voluntary arts and culture can help people to a more fulfilling and enlightened life, whilst at the same time representing different backgrounds and approaches and bringing a variety of competencies, skills, experiences and networks to the project.

The concept of Culture Guide services in the context of voluntary arts and culture associations is new and innovative. The partners did not have former European experiences to build on - therefore new relevant knowledge, experiences and methodologies on a European scale had to be developed in a multilateral cooperation.

#### **National Association of Cultural Councils in Denmark (KSD)**

Kulturelle Samråd i Danmark (National Association of Cultural Councils in Denmark) is the national association of voluntary cultural councils, which are umbrella associations for local associations of voluntary culture. Voluntary cultural councils exist in approximately 90 of Denmark's 98 municipalities, to be the voice of voluntary cultural and amateur activities to local politicians in order to give civil society, and thus local democracy, the chance to be heard in relation to cultural policy.



#### **Interfolk, Institute for Civil Society (IF), Denmark**

Interfolk is a non-profit association based on individuals sharing the same fundamental ideas and objectives on liberal adult education.



It strives to promote liberal adult education and cultural learning that focuses on personal autonomy, active citizenship, social inclusion, and cultural cohesion. It works to create partnerships with Nordic and European associations within liberal adult education, NGO-activities and the spheres of voluntary arts and culture.



### **National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts (LKCA), Netherlands**

Landelijk Kennisinstituut Cultuureducatie en Amateurkunst (National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts) is the Dutch organisation that aims to help anyone interested in education and participation in culture and arts, both within the education system and beyond, including art teachers, culture coordinators and coaches, education officers within cultural institutions, policy officers, politicians, researchers, school managers, and administrators in the education sector and in umbrella organisations for the amateur arts.



### **Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities (JSKD)**

Javni sklad RS za kulturne dejavnosti (Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities) is a national institution covering all branches of amateur culture and art, including vocal and instrumental music, theatre and puppet, folklore, film and video, literature, fine arts and dance. Its main tasks include: organising and delivering cultural events; preparing seminars, workshops, lectures and summer camps; publishing periodicals, expert guides and other publications; and the joint financing of cultural projects.

### **Hungarian Folk High School Society (MNT)**

Magyar Népfőiskolai Társaság (Hungarian Folk High School Society) is a national non-governmental organisation specialising in non-formal adult education. As an umbrella organisation, it has more than one hundred member organisations within Hungary. Among its objectives are promoting learner-centeredness, increasing the autonomy and capability of individuals and minority communities, and to address problems of marginalisation through learning, cultural activities and community development.



### **Voluntary Arts (VA), UK**

Voluntary Arts is the development agency set up to promote participation in creative cultural activities in the UK and Republic of Ireland. It works with policy makers, funders and politicians to improve the environment for everyone participating in the creative cultural activities, and provides information and training to those who participate in the voluntary arts sector. This includes over 300 national and regional umbrella bodies, and through them, their member groups of local voluntary arts practitioners.



**Opposite:**  
*Culture Guides project in  
Slovenia*



## Key recommendations

- The work with the Culture Guides lasted only about six months for this European pilot, which in many cases was not enough time to get activities up and running. Future incarnations of Culture Guides should consider a longer period, especially if there is still some work to do in establishing networks.
- The most successful Culture Guides projects were supported by strong local partnership teams made up of representatives of a mix of organisations, both cultural and social.
- The projects that had greater early success were the ones where the organisations represented on the local partnership teams had access to existing volunteers and/or groups of socially marginalised end users.
- Make your choices (locations, topics, end user groups) early in the project, but make sure you have the buy-in of your local partnership team and Culture Guides.
- It can be fruitful to allow the Culture Guides to set the parameters of the project (locations, topics, end users) themselves, but sometimes this is too broad and they are unable to make decisions.

- Provide information to the Culture Guides at the outset, about what the role entails, what is expected of them in terms of time commitment and standards, and also practical considerations like health and safety, personal boundaries and incident reporting.
- It is often difficult to convene people at meetings, especially if this is not part of their main job, and they have to travel. Take this into consideration.
- Ensure that communication between all the stakeholders, Culture Guides and local partnership teams remains frequent and of high quality, to prevent them from losing interest and a sense of ownership in the project.
- Sensitivity about the substitution of paid professionals with volunteers should be taken into consideration, as roles should be complementary, and not treated as replacements.
- Remember that this will be the first time many end users have participated in culture, so ensure their introduction is as gentle as possible and in terms they can relate to.

## Overview of the projects

Beyond the main criteria of recruiting and training volunteer Culture Guides to enable socially marginalised groups to overcome barriers in accessing arts and culture, there was freedom for each partner to interpret the pilot work in whichever way they felt would be advantageous in their nation, with the support of local partnership teams made up of representatives of stakeholder organisations.

Below is an overview of how the projects looked in each country.

### UK

In the UK, the project was split over four locations, two in England and two in Wales. The two English regions were St Helens in the northwest and Swale and Medway in the southeast, and in these two regions local partner teams were formed of representatives of local organisations, of which one was tasked with leading the project.

The two Welsh regions were Wrexham in the north and Torfaen in the South, and though local partnership teams were similarly formed of representatives of local organisations, the leadership and day-to-day management of the project in these areas was overseen by staff at Voluntary Arts.

In all the UK regions it was decided that the project would grow

“*The group and I have had such a great time doing the project. It's had memories, fun, enthusiasm and it's been an amazing, rewarding journey.*”

**Culture Guide,  
St Helens, UK**

organically, taking to account the preferences of the culture Guides that would be recruited in deciding both the groups of end-users to target and the artistic and cultural experiences to include.

However, in Swale and Medway, which has a great wealth of nautical culture and history, it was felt that the Culture Guides project in this area would promote and nurture understanding of maritime and nautical arts, crafts and heritage.

## Slovenia

“The key element that attracted me to participate in the project Cultural Guides was the understanding of equality. When the culture is equally available to all, it opens up new possibilities for expression and creativity. And it seems to me that is the essence of culture.”

**Jan Pirnat,**  
**culture organiser**  
**at the Association of**  
**Culture Societies,**  
**ZKD Grosuplje,**  
**Slovenia**

To meet the needs of end users and adapt activities within the Culture Guides project to the specific local environment, JSKD conducted a brief consultation with the heads of its regional branches and associations of cultural societies. A lot of them had already been involved in similar activities for specific target groups.

The response was good, so they started to develop seven local teams from different regions of Slovenia. The regional branches and associations suggested potential groups of end users and volunteers who would be interested to join in.

After an initial seminar, seven local teams began to build up the programme which was then carried out in June and in the autumn. Three local teams in the Goriška region worked with older people, blind and visually impaired people and with ethnic minorities living in that area.

Local teams in Ljubljana and Grosuplje choose a slightly different approach to the Culture Guide activities - they prepared a series of theatre, film and dance workshops for children from socially deprived families and for children with special needs, cooperating with local social services and elementary school. Their programs last a longer period of time and will be completed by the end of the school year.

A team in Velenje choose a group of immigrants, and, with them, prepared an evening of poetry reading in their own languages.

### Netherlands

LKCA aimed for a diversity of end-users, geographically spread over the Netherlands in different social situations, and where the contribution of volunteers in cultural and social organisations is developed differently. They developed projects in cities in the urban areas of the Randstad and the province of Gelderland, as well as in the more rural provinces Drenthe and Flevoland.

They aimed at lonely elderly people in rural areas, elderly people with dementia, and people with psychiatric and mental health disorders. The lonely elderly people were focused on receptive participation like visits to museums, cultural archives or cultural cafés, whilst all the other end users were focused on active participation in music, theatre and visual arts.

#### **Opposite:**

*Culture Guides project in Slovenia*

“ I've spoken a lot of people from different organisations who are working with volunteers. Every organisation is working in a different way and you can learn from each other. And, most of all, you must try something to find out what works and what doesn't. ”

**Culture Guide,  
Drenthe, Netherlands**



## Hungary

The Balaton Highland was chosen as the geographical area in Hungary, where there are strong cultural traditions, for instance in the culture of vine growing and wine production, which has links to many cultural and artistic traditions.

With help from a folk high school working in the region, MNT focused on the theme of wine and the traditions related to vine growing. Several villages organise vintage festivals, which are attended by a wide and diverse audience from the elderly through middle-aged people to youth and children.

Smaller villages in the region are disadvantaged settlements, where cultural and artistic offerings are insufficient and activities

“ It is an interesting experience to be involved in an international project with people I don't know. ”

**Local partnership team member in Balatonszepezd, Hungary**

are on a low level. Their involvement and the mobilisation of entire local communities were formulated as an important goal.

Two villages, Mindszentkállya-Szentbékállya were actively involved in the project. Another group of villages in the Nivegy Valley planned to revive and organise the vintage procession for the first time, but they lacked the human resources to take part in the joint preparation and implementation.

In one of the villages, there was an initiative to revive the one-time existing men's choir and a music teacher agreed to assist. Another new initiative aimed to collect old tools of vine growing and wine production and to display them at an exhibition that would also present the history of vintage festivals.

### Denmark

KSD chose to focus on marginalised children, as the Danish Ministry of Culture's 2012 survey about Danish cultural habits had shown that children from homes that do not participate in artistic and cultural activities are not going to participate in them as grown-ups.

As KSD was running the project with a staff of just two people it was important to choose two places not far from the head office in Copenhagen. They also stressed the importance of having a platform at the two places and since they have local cultural

“ The best thing I gained from the project was meeting a diverse group of people. ”

**Local partnership  
team member in  
Mindszentkállya,  
Hungary**

councils in about 50 per cent of the Danish municipalities, they chose two with well-functioning councils.

As local cultural councils are umbrellas over the local cultural associations the activities chosen were those that the associations themselves do, i.e. activities within the arts and heritage. The activities were based on the cultural associations' normal activities, but were adapted for children.

## Local partnership teams

“*The project has highlighted the need for more people willing and prepared to support the arts in a volunteering capacity. Too many people feel because they don't have experience or knowledge of the arts that they don't have a contribution they can make.*”

**Local partnership team member, Torfaen, UK**

The local partnership team, made up of representatives of local organisations that have an interest in engaging socially-marginalised communities in artistic and cultural experiences, either for social, health or cultural reasons, was an important principle in the Culture Guides idea from the start.

It was only by getting buy-in from these organisations that there would be any hope in sustaining the engagement beyond the length of the funded pilots, and it was important, therefore, that these teams were engaged in shaping the pilots from an early stage.

LOCAL HISTORY

UNVEIL  
THE HISTORY  
OF YOUR FAVOURITE  
HAUNTS

THE COMEDY TRUST  
PRESENTS...

THE COMEDY TRUST  
PRESENTS...

STAND UP  
TO  
SIGMA

STAND UP  
TO  
SIGMA

Comedy to tackle  
health stigma  
discrimination

CULTURE  
GUIDES



**Opposite:**

*Culture Guides project in  
St Helens, UK*

## Slovenia

For the local partnership teams in Slovenia, JSKD organised a demonstration meeting with organisations that work with marginalised groups to discuss possibilities of cooperation.

Each of the local partnership teams included a local cultural organiser, two to three volunteers and representatives of organisations working with target groups - for example a day centre for young people, a school for children with special needs, a home for the elderly, an association for the blind and visually impaired and a psychiatric hospital.

The number of meetings varied - for the preparation and implementation of workshops there were many more meetings than to organise a visit to an exhibition or event.

## Netherlands

“ Working with volunteers helped me to get nearer my [end users] and kept me inspired. My volunteers became friends, so it has a social meaning also. ”

**Local partnership  
team member,  
the Netherlands**

LKCA organised an introductory meeting for interested organisations and artists working in the field of cultural participation for marginalised groups and volunteering. From that meeting, three partners were recruited and as more needs and possibilities became apparent, two more partners were recruited.

LKCA spent a lot of time in search of an organisation willing to start a project with Polish working migrants, but unfortunately they did

not succeed.

Local partnership teams included two local arts centres, one health organisation, one day-care organisation for psychiatric disabled people and one provincial organisation which functioned as an agent for three local museums. Local teams met between three and seven times.

## Hungary

Prior to local visits, MNT had a meeting with colleagues from 15 settlements, with whom they had already collaborated in former projects. This was first time that the aims and methods of the project were discussed with these colleagues. They described the features of cultural and artistic activities in these communities, and identified where and how these activities could be developed, how much they knew about local vintage traditions, what experience they have in relation to vintage festivals, and who could possibly be involved.

In the end seven villages agreed to take part. Local partnership teams included people who play important roles in the local cultural life of their communities - leaders of art groups, leaders and staff of cultural centres, representatives of the local self-government, the mayor, leaders of local NGOs, citizens active in local public life, entrepreneurs and private individuals.

“ I did not realise that a lot of the work I do is voluntary. ”

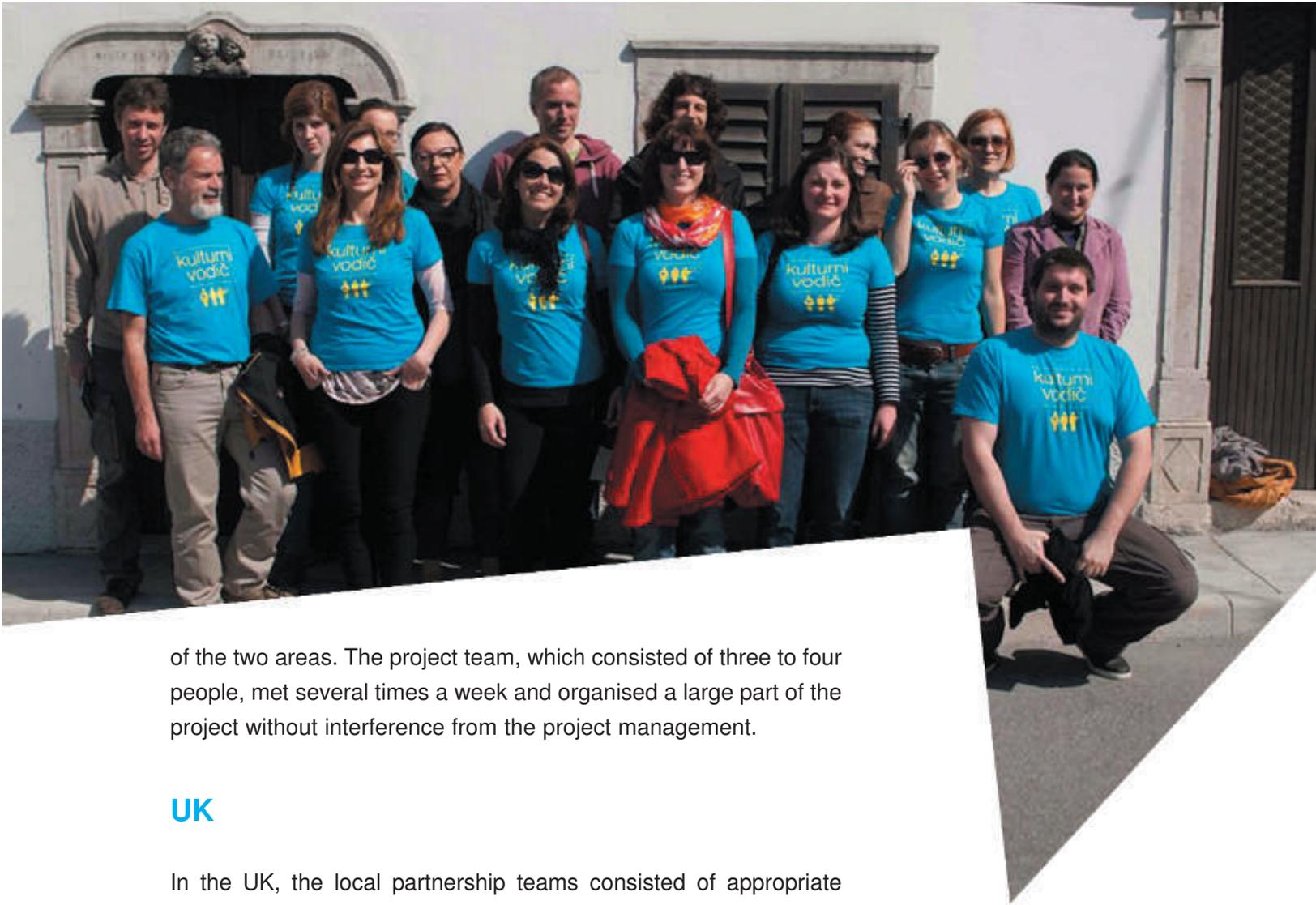
**Local partnership  
team member,  
Balatonszepezd,  
Hungary**

MNT relied on local contributors who knew the targeted villages and the vintage festivals in the Balaton Highland. Some of them even participated in the festivals. They provided MNT with information about individuals, organisations and institutions that could be used to build a partnership. The project team first met key persons in 15 villages. In the discussion about the experiences of previous vintage festivals, they identified which villages they could involve the most, where the local leadership was the most supportive, and what sort of artistic and cultural activities were available.

Factors that influenced the selection of local partnership team members included: which leaders are supportive and how do they raise funds; what type of cultural and artistic programmes are available; which of the non-professional art groups can be contributors; who are the best organisers and what are their tasks; who are the leading figures that are followed by neighbours and friends; who has the best wine and willingness to offer it for tasting; what tit-bits to go with wine are prepared and by who; who could invite horsemen to join the procession to make it more spectacular; who can best organise the evening ball and dinner; who can still remember old sayings, poems and songs and present them?

## Denmark

For the Danish project, it was quite simple to create local teams as they were already there, namely the local cultural councils in each



of the two areas. The project team, which consisted of three to four people, met several times a week and organised a large part of the project without interference from the project management.

## UK

In the UK, the local partnership teams consisted of appropriate people from key organisations connected with art, culture and local communities who helped develop the project locally and also provided local support to Culture Guide volunteers. Examples of organisations represented included local government culture teams, local galleries and theatres, mental health charities, organisations for elderly people and a library network.

“ I didn't know what to expect when I started, but have found the experience very rewarding and would recommend it to anyone. ”

**Culture Guide,  
St Helens, UK**

**Opposite:**  
*Culture Guides in  
Slovenia*

Initially, the local partnership teams had specific ideas about where the project should focus, but as the meetings progressed, it became clear that the focus of the project also needed to take into account the experience and interests of the Culture Guide volunteers.

## Recruiting Culture Guide volunteers

The project did not specify how, and from where, Culture Guide volunteers were to be recruited, leaving each partner to develop a best-practice approach appropriate to their country.

### Netherlands

The Culture Guide volunteers in the Netherlands were recruited in all cases by the local partners. In the case of the group of end users with psychiatric disorders, there was a nice conversion in which participants provoked other people from the day-care to cooperate in the project, and from end users they became Culture Guides themselves.

### Hungary

It was not too difficult to recruit volunteers as it is customary that both old and young people contribute something in the preparations for the vintage festival. Acquaintances, friends,

neighbours and whole families mobilise one another (and also people who have moved from the village and now live elsewhere). For most of them, contribution to the events of the vintage festival is a matter of prestige.

Key organisers and helpers were consulted who could be asked to contribute as volunteers and therefore creating a snowball effect. Some provided transportation vehicles, some offered wine for tasting (this is also a kind of competition between wine producers), housewives made snacks and cakes to go with the wine. Culture Guide volunteers were responsible for the preparatory work with art groups or for inviting performers.

### Denmark

As the members of the local cultural councils in the two municipalities in which the Culture Guides project was to take place were local cultural associations, the construction was there in advance, so in Denmark it was just a case of asking the local cultural associations whether they wanted to participate as Cultural Guides and culture providers.

### UK

In the UK, Voluntary Arts decided to try different methods of recruiting Culture Guide volunteers in different areas, to see which was most successful.

“ I think there is still a lot of work to do to re-educate people into understanding that they do have a contribution to make to the arts irrespective of their arts experience, that it takes different kinds of people with different life skills and professional knowledge to support an organisation and give it the best chance of succeeding and becoming sustainable. ”

**Local partnership team member, Torfaen, UK**

In Swale and Medway, the local partnership team put on a recruitment event and the Culture Guide project was put in a range of regional newsletters and websites, through an interview on local radio and at a local event, in which the participants ranged in age from six to 80 years old. The activities included singing (sea shanties), story telling, performance art and painting tiles.

In St Helens, Culture Guides were identified from existing volunteers from the lead partner and other partners of the local partnership team.

In Torfaen, it was decided that an open recruitment for Culture Guides would be carried out via posters, posts on volunteer recruitment sites, job search sites and through emails to relevant groups. This approach had only limited success, though three Culture Guides were at last recruited via a local university and via the website.

Recruitment of Culture Guides in Wrexham was carried out by asking the local partnership team to identify individuals in their own networks that might be interested and sufficiently skilled/experienced to become Culture Guides.

## Slovenia

In Slovenia, the Culture Guide volunteers were recruited by the local partnership team who saw the Culture Guides project as a

new opportunity for recruiting volunteers in general. JSKD cooperated with rather young population of volunteers, since employment in the Slovenia was not very good at the time, and that goes especially for the field of culture. So some volunteers took part in the hope of increasing their chances of finding a job.

In the case of working with elderly people, JSKD had a nice experience with elderly volunteers who care for arts, and they inspired others to join to the programme.

## Pilot courses and other training

The Culture Guide project specified that each nation would hold a two-day residential pilot course in Spring 2014 to introduce the newly-recruited volunteers and local partnership teams with the requirements of the project, and to begin to plan activities based on discussion and sharing of ideas.

### Hungary

The title of the pilot course in Hungary was 'Strengthening the worship of wine and developing vintage festivals - learning from good practices', and it was attended by 20 representatives of seven villages. Participants included mayors, artistic leaders, cultural professionals, organisers, and volunteers.

**Opposite:**  
*Culture Guides from  
Torfaen, UK*



Images broadcast at bbc.co.uk/liverpool

RADIO

95.8 FM | 14

bh.co.uk

CULTURAL  
GUIDES

CULTURAL  
GUIDES

ON

Hello, my name is...  
a friendly...  
take my place

The customs and traditions related to grape harvest and wine in the Balaton Highland were presented by an ethnographer. Examples were taken from Balatonakali and the villages of Mindszentkállya and Szentbékállya, and films were also shown. The village of Zánka was also an example, where the most spectacular element in the festival is the vintage puppets that are placed in the streets during the festive period.

Information included all aspects of preparatory work and delivery of celebrations, and special emphasis was put on the involvement of local communities. Apart from organisational issues, the role of artistic performance, vintage sayings, poems and songs was also discussed. A collection of songs, sayings and poems was made available for everybody's use and participants were invited to add to it.

The presentations by organisers of vintage festivals gave the idea that a publication with practical advice for festival organisers should be produced. This guide was intended to be not only a collection of good practice examples but also a practical tool as there were three wine growing villages that planned to start organising vintage processions. The local partnership teams also considered a guide to be useful in the extension of activities.

“ We are just starting, but I think we are in the future ready to receive more and different vulnerable people. ”

**Culture Guide,  
Drenthe, Netherlands**

## Denmark

In Denmark, a joint meeting was held where the upcoming Culture Guides were briefed on the project. Additionally, several meetings were held between the local cultural council and the Culture Guides to discuss the activities. As the Cultural Guides were also the suppliers of these activities, much time was spent on these discussions.

Additionally, a large and a small seminar were held where the Culture Guides were taught how to communicate to children, what the children expected and how the roles would be between teachers and Culture Guides.

## UK

In the UK, the pilot course took the form of a two-day orientation session held in Birmingham in June 2014. 11 participants took part including local partnership team members and volunteer culture Guides from England and Wales.

The first day was for facilitators and local partnership team members only and included a project overview, a review of the volunteer recruitment process and a discussion on the role of the local partner group. The second day included volunteer Culture Guides and featured content on what to expect from volunteering in the arts, how to reach people who are not accessing the arts and capturing and disseminating results.

Additional training opportunities included a 'speed dating' event in St Helens where volunteer Culture Guides were matched with representatives of groups of end users, whilst in Swale and Medway, Voluntary Arts also ran volunteer management training to prepare the local partnership team for volunteers and ensure the appropriate documentation was in order.

Voluntary Arts attracted additional funding after the start of the project for training on topics such as removing barriers to participation and mapping local creative activity in your area, which the Culture Guides were able to take advantage of.

### Slovenia

JSKD set an ambitious program for their pilot course, which took place at two levels. The first part of the seminar was designed to be attended by all participants, while the second part was conducted separately for the organisers and for volunteers.

18 participants attended the seminar, which was held in March 2014 in Kobarid (Gorizia region). The programme was executed to a high quality, with lecturers from various fields, including the legal aspects of volunteering, public relations to popularise volunteering, the theoretical and practical approach to DIE (Drama in Education), examples of good practice (volunteers working with young people, the homeless, prisoners, older people, etc.).

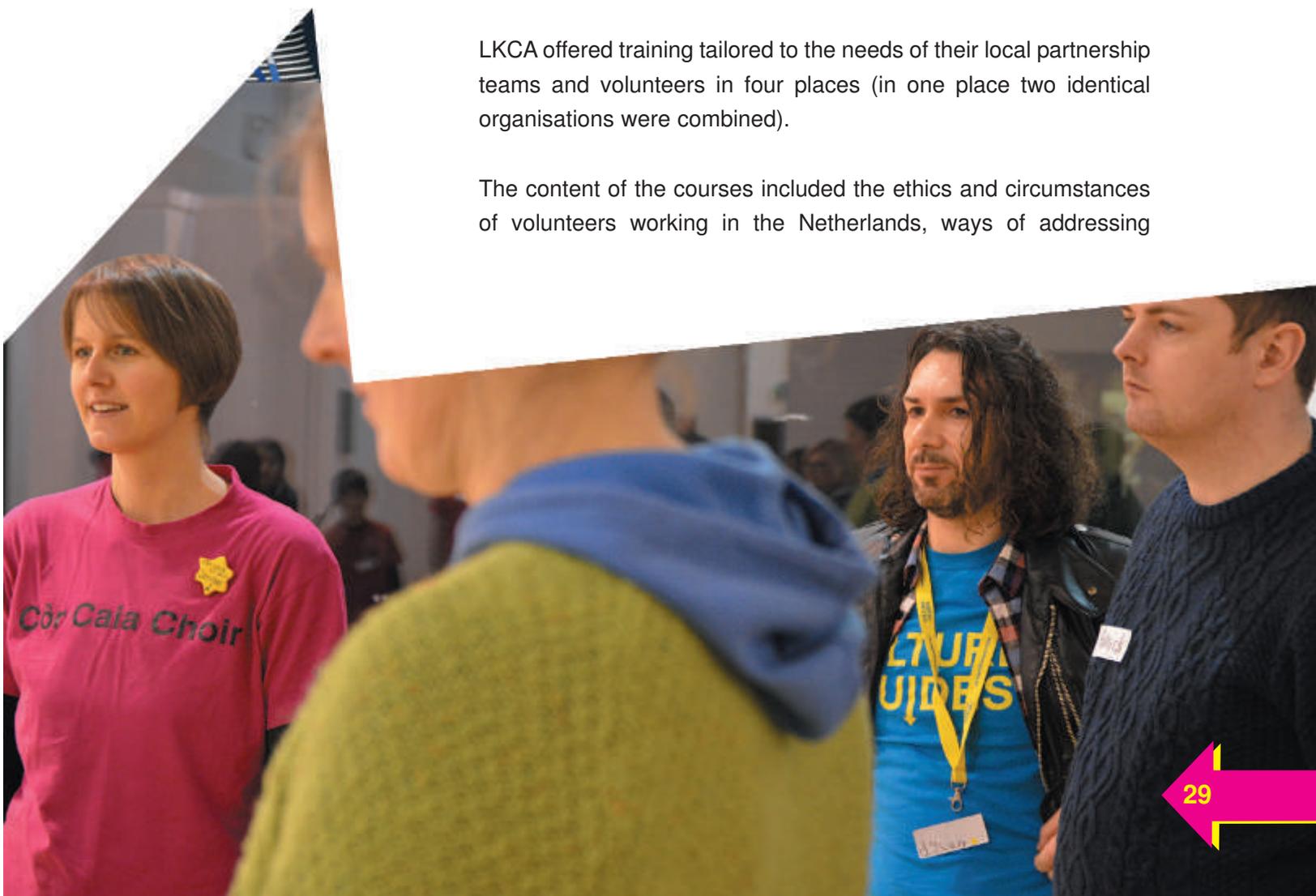
**Opposite:**  
*Culture Guides project in  
Wrexham, UK*

Seminar participants also received written materials to help them in their work, and a two-day residential offered them also many opportunities to exchange views and practical experience in their field of interest.

## Netherlands

LKCA offered training tailored to the needs of their local partnership teams and volunteers in four places (in one place two identical organisations were combined).

The content of the courses included the ethics and circumstances of volunteers working in the Netherlands, ways of addressing



marginalised end users, local networks as a bridge to end users, art and culture as a way of lowering obstacles and taking part in community, and practical plans for Culture Guide.

In most cases there followed internal meetings where volunteers shared their experiences with the end users and managers supported and helped them.

In two of the pilot courses, artists were added to the course. This involved participatory sessions where the volunteers worked directly with the target groups. The artists assisted the volunteers on two levels:

1. They helped the volunteers to find art forms that worked for the specific target groups.
2. They taught the volunteers the dos and don'ts of working with people with dementia, psychiatric and mental disorders.

In both cases, the volunteers found that the deployment of artists increased the quality of the course.

## Management and support of Culture Guide volunteers

Following recruitment and induction at the pilot courses, the Culture Guide volunteers were, in some cases, managed by the partner

organisations with support from the local partnership teams, whilst in others the management and ongoing support of the volunteers was the responsibility of one or more members of the local partnership teams.

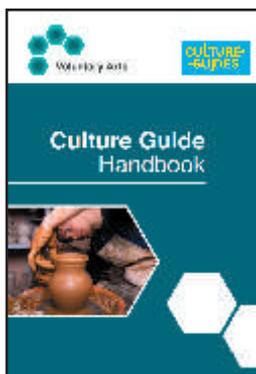
## Denmark

In Denmark, the local partnership teams (cultural councils) had day-to-day contact and meetings with the Culture Guides, and the Culture Guides were very autonomous in their way of working. KSD had regular contact with the project team, but not directly with the Culture Guides.

## UK

In the UK, the style of management was split between the two projects in England and the two in Wales. In England, a lead organisation within the local partnership team took on the day-to-day management of the Culture Guides, reporting back to Voluntary Arts on a regular basis.

In Wales, Voluntary Arts took a more hands-on approach, and a member of staff mentored and supported the Culture Guides on a weekly basis through a combination of meetings, email and phone contact. This was more labour-intensive, but the hope is that the Welsh Culture Guides will continue to work closely with Voluntary Arts into the future, whilst the English volunteers, if they continue,



*Culture Guides volunteer handbook produced by Voluntary Arts, UK*



“ We received very good response and the intergenerational cooperation made the strongest impression on me - the children were creating with their parents or grandparents. ”

**Petra Paravan,**  
**Culture Guide,**  
**Nova Gorica,**  
**Slovenia**

will do so independently of Voluntary Arts.

Voluntary Arts produced a volunteer handbook to provide additional support to the Culture Guides. This included back ground information about Voluntary Arts and the Culture Guides project, an outline of what the Culture Guide could expect from volunteering and what would be expected of them (commitment, a professional manner etc.).

It also included specific information on many issues that arose at the orientation session (pilot course) in Birmingham, including compliance with Voluntary Arts existing volunteer policies, expenses claims, travel, health and safety, personal boundaries, confidentiality, criminal records checks, data protection, insurance and dealing with complaints. In addition, there was a Culture Guide role description to give the volunteers clarity about the task they were being asked to complete.

## Slovenia

In Slovenia, the management of the volunteers was largely undertaken by the cultural organisers that formed part of the local partnership teams.

Meetings were organised before and after the pilot course to encourage them to build a network and inspire local partnership teams that were formed in later phases. Especially successful and

**Opposite:**

*Wine-growing heritage of the Balaton region of Hungary*

positive was the meeting held in early autumn of 2014, since some of the projects had already started, so they could share their experience and outcomes with those who had just started with the activities.

JSKD kept an ongoing communication with the cultural organisers and Culture Guides through email and phone, since some specific or delicate issues were easier to solve that way.

### Netherlands

In the Netherlands, LKCA was closely involved in all the first pilot courses for the volunteers. The courses where the artists were involved took place over several days and were attended by someone from LKCA. There was regular contact with the LKCA managers, both during the courses themselves, and via mail and telephone.

### Hungary

In Hungary, the Culture Guides were managed by the organisers of the vintage festivals, who formed the local partnership teams.

As in the UK, MNT produced a publication for their Culture Guides. As well as focusing on the practicalities of volunteering, it also provided background information and history on vintage festivals, and practical guidance on how they should be run. The first version

of the publication was presented to participants during the pilot course and they had the opportunity to propose additions.

## Reaching end users

Partners used a variety of means to find and make contact with groups of end users who rarely access cultural opportunities as a result of being socially marginalised. Often these were groups of service users of the organisations that were represented on the local partnership groups.

### UK

“ I felt that [it] exceeded my expectations due to feedback we received from some of the members. After the first event more members attended and felt less afraid of attending the events. ”

**Culture Guide,  
St Helens, UK**

In the UK, end users were reached in different ways, depending on the interests of the Culture Guides themselves and the make-up of the local partnership teams. In St Helens, for example, the local partnership team was made up of many health organisations, which had groups of service users ready to take part in cultural activities, but who had previously not done so due to their impairments. This allowed Culture Guide activities to start relatively quickly.

In the two Welsh regions, the local partnership teams were made up largely of cultural institutions such as local government culture departments, arts venues, theatres, galleries, etc. There was no obvious group of end users, so it was left up to the Culture Guides

to find and approach groups of end users from their locality. One Culture Guide in Wrexham worked for a local mental health charity so was able to find end users through that. Others were not so clear on who they wanted to work with, so this slowed the start of the project in these areas. Advertising for people to take part, by putting up posters and leaving leaflets in public places such as health centres and libraries was trialled with limited success.

### Slovenia

In Slovenia, most of the groups of end users were selected because they had already expressed an interest in cooperating in various cultural events. In some cases, cultural organisations on



the local partnership team presented the project to local social institutions and together they chose a cultural event or workshop that would be suitable for end users.

One example is the day centre Cona Fu ine, which carried out a programme of activities for children from socially disadvantaged families, who until then had no experience of cultural programmes. They saw the project as an opportunity, since the creativity shown in the theatre, dance and film workshops encouraged reflection, self-reflection and creative thinking. Art was used as a tool to raise awareness of their own identity, through which they could actively perceive and interpret experiences from the domestic environment. The same was true for children with special needs who attended theatre classes within primary school activities.

## Netherlands

In the Netherlands, most of the marginalised groups chosen as end users were already target groups for LKCA, though the labour migrants and the psychiatric groups were more-or-less new target groups.

At first LKCA did not contact the groups of end users directly, but instead addressed partners already working with the marginalised groups, even if some of them were new to using cultural activities in their work. Cultural activities were chosen based on the experience that art stimulates the imagination and wellbeing of

**Opposite:**  
*Culture Guides pilot  
course in Slovenia*

marginalised people, which in turn stimulates them to take part in civil society.

Some of the groups needed a clear dot on the horizon; a concrete result to work for. For example the psychiatric group was enthusiastic about working in the longer term towards a public presentation and a festival.

## Hungary

In Hungary, the end users were the public who attended the vintage festivals, in areas where little cultural participation otherwise took place. MNT looked for villages where the majority of the audience were local people, the festival was organised by the local community for themselves, and non-professional cultural and artistic activities were preferred to cultural programmes by professional artists. They understood that participation in these areas cannot be achieved by forcing culture on people.

Classic festive celebrations have real appeal. A colourful crowd gathers together to celebrate, people invite guests to their homes, delicacies to eat are offered in the streets along with good quality local wines to taste. The most important aspect of this is a sense of being together, the experience and strengthening of local identity and pride based on traditions.

“ We were invited by culture organizer at ZKD Grosuplje who presented us with the Culture Guides project. This was an opportunity to present our theatre work to a wider audience ... and to give the children with disabilities a chance to experience theatre, first on stage, and second, to help them develop skills and imagination. At the same time, we want other people to approach to children with disabilities, to see their positive qualities and in such a way to move a piece in the mosaic of prejudice, fear, limitations and boundaries of diversity. ”

**Anja Svetin and  
Brigita Škulj,  
elementary school  
teachers of children  
with disabilities, OŠ  
Brinje Grosuplje,  
Slovenia**

Cultural and artistic activities strengthen community cohesion and even greater impact is made if local people volunteer to give a cultural performance. The revival of the repertory of the men's choir was such an initiative. Members of the choir were highly respected, and their contribution valued. Others may as well join the performance spontaneously, but the majority need encouragement by people such as Culture Guides.

## Denmark

KSD chose to focus on marginalised children because of a survey made in 2012 by the Danish Ministry of Culture about Danish cultural habits, showing that children from homes that do not participate in artistic and cultural activities are not going to participate in them when they grow up. So it was natural to think of children and young people as end users.

At the same time there was a new reform for primary schools where one of the objectives was wider cooperation between the schools and the local community, including associations within the field of amateur art and voluntary culture. Therefore it wasn't difficult to persuade the schools to attend.

KSD first thought of finding marginalised children in each class, but it's hard to take children out of classes. Therefore they chose to involve whole classes, even though some of the kids (but really only a small number, which was unexpected) spent time on culture outside of school.

## Running Culture Guide activities

The activities selected could be active (such as taking part in a workshop or performance for example) or receptive (visiting a gallery or professional show for example), and were often chosen based on what was appropriate for the group of end users the Culture Guides were working with and local availability of arts activities.

### Slovenia

The following Culture Guide activities were carried out in Slovenia:

- Elderly people from a retirement house in Idrija visited a photography exhibition about old town Idrija and were encouraged to tell stories about the life in that period.
- A group of blind and visually impaired people attended a fine art workshop led by Stanka Golob, creating images from different types of sand and granulates. They also visited an exhibition in Tolmin, where they were allowed to touch the paintings, which was a new experience for them.
- Children and youngsters from unprivileged and immigrant families active in CONA (Centre for Children, Youngsters and Volunteers) attended a series of classes from different art fields (acting, filming, dancing etc). The idea was to raise awareness and sensitivity of one's self and surroundings and encourage

**Opposite:**

*Culture Guides branded t-shirt and lanyard, UK*

CULTURES  
GUIDES

[www.cultureguides.eu](http://www.cultureguides.eu)

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CULTURE  
GUIDES



artistic creativity, resulting in a short movie made by the participants themselves.

- Children with special needs attended theatre workshops and theatre performances. Workshops were carried out within the school program in cooperation with culture organisers from ZKD Grosuplje.
- The team in Nova Gorica worked with minorities at Kromberk castle within two art forms - one was folklore and the other was painting course with an exhibition. At the end an exhibition was prepared which attracted a lot of visitors who would otherwise not attend cultural events.
- A poetry evening was organised in Velenje, where people from different countries were invited to read a poem in their own language. It was quite an experience for them, since they were not active as performers or artists. It was held in a mine museum on 3 December, which is a cultural holiday as it is the birthday of Slovenia's most famous poet France Prešeren.

“ I was astonished about the enthusiastic, emotional reaction of the manager of our target group (afterwards I understood that she was manager of eight institutions). It was the first time a cultural organisation offered a program for her groups. It was beyond expectations. ”

**Culture Guide,  
Drenthe, Netherlands**

## Netherlands

In the Netherlands, Culture Guide activities included the following:

- Lonely elderly people were taken to Kunstbedrijf Arnhem, a monthly cultural café with different kind of activities, and to Drents Archief, where special tours through the archives of the province took place with opportunities for the end users to describe their own life-stories into the forms of the archive.

- Vulnerable elderly people were given special guided tours through the Drents Museum.
- Once a month, Culture Guides worked individually with elderly people with dementia at a care residence Amsta in Amsterdam, using small materials to create small art works at a 'Table of Wonders'.
- In Lelystad, a psychiatric group, with the assistance of an artist and experienced expert, worked on a common installation for music, visual arts and performance which was presented at two festivals. In Nijmegen, the planned painting activities were postponed to a later period due to internal conflicts about the way that this offer might conflict with courses at the cultural centre.

“ *The Drents Archief was very interested in the Culture Guide project. It is an organisation where many volunteers are helping develop programmes to include older people.* ”

*Recruiting, receiving and accompanying groups of frail elders was a challenge for the special volunteers and selected professionals of the Drents Archief.*

*'Petticoats and Miniskirts' is a social history reminiscence project focusing on the 1950s and 60s for older members of the community in Drenthe. We want to trigger the memories of the ladies/gentlemen with objects from the period (photographs, movies, newspaper ads). The target group are those who are 67 years or older. After all, they have experienced that period!*

*We want to offer this programme outside the archive. The volunteer has made contact with Interzorg Noord-Nederland, which provides housing, care and services from nine locations in the north and centre of Drenthe to the elderly with special needs.*

*Interzorg reacted very enthusiastically, and they were surprised that we came to them rather than vice versa. In late July and August, the professional artist and volunteer took the Petticoat and Miniskirt program to all institutions, including Nieuw Graswijk, Assen (early onset dementia) and Hendrik Kok, Rolde (visual impairment).*

*It is new to us and we look forward to continuing to offer the program. We have no idea whether the public likes it or not, but that makes it exciting! ”*

**Opposite:**

*Culture Guides at  
BBC Radio Merseyside,  
Liverpool, UK*

## Hungary

The summer of 2014 was extremely rainy, and the organizers were exceptionally lucky to have sunshine and no rain on the day the vintage procession took place. The organizers also had a Plan B in case it rained and the celebrations had to be held indoors, which would have completely changed the atmosphere of the event.

People gathered in the morning, and the event commenced with the opening of the exhibition, then the local priest consecrated the



grape-bell. The leaders of the village greeted the gathering, talked about the origins and importance of the celebration, described the quality of grapes for the wine, and gave advice about moderate drinking.

Then the procession was formed, 'passengers' got on the horse-driven carts, tractors and trailers, and the procession was on the move. Escorts walked along the marching column and entertained spectators who watched the procession on either side of the streets. A central role in the procession was played by the 'village drummer', who guided the procession and entertained the audience with humorous sayings and talk.

Walking through the village streets, the procession stopped now and then and gave a performance by the men's choir or the dance

group. At the same time guests were offered wine and snacks just like the members of the procession. At the final station of the procession, there was a longer performance, and finally the village drummer thanked all the contributors, invited everyone to the village ball and dinner.

## Denmark

In Denmark, Culture Guide activities included:

- Skovbo Art Society provided art exhibitions with a guided tour adapted to children, where artists became guest teachers and exhibition tour guides and ran projects with children.
- Apollonaris Teaterforening provided a theatre performance on bullying with a debate, as part of school integration/inclusion work.
- Køge School Orchestra provided a lecture on school orchestra and its many and exciting activities, including how it is to play in the orchestra and how it develops interpersonal skills and camaraderie.
- An art trail in the Køge area.
- Denmark-Society provided a lecture on Dannebrog (the Danish flag, the world's oldest).
- The Ejby Choir provided examples of classic song and opera, including information on being a soloist and working with choirs.
- Ejby Cultural Center provided a session on genealogy, where the children interviewed parents, grandparents and great-

“ *[Personally, this project] helped me think about cultural projects for elderly, and helped me develop a concept which can be spread all over the city.* ”

**Local partnership  
team member in  
the Netherlands**

grandparents and found information on archives and the Internet.

- Culture Society of Skovbo provided a session on 'Peter and the Wolf', where trained flutist Linnéa Villén told the story and used recordings of the different instruments to describe the characters in the story. In the absence of an end to the story, the children themselves made poems and drew a conclusion, while the music played.
- At the Fishing and Port House Museum, children learnt about marine wildlife, caught fish, cut them into pieces and ate them. Subsequently, they created movies and pictures of fish and their experiences with the sea.
- In the Weaving Circle, children created a seasonal wheel, in which they wove seasonal colours onto wheels from bicycles and pram.
- Art Association of Frederiksværk provided a look into the world of art when the children visited the Association's current exhibition. The exhibiting artist put five questions to the children during the visit, and the children gave questions to the artists, to create a dialogue.
- The Historical Association of Frederiksværk presented a session on the Occupation of Frederiksværk, 1940-45, where the story was told and affects from the period were shown.
- Association of Town and Country ran a session with the children on how houses look and are described in literature, with a bike ride to see the landmark houses with the representative of the Association.
- Art Association Frederiksværk provided a session on



CULTURE  
GUIDES

**Opposite:**

*Culture Guides project in  
St Helens, UK*

mathematics in art, where children worked with mathematical figures include the golden section.

- The Historical Association of Frederiksværk organised a visit to the powder mill museum to hear about Frederiksværk, with a focus on the excavation of the canal and hydro power. The children built engines and worked with gears in Lego.

These activities were intended to have a range of benefits for the children, including developing their mental abilities and cultural intelligence, creating shared experiences and common wonder, touching the emotions, challenging, provoking, creating reflection, awareness and self-understanding, developing opportunities to verbalise feelings, experiences and actions, creating understanding between children of each other's cultural backgrounds and developing tolerance in a social environment.

The projects finished with exhibitions in the two cities involved.

## UK

A number of activities took place in the UK as part of the Culture Guides project:

- Culture Guides took a group from Newton le Willows to 'Stand up to Stigma' event in St Helens, where nine performers with a mental illness did a five minute stand-up comedy routine.
- A Culture Guide took an Age UK dementia group to the 'Fiddle

in't Bag' heritage hostelry, to try on outfits from WW1 and WW2 and see memorabilia and artefacts from the 1950s and 60s.

- A Culture Guide from St Helens led a group of ladies from a faith group to a workshop by volunteer artist Paula who created Halloween lanterns and pumpkins to display in their homes.
- Another St Helens Culture Guide facilitated a group decorating glass jugs with different patterned materials.
- A group of ladies were taken to the World of Glass in St Helens. Even though all the ladies were born and bred in St. Helens this was the first time they had ever been to this heritage, museum and exhibition centre.
- Two Culture Guides brought an Age UK group to Burtonwood Aerodrome Museum and Heritage Centre to coincide with Remembrance Day.
- An Age UK dementia group visited the show Dancing in the Street.
- Culture Guides facilitated residents of Sandalwood Gardens sheltered housing to make Christmas lanterns with an artist.
- A group from Helena Partnership housing association had a trip to Liverpool Empire Theatre to see Swan Lake.
- A Culture Guide accompanied a group of men from the Mind mental health group to a photography workshop.
- A mental health group were taken to Liverpool museums.
- Culture Guide Jean led Helena Partnership housing association group in a Christmas wreath making workshop.

In Wales, the Culture Guides started by carrying out a mapping project to identify creative cultural activities in the local area in order

to identify opportunities for end users. The Torfaen Culture Guides identified that they all had experience/an interest in cake decorating and they decided to run a cake decorating workshop in Torfaen in order to build their confidence in working with the public.

“ Sometimes dealing with the participants was hard as they were 'awkward' or reluctant to give feedback. Sometimes they were rude. ”

**Culture Guide,  
St Helens, UK**

The Wrexham Culture Guides used the bilateral visit of the Danish partners as a focus for their activities. Activities for the event included a visit to This Project's exhibitions and a singing workshop organised by a choir that Voluntary Arts Wales had been working with which also took place in one of This Project's galleries. As the gallery had a large window facing onto one of the streets in Wrexham town centre, people walking past were able to see that an event was taking place. Two passers-by came in to find out more and ended up taking part in the singing workshop. They subsequently left their contact details with one of the Wrexham Culture Guides in order that they could find out about further opportunities to take part in creative cultural activities.

## Unforeseen events

With a project such as this, with lots of potential to interpret the criteria in different ways, and with different social factors affecting each country, it was inevitable that lots of unforeseen issues would arise. It is through these that the most valuable learning experiences arose.



## Netherlands

LKCA found that the period of working with layered system of volunteers, end users, cultural managers and artists was too short to be able to function effectively.

It takes time to build new structures and to invent a new kind of language with which to understand one another. Moreover, it is necessary to build new local networks at all locations. LKCA learned that it will take more than a year to come to a shared vision, a clear communication strategy and to translate all this into action. Having said that, for all concerned the year proved a great learning experience for the future.

**Opposite:**

*Culture Guides pilot  
course in Slovenia*

There was also an issue around volunteer Culture Guides doing work that would formerly have been done by paid professionals. As lots of artists have lost their jobs in recent years, they are now looking for other ways to enter the labour market and sometimes volunteer work is an appropriate way to do. But of course this frustrates the attempts of other artists to get paid jobs. It needs to be made clear that a new offering is being created that is not conflicting with existing offerings.

## Hungary

MNT found that a number of proposals or ideas could not be realised.

Traditionally, all rules and laws are suspended at the time of grape harvest, and the village drummer possesses supreme power, he is the one to give orders and administer justice. The organising team found that village drummers have a national organisation, and they meet regularly to learn from one another. Project leaders wanted to improve dissemination by collecting the most valuable speeches, sayings and to help the village drummers to perform their task. The initiative failed because the performance of village drummers is based on individual talent and on much improvisation. This culture spreads by word of mouth and not much can be found in writing. Moreover, what can be said by village drummers is considered more-or-less a 'business secret' and is not publicised.

Another initiative concerned one of the best Gypsy bands in the neighbourhood. Gypsy bands have an inexhaustible repertoire and can play spontaneously any kind of music anyone asks for. The plans were to compile a repertoire of songs with the assistance of music experts, and to record a live performance on CD of songs relevant to vintage festivals. The aim was to create a high quality repertoire that other bands could play as well or could be used as background music to live singing. The plan failed for various reasons.

### Denmark

KSD found that it was very difficult to gather the Culture Guides for a three-day pilot course as planned. It was instead held as a one day seminar and two other meetings.

The amount of money required by the various projects varied, and this often only became apparent during the process. It would be better if this could be clarified at the start of each project.

### UK

Voluntary Arts identified unforeseen issues relatively early in the project and captured them in the volunteer handbook it gave out to potential Culture Guides. This included issues such as compliance with Voluntary Arts existing volunteer policies, expenses claims, travel, health and safety, personal boundaries, confidentiality,

“ Sometimes I feel that the project is perhaps too open, so it is difficult to focus on what is needed. ”

**Culture Guide,  
Torfaen, UK**

criminal records checks, data protection, insurance and dealing with complaints. Some of these, such as records checks and insurance had cost implications that weren't originally taken into consideration, and all of them had unforeseen time considerations.

Unforeseen opportunities that arose included the use of broadcast media, where Culture Guides were able to build of a relationship that Voluntary Arts has with BBC Radio Merseyside to get the Culture Guides message out to a much wider audience. Also, one Culture Guide plans to make a video presentation about various forms of creative cultural activity that will be for use by Culture Guides across the UK. The video will be used in discussions with groups of end users with the aim of exploring what their reasons are for not having taking part in various activities, and to encourage them to participate in creative cultural activities with the support of the Culture Guides.

## Slovenia

JSKD discovered a number of important points during the project, which it had not fully appreciated at beginning:

- It is important at the start to find good and reliable partners to carry out the project, and to clarify the tasks so that each partner knows exactly which task they are responsible for.
- The next most important issue for the implementation of the project is the preparation of quality introductory presentations

for different target audiences.

- Organisers should make extra effort to build a good working atmosphere between all members of the local partnership teams (cultural organisers, volunteers, social or other institutions).
- It is important to make sure that the volunteers recognise their work as equally or more valuable as that of the others. People should be treated with respect no matter what their reason for volunteering. Culture organisers should recognise the project as an opportunity, not as an unnecessary work.

## Evaluation

It was important to capture information about the impact of the project, both to feed back to the funders, and to feed into dissemination materials that would inform future incarnations of the Culture Guides project.

## Hungary

MNT felt that, in Hungary, systemic planning and organisation, the inclusion of new cultural and artistic elements in the customary programme, and being part of a European project, meant that the project had a great impact. The efforts by the project team to unravel local and international contexts were successful. Awareness of cultural history became part of the local identity.

**Opposite:**  
*Culture Guides 'cultural passport' used in the project in Denmark*

**KULTURPAS**



Kulturelt Samråd Køge

**TURPAS**



Kulturelt Samråd Køge

Earlier, for many people vintage festivals used to be an opportunity for excessive drinking and eating snacks offered for free.

Being part of the project provided new and lasting memories for the local community, and many of the local population got involved in cultural and artistic activities. It is customary that the vintage procession and the accompanying wine tasting are used to evaluate aloud the wines produced by different villages and wine producers. This time tasting of cultural rivalry was also offered. And as the saying goes, 'the more people get, the more they want' - that is, cultural and artistic contributions become the expectation. An event that raises local community consciousness is something to be continued.

### Denmark

In both municipalities a questionnaire was distributed and the children and teachers given different amounts of time to respond. The responses were mainly positive and led to the result that both municipalities will continue the project in 2015.

The pilot project was discussed at the school management meeting, who would like to see the project continued, for example, in the form of a catalog where the children can choose different activities.

In terms of evaluations of the schools, the feedback on the project was mostly positive. Primarily, they noted the volunteers' commitment and their great knowledge of the things they communicated to the children.

At the same time, they asked for more clarity on the expectations placed on teachers and associations and on how much time the volunteers were being asked to devote to the project. Teachers reported that they spent between 25 and 45 hours on the project.

“ We would like to expand the aims of the project as we move forward to encourage participants to become more closely engaged with a specific organisation. We really value the role of Culture Guide, but I feel they need to be better integrated into the fabric of a specific organisation and more involved in building knowledge of the partner organisations and cultural activities in their local area. ”

**Local partnership  
team member in  
Wrexham, UK**

## UK

As in Denmark, Voluntary Arts used a questionnaire to ascertain the impact upon end users, Culture Guides and local partnership team members. The results were largely positive, and all four regions plan to continue supporting the Culture Guides beyond the funded project.

## Slovenia

Normally, JSKD evaluated the effects of and responses to the project at the local partnership team meetings, and also received many calls from people explaining their (usually positive) feelings about experiencing a cultural event or a workshop. They got a lot of calls from end users expressing their wish to continue with the workshop or attend another event.

Whilst end users' responses were highly positive, local partnership team members and volunteers sometimes had more mixed feelings. On the one hand, they identified themselves with the project and recognised the positive impact on end users, as well as recognising the project as an opportunity for amateur culture, but on the other hand, some of them were disappointed with a poor response of the decision makers. This applies particularly in cases where they wished to continue with the program, but have been unable to provide additional funds.

### Netherlands

Imagination is a strong tool to empower people and to give them other expectations and experiences. The work of the Culture Guides provided a positive impact on the end users and gave them ways to participate in civil society.

In the Netherlands there is a strong discussion happening about the participative society, as governments withdraw, cut budgets and cut back from responsibilities in the field of wellbeing of their citizens. Citizens should solve their problems, not societies or governments. The arts are in stormy weather and discussions on legitimacy, effects and results are being held in comparison to economic or financial values.

The number of marginalised people with a strong need for support is growing fast and extra work is required to avoid losing these

“*Cultural Guides reminded us about networking and cooperation with vulnerable groups in our surroundings. Since then, we have constantly cooperated with some of those groups, mainly in the field of fine art. Vulnerable groups were successfully involved in cultural events and trainings, which is a good sign to continue. Now it is necessary to carry out such actions in other cultural institutions.*”

**Petra Paravan,  
Culture Guide,  
Nova Gorica, Slovenia**

**Opposite:**  
*Culture Guides project in  
Slovenia*

groups or leaving them unable to participate in society. This way of working, with the contribution of volunteer Culture Guides, seems to fill this need. The question remains how the professional artist and the Culture Guide can cooperate in such a way that the power of both is optimally used and they help each other in doing their job.

## Legacy of the project

This project has, in many cases, had a lasting effect on all of the stakeholders involved, from the end users through to the Culture Guides, local partnership teams and partner organisations, as well as the local communities in which the activities took place.



## End users

In Denmark, children from the municipalities of Halsnæs and Køge are more aware of art, heritage and the cultural associations, and their grandparents are more aware of the kinds of cultural activities their grandchildren take part in. Hopefully they will continue their journey together.

In the UK, the end users that have benefited from the project have gained a wealth of new experiences and opportunities for social interaction and widening horizons. Voluntary Arts will continue to stay in contact with them through the local partnership teams in order to monitor ongoing participation and resulting positive impact on wellbeing.

In Slovenia, most of the end users described the experience as a positive. For a lot of them this was all new experience and they experienced the creative process for the first time. In the projects that will continue in the future this provides a good possibility of impacting on their personal growth and quality of life.

In the Netherlands, LKCA hopes that the enthusiasm of the end users and their personal empowerment is seen by local organisations, in order to increase the possibilities for participation.

In Hungary, many people considered vintage festivals as attractive events that they can be outsider spectators of. Now that new contributors have been involved, they feel that the event is

“ Volunteering is a difficult question. A lot of work in amateur arts and culture is done on a voluntary basis because there is a committed person in a community. Many times we don't call this work 'voluntary', but the 'obsession' of somebody 'crazy'. It would be important to somehow stress that these 'crazy people' do work for the community. ”

**Local partnership  
team member in  
Mindszentkálta,  
Hungary**

their own, which has increased the common consciousness and cohesion of the local community.

## Culture Guide volunteers

In the UK, the Culture Guide volunteers have gained much from their experiences and have become very attached to the role. Voluntary Arts and some of the other organisations on the local partnership teams have committed to continue supporting the volunteers, to allow them to explore possibilities with a more relaxed timescale. Some of the Culture Guides come from marginalised groups themselves and there is some evidence that they have also gained wellbeing benefits from the project. Some wish to pursue a career in community arts and so the project has given them job prospects.

In Slovenia, the Culture Guides were very dedicated and very active during the project, since four of them were already working in the field of culture. Not all of them have been so enthusiastic; sometimes they have felt that they are volunteering for something they felt should be paid. But mostly they have finished the project with a positive feeling that they have contributed to the quality of life of marginalised groups.

In the Netherlands, most of the Culture Guides have had a positive experience of working with end users and gained experience through direct contact with marginalised groups. They have gained

kulturni  
vodič



a stronger social awareness and have seen how art can help to empower people and make connecting people easier.

In Hungary, people are proud to contribute as a volunteer, increasing their self-confidence and strengthening their sense of belonging to a community. Hopefully it will be easier to involve them in cultural and artistic activities in the future.

In Denmark, the members of the 16 cultural associations in the municipalities of Halsnæs and Køge (totalling approximately 50 people) will surely in future become more aware of how their activities in the cultural associations impact children and society, and they will hopefully be more open to working together.

### Local partnership team members/ organisations

In Slovenia, the local organisations and managers identified themselves with the project and saw it as an opportunity to gain new audiences, to get extra support from volunteers who can help them, and to make amateur culture more visible and socially recognised. But sometimes they encountered obstacles, such as lack of understanding of the local authorities, which goes especially for the cases where they applied for extra funding to continue with the program. The legacy here is uncertain.

**Opposite:**  
*Culture Guide from  
Slovenia*

In the Netherlands, the local organisations and managers have

learned to find and connect to new local partners and that the investment in volunteers can help their own survival. Working with a strong team of volunteers gives a larger interest in society and enlarges the social engagement of the organisation.

In Hungary, the bilateral study visit in the programme reinforced the prestige and importance of local amateur cultural and artistic activities for the local partnership teams. Experiences gained in the visit are on the agenda for continued implementation.

In Denmark, the municipalities and cultural councils of Halsnæs and Køge, the local cultural associations, school departments, culture departments, all schools, principals, teachers, press and local TV will all be more aware of the possibilities available by joining culture and heritage activities in the municipalities. There is also greater awareness of what the activities in the cultural associations mean to children and to society.

In the UK, there were mixed feels in some of the local partnership teams, especially in Wales, where progress was slower than in England. They continue to be supportive of the concept of Culture Guides, however, and Voluntary Arts will continue to work with them to share resources and facilitate mutual support in the use of volunteers as cultural facilitators.

“ I think there is still a lot of work to do to re-educate people into understanding that they do have a contribution to make to the arts irrespective of their arts experience, that it takes different kinds of people with different life skills and professional knowledge to support an organisation and give it the best chance of succeeding and becoming sustainable. ”

**Local partnership team  
member in Torfaen, UK**

## The partner organisations

In the Netherlands, LKCA learned that time and ownership are important aspects of a new project, and that volunteers are important for organisations but organisations struggle to deploy volunteers in a good way. LKCA have exceeded the allocated number of working hours by far and taking part in such a European project is a challenging job - managing the project in a good way, focussing on possibilities and making choices in an earlier phase are all important. It did not work out with all partners and end users - and yet they know that there is a growing need for projects aimed at labour migrants. They just need to do it another way. So the project also laid the challenge for future projects! And last but not least, and they already know but have seen it again: art and culture are able to connect and to empower people. Of this power they are again convinced and confirmed.

In Denmark, KSD is yet more aware of what activities in the cultural associations can mean to children and to society, and we will keep on working with the school project. They will implement Culture Guides in their strategy in order to work with marginalised groups in the future.

In the UK, Voluntary Arts has learned a lot about running this sort of project, primarily that to make it work in a relatively short timescale, you need to be very well organised and well connected. In England, the project got off to a great start, as Voluntary Arts worked with trusted partners that already had access to willing

volunteers and appropriate groups of end users. They also extended their limited capacity by entrusting the management of the Culture Guides to a lead partner on the local partnership team. In Wales, on the other hand, Voluntary Arts employed a more open-ended approach, using the project as a way to develop new partnerships and engage people new to volunteering who might have their own ideas about how they would like the project to unfold. Both approaches, and the contrast between them, yielded a lot of learning, but it was in England that Voluntary Arts achieved most impact for end users in the time available.

From April 2015, Voluntary Arts was commissioned by an arts centre in Cardiff to deliver a Culture Guides project intended to get more local people engaging with the centre's offerings. Voluntary Arts was able to utilise what it had learnt from the European project to provide a discrete Culture Guides project, the like of which could be commissioned by other cultural organisations in future, with Voluntary Arts as the specialist facilitator. Voluntary Arts is also committed to continuing the four existing Culture Guides projects, on a limited basis, using its own resources.

In Slovenia, increased access to cultural goods for vulnerable groups has a positive social impact in terms of social cohesion, intercultural dialogue, accepting differences, etc. JSKD believes that the projects carried out impact on individuals in terms of personal growth, self-improvement, and developing a sense of necessity in society which will allow them to spend some quality time and bring added value to the quality of their lives.

“ *The project has strengthened my existing positive thinking about volunteering and provided opportunities for more volunteers to engage with our organisation and support our work. It's great to have access to feedback and programming advice from volunteers who I see as very valuable 'critical friends' for our work.* ”

**Local partnership team member in Medway, UK**

JSKD as an organisation that is primarily responsible for amateur culture in Slovenia. This project overcomes stereotypes in society relating to the field of amateurism and cultural creativity. It shows the wider social importance of an activity that is not intended for a narrow circle of the interested audience and artists. The participants gained new skills, learned about best practices in other countries, and established contacts with participants and other institutions.

The fact is that marginalised groups are less involved in social life means that individuals within those communities face reduced self-esteem and self-confidence, and consequently they withdraw further from social life. This negative spiral not only affects the quality of their (social) life, but so also reduces their competence and thus economic potential. The Culture Guides project enables the participants to gain new knowledge. Helping facilitate the participation or even co-create the cultural offer encourages them to acquire new skills and competencies, gain social affirmation, increase self-esteem, and become aware of the importance each individual has in the co-creation of modern society.

## What have we learnt?

Across the five pilot projects, a great deal of knowledge has been generated about running this kind of project, and the following section outlines some of the best-practice lessons that have been learnt.

It is hoped that this learning will be useful to other European organisations considering developing local Culture Guide projects.

### What went well overall?

- The project had lots of media attention, due to that fact that it is a new approach and also partly because the course was conducted in an underdeveloped part of the Goriška region (Slovenia).
- The volunteers and local partnership team members involved got insight into areas that primarily do not fall within the scope of culture (Slovenia).
- Participation and outcomes were good in all cases where the heads of social institutions have positive attitudes towards culture and creativity (Slovenia).
- The organisations experienced with volunteers (healthcare organisations and museums) grasped the opportunity to upgrade the involvement of volunteers in their organisation as a way to find new target groups (Netherlands).
- In the project with the psychiatric group, the motivation of two festivals formed a strong stimulus. The aim of presenting the artworks in a public setting works very well (Netherlands).
- The idea of focusing on children and youth participation in arts and heritage coincided with a new school reform where one of the objectives is wider cooperation between the schools and the local community, including associations within the field of amateur art and voluntary culture (Denmark).

“ We are just starting, but I think we are in the future ready to receive more and different vulnerable people. ”

**Culture Guide,  
Drenthe, Netherlands**

## What could be improved overall next time?

- The timeframe was quite restricted, so we would plan a longer timeframe (UK).
- Engaging volunteers in a totally new task is for a cultural manager a demanding activity which requires a longer period of investment. In some cases there was too long a hesitation and questioning of the methodology. The focus could have been more on the planning, monitoring and support of the managers in their search for local networks and partners. At the same time LKCA could have focused on a smaller number of projects. Instead of initially six, two or three would have been better in order to give the needed support and stimulation (Netherlands).
- Exchange of experiences between the different locations in the different phases of the project would have been stimulating and would have helped the learning experience for the volunteers as well as for the local management team (Netherlands).
- The main aim in the project was the enrichment of the artistic and cultural contents of community traditions. There are many reasons for the deterioration of cultural and artistic quality in our consumer societies and this process has been going on for decades. It is not possible to restore appropriate quality in cultural practice and to widen participation at the same time, especially not among people with low education. This can only be the outcome of a longer process lasting for many years (Hungary).
- More information should be provided to key persons about the connection of socially marginalised groups to art and culture, about the benefits of art and culture to society (Hungary).

- We will ensure the creation of good expectations between those involved (Denmark).
- Due to the large number of local groups there was a lot of work with coordination and advising on the program preparation. It would have been better to have focused on a smaller number of projects (three or four instead of seven) (Slovenia).
- Since the local groups are from three Slovene regions (Gorizia, Styria and Central Slovenia), this resulted in some additional difficulties coordinating the project. In the future, it would be better to focus on one region, which enables better cooperation within the local partnership teams and also between different local teams. That would also encourage local teams to assist each other (Slovenia).
- The Culture Guide programme should be more exposed and presented as an opportunity for local communities (Slovenia).
- Many organisers need more support and assistance with the presentation of the project to decision-makers in order to get recognition and also financial support to ensure better sustainability (Slovenia).

### Local partnership teams - what went well?

- Most of the projects carried out were very well received by the target audience, organisers and volunteers identified with the projects. Certainly, this is a result of teamwork and a great sense of initiative and commitment of each partner in the planning and execution process (Slovenia).

“ [I]f we had had the opportunity to work with [the project facilitator] for a longer period I think that we would have been able to reach a great number of new volunteers and find effective ways to share resources and volunteer workforce...”

**Local partnership team member in Medway, UK**

- JSKD visited all the local teams to set an optimal working programme for each team, and attended several meetings with decision makers in local communities (Slovenia).
- Teams were supported with information and guidance, JSKD distributed all media responses and press releases in order to motivate and promote the work of local teams (Slovenia).
- A lot of local partnership team members recognised the opportunity to work with volunteers and therefore come in contact with new audiences (Slovenia).
- Working in a small group allowed for flexibility and adaptability (UK).
- During local meetings and discussions, it became clear who were the most active team members and ready to contribute (Hungary).
- Bringing local partnership teams together pooled resources and allowed members to support each other through the sharing of information (UK).
- Experiences and opinions were exchanged and proposals were formulated (Hungary).
- The local culture councils were very keen to participate in the local partnership teams and made a large part of the preparations themselves. It gave them a great sense of ownership of the project (Denmark).
- It was of great help that the local cultural councils and their cultural member associations were already there (Denmark).
- It was important that the local cultural councils themselves organised the pilot course, invited the member associations for meetings and briefed them on progress (Denmark).

- It was important that the local cultural councils contacted the school administration and schools to make arrangements with them (Denmark).
- Involving artists made it more realistic and clearer about what art can inspire and provoke (Netherlands).
- The internal meetings were inspiring moments for mutual learning of experiences and making the managers aware of their role in the process (Netherlands).
- LKCA frequently visited the projects and internal meetings in order to stimulate, answer questions, help the managers and inform them about the progress on the European scale (Netherlands).

“ I feel I have gained more confidence and feel more confident in facilitating more activities. ”

**Culture Guide,  
St Helens, UK**

### Local partnership teams - what could be improved?

- Devote more time and support to the local partnership team to establish a new local network with cultural, welfare and volunteer organisations. Local partners need to develop skills to make this network function (Slovenia).
- More emphasis could have been placed on the importance of strong ownership and a shared feeling of interest and responsibility on a local level (Slovenia).
- The concept and methodology of the project should be defined earlier, so the local partners would have more time to prepare a concrete program and make it easier to present it to other partners (Slovenia).

- Culture organisers should better recognise the Culture Guide project as an opportunity for amateur culture (Slovenia).
- A framework for each task should be prepared more carefully, and the time schedule of the meetings should be more precise (Slovenia).
- Sometimes a lack of communication between different organisations occurred and they had different expectations about the outcome of the programme (Slovenia).
- At the beginning a lot of local partnership team members saw the project as extra task, as something they have to do in addition to their regular work (Slovenia).
- It is important to involve local key persons who have already relied on the cooperation of local teams successfully (Hungary).
- Structured, systematic plans, including expected outcomes, should be made for informal discussions (Hungary).
- Organisational issues and culture or art related issues need to be more distinctly separated in the planning stage (Hungary).
- The local partnership group was supportive of the Culture Guide project and in principal were keen to be involved. However, there were ongoing problems in trying to hold regular meetings with the group as all members had limited time and it was difficult to find meeting dates and times to suit everyone. As a result of this, few local partnership group meetings were attended by all members so a significant amount of work was also carried out via email (UK).
- The members of the local partnership team all had pressing issues with their own organisations, which meant some of the events planned could not be actioned (UK).

- Most of the organisations represented on the local partnership teams are in a period of transition due to big changes in the cultural sector in the Netherlands. The involvement of the Culture Guide could possibly mitigate budget cuts organisations have had to deal with. But the extra time needed in assisting the Culture Guides was not in all places foreseen. To more clearly assess the time investment and division of tasks for a participating organisation could help, but it is hard to foresee the internal problems of an organisation (Netherlands).
- LKCA could have persevered more in the search for a partner organisation working with migrants (Netherlands).
- The tasks and work of managers and volunteers should have been made clearer at the start the pilot work. Only afterwards it seemed that not everybody had a clear understanding of the following steps (Netherlands).
- The local partnership team could have been better informed on the induction of the Culture Guides and the evaluation phase (Denmark).

### **Recruiting Culture Guide volunteers - what went well?**

- It was much easier working with partners who already had a pool of volunteers from which Culture Guides could be recruited (UK).
- Creating a volunteer handbook for Culture Guide induction worked well (UK).

“ *The project also helped to strengthen links between participating organisations.* ”

**Local partnership team member in Medway, UK**

- Along with various health and safety issues detailed in the volunteer handbook, basic risk assessment was carried out with Culture Guides as part of their induction to check that their home working environment was safe. Culture Guides were also given email addresses and basic mobile phones in order that they could keep their personal details confidential. As part of their induction, Culture Guides were also asked whether they had any specific needs or issues that they might need support with (UK).
- Giving the Culture Guides a sense of identity by having branded t-shirts and lanyards seemed to work well in improving the status of the role (UK).
- Choosing for partners already experienced in recruiting volunteers made it more practical and also more effective (Netherlands).
- The way in which the project was nationally announced stimulated both organisations and volunteers to take part. Being part of a European project and movement formed an extra stimulus (Netherlands).
- The culture organisations in some cases already work with volunteers, so that eased things a little (Slovenia).
- It was democratically decided that the member associations of the local cultural councils would participate in the project as Culture Guides. This gave greater ownership over it (Denmark).

## Recruiting Culture Guide volunteers - what could be improved?

- When using public advertising to recruit Culture Guides, be prepared for the response to be slow, as it is quite a difficult concept to communicate through a simple advert (UK).
- Volunteers could have been better informed about their possible tasks and responsibilities (Netherlands).
- The extra status of a Culture Guide compared to 'normal' volunteers could have been emphasised (Netherlands).
- A selection procedure and/or job interview, and signing a kind of contract, could have helped to keep a volunteer better connected and for longer (Netherlands).
- A team of volunteers (four to six) gives spirit, enthusiasm and possibilities to cope with loss of volunteers if they get a job (Netherlands).
- More volunteers should be engaged into each local partnership team in order to avoid difficulties with the implementation of the program, when a volunteer from different reasons can no longer participate in a project (Slovenia).
- Almost all volunteers participating in projects were young people, either students or young unemployed. Therefore, in some cases they could no longer participate in the program, either due to study commitments, relocation or if they got a job (Slovenia).
- The project would have benefited from more time to describe what the project is about and a better description of the Culture Guides role (Denmark).

“ *I better understand the culture because I have been active in it.* ”

***A child from  
Halsnæs, Denmark***

- We were not prepared for the fact that so many would participate as cultural guides. This meant that not all had participated in the preparatory meetings and that we did not know the names of all of them (Denmark).
- The circle of experienced volunteers could be widened with the involvement of new target groups (e.g. youth). Young people do attend vintage festivals, but mostly as members of participating families. The majority of participants are middle-aged or elderly (Hungary).
- A competition could be announced to award prizes successful volunteers, which would attract more participants. It would be desirable in the field of artistic activities e.g. choirs or dance groups (Hungary).
- Using community resources, volunteers could be offered folk costumes to wear, and the event could be captured in photographs (Hungary).

## Pilot course and other training - what went well?

- The pilot course built a team spirit for local partnership team members and volunteers at the very beginning, so people came to know each other and identify themselves with the project (Slovenia).
- Conclusions and impressions of the participants were positive. Participants in the last part of the seminar developed plans to implement project activities in the autumn in their environment

and JSKD also created a group on Facebook for information (Slovenia).

- There was great enthusiasm about the pilot course which gave participants strong support of the possibilities of the project and made them more aware of the power and possible influence of art and culture for marginalised groups (Netherlands).
- The seminar has been crucial to the work, as we had the opportunity to put a face to each other and discuss the framework for future cooperation (Denmark).
- 'Equal peers' were learning interesting, new things and gaining experiences from each other, which was the key to the success of the course. A number of interesting and valuable proposals were made for the re-introduction of certain elements e.g. consecrating the traditional grape-bell (Hungary).
- Participants were enthusiastic and committed as well as highly motivated. Local cultural awareness was reinforced, and the conviction that cultural awareness should be spread in a much wider circle was strengthened (Hungary).
- Ethnographic treasures from past decades were found and relevant experts were contacted, who assisted in the authentic presentation of the origins of the centuries-long traditions in the region (Hungary).

### **Pilot course and other training - what could be improved?**

- Participants should be better informed and prepared about the content of the project and encouraged to cooperate more with

their own ideas during the seminar (Slovenia).

- Content should be narrowed to focus on developing a practical program suitable for participant-specific local environments, and more assistance should be provided for Culture Guides to find local partners (Slovenia).
- There was not enough time at the course and in the follow up for participants to gain a clear picture of what the service of Culture Guides is, so the outcomes of the projects implemented vary, both in terms of quantity as well as methodology (Slovenia).
- The learning outcomes should have been better formulated with managers and volunteers (Netherlands).
- The main seminar only lasted one day as three days were not possible. Instead KSD had more meetings (Denmark).

“ I think in the future there [should be] more programs developed for vulnerable groups, so they can participate more in our society. That would be great! ”

**Culture Guide,  
Drenthe, Netherlands**

## Management and support of Culture Guide volunteers - what went well?

- Have a trusted partner on the local partnership team managing the Culture Guides reduced the burden on Voluntary Arts. Conversely, in the areas in which Voluntary Arts managed the Culture Guides themselves, these volunteers became much more closely integrated in the organisation and will prove a continuing asset (UK).
- Culture organisers should be more aware that volunteers may need some extra support executing the tasks (Slovenia).
- The local cultural councils (local partnership teams) had contact

and meetings with the Culture Guides along the way, but the Culture Guides were very autonomous in their way of working (Denmark).

## Management and support of Culture Guide volunteers - what could be improved?

- The role of a volunteer should be defined more clearly, as in some cases a cultural organiser took over the tasks of the volunteer (Slovenia).
- The dependence of the Culture Guides work on the support of their managers is a point of concern, and more regular direct contact with the Culture Guides in their work with the end users would have worked out faster and generated quicker results. In some cases the enthusiasm of the volunteer was bigger than that of the cultural manager. Of course as soon as the manager experiences the results of the Culture Guides, they become more engaged (Netherlands).
- More detailed terms of reference and a clear division of tasks for the Culture Guide could be made (Netherlands).
- Pilot work could have been followed and supported on a more regular basis. Sometimes a month passed away without contact about progress (Netherlands).
- Be aware of the possibility that Culture Guides who volunteer because they have free time due to unemployment may well need to stop Culture Guide work suddenly if they become employed (UK).

“ I realise now that it is difficult to get the public to know or to be aware or certain cultural activities in their area. ”

**Culture Guide,  
Tofaen, UK**

- Facilitate opportunities for groups of new Culture Guides to socialise outside of meetings as team building activities (UK).
- It should be taken into account that the enthusiasm of volunteer contributors is sometimes insufficient to fully perform the tasks proposed and agreed on. The professional contribution of paid experts is sometimes indispensable (Hungary).
- Perhaps the national partner should have more knowledge of, and show more appreciation towards, the culture guides (Denmark).

### Reaching end-users - what went well?

- Having organisations on the local partnership team representing marginalised communities was a huge help in linking up Culture Guides with groups of people (UK).
- JSKD had access to volunteers who were already engaged in some social programmes, so they already knew their end users (Slovenia).
- In cases where completely new target groups was approached, they felt enthusiastic about the attention that has been given to them. Responses were also good in cases where the local team was cooperating tightly with end users giving them the feeling that they work together and need each other (Slovenia).
- It was easier to get in touch with children because they could be reached through the schools and teachers (Denmark).
- It was interesting for the children to deal with something completely different than they were used to, and to link the time

in school with art and culture in the community (Denmark).

- Objects were collected and offered by people who would not normally get involved in the preparatory work of the event. This also provided publicity, which mobilized new people (Hungary).
- Customarily the date and programme of the vintage festival spread by word of mouth. This time attractive invitation cards were produced to give information about the event. This increased the prestige of the event (Hungary).

### Reaching end-users - what could be improved?

- Even though the Culture Guide project aims to flexibly support people around their individual interests in creative cultural activities, it is, in fact more likely to engage people if they initially attend a specific event. Individual end user plans can then be made once they become engaged with the Culture Guide project and Culture Guides have an opportunity to get to know them and find out about their interests and support needs (UK).
- For many potential end users, there needs to be a slow, gentle introduction to taking part in creative cultural activities, including having taster sessions of various creative cultural activities, having the opportunity to explore the idea of participating in creative cultural activities through discussions in a forum in which they feel comfortable and confident, and having the opportunity to get to know the individual Culture Guides (UK).

“ *The Culture Guide was extremely engaged so we were all involved.* ”

*A child from  
Køge, Denmark*

- Contacting potential end users personally (e.g. via groups they are already involved with) is more likely result in them engaging with the Culture Guide project than trying to engage people via posters etc (UK).
- Programmes should be prepared in a clear and user friendly way and adapted to a specific target group (Slovenia).
- Communication between end users, volunteers and cultural organisers might be better in order to meet the needs of end users (Slovenia).
- One target group (drug addicts) was too specific to include in the project. They showed interest, but it was not possible to make a concrete arrangement with them (Slovenia).
- Lonely elderly people are quite difficult as a target group. The fact that they are lonely is because they are not being active in any sort of accessible environment (Netherlands).
- Next time it would be good to let the children define some of the activities (Denmark).

## Running Culture Guide activities - what went well?

- There were long queues to attend some of the projects (Netherlands).
- The fact that culture providers and culture guides came from the same associations worked well (Denmark).
- There are clear benefits in arranging Culture Guide events where they can be seen by the general public. People are

naturally curious when they see that something is going on and are therefore more likely to want to find out more and to make contact with Culture Guides at the event than they would be to pick up a leaflet or take contact details from a poster. The fact that they can see what is happening makes it much easier to explain the potential benefits to them of the Culture Guide project, and in meeting the Culture Guides, they immediately know who would be working with them and are likely to find it easier to contact Culture Guides in the future (UK).

- For most of the participants it has been new and positive experience. A lot of the groups expressed a wish to attend another culture event or workshop (Slovenia).
- Four (out of six) projects will continue in the future, as local teams now know how to create a positive atmosphere and motivate end users. The programme of the visits of exhibitions and folklore events for ethnic minorities will continue and the daily centre for youth from socially deprived families will keep the theatre, dance and film workshops in their regular programme (Slovenia).
- The three local teams which have implemented theatre, dance and film workshops for children of immigrants (Zone Fu ine), theatre workshops for children with special needs (ZKD Grosuplje) and art workshops for the blind (Tolmin) were especially successful, because the method they selected enables long-term cooperation with target groups (Slovenia).

## Running Culture Guide activities - what could be improved?

- All local partnership teams independently chose the range of activities and selected the end user groups, so there were quite a lot of difficulties in determining the methodology and the way the individual activity should be carried out. In the future, it would be better to opt for a narrower range of content and agree in advance on how to carry out the activities (Slovenia).

## Evaluation - what could be improved?

- Methodology and the measures of impact should be prepared more clearly (Slovenia).
- The working time of managers, volunteers and participants could be measured (Netherlands).
- It would be good to measure local infrastructure by making a local map of organisations involved before and after (Netherlands).
- It would have been good to have done a survey of expectations prior to the event (Hungary).
- If end-users are children, it is better to do interviews, as written questionnaires are not answered particularly informatively (Denmark).

## Epilogue

### Hungary

Despite the wide range of approaches in the joint project work, we recognised the importance of the common mission, and we learnt a lot from each other. We have realised that we are at the very beginning of the road that allows wider segments of society to have a joyful life through art and culture.

The weak and the disadvantaged get lost in the desert or the jungle, so they especially need 'culture guides'. As the prominent Hungarian music teacher and composer Zoltán Kodály and the French writer Albert Camus put it:

*“One can live without music. There is a road even across the desert. But we (...) don't want one to walk a path of life across the desert but across blooming flower gardens.”* (Kodály)

*“Without culture, and the relative freedom, it presumes, society, even when perfect, is no more than a jungle. This is why every authentic creation is a gift to the future.”* (Camus)

We follow their advice in our future collaboration as well.

## UK

As the UK organisation set up to promote participation in creative cultural activities, most of our focus on volunteering, up until this project, has been on the volunteers who run amateur arts and crafts groups, and events and festivals in which amateur participation takes place. In the last few years, however, and in line with national cultural policy initiatives focused on participation, we have made a conscious effort to better engage with those members of the general public who don't currently take part, but who might derive great benefit if the barriers stopping them from doing so were removed.

Until the Culture Guide project it was not entirely clear how we could use our experience in the voluntary sector to promote participation amongst socially-marginalised groups who weren't currently participating, other than by encouraging them to take up voluntary positions themselves... a step too far for many non-participants. Culture Guides has given us a wonderful way of using volunteers to work on a one-to-one basis with socially marginalised groups and individuals, using dedicated volunteers to sensitively assess the physical, social and psychological barriers stopping them from taking part, and, in partnership with these people, finding simple and achievable ways of overcoming them.

We have already achieved additional funding to deliver a new Culture Guides project in partnership with a venue in Cardiff, a new area for the project. And we are committed to continuing support for

the existing volunteers in the four pilot areas, with plans for future regional funding bids and partnership working. With the right support, it is likely that this model will form part of our core work for some years to come.

### Netherlands

The involvement of volunteers in the fields of art and culture, health and care, sports and the living environment is getting more important. The introduction of the concept of 'participating society' and active citizens by the Dutch Government in 2014 illustrates the value given to the self-sufficiency of the citizen.

The budget cuts for professional involvement in the field of art and culture create new possibilities and challenges for volunteers, including those taking on the role of Culture Guides. Care homes, museums and local centers of art and education who have participated in this project have experienced the added value of the Culture Guide.

In the new policy plan of LKCA (2017-20), the Culture Guide project will be extended. New connections will be investigated and established, and interest of the Dutch national agency for voluntary work, of the Salvation Army and of Special Arts (cultural organisation for disabled people) is an promising sign. A few organisations participating in the project will continue with training, propagating and developing the Culture Guides.

The European project offers good potential for further development of programmes in the Netherlands, so that art and culture becomes accessible for groups in society for whom it was not previously self-evident.

## Denmark

It is important that art and culture are part of everyone's life, and especially children and young people from a very early age. Encounters with art and artists are vital experiences for children. In a life where things are individualised and measured for their visible utility, we can too easily overlook the experience of art and culture.

Therefore it was important for Kulturelle Samråd i Danmark to establish a Culture Guide system, so volunteers could be part of a mission to get more children and young people to participate in art and culture. And therefore it is also important for Kulturelle Samråd i Danmark to continue the activities beyond the project period. This will be done partly by continuing projects in the two participating municipalities, partly by setting up new projects that involve children and young people. In addition, Kulturelle Samråd i Danmark has been inspired by our European partners to initiate projects with Cultural Guides and elderly people.

Furthermore, at the end of the project Kulturelle Samråd i Danmark published a handbook (Kultur.dk) so that other local cultural councils (and possibly other local associations) will know how to plan future Culture Guide projects dealing with children and young people.

**Culture Guides** is a two year project that started in October 2013, run under the Grundtvig strand of the European Commission Lifelong Learning Programme, and involving six partners in five nations. Its aim is to investigate the possibility of a European framework to recruit, train and manage volunteers to act as mentors or guides to introduce and help marginalised social groups to participate in local art and culture activities, either as audience members or as active participants.

This handbook aims to provide a summary of best practice, developed from pilot Culture Guide projects in each of the five participating nations, and guidance for other organisations to develop similar programmes around Europe.

Participating organisations:  
**National Association of Cultural Councils in Denmark (KSD)**  
**Interfolk, Institute for Civil Society (IF)**, Denmark  
**Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts (LKCA)**, Netherlands  
**Hungarian Folk High School Society (MNT)**  
**Voluntary Arts (VA)**, UK

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# CULTURE GUIDES



Lifelong  
Learning  
Programme