

360°

Fonds für Kulturen der
neuen Stadtgesellschaft



Diversity Compass

KULTURSTIFTUNG
DES
BUNDES

*How can cultural institutions
become more diverse?
Insights from the 360° programme*



The 360° – Fund for New City Cultures, established by the German Federal Cultural Foundation, has been supporting cultural institutions in various artistic fields since 2018. Its primary aim is to address the needs and interests of all of society and actively incorporate the promising, but equally controversial issues of immigration and cultural diversity into their organisations, communicate these to their local communities, and so doing, reduce the exclusionary structural practices that exist in the cultural sector. The fund supports a broad range of topics, strategies and methods which demonstrate in exemplary fashion how institutions can effectively make use of their full potential (in terms of themes and staffing resources) to shape a new city culture. Over the past four years, 39 funded institutions across Germany have gained important insights in the thematic field of diversity-oriented opening processes.

The following “Diversity Compass” presents the participants’ experience and most effective measures and provides this aggregated expertise for the benefit of the cultural sector at large.

39 funded cultural institutions:
 16 museums
 13 theatres
 8 libraries
 1 state philharmonic orchestra
 1 music school

Programme duration:
 2 rounds of funding
 4 years
 Optional extension of up to 2 years

Funding instruments:
 one financed position (“diversity agent”) and project funding totalling 100,000 euros per institution

Institutional self-contribution:
 50,000 euros for project resources

Programme instruments:
 annual academies, professional training programme, accompanying evaluation

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On Learning Together – An Introduction

Anna Zosik – head of the 360° – Fund for New City Cultures

At the 360° programme kick-off meeting at Villa Elisabeth in Berlin in 2018 with all the diversity agents and directors of the participating institutions gathered together, there was a feeling of optimism in the air – mixed with uncertainty. Everyone had lots of questions – about the coordination of the process, the role of the diversity agents, and not least of all, the task and role of the Federal Cultural Foundation itself. We all had our own ideas and thoughts on how the programme could be implemented, but certainly no clear plan. Nonetheless, we were ready to learn together.

A “learning programme” with institutions learning with and from one another – it generally sounds like a good idea. But when proposed by a major funding institution, the recipients meet it with a certain degree of scepticism. How seriously do they mean it? How much ignorance can we admit to, and how many mistakes are we really allowed to make and communicate in a process which focuses on reporting success? First and foremost, the “learning programme” means acknowledging deficits in expertise, being open to new experiences, and being allowed to make mistakes.

The German psychiatrist, psychoanalyst and systemic organisational consultant Fritz B. Simon writes: “With respect to organisations whose knowledge lies in their processes and structures, learning means that processes and structures can be changed. A learning organisation is one that is capable of transforming its structures and processes (i.e. itself).”¹

¹ Fritz B. Simon (2021): Einführung in die systemische Organisationstheorie. Heidelberg: Carl-Auer-Verlag.

And this is precisely what a diversification process is about: developing and implementing new structures and new routines and demonstrating stronger commitment to what cultural institutions have long claimed to be their goal, namely, embracing a more diverse city culture. In concrete terms, this means achieving greater audience diversity, more diverse programmes, and above all, more diversity at the personnel level. The aim is both to generate an awareness for diversity among the current staff, as well as strive for greater representation of people with an immigrant background – especially when it comes to hiring employees for positions with programmatic and strategic decision-making competence.

The participating institutions were provided with no instructions or empirically tested experience on how to best accomplish these goals. This was cause for some confusion at the start of the programme. The funding model to introduce a new occupational profile – “diversity agents” – at cultural institutions was a pilot project without precedent in the German speaking countries.

The learning programme – it was a serious proposition, and we were allowed to learn a great deal from the experiences of the 39 participating institutions. We learned from discussions, on-site visits, case reports, countless questionnaires which we sent to them, presentations by the diversity agents and the respective directors at conferences and academies, the results of the evaluation and much more. The task of the Federal Cultural Foundation was to bundle the experiences gained by participating institutions and coordinate the transfer of this knowledge on a broader scale. This resulted in a corresponding policy paper², the podcast “KulturDivers”³ and the conference “Ungeduld” (Impatience)⁴, attended by over 800 members of Germany’s cultural sector.

The Diversity Compass you are now reading is another important product of mutual learning. The publication is primarily intended as a practice-oriented tool for cultural policymakers and the staff of cultural institutions who wish to incorporate diversity-oriented approaches into their organisational structures. One of the central focuses of the 360° programme is the dimension of origin-related diversity. Our chief intention was to illustrate the complexity of this specific transformation process and offer orientation on how to influence it. This publication does not function as a step-by-step instruction manual because cultural institutions and their initial parameters are far too heterogeneous. Firstly, institutions comprising multiple artistic disciplines, such as theatres, museums, libraries and orchestras, have their own work cultures and requirements. Secondly, the size of the institutions can vary significantly, as can the structural composition of their local communities. Lastly, varying levels of knowledge in the organisations and countless other factors influence the conditions of opening processes. And yet, when it comes to shaping the diversification process, there are many points of overlap, especially on the structural level, which allow us to transfer the experiences and results to other structures and contexts. And this is exactly where the Diversity Compass comes in.

2 Diversity for the Future
Recommendations for
establishing long-term
diversity-building measures
in cultural institutions



3 Podcast „KulturDivers –
Der Podcast zu Kultur und
Diversität“ (only available
in German)



4 Documentation of the
conference „Ungeduld –
Auf dem Weg zu mehr
Diversität in Kulturinsti-
tutionen“ (some videos
available in English)



Starting on page 9, the 360° agents from the funded institutions share their views and insights into the complex area of **process development**:

In her article (p. 11), the diversity agent at the Niedersächsisches Staatstheater Hannover, Leyla Ercan, emphasises the need for sustainable cooperative structures and changes to the organisational and working cultures of cultural organisations to dismantle barriers and create a new sense of belonging.

André Uelner from the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie of Rhineland-Palatinate describes the diversity processes taking place at his institution (p. 21). In the interview, he underscores the importance of partnerships with local cultural stakeholders and offers tips on how such collaboration can take place among equal partners even when resources are distributed unequally.

Hendrikje Brüning, a former 360° agent at the Landesmuseum Natur und Mensch Oldenburg, shares her view of diversity orientation from a change management perspective. In her essay (p. 27), she analyses the practical side of the process in five phases – from the initial exploratory meeting to the sustainable implementation of diversity in the organisational culture.

At the heart of the Diversity Compass is a **list of measures** (p. 35). These provide an overview of the effective instruments and necessary resources for introducing and implementing diversity at cultural institutions. The list is based solely on the empirical findings and experience gained from the funded institutions during their four-year participation in the 360° programme.

The list of measures is by no means exhaustive. Rather, its purpose is to highlight various opportunities for achieving diversity-oriented transformation and provide orientation and inspiration for developing diversity processes. The compiled measures can also be applied to a variety of artistic disciplines and different cultural institutions (and beyond).

In the final chapter, the evaluation agency Syspons reviews the **impact of the programme based on the examples of four funded institutions** (p. 63). The case reports illustrate how differently the implementation strategies at these four locations were applied. Furthermore, they underscore the individuality of the transformation process, which is integrally linked to the local context and the corresponding starting position.

We wish you an enlightening read and hope that the Diversity Compass can help you better plan and implement this complex transformation process at your own institution.

Process Development





*It's all about belonging.
Developing diversity is a
matter of creating new
cultures of post-immigrant
cooperation, participation
and affiliation in cultural
organisations*

Leyla Ercan — diversity agent at the Niedersächsisches Staatstheater Hannover

Transformation processes in cultural institutions are complex matters. This is because cultural institutions are usually organisations that have evolved over centuries with their own specific history, internalised traditions and artistic identities, with complex and firmly anchored structures and production and working conditions, flanked by bureaucratic guidelines, funding requirements and cultural political parameters. These factors represent a significant part of their staying power and have been at the centre of debates surrounding the structural and legitimisation crisis in cultural institutions for many years. What is striking is that these debates are predominately led by those who have already established themselves as stakeholders in cultural organisations. Accordingly, the measures, approaches and instruments that were created to bring about such change often fail. Frequently they remain an echo and expression of the desire for change and the “fantasy of opening up” held by stakeholders, milieus and social groups who are already well-connected to the cultural organisations.

These self-reproducing cycles need to be consciously and actively disrupted – and that at the structural level. This is no easy task. It requires a visionary master plan which critically examines the institution and its power structures and provides concrete steps and measures tailored to the institution to understand, reach, represent and promote participation of yet non-represented and non-participating post-immigrants and their perspectives. However, the essential organisational step should be to develop

one's own working and communication structures, working atmosphere and personal interaction in such a way that is diversity-friendly, respectful and inviting. The result should be that the above-mentioned groups will want to engage with cultural institutions, voluntarily, self-determined and with pleasure, without having to be "lured" inside.¹

But what might this look like concretely?

1. Structural change means being open to new knowledge, new areas of competence and shifts in interpretation and discourse

There is a long history of individual projects which have addressed, reached and participatively engaged the so-called "marginalised" and "under- and un-represented" members of the post-immigrant society. However, these projects have often taken place on the periphery of the cultural institutions, such as in outreach and communication departments, as part of temporary projects of intercultural encounter, one-time exhibitions on immigration, theme-based events, concerts, educationally oriented community projects and the like.

After almost four years of 360°, the results show that these groups have since become an indispensable aspect of across-the-board organisational processes of change! To ensure that institutions can sustainably pursue diversity-oriented opening processes in terms of their programmes, staff and audience, and not fall back to their "default settings", what we need is more than run-of-the-mill project-based opening measures. We need to structurally establish the participation of the diverse, post-immigrant society. Furthermore, the perspectives guiding future action, the knowledge cultures, experiences and impulses of change should come from those groups and stakeholders who are not already visibly active, represented and involved in the cultural organisations.

This step requires courage and strength to radically scrutinise one's own positions, self-image and perceptions, to take a step back and make space for voices of criticism and new ideas. Many organisations underestimate how intensive, perplexing and upsetting such a self-critical examination of the often-invisible barriers, structures and attitudes at their workplace can be. But those who wish to change must be prepared to walk through a "valley of tears" so to speak, i.e. they must fight the urge to defend themselves reflexively and instead listen to, acknowledge and take seriously the criticism and frustration of post-immigrants. What kind of criticism are these groups levelling at the cultural sector? What negative experiences are they having in these institutions? What barriers do they encounter and how do they deal with them? What expectations do they have of the cultural sector and (cultural) policy? How do potential "new" actors view the efforts to enact change in the cultural institutions? What recommendations do they offer?²

1 Diversity Arts Culture. Berlin Project Office for Diversity Development (2021): Call for Access! Guidelines for Promoting Marginalised Participants in the Cultural Sector (German only).



2 The studies: "Berlin experiences and expectations: On the way toward a more diverse cultural sector. Focus group interviews with non-visitors and non-actors"



and "Diversity in cultural organisations" (German only).



both commissioned by the Berlin project office for diversity development, Diversity Arts Culture, demonstrate how surveys on barriers, experiences and needs for action can be conducted.

It is true that many institutions survey target groups about their experiences, perspectives, knowledge, areas of competence etc., but often incorporate the results to strictly defined, peripheral projects and spaces of experience (e.g. in the education and mediation area) or disregard these again after the project has concluded. Despite these often-exceedingly positive learning processes, such projects do not leave structurally impactful traces in their institutions, nor are they channelled into modified institutional procedures and processes. Rather, they are generally shelved and forgotten. When the next immigration project comes along, everything is back to square one because the core structures of the institutions are still the same. With respect to its working structures, cultures and processes, the institution imitates the marginalisation dynamics of society as a whole, in which marginalised groups are spit back out of the system.³

2. Sustainable, mutually appreciative, cooperative relationships

When a project ends, it often means that after six or eight months (or in the case of theatres, typically after a six-week rehearsal phase), all the intensive collaboration, rapprochement and formation of stable relationships of trust with people, projects and experts from post-immigrant communities are suddenly discontinued. The abrupt termination of partnerships and communication are often very unpleasant and disillusioning to these newly activated, mobilised, culturally interested stakeholders and creators from marginalised communities. The fact that these contacts grow cold after a project concludes and no sustainable collaborations result from them often leaves the participants feeling that they had only been instrumentalised as extras for an image or marketing campaign. Many immigrant-run organisations have become extremely cautious and are reluctant to play along in a diversity or integration trend which serves a purely symbolic political purpose or a "follow-the-funding" mentality ("There's funding available for XYZ, so let's apply for it even if it's not our subject"). And despite all-in commitments and pronouncements for decades, such projects have hardly had any tangible organisational or structural impact on the institutions.

This is where sporadic, temporary projects must give way to long-term, sustainable collaborations based on trust. Why not set annual target parameters? For example: let's work with immigrant-run organisations, this interest group or that actor on three joint theatre productions each year, or curate two exhibitions, or revise our permanent exhibition over the next three years?⁴

3 Centre for Community Organizations (2019): White Supremacy Culture in Organizations. Montreal.



and Centre for Community Organizations (2018): The "Problem" Woman of Colour in the Workplace. Montreal.



4 For more on the criticism of the project funding mentality in the cultural sector, see: Diversity Arts Culture. Berlin project office for diversity development (2021): We've got a project for that ... Thinking structurally about diversity (German only).



3. An end to paternalism: Engagement, participation and co-creation at eye level

Many traditional integration projects – not only in cultural organisations – follow a typical path. A funding programme issues a call for applications and staff members in cultural organisations who belong to the majority society sit down and develop a concept, draft a plan and project schedule, and formulate the objective of the project. If their proposal is granted funding, the project begins. This is usually the moment when the project coordinator desperately starts looking for post-immigrant cooperation partners and project participants from the communities they wish to reach. For that's who we're doing this for, right? We diversity agents regularly receive calls from associations and interest groups who ask us to "quickly deliver a few immigrants" for a newly funded integration project. When we take a closer look, we recognise that the project coordinators hope to hit the ground running without any prior experience or working relationships with the communities they are trying to reach.

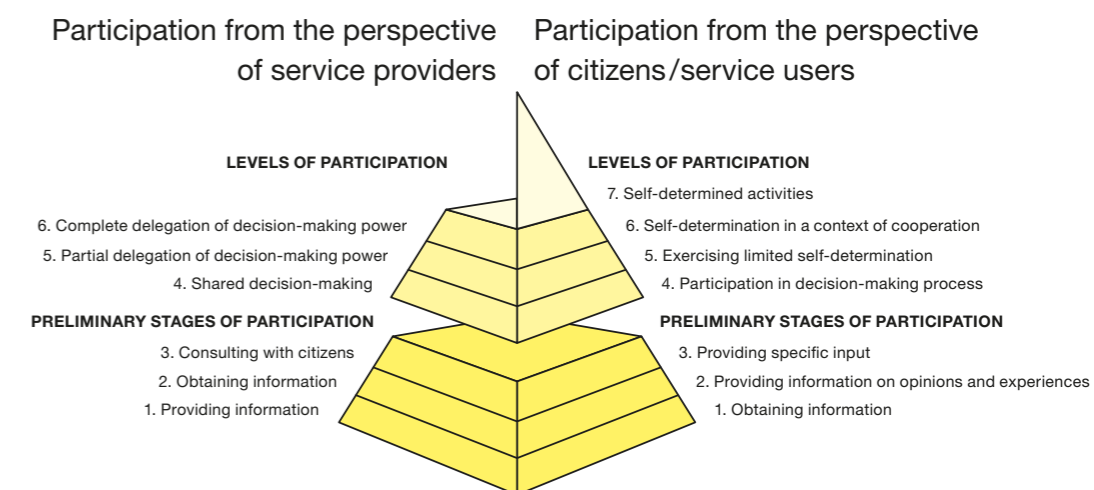
In terms of diversity, these inquiries unfortunately reach us much too late. The communities they are trying to address and include should already be integrated into the project at phase 1, or better yet, before phase 1. Even before the funding proposals are submitted – and this is the cardinal rule – the organisations must already have a well-functioning, well-coordinated, sustainable network in place, cultivated over years with cooperation partners and potential participants from the communities. This requires time resources, agreements, trust and commitment. Indeed, if organisations do not have a tried-and-tested working relationship with the communities based on trust, they should not even submit a project proposal, and if they do, the projects deserve to be denied funding.

In the best-case scenario, the call for applications for funding should be formulated in consultation with experts from the targeted underrepresented communities. For what good does a well-intentioned funding programme do if it fails to consider the interests, needs and requirements, the living environments and experiences, the information channels and habits of the people it hopes to reach?

4. Minor roles? Participation? Cooperation? Collaboration? Co-creation? Precisely define your project and cooperation structures!

Participation has become a catchword in the diversity debate. To the trained eye (with respect to diversity), we discover that the term "participation" is often tossed around in a very undifferentiated, clichéd manner in project concepts. For instance, there is no "one" type of participation. In sociology and academia, participation is portrayed as a multi-layered model comprised of various forms of participation.

The participation pyramid by Straßburger and Rieger



The various preliminary stages are followed by post-participatory forms, such as self-determination and self-administration. Also pseudo forms of participation, such as alibi participation, decorative inclusion and external determination are also part of the critical examination of participatory forms.⁵ The rule of thumb is: The more creative sway, decision-making competence and interpretative control that institutions relinquish to post-immigrant stakeholders whom they wish to reach, the more sustainable and constructive the partnership will be.

Consequently, approaches that centre around audience development and are limited to reducing barriers with respect to cultural usage do not have a long-term impact. For example, opening processes at theatres work best when participation is not only meant passively, but rather cultivates a close connection to the artistic work and enables participants to become actively engaged with the theatre's core product, the performance. This means that theatres must be open to welcoming new artistic collaborations and co-creations with a wide variety of partners in the post-immigrant communities and other audiences which are not (yet) artistically inclined or have different

⁵ Gaby Straßburger; Judith Rieger (Hrsg.) (2019): Partizipation kompakt. Für Studium, Lehre und Praxis sozialer Berufe. Weinheim: Beltz Juventa (German only).

artistic interests. Furthermore, they must work to integrate themselves in their municipal and educational social landscapes and adjust their objectives and programme policies accordingly. The goal should not only be to attract post-immigrant citizens as audience members, but also to acquaint them to the German theatre sector and introduce them to the artistic and cultural production processes at theatres. It would be useful to adopt a more comprehensive understanding of participation, in which the target group – supported by coaches – could be motivated, guided and empowered to work artistically and produce theatre themselves in a self-determined manner. They could organise the collaboration in the collective on their own, choose the themes and materials they wish to explore, work together on developing plays, directing and dramaturgy, and assume responsibility for technical support, production and event management. High-level participation requires, among other things, dynamic, community-building processes, empowerment workshops and writing workshops which explore one's inner artistic experience, artistic-cultural production and self-image, and joint art production and reception.

5. The expanded diversity model DEIB (Diversity – Equity – Inclusion – Belonging)

“Diversity – Equity – Inclusion – Belonging” or the DEIB model, now frequently used in the United States, is an expanded diversity model which aims to adequately address the complex approach to communication and participation. Sustainable diversity development does not only entail making sure that a broad range of identities, experiences, knowledge bases and areas of competence in cultural organisations are represented at all levels. It also ensures that representation and participation are handled fairly, i.e. equal opportunity is established with respect to economic, social and symbolic power and resources, and the ideas, expectations and perspectives of all individuals – especially underrepresented actors – are equitably recognised and implemented. As a rule, this means redistributing interpretative control and decision-making power.

Last but not least, sustainable diversity development means creating a sense of belonging – safety, protection from discrimination, violence and bullying. It means recognising differing opinions, worldviews and values and integrating them into the predominant culture of the institution. It means establishing a general atmosphere of respect, acceptance and empathy.⁶

6 Ademolu Adediran
(2021): Diversity, Equity,
and Inclusion: Practices
and Impacts.



and
Conscient Strategies
(2020): DEIB Employee
Experience Survey.
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
& Belonging.



6. It's all about belonging! Creating and revoking affiliations through the highly coded, normative, powerful spaces of cultural institutions

There have been attempts to open cultural institutions since the 1980s (catchphrase: “Culture for Everyone”). The reason it has proceeded so slowly has to do with the nature of German cultural organisations. Historically, theatres, museums and libraries have always been places of national and cultural identity-building and self-affirmation. Nowhere else has German “*Leitkultur*”, as it is often called and not without a certain critical-ironic detachment, been as normatively negotiated, cultivated and exhibited as in German (high) cultural institutions. Cultural organisations do not exist in a vacuum; they are embedded in the history of the German nation, culture and societal conditions.

At the same time, cultural organisations tend to see themselves as places of transgression, where social relationships, norms, narratives, thinking and viewing habits are radically called into question, where the powers that be are critiqued and alternative visions of the world and society are developed. This artistic-cultural self-image of German cultural institutions that is fuelled by a construed difference of an internal and external sphere, is now teetering. How public is this space in reality? Who exactly is debating these social issues? How critical can all this be if entire segments of the population are not allowed to participate in these cultural processes of negotiation? When it's always the same groups who are granted the scope to decide and interpret, while the same marginalised groups are always the ones who are defined, described and objectified by others?

In short, cultural organisations are highly coded, normative, powerful spaces, where the same social dynamics of inequality and power exist as they do outside and reproduce extremely effective dynamics of belonging and exclusion. This occurs through, e.g. academic prerequisites, habits, the dominant cultural, ethnic and Eurocentric (white) understanding of art and culture, along with the same communication and working cultures, heteronormative and patriarchal worldviews, socioeconomic conditions for gaining access etc. The extent to which people feel they belong to an institution is inherently tied to these invisible normativities that are inscribed in organisational cultures and structures. Unarticulated, implicit rules are especially effective and present because they are strongly internalised and seldom questioned. New employees, in particular, who lack this institutional knowledge or whose knowledge bases are marginalised and not recognised in their institutions, struggle to recognise these implicit rules and act accordingly. This is where a change of perspective is needed. Engendering a sense of belonging is not the duty of the individual; the institution defines who belongs and who doesn't. It is not the individual who must conform or integrate; it is the institution which must change.

To use the parable by the organisational theorist R. Roosevelt Thomas Jr.: Before the giraffe invites the elephant into its house to collaborate on a project, it must modify its house (which is custom-built to meet the wishes, interests, requirements and needs of giraffes) to make it elephant-friendly – and that before the project begins! Because even if the elephant could squeeze through the narrow door, would it feel comfortable, welcome and at home inside? Before a cultural organisation can become “colourful” and “diverse”, it must first become “different”. It’s all about belonging!⁷

⁷ R. Roosevelt Thomas (2012): Building a House for Diversity: How a Fable About a Giraffe & an Elephant Offers New Strategies for Today's Workforce.1999.

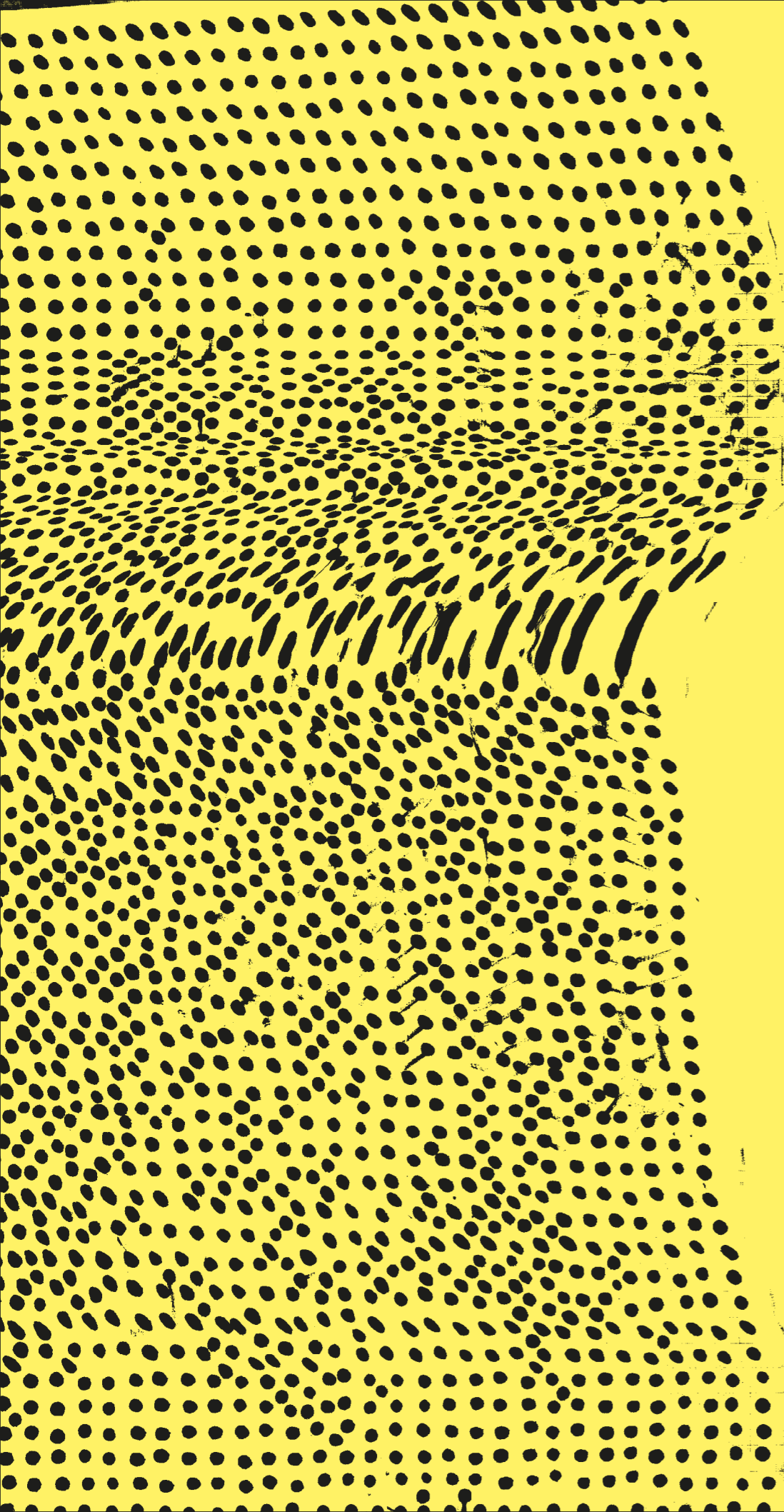
“For nothing is harder than breaking old habits”

André Uelner — diversity agent at the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz in Ludwigshafen, spoke with the 360° team at the Federal Cultural Foundation about partnerships between equals and the special challenges that orchestras face in the process of achieving greater diversity.

Mr Uelner, you’ve been the diversity agent at the Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz in Ludwigshafen since 2019. What was the situation when you first arrived at the Staatsphilharmonie?

The Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz (DSP) is a major municipal cultural player without any performance venues of its own. The orchestra caters to three different audience groups. As a travelling orchestra, it performs at (rural) municipalities in the southern part of the state, and offers its own subscription concert series in Ludwigshafen und Mannheim. International tours featuring big names in the classical music scene top off the concert programme. In the urban community, the DSP is largely regarded as an elitist institution which complicates our efforts to attract especially marginalised segments of the population. Several non-representative surveys conducted in downtown Ludwigshafen indicated that those interviewed didn’t even know the orchestra existed. This is probably due to the special situation in Ludwigshafen. Almost 16 % of the population receive social benefits, and in 2019, Ludwigshafen had the highest school drop-out rate of 14.2 % out of the 15 regions evaluated in the “Participation Atlas”¹. The municipal debt is higher than the national average, which means there only limited financial resources for culture. Over the past ten years, we’ve seen that newly established projects in the independent scene always bowed out sooner or later

¹ Participation Atlas (German only):



due to poor prospects or moved their activities across the Rhine to Mannheim. The general public is often unaware of (post-)immigrant cultural projects, especially because the local press rarely reports on their activities, and there is hardly any coordination between them and the municipal cultural promotion office. And yet statistically speaking, around 53 % of the population had an immigrant background in 2022. Overall, Ludwigshafen lacks platforms to engage in comprehensive exchange, and one gets the impression that cultural actors have established themselves in niches.

What has changed in the Staatsphilharmonie since the 360° programme began?

When I first started working at the Staatsphilharmonie, people often noted the international character of our orchestra and that any lack of diversity applied rather to our audience. But as for the employees at our institution, we are currently emphasising the difference between “international” and “diverse”.

In autumn 2020, the BPoC “City Philharmonic” committee was established with the goal of depicting perspectives which have neither been represented in the audience nor the orchestra up till now. Meanwhile, the committee curates its own programmes and writes articles for the DSP magazine. We also work closely with the Ludwigshafen University of Business and Society to develop projects for music in the social sphere, and offer seminars in aesthetic practice, and more specifically, in the field of sound design, to students majoring in Social Work.

You’ve also had some success in the area of outreach. What further measures have been implemented?

We’ve also made progress at the staffing and programme level. For instance, shortly after the programme began in autumn 2019, we suggested implementing an antiracism policy, but the staff council didn’t warm up to it. But today, we’re soon going to include a code of conduct to our service contracts based on this policy. The code includes terms for managing complaints which also necessitates discrimination-sensitive and legal training for the representatives of the Complaints Office.

At the staffing level, orchestras are the last clients in the training system. Under the current conditions, the applicant pool is not yet

diverse enough. There is only so much an institution can do to influence this. Educational and cultural policymakers are the ones who must promote new talent as fast as possible in a targeted and improved way in order to achieve greater diversity in the medium term. The time factor plays a large role in this, because children who start learning an instrument today will only be available to the orchestra as professional musicians in 15 to 20 years.

What do you see as the greatest challenges facing orchestras with respect to achieving diversity?

The work of orchestras is based on a narrow understanding of culture and musical composition which primarily reproduces an established canon. A diversification process can only succeed if the range of offered programme formats and themes becomes more diverse, doesn’t limit itself to the relatively rigid concert ritual, and incorporates different musical genres and cultures, e.g. through partnerships. A broader artistic-thematic spectrum can help reach new audiences.

And how is the Staatsphilharmonie addressing this challenge?

We’re generally focusing our efforts on interacting with the public on location. In cooperation with the Orientalische Musikakademie Mannheim (OMM) and the Popakademie Baden-Württemberg, we established the transcultural ensemble “Colourage” in spring 2020. In basic democratic fashion, the participating musicians from the DSP and OMM are working to create their own musical repertoire situated between Western-oriented classical music and maqam-based musical traditions which have their origin in Arabic art music. The ensemble has been given the space it needs to develop organically. After a two-year foundation building phase, the ensemble has now reached a point where it can perform more regularly. It has adopted its own rehearsal language, but it also realised that the cultural and linguistic characteristics of musical understanding cannot be translated 1:1. But this discrepancy is seen as a resource.

This type of collaboration often raises the question of how resources are distributed.

The DSP budget is about hundred times more than the resources that the Orientalische Musikakademie has at its disposal. Consequently, it was clear that the DSP would have to invest more of its own resources, and that I, being the project director, would oversee the organisational tasks and help with securing third-party funding. From the beginning of partnership, the project has been financed almost 100 % through the DSP's own contributions and third-party funding. We hold regular meetings to discuss operational and thematic planning, whereby the democratically organised ensemble has the final say on purely musical matters. Furthermore, the ensemble also functions as a networking platform that provides musicians the opportunity to initiate other partnerships. For example, at the wish of a Syrian oud player, we contacted a professor of composition who is helping prepare the musicians for an orchestral concert with the ensemble "Colourage" and the Staatsphilharmonie at the Konzerthaus in Mannheim in the 2023/24 season. Another member of the ensemble was involved as a curator in conceptualising and developing the programme for the World Percussion Festival, which took place in cooperation with the DSP and the Ludwigshafen Office of Cultural Affairs. Both cooperation partners chose not to interfere with the thematic content nor attempt to exert influence with respect to control or benchmark measures in order to encourage artistic freedom and equality. The result was that the festival was able to draw a noticeably diverse audience for the first time.

In view of such disparity in terms of resources, how does one establish an equal basis between the cooperation partners?

I had the impression that we, as representatives of a publicly funded cultural institution, had to perform a careful balancing act: on one hand, because of our comparatively strong financial and personnel situation, the DSP bore most of the organisational and financial responsibility in the partnerships, but on the other, we had to relinquish influence so that our partners were free to make thematic and artistic decisions. In such cases, it's necessary to instil flexibility into one's institutional processes and routines. We also try to carefully support actors in the city with developing their new curatorial and management skills based on their own logic. Considering the disparity in financial resources, a relationship on an entirely equitable basis can only be achieved through a sensitive approach, and at the moment, is only feasible to a certain degree. Partnerships built on continuous collaboration over several years can help establish equality between the partners in the long term.

What recommendations do you have for other institutions which are interested in cooperating with stakeholders from their local community?

A decisive factor for developing long-term, resilient partnerships based on mutual respect is the underlying attitude of the staff at both cooperating cultural institutions, for nothing is harder than breaking old habits. One can quickly and unintentionally overstep the boundaries of (positive) discrimination, instrumentalisation and tokenisation. Recognising these old habits, in my opinion, is a fundamental prerequisite – especially in partnerships of asymmetrical power. The house management must set aside sufficient time resources for this ongoing task of reflection and examination. Cooperation partners can immediately sense whether the employees of a cultural institution are entering the relationship with honest intentions, and they also notice if these intentions change midway through.

Anchoring the process, or accepting substantial changes

Hendrikje Brüning — formerly responsible for strategic organisational development at the Landesmuseum Natur und Mensch in Oldenburg

The following text was produced with the support of Sarah Hergenröther, 360° agent for cultural diversity and diversity development at the Munich Municipal Library, Anja Junghans, diversity agent at the LWL-Industriemuseum Henrichshütte in Hattingen and Bronwyn Tweddle, diversity advisor at the Mecklenburgisches Staatstheater in Schwerin.

Diversity orientation can be the catalyst for an opening process and sustainable change – and if the institution allows it, the opening process may sooner or later, to a larger or smaller extent, encompass the entire organisation.

One of the important lessons gained from our exchange with the 360° institutions was that although the processes have much in common, their design is often very different and unique. And because there cannot be a *single* blueprint for any *one* process, we have provided a summary of each below, supplemented with comments by three other 360° agents from a museum, library and theatre. The goal is to offer an impression of the wide range of experiences gained during the implementation of the process.

First things first

Four core elements can be used for orientation in the process, two of which are internally focused and the other two, externally focused:

- 1.) Change-management elements are applied internally which anchor the opening process as a management task from the top down. This, in turn, facilitates an environment that is open to change.
- 2.) “Bottom-up”-oriented components from organisational development (OD) are incorporated which enable the entire organisation to become involved at all levels. The guiding principle could be “*anchor internally before implementing externally*”.

This helps avoid communicating aspirations which could elicit public expectations without yet having any substantial internal backing.

■ *Comment by Sarah Hergenröther, library: This is a very important point!*

Nonetheless, at the very beginning, there must be a discussion with stakeholders and a debate about who will (and who won't) be interacting with the organisation and seeing themselves as part of it. Accordingly, the other core elements are 3.) stakeholder interaction and 4.) external expertise at the start so that the organisation can truly open itself. An organisation, which is not yet opened, often lacks the resources to open itself on its own accord.

■ *Comment by Sarah Hergenröther, library: Yes! Outside perspectives help you recognise where your blind spots are and what needs to be done in the process to be able to see them.*

First phase: Analyse, understand and clarify

At the beginning of the process, it can help to examine what kind of expectations and assumptions exist with respect to the diversity-oriented process. An important insight is that this is not about launching a "project", but rather embarking on a long-term process. Diversity orientation permanently changes how and with whom the organisation performs its tasks – also with respect to its working methods and routines. Diversity orientation refers to how work is done, interpersonal relationships, and consequently, how organisations and their staff conduct themselves.

■ *Comment by Sarah Hergenröther, library: This is where one should also think about developing an anti-discriminatory attitude.*

An important element and initial measure in this early phase is to designate someone (e.g. a "change team") to be responsible for the process and examine the status quo: Do we know what diversity orientation means? To answer this question, the change team gathers information and competence, which includes discussing potential-oriented diversity management and power-critical anti-discrimination work. A mutual and well-considered understanding of diversity is vital for implementing the process because it serves as the basis for analysing one's institution and can ideally be used to describe different hierarchical levels. What does diversity look like in terms of the organisation, staff, audience and programme?

■ *Comment by Anja Junghans, museum: Hardly any organisation starts from scratch. It's worth finding out what ideas are hidden inside whose drawers, and what measures may have already been*

■ *implemented. It's also about appreciating the efforts already made and identifying potential allies for continuing the process.*

■ *Comment by Sarah Hergenröther, library: From our experience, it's important to recognise that you can't analyse these questions by themselves, but only in exchange with feedback groups. Only then can you identify existing weaknesses. With us, the analysis of our programme only functioned after repeated feedback loops with the people we wanted to reach. To this end, we conducted various focal group interviews and sought advice. For example, representatives from immigrant associations offered us feedback on our events based on our programme brochures. From this we learned that despite touching on many good topics, they all had a Eurocentric perspective. To address this, 15 colleagues completed the online qualification programme "Organising racism-critical events successfully" by Noah Sow. Also with respect to our media holdings, we needed external expertise. While we initially assumed that further diversity development would mean expanding and advertising our foreign language portfolio, the consultations showed that it was really about presenting different perspectives in our media content. This tied into the analysis of our library's children's book collection: Who are the heroes in our media? Are there heroes of colour, stories whose main characters are children with a disability, or stories about rainbow families? Only with external feedback were we able to locate areas that required analysis.*

Second phase: Communicative anchoring

The phase of communicative anchoring often begins as a second step, but then is ongoing. One of the challenges in this phase can be that the organisation asks the question of *why*. It is not necessary for the process to have just one reason, but it is helpful when the motivation(s) of the initiators is/are clear. For the process to be effective, the following mutual understanding about the approach and procedure is helpful: The organisation must truly want to change, because to get there, it will have to allow interventions and changes to happen to its system.

The process itself, its relevance and the goal of opening and learning together are change elements which should optimally be anchored by the management. The organisational development (OD) element should have a structure (for example, a workgroup), in which staff members from various areas can give feedback. In this way, the change team can find out what the organisation needs at different places in order to customise the changes. This measure also helps counter typical obstacles, like the feeling of incompetence, the lack of understanding regarding the content, or the necessity of anchoring in general.

Comment by Anja Junghans, museum: When establishing a workgroup, one should keep in mind that there is no blueprint for the process and not everything will happen in the desired time and progression. That's why it is not necessary to receive in-house feedback on all points from the very beginning and throughout the diversity process. Consequently, we gave the workgroup a somewhat different role. The members began by spending the first twelve months intensively exploring diversity in a praxis-oriented manner and jointly formulated their goals and their position in the form of a mission statement. Today, the workgroup develops its own activities based on this mission statement, e.g. neighbourhood meals, diversity-oriented expansion of our mailing list, and an excursion for employees.

Another comment by Anja Junghans, museum: When establishing a workgroup – especially if it comprises representatives from many different areas of the organisation – the question comes up as to whether participation should be voluntary or compulsory. At the beginning of the 360° programme, the discussion about diversity was still in its infancy. That's why we hit upon a compromise: Participation in the workgroup was compulsory for at least one person from each department as a representative. It was up to the employees to select their representative. Meanwhile, participation is voluntary, and the workgroup has even more members than it did in the beginning.

Comment by Sarah Hergenröther, library: In the case of our institution, the significance of diversity was anchored in a "vision development" process which was initiated by the management. What we also discovered was that the open discussion about diversity in the various library teams was very helpful for developing a joint position. Each team is visited once a year, informed about the planned and implemented measures, and asked about any issues which affect them with respect to diversity. This has resulted in discussions at various locations which have provided us with valuable insights on the status quo. Our conversations also highlight the perspectives and resources that exist in the teams and motivate the colleagues to jointly examine diversity even more.

Third, recurring phase: Prioritising measures and anchoring the process internally

This is the phase that presents the most obstacles. It is an ongoing phase and should be revisited time and again because this is where we examine our own steps in the process. Are the implemented measures truly having the effect we hoped, and do they address our current needs?

We can answer these questions well by observing the obstacles. A typical obstacle is the perceived lack of time and is often structurally rooted. Following an initial dynamic phase at the beginning of the process, it quickly becomes evident that opening an institution requires long-term time resources and, above all, the attention of the participating staff. Making real changes to the situation can serve to address this problem; building competence and advancing opening processes should not be regarded as "also important" topics but should rather be the standard tasks of an institution. As organisational development (OD) elements, it is crucial to implement corresponding structures and spaces for reflection, exchange, and fostering understanding and building competence. The process becomes anchored in the institution by continually involving the employees, and optimally, the number of involved persons steadily increases with time.

Fourth, recurring phase: Establishing new relationships and practising new forms of behaviour

This phase is closely connected to the third. In the prior phase, the evaluation of the measures reveals whether they had the desired effect. Now, each staff member and the entire organisation must meet the challenge of putting these changes into practice and creating sustainable structures and routines from these short-term measures to promote diversity-conscious collaboration. This phase is often underrated. The sense that we've understood the challenges involved often blinds us to the fact that situations and behaviours must *actually change*. It is not enough to merely understand diversity-oriented development, but also to act accordingly if it is to be effective.

The change element in this case is a question of resources, and therefore, the management is responsible for providing structures that induce these changes. At this point, if not earlier, one must critically assess the entire strategic orientation: How does the institution want to sustainably implement diversity orientation as a strategic element?

The crucial OD element is the evaluation at different levels. The longer the process runs, the more internal staff will be involved for varying periods of time. Some will accompany the process from the start, while new colleagues will join later and will have to become acquainted with all the issues. Before diversity orientation becomes a normal, accepted part of the organisation's culture, enough people will have to repeat these changed routines many, many times.

Comment by Anja Junghans, museum: Here we clearly see that a high degree of understanding and attention to organisational development is essential for a diversity process. Those tasked with implementing the process should already possess or at least work to acquire the corresponding skills.

Comment by Bronwyn Tweddle, theatre: The contribution describes the most important points for shaping the process, and the clear structure also seems helpful from a theatre perspective.

Fifth phase: Shifting focus

Does all this mean that diversity orientation must remain the highest priority for an organisation for it to be effectively implemented? Yes and no. Once diversity orientation has become a vital and practised part of the organisation's culture over a longer period of time, other topics can shift back to the foreground, and the evaluative cycle need not occur so often. However, attention must always be paid to diversity and should never be taken for granted as part of the organisation's self-image.

*Diversity-oriented
opening measures in
cultural institutions*



Background

The four-year programme period has clearly shown that diversity-oriented opening in cultural institutions can only be achieved through a long-term process of structural change. For the participating institutions, implementing diversity-oriented and discrimination-sensitive outreach measures means questioning one's attitudes and working cultures, becoming more flexible with regard to rigid hierarchies, and renegotiating financial, personnel and time resources. The institutions must acquire new knowledge and regularly keep it up to date. And they must reflect on and, if necessary, change old habits and routines. A diversity-oriented transformation process is a complex and comprehensive, cross-sectional task.

The following compilation of effective measures aims to provide cultural institutions with orientation for developing diversity-based organisational structures, whereby the focus falls mainly on the dimension of origin-based diversity and its corresponding intersectional aspects. It is exclusively based on the empirical experiences and insights gained over four years by 39 institutions which participated in the programme 360° – Fund for New City Cultures. Due to their varying circumstances and needs, not all of the described measures were implemented at every institution. At the start of 360°, the coordinating team defined three key areas – staff, audience and programme – as the basis for anchoring the process for all participants. As the programme progressed, other focal areas were added, specifically “organisation and structure”, and “internal and external communication”.

The following list is by no means complete and should not be regarded as a step-by-step instruction manual. Considering the individual starting conditions of the institutions, such a manual wouldn't be very useful. Rather, the list describes the various instruments and approaches to diversity-oriented development and is intended to provide orientation and inspiration for shaping diversity processes. The following measures can be implemented in any number of artistic areas and can be applied to a wide range of cultural institutions (as well as contexts which extend beyond them).

The process is comprehensive and highly complex. Not all the measures can be immediately and simultaneously implemented. Progress can also be made by taking small steps. The important thing is to begin!

Prerequisites

The successful implementation of a diversification process depends on numerous framework conditions. According to a survey of the 360° institutions, two prerequisites played an especially important role in the success of the process:

1. A determined and strongly motivated management team

The programme has shown that a diversity-oriented transformation process is a profound, complex and lengthy endeavour, and – like every plan to institute changes – is bound to meet with resistance in the organisation. Therefore, a key factor for achieving successful and sustainable change is having a management team which communicates the process to the staff as an opportunity to develop, and which visibly promotes and takes responsibility for it. For the project to be successful, the management team must be willing to explore diversity- and discrimination-related issues and be prepared to adopt structural changes. If this doesn't happen, or if the process is only symbolically supported (for example, delegated to subordinate structures), it is much more likely that the measures will have no long-term impact. Furthermore, management teams are in the position to “sell” these processes and the respective infrastructure to cultural policymakers and, so doing, help initiate changes to the framework conditions.

2. Cultural-political framework conditions for ensuring commitment

By participating in the 360° programme, the institutions essentially pledged to implement diversity-oriented measures and strategies automatically. But based on the experience of the programme's participants, to ensure that the

diversity process continues and can be implemented in the broader cultural sector, clearly defined cultural-political framework conditions are needed (e.g. anchoring diversity development into funding criteria or reformulating the measures of success). Moreover, cultural policymakers must generally articulate this as an intended goal and ensure that new resources are allocated, and existing resources are redistributed.

Resources

Long-term diversity-oriented organisational development entails making changes to the structures, processes and the internal communication within the cultural organisations. Such changes require time, staff, financial resources, infrastructural support and new expertise. To meet these needs, the institutions can either redistribute the resources they already have, or cultural policymakers can allocate additional resources for this purpose.

Redistributing resources predicates a reprioritisation of the tasks at the institution: by producing one exhibition or reading less per year, staff will have more time and energy to devote to diversity-oriented tasks. They can try out new artistic formats, establish and maintain new networks, and find opportunities to adjust their communication strategies to their local communities, learn more about diversity etc. Redistributing resources also applies to the existing infrastructure (rooms, technology etc.) which can be provided for joint projects with groups and institutions in a diverse city culture. From the perspective of the 360° participants, this new prioritisation within the institutions allows diversity to become sustainably anchored as a cross-sectional issue throughout the entire organisation. Experience has shown that introducing diversity as an supplementary task may overwhelm the staff and result in the process being rejected outright or considerably slowed down.

To achieve greater diversity, additional financial resources and personnel are required. Strategically planning diversity processes, building structures for processes of participation, following social debates and translating them into the institution's programmatic and strategic positioning – all of this requires the institution to expand its fields of competence and hire additional staff. The opening process also involves new activities and obligations (e.g. conducting training seminars for staff members, enlisting the support of external experts, remunerating civil-sector cooperation partners), all of which are tied to financial expenditures. Because cultural institutions often cannot shoulder these expenses on their own, new funding models are necessary and additional funding must be allocated by cultural policymakers.

About the development process:

The summarised findings provided in this chapter are the result of an intensive, joint working process with the diversity agents and the management teams of all 39 institutions funded through 360°. The information was drawn from a questionnaire completed by the cultural institutions and assessed by the German Federal Cultural Foundation. During the 360° Academy in June 2022, the first draft of the list of measures was reviewed and revised with the diversity agents and management teams of the funded institutions. These were then edited and finalised by the Federal Cultural Foundation in consultation with two agents who provided further feedback.

The Federal Cultural Foundation would like to thank all the participants for sharing their experiences, constructive criticism and productive dialogue. Our special thanks go to Judith Blumberg and Sylvia Linneberg for their insightful feedback during the final project phase.

Overview of diversity-oriented opening measures in cultural institutions

ORGANISATION & STRUCTURE

- Creation of a staff position for diversity
- Establishment of a diversity workgroup
- Regular executive-level meetings with the diversity agent or the diversity workgroup
- Development of a mission statement
- Creation of a Complaints Office
- Agreements on structurally anchoring diversity within the organisation
- External advisory committees and experts

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Measures to promote active dialogue and inquire about the staff's interests and needs:

- Presentation of the process in various areas and departments
- Creation of communicative spaces for dialogue and collegial advice
- Open consultation hours with diversity agents

Measures designed to provide information:

- Development of communication tools
- Diversity wiki / library

STAFF

- Collection of diversity-related data from the staff
- Continual professional training seminars
- Diversity-sensitive application process
- Offering paid internships
- Development of job profiles for internships
- External advisory committees and diversely constituted juries

PROGRAMME

- Discussion on diversity in the programme planning phase
- Participative and co-curative programme formats in cooperation with local communities
- Programme formats for special occasions
- Regular programme formats with a focus on diversity
- Artists-in-residence programmes
- Involvement with non-institutionally organised projects
- Project events in public spaces

AUDIENCE

Standortbestimmung:

- Conducting a situation analysis
- Conducting a survey of non-visitors

Community-Outreach:

- Regular visits to the communities
- Spaces of encounter and provision of infrastructure

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- Mission statement and diversity-based communicative process
- Accessible (low-threshold) communication:
 - Multilingual offers
 - Plain language
 - Gender-sensitive language
- Diversity-sensitive imagery
- Expansion of the distribution list
- Contextualisation

Organisation & Structure

According to systemic organisation theory, organisations pursue a single purpose – self-preservation. As long as their existence is ensured by the necessary resources, processes, communication channels and self-defined objectives, there is enormous momentum to “stay the course” and little taste for experimentation. Changes of substantial nature – which diversity-oriented opening processes are – require extensive adjustments and are associated with considerable effort on the part of the organisation. This applies to cultural organisations to an equal degree. To permanently anchor the desired changes, it is important to first adopt new attitudes and create new structures.

What makes a diversity-oriented transformation process so distinctive is its highly emotional character. The focus does not lie on reorganising technical processes and communication channels, but rather closely examining the attitudes that members of staff and their institutions have long held, negotiating (new) values, introducing new aesthetic approaches, mediating between different cultural viewpoints and interests, among other things. The process is cyclical and requires constant self-reflection. It is accompanied by intensive societal discussion and debate which exert a strong influence on the content and dynamics of the processes and necessitate regular adjustments. Transparent communication, openness, patience and an error-tolerant organisational culture are important factors for advancing changes despite these challenges. Moreover, external support is crucial to everyone involved, i.e. management teams, agents and other individuals who actively shape the processes.

Before implementing diversity-oriented measures, it is a good idea to conduct an internal organisational analysis (with external consultation) which surveys the prevalent views and attitudes regarding diversity and identifies the internal structures and their respective needs for this process. With this information, it is possible to make recommendations on the delegation of tasks based on influencing factors, such as the size and complexity of the institution. For example, should the process be entrusted to a single person, a tandem, or a “diversity team”? The analysis should be accompanied by an in-house dialogue, in which the goals of the process are discussed and further developed with the entire staff.

MEASURES

○ Creation of a staff position for diversity

The “diversity agent” model was the most significant structural measure introduced by the programme. Assigned with cross-sectional tasks, these agents guide the process either by themselves or together in a team, coordinate activities, communicate their activities internally, recruit supporters, enlist allies, develop strategies with executive committees, cultivate contacts and exchange with external cooperation partners and seek their feedback. The mere presence of an agent inside the organisation and interest in what staff members do on a daily basis significantly increases the general acceptance of the diversification process. Due to the emotionally charged nature of the potential transformation, it is crucial that the management team stands behind and supports the agent. Ideally, the institution should also facilitate external support via coaching or supervision.

At the beginning of the process, it is important to sit down with the management team and clearly define the agent’s role, tasks and mandate within the institution and conduct a joint analysis of the initial situation. Based on this information, the jointly formulated objectives serve to provide orientation with respect to targets and benchmarks of success.

The agent is a qualified specialist and is not solely responsible for the entire institutional transformation process.

○ Establishment of a diversity workgroup

Committees were created in the participating institutions to introduce and oversee the process throughout the organisation and act as a mediator from top-down to bottom up. These so-called “diversity workgroups”, “diversity task forces” or “steering committees” are responsible for formulating goals, plan measures and activities, and guide the implementation of the project. The scope of authority and resources available to the workgroup should be defined in consultation with the management at the very beginning. In larger institutions, two committees were often established – a steering committee comprised of the diversity agent and the institution’s managing director or the project manager responsible for the strategic planning, and an operational committee of interested staff members who would ideally represent the full occupational spectrum of the institution. A mutual understanding of diversity and regular staff training should comprise the working basis of the workgroup.

○ **Regular executive-level meetings with the diversity agent or the diversity workgroup**

Scheduling a fixed meeting at the organisational level underscores the commitment to implementing transformation processes. This enables participants to regularly review the progress toward achieving the defined objectives and modify the strategic planning if necessary.

○ **Development of a mission statement**

A mission statement reflects the fundamental orientation of an organisation, serves to affirm its identity and relates the system of shared values within and outside the institution. To have a credible and sustainable impact, it is important to involve as many employees as possible in drafting the mission statement, and subsequently work to actively implement and anchor it into daily activities at the organisational level. The formulation of a mission statement involves joint negotiation, during which positions and viewpoints on diversity are discussed, and due to its complexity, can take several months to finalise. From the public's perspective, a mission statement can serve as a self-description, and the formulation of diversity-oriented objectives can play a vital role in recruitment.

○ **Creation of a Complaints Office**

According to §§ 13 (1, 1) and 12 (5) of the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG), the employer is legally obliged to create and announce the existence of a Complaints Office. During the 360° programme, several participating institutions set up a Complaints Office in accordance with AGG in order to better respond to discrimination at the workplace on account of ethnic origin, gender identity, religion or worldview, disability, age or sexual orientation. To this end, it is important that staff obtain subject-related competence through corresponding professional training seminars and to communicate the work of the Complaints Office within the organisation.

○ **Agreements on structurally anchoring diversity within the organisation**

Written agreements serve to reinforce commitment. They ensure that diversity is structurally anchored in the organisation and is practically applied. Experience has shown that documents, such as house rules, codes of conduct, service agreements, anti-discrimination provisions in contracts, and guidelines on discrimination-free events are effective instruments for achieving greater diversity.

○ **External advisory committees and experts**

Many institutions report that consulting regularly with external experts in the area of organisational development has proven to be an effective method. These advisors are able to analyse the processual architecture holistically and objectively, thereby providing an important level of external reflection.

Internal Communication

Reliable and understandable communication represents the underlying structure of the transformation process. One aspect of communication is external, in that it involves engaging in dialogue with the community in order to inform residents about the possibilities of participating and influencing the process, and taking their wishes and needs into account (see the section on “External communication”). On the other hand, it also entails transparently communicating with the members of staff about the opening process and the corresponding planned measures. Both forms of communication should be carefully coordinated and have visible structural consequences in order to demonstrate to the staff and the public that the organisation is serious in its pursuit of diversity-oriented ambitions and aspirations.

While it is important that management communicates its strong commitment, it is equally important that the employees are included in the transformation process and their feedback is considered. Should this fail to happen, the changes can spark fears and lead to rejection. A respectful working culture that values open dialogue and feedback also allows employees to articulate their concerns and offer suggestions on how to move forward in the process. To get everyone on board, the internal communication must be understandable, and current information about the process should be shared with all employees regardless of which department they work in or their area of expertise.

As part of the programme, numerous internal communication measures were developed and tested. These can be generally divided into two groups:

- *measures which promote active dialogue and inquire about the staff's interests and needs*
- *measures designed to provide information*

Because diversity is a topic connected to so many different personal experiences and opinions, it can be helpful for the development process to supplement the concrete measures and formalised programmes with personal conversations with colleagues. Organisationally, it would make sense, therefore, to set aside sufficient time and opportunity for informal discussions.

MEASURES

Measures which promote active dialogue and inquire about the staff's interests and needs:

○ **Presentation of the process in various areas and departments**

Engaging in dialogue with individual departments helps employees to better understand the process and expectations of its implementation, as well as prevent uncertainties and allay concerns. At the same time, these discussions can reveal the needs of the departments where diversity-oriented measures could be best applied. When diversity agents actively engage with employees, it can encourage them to reflect on their own role in the process and take initiative to actively shape it.

○ **Creation of communicative spaces for dialogue and collegial advice**

Open workshops or seminars offered by agents or the diversity workgroup can encourage (informal) discussion about various diversity-oriented topics. These get-togethers strengthen the sense of community and provide an opportunity to present and discuss internal and external perspectives on the topic. These discussions can also reveal which topics could be the focus of more in-depth professional training seminars.

○ **Open consultation hours with diversity agents**

In some institutions, the agents held open consultation hours during which employees could stop by and discuss various matters, e.g. personal experiences, suggestions on possible topics for events, the wish to address certain topics at the organisational level etc.

Measures designed to provide information:

○ **Development of communication tools**

Many institutions launched an in-house newsletter as a regular instrument to publicise the diversity-related activities taking place there and to inform staff about general matters, events, participants and theoretical approaches related to diversity. Instead of creating entirely new channels, some organisations integrated this content into their existing communication structures.

○ **Diversity wiki / library**

An (analogue or digital) compilation of literature and materials on diversity provided by the agent or workgroup offers all employees the possibility of learning more about the topic themselves.

Because different people become involved in the process at different times and in different ways, we recommend establishing communication channels which use both analogue and digital formats.

Staff

The aim of diversity-oriented opening at the staff level is to build a more multifaceted team of employees in the long term. Cultural institutions recognise that they lack (post-)immigrant perspectives and expertise and have been working for years to increase representation. These efforts, however, are all too often limited to special projects organised for special occasions.

Of all the three focal areas (staff, audience and programme) which the 360° programme has addressed, the staff level is possibly the hardest nut to crack. This is mainly due to two factors. For one, hiring practices often result in exclusion, albeit unintentionally. A 2018 [study on discrimination in the application process](#) by researchers at the Berlin Social Science Centre (WZB) confirmed that the decision to invite an applicant to an interview is strongly influenced by their place of origin, religious affiliation, skin colour and not least of all, their gender. Coupled with this is a strong tendency to hire persons who align with the institution's "habitus" and superficially resemble the current workforce.

The second factor hindering diversity applies to the executive and managerial level of a cultural institution. These positions are generally filled from a pool of socio-economically well-situated members of the academic class which already tends to be less diverse than the general population overall.

The targeted introduction of administrative instruments serves to increase the level of diversity competence among the staff, while lowering the barriers of access for potential employees.

MEASURES

○ **Collection of diversity-related data from the staff**

Data collection is helpful for realistically determining how diverse the staff is, where changes can be made, and what kind of experiences the employees have had with discrimination at the institution in the past. Some institutions conducted surveys of their employees on this subject. Data collection on equal treatment is a rather complex undertaking due to data protection concerns, and its ability to provide conclusive results is often limited. Therefore, we recommend always anonymising questionnaires and surveys and making participation voluntary. By cooperating with external research institutes to analyse the results and promptly taking measures to address any identified systematic disadvantages and barriers can strengthen trust in such instruments and increase the number of future survey participants.

○ **Continual professional training seminars**

Continuing education and training seminars form the basis for a shared understanding of diversity at the institution. The overarching strategic goal is to motivate the staff to personally adopt the perspective of diversity-oriented action. A two-stage continuing education system proved particularly effective in the 360° institutions. Following a general seminar on diversity for all employees, additional seminars specifically tailored to individual areas of activity were offered to the corresponding occupational groups within the institution (e.g. management, personnel department, communications, curation, mediation, staff with direct audience contact, etc.).

Participation in training seminars was mandatory at some institutions while it was only voluntary at others. The decision largely depends on the culture of the individual institution, the state of knowledge and openness of the staff, and the strategy of the management team, the agent and the diversity workgroup.

The participating institutions especially emphasised the continuity of this measure. It is equally important to consider offering diversity seminars during the onboarding process of new employees.

Because diversity is a topic often connected with insecurity and even misgivings, it is very important that trainers exhibit a respectful and error-tolerant attitude.

○ **Diversity-sensitive application process**

This measure consists of a series of adjustments that affect the entire application process. These include targeted recruitment of diverse personnel, reformulation of job ads (e.g. adding a line about diversity-oriented personnel measures like empowerment opportunities), the use of new platforms and distribution channels to ensure a wide dispersion of job ads as well as targeted placement to reach diverse candidates, inclusion of diversity competence as a job requirement, and inquiring at interviews whether candidates have such competence (depending on their field of activity).

Generally speaking, more flexibility is required in the hiring process, e.g. more openness toward applicants with a wider variety of educational backgrounds and recruitment of lateral entrants, development of new professional training profiles, especially with respect to curatorial and mediation work, and more streamlined recognition of foreign degrees and academic certificates.

○ **Offering paid internships**

To facilitate diversity-oriented opening among staff and create easier access to cultural institutions, many organisations have found that offering paid internships proved to be an effective measure in promoting early-career professionals with an immigrant background. These measures can be augmented by in-house mentoring programmes during the internship period.

○ **Development of job profiles for internships**

With the goal of promoting young professionals, the institutions also reviewed and continually developed job profiles, recruitment processes and selection procedures with diversity in mind. According to the institutions, formal requirements can often become obstacles in this context which makes it necessary to engage in extensive negotiation between the personnel department, the staff council and the head of vocational training.

○ **External advisory committees and diversely constituted juries**

Many institutions have no possibility to add additional staff positions to their current workforce. Moreover, the goal should not be to replace existing staff with “diverse” staff merely for the sake of diversification. And yet, to gain perspectives from a diverse city community and to represent their concerns within the organisation, numerous institutions established external advisory committees or critical friends groups (CFGs). These are comprised of committed individuals or representatives of civic associations, immigrant-run organisations and interest groups. Appointing diverse members on juries and selection committees was mentioned as an important measure, as well. The additional expertise which the organisation gains from them should be appropriately remunerated.

Programme

Cultural institutions which see themselves as relevant cultural sites and places of encounter for a diverse society have begun incorporating an increasingly broad spectrum of themes and perspectives into their programmes. The programme area offers institutions a chance to collaborate with communities and/or (post-)immigrant artists and artist collectives and give them space to present their perspectives and issues. This is about integrating diverse artistic and content-based approaches in a structural, continuous and sustainable manner. For example, efforts can focus on developing participative programme formats with the communities, or enlisting new artists, authors and curators for existing or newly developed special formats. By conducting diversity-sensitive assessments of one's theatre production, book collections or exhibition objects in cooperation with the diversity agent and external experts from diverse (post-)immigrant and diasporic organisations, marginalised knowledge can be channelled into (production) processes and longstanding conventions of interpretation can be scrutinised. On the basis of this assessment, institutions can revise and expand their programmes accordingly.

MEASURES

○ Discussion on diversity in the programme planning phase

At the start of the production phase of an exhibition, performance etc., some cultural institutions used guideline-based or moderated discussions as a tool to jointly reflect on or thematically fine-tune the planned events in terms of diversity. Depending on the artistic field and type of production, the participants in these discussions will vary – in some cases, they are conducted within production teams, and in others, with experts and representatives from the community. The goal is to create a space where participants can gain a sense of the thematic relevance of the dimensions of diversity for the respective production and come to an agreement on establishing diversity-sensitive working and production conditions.

○ Participative and co-curative programme formats in cooperation with local communities

Many cultural organisations already develop programme formats together with community and municipal representatives. As part of the 360° programme, the funded institutions focused more intensively on building partnerships with (post-)immigrants, immigrant communities and immigrant-run organisations, and developed participative programme formats, such as

discussion series, readings, urban labs and exhibitions. In this way, visitors were able to shape the programmes themselves, integrating their wishes, topics and knowledge.

○ Programme formats for special occasions

Commemorations and days of action, such as German Diversity Day, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and Black History Month, offer cultural institutions a forum for developing programme events. Due to their public impact, such special occasions offer an opportunity to draw attention to the challenges of a diverse city community, e.g. equal treatment, equitable participation, visibility etc. Many of these events were the product of collaboration with many different immigrant organisations, artists, civic organisations, integration offices etc. Not only did these events direct attention to diversity, they also brought various participants in the city together who would have never or only seldom collaborated otherwise.

○ Regular programme formats with a focus on diversity

In addition to programme formats created for special occasions, numerous institutions established recurring events focussing on diversity-related issues. These are not only based on specific short-term projects, but also on multiple, long-term perspectives on diversity.

○ Artists-in-residence programmes

Many cultural institutions established longer-term artists-in-residence programmes as a means to collaborate with artists from their city communities whose perspectives are normally never or only inadequately represented at the institutions. On one hand, artist-in-residence projects can make programmes more diverse and generate appeal with new audience groups, and on the other, they provide artists with a new platform to present their work. In this way, networks for both sides can be expanded sustainably. It is important, however, that the institution actively cultivates this contact because many creative artists lack experience with communicating with cultural institutions (with respect to formalities, preparation times, contracts etc.) and thus encounter obstacles to gaining access.

○ Involvement with non-institutionally organised projects

Some of the funded institutions freely relinquished their authority to develop and decide on project-related matters by granting committed community

members access to their infrastructure so that they could stage self-organised projects. Not only do the institutions share their venues and technical equipment with the external participants, but they also advertise these external projects via their communication channels. This strategy results in more diverse programme and generates more publicity for the independent projects.

To clarify the expectations of the partnership for both parties, we recommend arranging preparatory meetings and drafting detailed agreements in writing. These agreements should define the scope and type of collaboration as well as the partners' obligations and responsibilities so as to avoid potential conflicts.

○ **Project events in public spaces**

Staging project events at locations frequented by non-visitors can help reach new audiences. Theatres, libraries and museums have therefore begun holding events in new city quarters which had mostly been overlooked by municipal cultural institutions in the past. For some people, it was the first time they had ever come in contact with these institutions. To ensure that this initial contact develops into a longstanding relationship, these events should not be held just once and never again, but rather have a recurring character.

Audience

On account of their founding stories, many museums, theatres, libraries and other public cultural institutions see themselves as traditional cultural venues of the “educated middle class”. Of course, this view poses a problem as they meet the challenge of adapting their profiles and programmes to an increasingly diversified society. A dual strategy has proven especially effective in navigating this adaptation process. The first comprises an analysis of the current audience (location assessment), and the second seeks to engage in targeted contact with new visitors (community outreach). One of the first steps in the diversification process for institutions is to reach out to organisations in local communities and engage in ongoing dialogue. These communities, organisations and interest groups frequently reported that they didn't feel welcomed at these institutions and that the offered programmes did not have them and their interests in mind. Furthermore, they felt the institutions were inaccessible and that their architecture or history evoked an off-putting dominance. This initial discussion often represents the start of a far-reaching outreach process which involves developing creative solutions together with the communities in order to proactively integrate and explicitly invite those groups which have not yet taken advantage of the cultural offers on their own initiative. A prerequisite for this collaborative effort is the provision of adequate resources, which includes remunerating the performed work and visibly adopting suggested ideas. The goal of the outreach process is to sustainably lower thresholds by explaining or deconstructing unspoken codes and transforming cultural institutions into open, inviting places for a diverse city community.

MEASURES

Location assessment:

○ **Conducting a situational analysis**

Many cultural institutions gained an overview of their current audience. What kind of people from which areas and communities in the city regularly visited the institution? Who only showed up every so often and for which formats? What kind of schools and which school classes visit?

By setting an internal target definition beforehand, the surveys could be designed to collect specific data. Based on detailed information from these qualitative and quantitative surveys, as well as data from the ticketing system, it was possible to plan strategic steps to reach new audiences.

○ Conducting a survey of non-visitors

Some of the funded institutions conducted surveys of non-visitors to find out what was causing them to stay away. In this way, they were able to identify various reasons and barriers to accessibility which they subsequently addressed in their programme planning.

The cultural institutions recommended repeating these analyses every few years so that the focus can be adjusted and sharpened if necessary.

Community outreach:

○ Regular visits to the communities

Visiting communities on a regular basis engenders trust and enables all parties to engage in dialogue on an equal basis. When the staff of cultural institutions head out to meeting places in these communities, it signals a genuine interest in their topics, concerns and ideas, and a desire to cooperate with them. At the same time, it is easier to strike up conversation with the staff of the institution, ask questions and share the concerns of the communities.

○ Spaces of encounter and provision of infrastructure

Many institutions have created places of encounter for the audience. These locations can be used for creative output or for no purpose other than meeting and spending time together. To ensure continuous exchange and cooperation, cultural institutions can provide associations, interest groups and other committed individuals with technical equipment, personnel and rehearsal spaces and venues. Sharing resources helps foster mutual trust and enables partners to carry out their own projects and events independent of the institution and its preferred content. Furthermore, this gesture underscores the institution's serious intention to engage in a partnership between equals.

Community outreach means building relationships based on trust. This requires time, patience, reliability and occasionally several attempts.

External communication

Reliable and understandable communication represents the underlying structure of the transformation process. On one hand, the measures and structural changes inside the institution have to be communicated to staff and partners so that everyone can help advance the process (see the section on *Internal communication*). On the other hand, it helps to conduct intensive dialogue with the city community in order to inform members of the public on ways they can participate and shape the process, as well as to learn more about their wishes and needs. To bolster the plausibility of these diversity-oriented ambitions among staff and the city community, it is important both forms of communication (internal and external) are well coordinated and have visible structural consequences.

In the following section, we define external communication not only as information on diversity-specific topics being channelled from the cultural institution into society. It also consists of linguistic adjustments, the expansion of communication channels, and direct address and engagement with the public.

MEASURES

○ Mission statement and diversity-based communicative process

In addition to the structural significance of a mission statement (see the section *Organisation & structure*), clearly defining the organisation's self-image in writing has another important function. As a collection of mutually shared values, the mission statement can allow the entire institution to position itself against all forms of exclusion and discrimination. At the same time, many cultural institutions wish to present their mission statement as the preliminary and potentially still evolving result of the opening process and to acknowledge their own learning needs – without endangering sensitive processes. Such transparency strengthens the communities' trust in the institution and makes it attractive as a potential employer.

○ Accessible (low-threshold) communication

Language plays a special role in the diversity-oriented opening of cultural institutions. It can be either a barrier or a key to access and therefore deserves particularly attention when implementing communicative measures.

Multilingual information

The more diverse a city community, the more languages are represented in daily life. Many cultural institutions addressed this language diversity with multilingual information on their websites, social media and in print materials, with super- or subtitles, or special programmes.

Plain language

Many cultural institutions have translated their websites into plain language to help users more quickly understand complex content.

Gender-sensitive language

By adopting gender-sensitive language in their written correspondence and all marketing materials, cultural institutions have worked to ensure that everyone feels addressed regardless of their gender.

○ **Diversity-sensitive imagery**

The diversity of the city community should be reflected in the communication products of the institution so that all people feel acknowledged and welcomed. Consequently, marketing should not be the sole reason why institutions use diversity-sensitive imagery; it should rather correspond to the position of the institution overall.

○ **Expansion of the distribution list**

To reach new audiences, cultural institutions have begun analysing their communication channels and checking for possible blind spots. Who is following us on Instagram? Who has subscribed to our newsletter? In what districts are our flyers being distributed – and where aren't they? Based on these findings, institutions can reach out to various interest groups, multipliers and communities, cultivate relationships with them, and take advantage of new communication channels.

○ **Contextualisation**

Our cultural assets might not always reflect contemporary values due to the historical context of their creation. Many cultural institutions have addressed this discrepancy by providing contextualisation, directing the public's attention to the problematic or old-fashioned content. In this way, contextualisation can mitigate concerns in advance and help dismantle the barriers related to such content.

Four Stories of Diversity



The diverse processes of diversity

Christoph Emminghaus – managing director at Syspons &
Anna Stegmann – lead consultant at Syspons

With the 360° programme, the German Federal Cultural Foundation entered uncharted territory, corralling almost forty cultural institutions in various artistic fields and varying size on a path to becoming more diversity-oriented. The programme was designed to provide the participants with considerable freedom to shape and further develop the processes based on their unique circumstances and situation. The result was a series of commonly shared experiences, as well as different paths and outcomes.

In the following, we relate four exemplary stories describing how these processes impacted four participating cultural institutions. These stories are the result of an evaluative study which accompanied the programme and the participating cultural institutions from the beginning. They illustrate how differently positioned the institutions were at the start and portray the paths the agents took with their host institutions to implement the changes. The results reveal to what extent flexibility, a change of roles and resilience were necessary to achieve the goal. They also underscore the fact that effects are not always predictable but are rather the result of a combination of complex processes.

Diversity competence as a professional qualification

The 360° process at the Stadtmuseum Berlin

The Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin is one of the largest cultural-historic institutions in Germany. In addition to its main headquarters at the Märkisches Museum, it operates another five exhibition venues in east and west Berlin, each with individual thematic focuses. With the opening of the Humboldt Forum and the exhibition “Berlin Global” in 2021, the foundation inaugurated another prominent and centrally located venue which highlights Berlin’s connections to the world. There are currently around 320 people employed at the Stiftung Stadtmuseum, and many of them have worked at the Stadtmuseum for years.

The 360° project arrived during a phase of modernisation at the museum and its branch locations. The newly designed exhibition “Berlin Global” is the most apparent outcome of this process. The other exhibitions are also under review and are currently being updated thematically and didactically. The idea behind the 360° concept was to incorporate a diversity-oriented perspective in this ongoing modernisation process. Not only are these modernisation efforts focused on the exhibitions (programme), but also on attracting new target groups (audience) and adopting a more diversity-oriented organisational development (staff and structure). The 360° process was scheduled to run for four years – a period that corresponds with other changes being implemented at the institution.

The application for participation in the 360° programme of the Federal Cultural Foundation resulted from the findings of a previous project at the Stadtmuseum which originally revealed the need for further study of diversity-related issues. The art historian Paul Spies, who was appointed the new museum director in 2016, supported the 360° application. In addition to his regular duties as director, he also assumed responsibility for curating the exhibition “Berlin Global” which was being developed at the time for the Humboldt Forum.

The original plan was to divide the role of “diversity agent” between two positions, one who would be in charge of diversity with respect to the programme and audience, and the other for diversity-oriented staffing and organisational issues. However, this construct never materialised, and ultimately a full-time agent was hired to oversee the entire thematic spectrum. The Stadtmuseum succeeded in recruiting Idil Efe to fill this position. She brought the relevant professional experience in diversity discourse and change management to the table. She also holds qualification as a coach. Furthermore, she was one of the curators of the “Berlin Global” exhibition. In this respect, she was equipped to coordinate a broad spectrum of potential areas of responsibility.

To properly grasp the approach and details of the 360° process at the Stadtmuseum Berlin, one must take a closer look at the initial situation and the overarching changes that were taking place at the Stadtmuseum. Although the museum is centrally located in the capital and operates various branch locations in east and west Berlin, it attracts far less attention compared to other tourist magnets in Berlin, e.g. the Jewish Museum. With the appointment of its new director in 2016, the museum put forth an extensive modernisation agenda. Where this agenda would lead was amply demonstrated by the “Berlin Global” exhibition which opened in 2021. It was the first time that an exhibition prominently delved into the global connections maintained by the Stadtmuseum and how they have influenced Berlin. The modern and reduced exhibition concept, which appeals to a broad target audience, points to this newly adopted strategy – in stark contrast to the other exhibition venues or the collection of some 4.5 million objects which rarely ever highlight Berlin’s ambivalent history as a place of immigration.

The modernisation process at the Stadtmuseum not only focused on the exhibition and collection. In years past, the Stadtmuseum had little or no success in reaching and attracting a broad segment of the city community. It is equally striking that the museum had not yet succeeded in diversifying its staff pool. In the mind of the immigrant community, the Stadtmuseum was not even on the map as a potential place of employment.

In view of this background and based on the necessity and wish of the Stadtmuseum to modernise itself, it made sense to focus on the personnel issue.

Some headway was initially made with a few smaller-scale exhibition projects. But in order to achieve real change, the focus of the museum had to shift away from the East-West conflict and more to the significance of migration for Berlin, as well as for the Stadtmuseum itself and its employees. The first steps in this process comprised seminars on diversity-relevant topics which were attended by a large number of the museum staff.

In addition, the development of criteria for diversity competence and their systematic implementation in the entire hiring process played a central role. This served to operationalise diversity as an additional key qualification when filling vacancies. And this had consequences for the entire application process – from developing job profiles and job advertisements to conducting the selection process and choosing candidates. The Stadtmuseum now expects job applicants to possess various levels of diversity competence irrespective of the specific job they are applying for. The focus was not on hiring individuals who represented formerly underrepresented groups, but rather those who possessed diversity competence.

For the pool of applicants, this change emphasised the importance of this key qualification and encourages those persons who possess such competence to apply. To this end, assessment standards were developed for the selection process. The diversity agent or another similarly trained person is now a sitting member on the selection committee. During the interviews, candidates are specifically asked about their diversity competence.

Consequently, the staff at the Stadtmuseum report that various positions have been filled with different candidates than would have been the case without these criteria in place. Especially when applying for entry-level positions, where the necessary professional skills might not play so heavily a role, having diversity competence can make all the difference. In the same way, applicants for management positions might be turned down if they lack diversity competence.

A structural effect also comes into play. By highlighting the topic of diversity competence, presenting the institution in this context, and ultimately hiring employees with an immigrant background, the Stadtmuseum is able to tap the potential of a new employee pool. This is an important factor especially in areas where the museum is finding it increasingly difficult to recruit qualified early-career professionals (e.g. in IT and finance).

The systematic implementation at the structural level has been a distinguishing feature of the 360° process at the Stadtmuseum. Today, its realisation is not only the work of the agent, but of all the participants involved in the process. At the same time, the director has clearly supported the process and its implementation every step of the way. Even where obstacles still exist, the path is still being forged for the current and future employees.

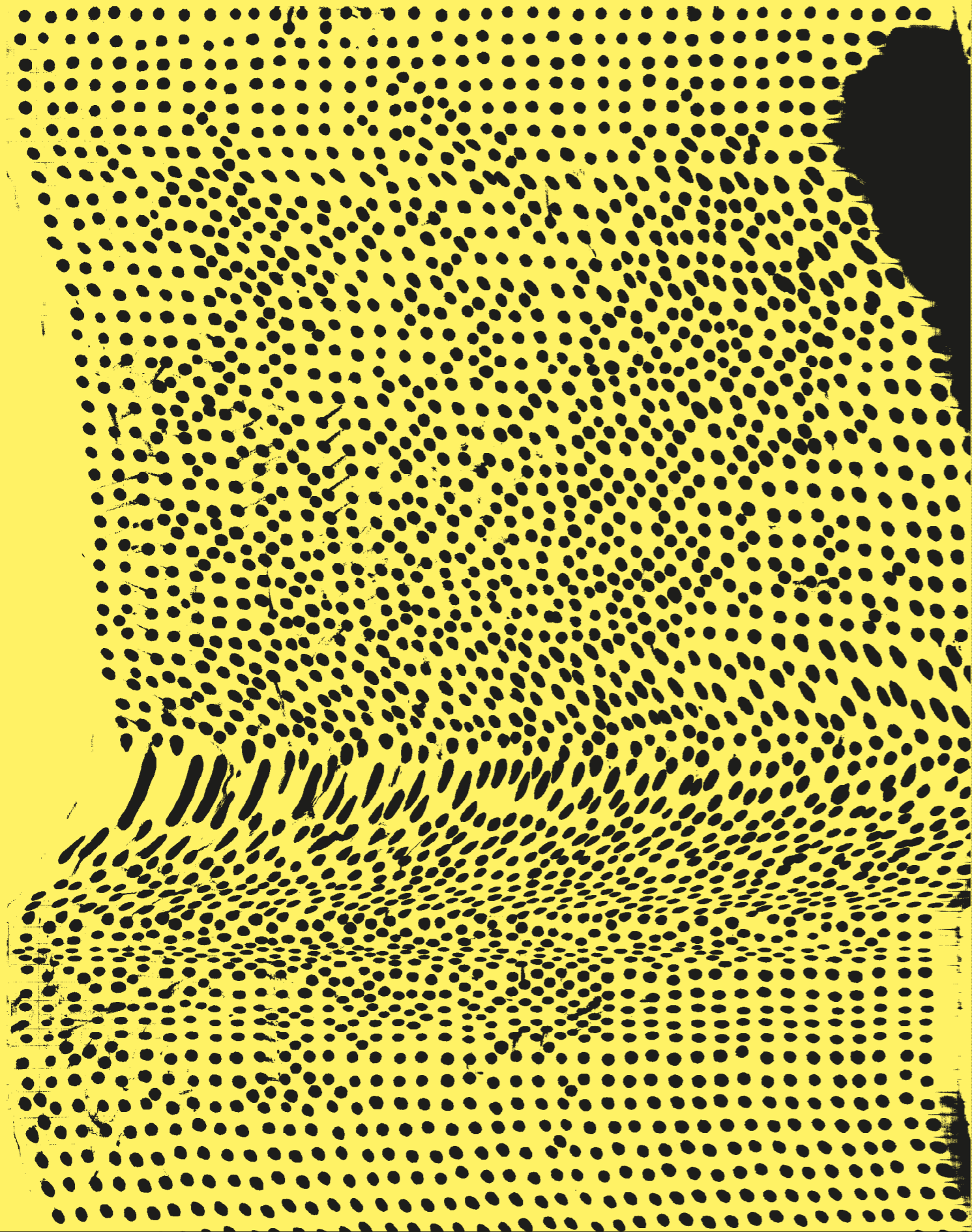
Because there are only a limited number of vacancies available each year, the transformation process will take a while. All the more relevant, therefore, that the Stadtmuseum is considering working with someone responsible for diversity following the conclusion of the 360° process.

The initial effects of the programme are now noticeable in entirely different places. For example, in July 2022, the Stadtmuseum opened the exhibition “30 Kilograms” which concretely addresses the experience of Turkish immigrants and how much luggage they were permitted to take along with them on a flight to Germany. The Stadtmuseum ventured ahead along a new path both in terms of the target audience and the curatorial process which involved individuals from Berlin’s Turkish community. At the opening in the courtyard of the Humboldt Forum, the Turkish artist Gaye Su Akyol performed a concert and attracted a diverse audience from Berlin’s urban community.

For the 360° programme, we can consider it a success that the prerequisites seem to be fulfilled and that the staff appear to have the energy and willingness to embrace new topics, try out new forms of presentation and reach out to a new audience. These endeavours include a model project on decolonialising urban commemorative culture and most recently the development of a workshop series on anti-racist curation. It is quite possible that an approach that did not focus on personnel issues may have achieved the same result. But the chances for sustainably anchoring these changes at the Stadtmuseum are now considerably higher.

Conception and reality

The 360° project at the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus



With over 500 employees, the Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf is one of the major theatres participating in the 360° programme. The project it proposed was entitled “New Friends. New Stories”. The Schauspielhaus aimed to expand its partnership with local organisations and explore more experimental theatre formats over the course of four years. The underlying idea was to build a sustainable network with members of the city’s diverse community and to focus on “enticing rather than scaring away” potential target audiences. The core of the project consisted of implementing changes to the programme and audience areas.

Looking back, we see that a lot has happened at the Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf. Despite the changes which were instituted on account of the pandemic, the Schauspielhaus has changed, further developed its programme and become a place for a diverse audience. Most importantly, however, the employees and theatre as a whole succeeded in acquiring diversity competence. Not everything was pleasant, and the project certainly had its share of conflicts. However, at its core, the 360° project emphasised the significance of diversity competence at the theatre and created an approach to address potential disputes.

Back to the beginning. There was never a time when the 360° project was an isolated measure. Rather, it was one in a series of implemented changes and new appointments to management positions at the Schauspielhaus.

For instance, the general theatre director Wilfried Schulz had already tested the idea of a civic theatre in Dresden, which he then brought with him to Düsseldorf. The civic theatre project entitled “City:Collective” was further developed by Birgit Lengers and Bassam Ghazi with the aim of “bringing together people from many different walks of life”. The project consciously incorporated diverse perspectives into the working processes and performances. Also, the youth theatre department Junges Schauspiel had already launched a programme prior to 360° headed by Stefan Fischer-Fels which aimed to represent Düsseldorf’s diverse community both on and off stage. The result was Café Eden, which opened in the foyer of the Junges Schauspiel in 2016 as a place of encounter and dialogue where people with and without an immigrant background could meet. In 2018 Veronika Gerhard assumed the artistic direction of the performance venue.

Building on the experiences described above and with a management team that possessed a deep understanding of diversity processes, the Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf submitted its 360° project proposal to the Federal Cultural Foundation in 2018.

In line with its overarching objective, the responsibility for the project was assigned to the general theatre director and thus required his active involvement for its implementation. The personal advisor to the general theatre director and the artistic project manager of the Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf Cornelia Walter was responsible for supervising the project. Guy Dermosessian was brought on board as the diversity agent. Although not explicitly a theatre expert, he had extensive experience advising cultural institutions and municipalities as a diversity manager and was also well-connected to the cultural scene in North Rhine-Westphalia.

360° was able to build on the progress already achieved and implementing these processes into the main theatre. These were good starting conditions. However, it also took some time for the Schauspielhaus to arrive at a jointly shared objective and clarify the roles among the various participants. In the beginning, the general theatre director, project manager and agent discussed and grappled with the project’s orientation and how to open the theatre and the main stage to the city community. The result was to cautiously open the main theatre up for new formats from the community.

A side stage, called the “Unterhaus”, was established in the main building for groups from the city community. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, however, this opening had more of a symbolic than physical character. But at least it was a first step in the transformation process.

The prior developments suddenly took on greater relevance when, in March 2021, an actor publicly reported his experience with racial discrimination at the theatre on a WDR television broadcast. Such stories have since been

reported at other theatres as well. Although the events had taken place a year and a half earlier, the process of addressing diversity and discrimination at the Schauspielhaus was suddenly upended and catapulted into the public sphere and social media where it was subjected to intense political interest. Guest performances were cancelled, and political representatives among others demanded that the theatre clearly state its position and investigate the matter.

As much as this incident emphasised the significance of the 360° process, it also revealed the ambivalent nature of discussing discrimination. Could it be that 360° helped encourage an actor to go public with his experiences in hopes of no longer feeling isolated at the theatre afterwards? In Düsseldorf, it became clearly apparent at this point, if not earlier, that diversity-oriented opening at a large cultural institution could not remain a conflict-free process despite the best of intentions and the participants’ good will. In addition to the artistic exploration of discrimination, the incident contributed to shifting attention inwardly and reflecting on one’s own attitudes and working methods. Most of the other theatres in the 360° programme recognised the necessity of this exercise in a similar way.

For the 360° process in Düsseldorf, the path forward required the project participants to find a way to constructively address the case of racial discrimination both within and outside the theatre. Cooperation partners, artists and various segments of the community openly questioned to what extent a diversity process can continue at an institution where such discrimination occurs. This turmoil strongly influenced the theatre and its staff during this phase. On one hand, the incident elicited dismay and sympathy for an actor, but on the other, the team and the entire theatre felt subject to general suspicion of discrimination.

In the effort to manage this crisis, it was fortunate to have a diversity agent in the team who could act as a mediator between the various positions. Especially when direct communication between the conflicting parties was at its most difficult, there was a person available who was widely trusted and with whom all parties could communicate. This was an important prerequisite for reengaging in dialogue.

From an outside perspective, perhaps the greatest success of the 360° process in Düsseldorf is the fact that the theatre and its employees were able to address the incident and come out in one piece. Despite the restrictions of the coronavirus pandemic, the project created a forum for dialogue which consisted of individual and group discussions, meetings and diversity workshops. Such workshops are a fixed and required component in all 360° processes. At the Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf, these workshops played an even more vital role in view of the publicly discussed incident of racial discrimination. The allyship approach, in which persons in positions of privilege and

power act in solidarity with discriminated groups, proved particularly useful from a conceptual standpoint. In retrospect, the workshop participants reported that this approach facilitated a better understanding and productive exchange while strengthening their own ability to take action.

Although not directly connected to the 360° process, things began changing at the Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf in the time thereafter. For example, various trade unions and stage-related departments worked to increase their diversity competence and engage in appropriate and sensitive cooperation with the diverse acting ensemble. And the theatre workshops have strived to diversify their staff with new hires and bring the experience of refugees into their teams.

The reactions to the theatre's upcoming season programme were the most recent sign of the transformation process. The Schauspielhaus opened the 2022/23 season with Shakespeare's "Othello", a play which has been heavily criticised in postcolonial discourse since the 1980s for its racist performance history. The Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf is certainly not the first theatre to venture a new interpretation of this material. But after three years in the 360° programme, its thematic significance at the theatre cannot fail to be noticed. Throughout the theatre and in every department, there is a wish for critical examination and a sense of responsibility to stage an appropriate production. This awareness of responsibility is a reflection of change at the theatre.

The approach taken by the theatre certainly contributed to this change. On one hand, the diversity agent served a mediative function between the various interests within the theatre and the city community – whereby all participants were expected to bear responsibility for the resulting content and processes. On the other hand, the theatre has participated in a multi-year process that culminated in a corresponding workplace agreement and has addressed racially discriminatory incidents head-on.

Ultimately, the greatest change at the Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf was not achieved with respect to the programme or audience as had been planned; rather far more significant and sustainable were the changes that occurred among the staff.

Organisation and community networking

The 360° process at the Ernst-Abbe-Library in Jena

For over 125 years the Ernst-Abbe-Library Jena (Ernst-Abbe-Bücherei, EAB) has operated as a public reading hall and library in Jena. It has implemented a diverse array of restructuring measures and changes in strategy over the course of its long history. In 2005 it was organisationally and strategically integrated into the municipal enterprise JenaKultur, together with other municipal cultural and tourism-related organisations. In view of its long history with organisational transformation, this change is nothing new to the EAB. However, the current transformation process at the library differs from earlier ones as it was initiated by a transformation in Jena's city community. In order to meet the expectations and needs of its community, the EAB applied to participate in the 360° programme. It proposed to focus on two central areas: building networks with communities in the city and conducting comprehensive staff training and continuing education programmes. With both approaches, the library aimed to open itself to more diversity with regard to its audience and programme, and so doing, advance a broad-based organisational development process.

The city of Jena began noticeably changing after 2015 when increasing numbers of Syrian refugees were resettled there. Many of these new residents have since remained in Jena. At the same time, more and more people with diverse immigrant backgrounds have moved there as well. Between 2009 and 2020, the share of Jena's residents with an immigrant background almost doubled from 7.8 % to 14.8 %.¹ The motto of the Ernst Abbe Library,

¹ See Jena municipal administration (ed.), 2021: Jena Migration Report 2021. Accessible online at (German only):



“The Whole World in One Building”, presented a new challenge. In past years, its only connection to different languages and cultures was primarily reflected in its travel guides and foreign language textbooks. Now, neither its media collection nor its staff corresponded to its purported aim of serving such an increasingly diversified community as Jena.

The first strategic steps of reorientation had already been taken prior to the 360° process. Katja Müller has served as the director of the library since 2017. Since then, the EAB has intensified its collaboration with schools and preschools and expanded its programmes for selected target groups. The library has also been busy preparing to move to new a central location downtown. This project is proceeding in two steps. First, the EAB moved to an interim location in 2019 because its former premises were in need of urgent renovation. At the same time, preparations began for the construction of a brand-new location in downtown Jena which would house the library and the Citizen Service Office after completion in 2023. Not only are these new headquarters an opportunity for the EAB to implement the opening process on a strategic level, they also provide the ideal setting for a new start.

Against the backdrop of these changes already underway, the proposal to participate in the 360° programme was presented to the Federal Cultural Foundation by the head of JenaKultur, specifically Jonas Zipf, the so-called “plant manager”. The underlying idea was to promote the diversity-oriented opening process at the library as a pilot project which could be later applied to the entire JenaKultur consortium. The project aimed to specifically focus on the internal and external communication of these processes and local network-building between the EAB and Jena’s communities. Dr Julia Hauck was recruited as the project’s diversity agent as someone especially suited to the task. As the former managing director of an organisation devoted to providing socio-psychological support to refugees, she came to the project with numerous contacts to the local communities and diversity-oriented stakeholders.

The agent played a dual role from the very beginning – first as a coordinator of the 360° process at the library, and second, as a source of new ideas for the overarching development process at JenaKultur. To this end, she remained in close contact with the management teams, attending weekly meetings with the director of the library and bimonthly meetings with the plant manager at JenaKultur. To help drive the overarching development process at JenaKultur, the agent assumed the role of moderator for the cultural education workgroup and started networking with central stakeholders in the city community. She also served as a member on a planning committee to organise a city-wide inclusion festival which would bring important actors and stakeholders in Jena together. After some initial problems with coordinating and prioritising the agent’s various tasks and roles,

a management-level agreement was made to allow the agent to focus her efforts on implementing the opening process at the library.

The plan was to promote the opening process at the library by means of targeted programmes and events. The first of these was an open-house event held in August 2019 shortly before the EAB was to move to its interim location. By offering multilingual books and an accompanying programme tailored to families and children, the hope was to attract user groups which the library had not succeeded in reaching in the past. Arabic refugees were specifically designated as a target group. It turned out that Syrian women indeed came with their children, although many arrived in the afternoon after the accompanying programme for families was already coming to an end. The lesson learned was that there would be no (rapid) success without cultivating contacts beforehand and specifically evaluating the needs of the target groups.

Based on this experience, the EAB changed course. Instead of the library developing random programmes, the agent sought direct contact with the communities in the city to engage in direct dialogue. A decision was made to support these networking activities by offering financial resources (e.g. in form of paid fees) and spatial resources (e.g. providing venues for cultural festivals). At the same time, the EAB kicked off a citywide outreach project in the form of a creative (non-)user survey. In cooperation with QuerWege e. V., a Jena-based organisation for inclusive education at day-care centres and schools, the library dispatched cargo bicycles to various districts of Jena in July and August 2021. In preparation, the riders of these bikes received detailed instructions on how to interact with diverse target groups and training in using plain language, for example. The destinations included the Jena life counselling centre, an integrative daycare centre and the Christopher Street Day parade. The riders surveyed around 200 people on location and asked them about their needs, wishes and expectations of a municipal library, as well as any reasons for their reluctance to use its services. In addition to a range of information on desired media and usage forms of books, one of the key findings of this survey was the desire for plain language in contrast to multiple foreign languages. Not only would plain language help attract visitors whose native language is not German, but also children and persons with cognitive impairments.

Aside from those processes aimed to open the library to diverse target groups, the 360° process also impacted the internal organisation at the EAB. Like at many other 360° organisations, the diversity agent had difficulty at first gaining acceptance. The agent’s position was created in accordance with the funding guidelines of the 360° programme. Compared with the regular staff, the agent was granted a much higher status at the library and was entrusted with an entirely new area of duties. At the same time, the lending desk, the “core business” of the library, was short on staff.

The agent was finally able to win the acceptance of her colleagues when she volunteered to work at the lending desk in order to gain deeper insight into the daily work at the library. This gesture alone did wonders to strengthen the team spirit between the regular staff and the agent. A kick-off workshop for all EAB employees was another important milestone in gaining the staff's acceptance not only of the agent but of the 360° process overall. The workshop was moderated by an external partner, the Office of Intercultural Opening. The focus of the introductory event was to jointly reflect on personal factors of exclusion and discrimination and to raise awareness at the emotional level among all staff members. The workshop directly led to the establishment of a diversity workgroup, which was headed by the agent and in which many colleagues at all levels participated.

All in all, the process of opening is meanwhile established in the working routines of the staff and borne on many shoulders. A key to achieving this was recognising the integral role the EAB staff played in the process from the start and to get them on board through extensive training and continuing education measures. By regularly addressing diversity-sensitive issues while engaging in an outreach process, through which e.g. queer communities in Jena were identified as a target group for the library, it was possible to broach such topics as gender-sensitive language or to rethink literary categories of the past, like "novels for women". Following a training seminar on plain language, all the communication channels and documents intended for external uses were revised, including the website and user regulations. The new library, currently under construction, will feature a new international area and rooms for events and accompanying programmes.

It remains to be seen to what extent the approach implemented at the EAB can serve as a pilot project for a diversity-oriented opening process at JenaKultur. The plant manager, who originally introduced the 360° process, left the consortium in summer 2022. However, the first signs of change can already be observed. For example, training seminars on plain language are now available to personnel working in the municipal administration.

Community work as a cornerstone in the diversification process

The 360° process at the German Hygiene Museum in Dresden

Due to its programmatic profile and its location in the so-called “neue Länder” (the federal states of the former GDR) in eastern Germany, the German Hygiene Museum in Dresden (DHMD) has assumed an interesting role in the 360° programme of the Federal Cultural Foundation. The museum attracts visitors of all ages thanks to its special exhibitions on current and socially relevant issues in the world of science, society, art and culture, its discursive cultural and research-oriented event programme and target group-specific educational projects. Interestingly, its visitors are younger than the average audiences of most museums in Germany, and it offers programmes with relatively low educational barriers – especially in contrast to art museums. In line with its overall strategy of being a museum for as many visitor groups as possible, the thematic and working areas of diversity and heterogeneity, as well as accessibility and inclusion have been on the museum’s agenda for many years.

The thematic complex of diversity in the urban community represented one of the programmatic focuses in a special exhibition entitled “The New Germany. From Migration to Diversity” (8 March – 12 October 2014) which presented various narratives and perspectives of a diverse, immigrant-based society. Numerous video interviews with immigrant representatives from Dresden and German society were conducted for the exhibition. The exhibition was supplemented by a free magazine featuring portraits of and reports by immigrant residents of Dresden. However, before the massive

wave of refugees arrived in Germany in 2015, the question of how we want to live together in an immigration society was only mildly relevant to Dresden's public, which was reflected in the relatively low visitor turnout at the exhibition and its accompanying programme. It appears that there was little awareness and interest in migration issues back then, which might be explained by the fact that only 7.8 % of residents in Dresden had an immigrant background at the time. Meanwhile, this figure has almost doubled to 13.9 %, though the percentage is far below the national average and especially so compared with other cities of similar size. In addition, on account of its history in the former socialist GDR, Dresden's residents of immigrant background are significantly different than those in west German cities in terms of their social and demographic characteristics. In contrast to west Germany, these Dresden residents were more likely to have moved there as asylum seekers than migrant workers.

The positive experiences that arose from the renovation of the children's museum "World of Senses" in 2018 provided a strong impulse for participating in the 360° programme. The renovation project, which redesigned the museum to be thematically inclusive and offer complete barrier-free accessibility, was developed in close cooperation with school classes with a high percentage of immigrant children. This came at the same time as the conception phase for the special exhibition "Racism. The Invention of the Human Races" (19 May 2018 – 6 January 2019), which was met with marked criticism by various communities and interest groups in Dresden. The scientific advisory board was comprised of diverse positions and individuals, and the German architect and Burkina Faso native Francis Kéré was selected to design the exhibition. Nonetheless, critics alleged that this was an exhibition on racism, planned by a team of mostly White curators. During the realisation phase, the DHMD responded to this objection by making small adjustments to the curatorial and design concepts. To this end, the museum worked closely with advisors and activists who represented various immigrant backgrounds and diverse perspectives and who brought their own experiences with racism to the project.

This experience emphasised the need for the museum to lead discussions on what comprised the definitive interpretation of the theme and to think about diversifying its own structures. The call for applications to the 360° programme offered an opportunity to cast the processes of transformation, which had already begun, as an overarching task for the entire institution, and to professionalise these in the areas of staff, audience and programme. By adjusting its own structures within Dresden's city community, the museum's primary goal was to position itself as a credible platform for a broad spectrum of biographically-related perspectives and develop concrete possibilities for participation.

At the beginning of the project, the museum's management team established an Office for Diversity at the departmental level. A diversity agent

was hired, in this case a stage director who had prior experience with participation and community work. To help her become acquainted with the museum's organisational structures, the agent rotated through the various programme departments starting with the event department. Building on the experience gained from the work on the exhibition "The New Germany", the agent's first task was to focus on further diversifying the programmes, as the museum staff had already prepared the groundwork and achieved some progress in this regard. In addition to an event series organised by the agent which largely involved participants with an immigrant background and addressed immigration-related topics, efforts were made to increase the number of expert consultants with an immigrant background for other formats. The purpose, on one hand, was to demonstrate that people with an immigrant background possess expertise on a broad array of thematic areas. On the other, there was the hope that a stronger representation of immigrant-related positions and topics at the podium would resonate with a diverse audience. Regular audience surveys revealed, however, that this approach did little to further diversify the audience and that the audience members who had an immigrant background also possessed an above-average level of education. In other words, language barriers were more likely to hinder accessibility to the museum's discussion events which often revolved around academic themes and issues. Consequently, diversifying the audience beyond the small pool of educated academics posed a difficult challenge.

In those first few months, the 360° process was hobbled by a variety of other problems. For example, due to the very limited number of applicants, a White woman without any migration or refugee experience of her own was hired to fill the 360° position of diversity agent. This meant that she lacked the personal experience and perspectives which would have been necessary for developing programmes and engaging with cooperation partners. Within the museum, there were also some who held differing views and expectations concerning the workflow and objectives of the 360° process. While the department heads expected the agent to relieve them of some of their operative tasks during her rotation, they were asked to take on additional and new tasks. The then museum director Prof. Klaus Vogel played an active role in resolving these internal differences, and so doing, guided the 360° process to the next phase of the project.

In order to improve the situation even further, the agent suggested dividing her position in half so that someone could be brought on board with additional content-related expertise and that all-essential immigrant perspective. The new "tandem agent" was a personnel manager and sociologist who had fled from Syria and who would be responsible for "staff and audience". Despite this structural improvement, differing views on how the project should progress caused the first agent to leave her post in Dresden.

The museum advertised the now vacant half-tandem position and chose a cultural manager who had grown up in Dresden and had spent many years abroad in eastern Europe. She was placed in charge of the areas of “programme and audience”. Both new tandem agents complement each other in terms of content, combine both local and immigrant perspectives, and possess a variety of subject-related and professional knowledge and experience.

Even before the staff changes occurred, there was a plan to commission a comprehensive non-visitor survey to better understand why key groups of Dresden’s population had yet to visit the DHMD. To this end, the museum arranged focus group discussions with representatives of immigrant community organisations and interest groups. A key outcome of these talks was the wish for sustained collaboration with the museum. This resulted in the establishment of a “Community Workshop” to serve as a participative platform for engaging in dialogue and cultivating relationships between the immigrant communities and the museum.

The first Community Workshop took place as a World Café format in June 2020. The museum was represented by both diversity agents and several employees – including management staff – from the programme-related departments responsible for events, education and mediation, public relations, collections and exhibitions. This initial meeting with multipliers and participants from the communities turned out to be an important milestone for the 360° process. Engaged in direct communication, the museum staff was able to experience first-hand how significant diverse perspectives can and should be for one’s own working context. The workshop participants also initiated several larger-scale, joint projects, e.g. the planning and staging of two “Family Sundays” each year and a training programme for tour guides who could offer exhibition tours in their respective native languages.

One of the main reasons for the success of the Community Workshop was its inherent thematic flexibility and open-ended format. In response to the expressed interest in a long-term relationship and genuine opportunities for future participation, the workshop participants agreed to continue meeting on a semi-annual basis. In this way, the Community Workshop continued in digital form even while the museum was closed during the pandemic-related lockdown.

An additional advantage from the point of view of the museum was that forging sustainable relations with these communities laid the groundwork for changes in the three intended areas of “audience, programme and staff”. In the “audience” area, for example, participants developed ideas on how to make the DHMD more accessible to families which had no relationship to the “museum” as a place of education and recreation, or only had limited knowledge of German. In the “programme” area, the museum benefited from the Community Workshop by attaining access to a broad

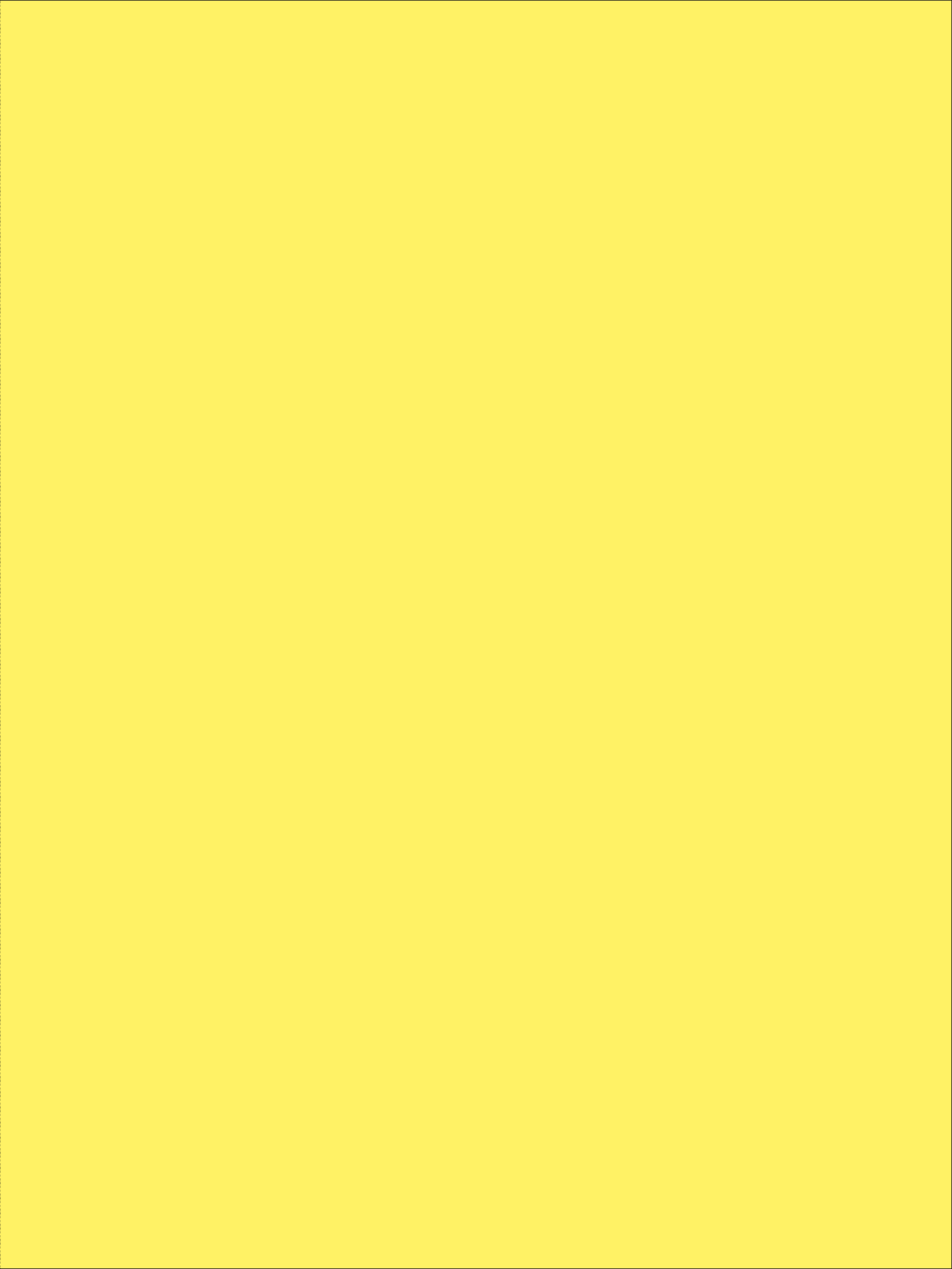
community-based network of individuals with diverse perspectives. Moreover, it was able to use the Community Workshop as a forum for feedback and ideas to query and test the relevance of certain issues for individual immigrant groups. As part of the upcoming 2024 exhibition on the history of the German Hygiene Museum in the GDR and post-reunification era, the museum plans to address not only West German-East German, but also immigrant cultures of remembrance. Meanwhile, the communities themselves have increasingly proposed topics to the DHMD and are integrating their ideas into the programme work. The activities of the Community Workshop can thus contribute to encouraging the DHMD staff to accept the diversity-oriented opening of their institution and view it as a lateral task for the entire museum.

In the “staff” area, initial changes were implemented as well. The in-house diversity seminars which commenced at the start of the 360° process were continued in the second project phase. In close cooperation with the personnel department, the DHMD has meanwhile adopted diversity-sensitive language in its job advertisements. It was also able to take advantage of the newly established community networks to publicise new job vacancies and increase their visibility among more diverse target groups. However, it appears that the process of implementing change in the staff area will require the greatest effort and time. Despite changes made to the personnel policies by the now fully staffed DHMD executive board, comprised of Dr Iris Edenheiser and Lisa Klamka, the DHMD must address typical structural hurdles resulting from the only minimal fluctuation among permanent staff positions. The new, explicitly diversity-oriented executive board intends to focus its future efforts on stabilising the process of change which has already begun and supplement it with new aspects in the various fields of activity. It views the diversification of its staff as one of its central tasks in the coming years.

All in all, the basis of trust which the DHMD succeeded in building with the communities of Dresden can be regarded as a key factor for the positive development in the 360° process. Over this four-year process, one can observe a shift in attitude among the employees which, though difficult to measure, may well represent the most important and ultimately most sustainable basis for promoting the long-term diversity-oriented opening of the museum.

That said, the effort to sustain the ongoing community work poses a major challenge to the museum. To ensure that this incipient process does not flicker out, the museum must devote a steady stream of personnel, financial and spatial resources to the cause. Even though the departments are now directly involved in the Community Workshop which has created a basis of personal and working contacts, the two diversity agents remain central nodes in the network. Looking ahead at the sustainability of their efforts, the question is: how can this community work succeed after funding through

the 360° programme concludes? The museum has already provided a tentative answer by extending the contract of one of the agents and securing additional funding to finance the diversity-oriented opening process of the museum.



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Executive committee and authorised representatives:

Hortensia Völckers and Kirsten Haß

Franckeplatz 2

06110 Halle an der Saale, Germany

www.kulturstiftung-des-bundes.de

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Programme manager: Anna Zosik

Programme assistant: Clara-Michaela Dvořák

Communication: Kathrin Mergel

Administration: Constanze Kaplick

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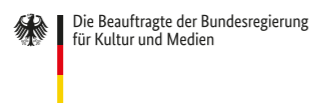
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Theater Bielefeld

Theater Dortmund/Oper

tjg. theater junge generation, Dresden

Theater Oberhausen

