SUCCESS STORIES

A magazine about successful collaboration when SCIENCE meets ARTS

Interaction Seeds

Discover new ways to engage citizens through art-science interactions!

5
Success Stories
40 pages of detailed information and good practices for replication

Stéphanie Petit,
InteractionSeeds
Project Coordinator
(Dowel Innovation)

Dear reader,

Have you ever thought about the influence art can have on young people who are exposed to a seemingly endless digital transformation? Or why science and art can offer new perspectives to an ageing society? The influence of climate change on Greek traditions also shows how collaboration between science and art can engage communities in reflecting on their future. For almost two years, we have been working on these and many other initiatives in the EU-funded project InteractionSeeds. Seeds are the initiatives we accompany, as artists, scientists, and citizens join forces - sparking dialogue, inspiring reflection, and creating together.

But why is this topic so relevant in Europe and worldwide?
Art brings creative perspectives to technological developments, promotes socially acceptable innovations and human-centered technologies.

Social impact
Art plays a crucial role in communicating scientific findings, raising public awareness, and fostering political reflection.

Structure & funding at EU level
The EU offers a broad portfolio: from mobility programmes and specific residency projects to award ceremonies. Transdisciplinarity and artistic research are also being strengthened institutionally.

As our project draws to a close, we would like to share the most important findings of our work with you in this magazine. In five selected success stories, we offer a detailed look behind the scenes to provide you with inspiration that will pave the way for further successful seeds. An overview of all the initiatives we have accompanied in the project is also awaiting to be discovered. I hope you enjoy reading this and look forward to exchanging ideas for further initiatives.

Interaction
Seeds

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Working on Students' AI literacy through Poetry-Slam Workshops

Dowel innovation

Domain:
Digital Age

Place:
Nice, France

Duration:
6 workshops,
spaned
over 4 months

Target audience:
Two classes of middle
school students with
special educational needs

In a Nutshell

Mission

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies can potentially influence children's learning and cognitive development significantly. This calls for careful guidance and critical reflection on their integration into education, alongside a focus on essential competencies for both students and teachers. These competencies, known as "AI literacy," are often defined beyond technical skills, encompassing critical thinking, ethical awareness, and collaborative abilities to equip learners for the opportunities and challenges of AI. This interaction seeks to harness the arts as a powerful tool for fostering AI literacy through a human-centered approach, encouraging creativity, reflection, and deeper engagement with technology.

Engagement activities

This interaction is structured around three key activities for students with special educational needs: exploring artificial intelligence through a visit to the House of AI, an interactive space complemented by dedicated presentations; developing their cognitive and socio-emotional skills through slam poetry workshops; and finally, applying their knowledge by using Generative AI to enhance their work and expand their cultural references, in alignment with the school curriculum.

Artistic activities

Five poetry-slam workshops, where students develop their own poetry and learn how to declaim it. During the last workshop, all students took to the stage to present their work.

IMPACT

Confidence boost

Increased AI literacy

Broadened cultural references

Enhanced critical thinking capacities

Stronger Students-Teachers relations

Nurtured cognitive and socio-emotional skills

WHAT HAPPENED?

The interaction took place in the Alpes-Maritimes region in the south of France, a territory where AI plays a significant role. Policymakers have taken proactive steps to address its societal impact, notably through OTESIA (The Observatory of AI Economic and Societal Impacts) and the "House of AI," a publicly funded space designed to introduce AI concepts and applications to diverse audiences, particularly students.

Amid the rapid rise of Generative AI and growing concerns over misinformation, strengthening AI literacy has become crucial—both for students who must navigate these technologies and for teachers who guide them. Recognising this need, slam poetry was identified as an innovative and impactful medium to complement AI education.

Slam poetry indeed fosters self-expression, critical thinking, and creativity, making it a natural fit for this initiative. To bring this vision to life, the CidiSol association was approached as a key partner. Their established relationships with teachers interested in integrating slam poetry into their curriculum were instrumental in selecting the participating secondary school and the two Special Educational Needs (SEN) classes that took part in the interaction.

PARTICIPANTS ENGAGEMENT

Visit at the House of AI

The initiative started with a visit to the House of AI. Through interactive demonstrations, students explored the question, "What can AI do?" while also engaging in discussions about how AI operates, how it is trained, and the ethical concerns surrounding its use. Particular attention was given to Generative AI and its role in the spread of misinformation, ensuring that students developed both technical awareness and critical thinking skills in relation to AI technologies.

Poetry-slam and new learning experiences

Building on this foundation, the initiative continued with a series of five poetry-slam workshops (see below). Following the writing phase, students began experimenting with Generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT and Mistral AI, to further develop their creative work. This included an introduction to prompt engineering, where students learned to formulate precise queries to achieve specific outputs. By using AI to reimagine their poetry-slams in different styles and formats based on teachers recommendations (e.g. "put my poetry in the style of Shakespeare"), students expanded their artistic and cultural exploration while developing a more nuanced approach to AI.

Assessing AI literacy

To evaluate the impact of the initiative, an AI literacy test, developed by researchers in the field of AI education, was reviewed, translated, and adapted to align with the themes explored during the students' visit to the House of AI and the subsequent workshops.

Artistic activities

To kick off the poetry-slam workshops, the students were introduced to a brief history of poetry-slam and rap, providing context for the movement's roots and its objectives. Poetry-slam is a dynamic art form designed to capture attention, where both the performance and the text hold equal significance.

To create an immediate connection and offer a practical example, the artist Killian Alaari performed one of his own poetry-slams, inviting the students to join in as part of the choir. This hands-on involvement allowed the students to experience the rhythm and energy of slam poetry firsthand, while also creating a collaborative atmosphere that set the tone for the workshops.

It was then the students' turn to embark on creating their own poetry-slams. The students chose a personal topic that resonated with them — whether it was a strong emotion they had felt during the week or something they were passionate about.

Through a series of interactive games, the students delved into relevant lexical fields and rhythmic patterns, which helped them align their poetry with their chosen topics and emotions. The challenge was to develop sentences and ideas that connected with the essence of their topic, but without explicitly mentioning it, nor the time and place they had chosen. This approach encouraged creativity and a deeper exploration of their emotions and experiences. With the support of the slam poet and their teachers, the students crafted personal narratives, enabling them to express themselves and be authentic. The environment fostered during the workshops was safe, welcoming, and judgment-free, ensuring that students felt comfortable exploring and sharing their thoughts.

In a second step, the students worked on crafting their pieces into cohesive and impactful performances, focusing on how to deliver their words with emotion, rhythm, and clarity. They explored the use of pauses, intonations, and body language to enhance the delivery of their narratives, ensuring that their words resonated not only through content but through the power of performance. Then, students worked on their stage presence, practicing in front of their peers, gaining confidence, and adjusting their delivery.

The performance day was not only an opportunity for students to showcase their work but also a moment of collective celebration. Each performance was met with applause and encouragement from peers, teachers, and the slam poet, creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and support.

By the end of the workshops, the students had not only developed their poetry and performance skills but also gained valuable insights into how AI can be used as a tool to enhance creativity, expand their artistic horizons, and engage with complex emotions and themes.

Find the artist, **Killian Alaari**, on Youtube

Impact of the interaction

The integration of slam-poetry workshops into AI education created a powerful and engaging learning experience, enabling students to express themselves more effectively while fostering critical thinking and creativity. Students refined their ability to structure thoughts into meaningful narratives, strengthening both their writing and speaking skills. This process encouraged them to evaluate and articulate their ideas with clarity, while the act of self-expression in a supportive environment boosted their confidence and self-esteem.

A key element of the workshops was the personalised feedback provided by the artist, which deepened students' connection to their work and strengthened their relationship with teachers. This positive, interactive setting nurtured both cognitive and socio-emotional development, ultimately contributing to improved learning outcomes. The workshops did more than just enhance linguistic and artistic abilities—they created a space for personal reflection and open dialogue, helping students develop a stronger sense of self-awareness and resilience.

By merging AI education with slam poetry, the initiative offered a unique, reflective approach to understanding AI, how it works and how to use it. Rather than seeing AI as a passive tool or a replacement for human creativity, students engaged with it critically,

learning how it can support their artistic and intellectual growth. This approach encouraged active participation, ensuring that students remained emotionally and cognitively engaged while developing essential AI literacy skills.

Using AI to adapt their slam poetry into the style of various authors, genres, or artists provided students with an immersive and dynamic way to explore literature and artistic expression. This process enabled them to rapidly discover new texts, broaden their cultural references, and gain a deeper appreciation for different literary traditions. By experimenting with AI-generated transformations of their work, students could compare stylistic elements, identify thematic influences, and reflect on how language and form evolve across different artistic contexts. It allowed them to see their own writing from a fresh perspective.

Beyond the students, the experience also proved transformative for teachers, providing them with insights into AI's potential in education. They gained a deeper understanding of how AI can be integrated into their classrooms and how to guide students in using it effectively. By combining artistic self-expression with digital literacy, the initiative not only enriched students' perspectives on AI but also empowered educators to navigate and leverage AI's possibilities in a thoughtful and responsible way.

Good practices for replication

For successful replication, DOWEL emphasises the importance of focusing on the following key aspects:

Strong teacher engagement is essential, as they play a pivotal role in maintaining students' curiosity, assessing their AI literacy, and providing ongoing support between workshops. To ensure their preparedness, an initial alignment and awareness-raising session with teachers is crucial. This not only helps them understand the process but also addresses any apprehensions they or the artist may have about AI integration.

The experience and approach of the slam poet are equally vital. As the facilitator of the creative process, the poet establishes a trusting and open environment, enabling students to express themselves freely, think critically, and engage fully in the activity.

Finally, **since students are exposed to AI from an increasingly young age, early awareness is key.** Introducing discussions on AI literacy before misconceptions take root ensures they develop a thoughtful and informed perspective on the technology.
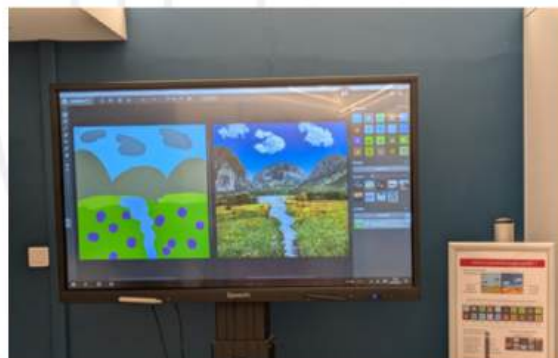
Resources

The poetry-slam workshops cost **2,700€**. The visit of the House of AI is a free-service, setup by the local authority to facilitate AI introduction to the general public.

Contact for more information:
julie.saccomano@dowel.eu

Inclusive and culturally-rooted Energy Communities

GAIA

In a Nutshell

Mission

This interaction aimed at shaping how people perceive and engage with the concepts of sustainability, community, and innovation. By incorporating dance, music, and collaborative art-making into discussions about energy communities, the interaction provided a unique and memorable experience that went beyond technical knowledge.

Engagement activities

The interaction took the form of a summer course in an energy community, mixing field visits, artistic interventions and courses on sustainable renovation models for energy efficiency, Nature-based Solutions, and positive energy neighborhoods.

Artistic activities

Two standout performances took center stage: the "ARS IN NATURA EST: Dance Performance" by Ross Dantza Eskola and the "ARS IN NATURA EST: Music Performance" by Segundo Olaeta Musika Eskola. Through movement and melody, they captured the essence of the event's key themes: sustainability, community, and positive energy, demonstrating how these values can be expressed and felt through art.

IMPACT

Unleashing creativity

Emotional connection to nature

Stronger sense of cultural communities

Reflective process for behavourial change

Raising awareness on sustainable practices

WHAT HAPPENED?

The San Fidel TEK initiative was launched in the heart of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve—a region celebrated for its extraordinary blend of environmental richness, cultural heritage, and strong commitment to sustainability. This unique setting made it the perfect backdrop to champion renewable energy and community-driven actions.

The purpose of the interaction was to inspire the rise of new initiatives similar to the San Fidel TEK one, as it sets a powerful example for other regions. To do so, the summer course showcased a unique approach: integrating art and culture into an energy project to make it more relatable and engaging for the local community.

The summer course, during which the interaction was held, brought together local leaders, experts, and community members. Participants explored the practicalities of building energy communities like San Fidel TEK. The focus was on creating win-win outcomes: tangible benefits for local residents and a meaningful contribution to the environment.

This initiative showed how renewable energy is more than just technology—it's a driver of social transformation. By blending technical innovation with cultural resonance and collective action, San Fidel TEK fostered a deeper connection between people, their community, and the planet's future.

PARTICIPANTS ENGAGEMENT

The summer course was carefully designed to guide participants through four dynamic steps:

A field visit to the Energy Community, enhanced by captivating dance and music performances that celebrated local culture and identity.
Presentations and discussions, introduced by the mayor, showcasing the principles and benefits of energy communities through real-world use cases, sustainable renovation models for energy efficiency, Nature-based Solutions, and positive energy neighbourhoods.

A hands-on artistic activity, merging the concepts of sustainability and creativity to inspire innovative thinking.
A site visit to an energy efficiency project, bringing theory to life and illustrating impactful results.

The focus throughout the interaction was clear: celebrate local identity and foster collective action as key ingredients for achieving meaningful environmental goals.

A standout feature of the event was indeed the introduction of the Living Lab methodology, paired with a cultural and creative perspective, to demonstrate how these approaches can actively involve diverse stakeholders in building successful Energy Communities. By creating spaces for dialogue, collaboration, and hands-on participation, the interaction not only raised awareness but also showcased how innovative solutions can drive real, transformative change.

By merging practical insights with cultural expression, the event left participants inspired, motivated, and ready to take action in their own communities.

Artistic activities

The artistic elements of the interaction created a dynamic space for participants to actively engage and contribute to the vision of a sustainable and culturally vibrant community. Dance and music, as universal languages, were carefully chosen to transcend barriers and connect with the audience on a deeply emotional level. The goal was clear: not only to inform, but to move and inspire the audience through a powerful, unforgettable experience.

Dance Performance: "ARS IN NATURA EST" by Ross Dantza Eskola:
The day commenced with an inspiring dance performance, "ARS IN NATURA EST" by Ross Dantza Eskola. This performance illustrated the harmony between humans, nature, and energy, as dancers brought to life the fluidity and dynamism of natural elements like wind and sunlight. Through their movements, they embodied the flow of renewable energy, weaving a story of connection and sustainability.
The performance encouraged participants to pause and reflect on the relationship between the use of energy and the protection of the environment.

Music Performance: "ARS IN NATURA EST" by Segundo Olaeta Musika Eskola:
The musical performance by Segundo Olaeta Musika Eskola continued the artistic narrative. The music, composed specifically for this event, incorporated natural sounds and rhythms that mirrored the landscape of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve. The performance blended traditional Basque music with contemporary elements, creating a soundscape that celebrated local culture while looking towards a sustainable future.

Both the dance and music performances powerfully conveyed a central message: sustainability and innovation are more than just technical or scientific concepts—they are deeply intertwined with culture and community. They encouraged the audience to reflect on how energy use and environmental stewardship are inherently connected to the cultural local identity.

Artistic Joint Work: Putting Learnings into Practice
Participants finally took part in a collaborative artistic workshop, turning the day's discussions into creative expression. Guided by local artists, participants used mixed media to create a visual representation of a "positive energy neighbourhood." Divided into teams, each group focused on a specific aspect of energy communities, such as solar energy, community engagement, or the natural environment. This highly interactive activity fostered a sense of shared ownership and allowed participants, regardless of artistic background, to actively engage with the project's themes. The completed artworks were proudly displayed in a communal space, serving as an inspiring visual reminder of the collaboration and ideas shared during the event.

THE ARTISTS

Ross Dantza Eskola   Segundo Olaeta Musika Eskola

Impact of the interaction

Unleashing Creativity to Solve Energy Challenges:
This interaction showcased how culture and creativity can unlock innovative solutions to complex challenges like sustainability and energy saving. Through active participation in artistic joint work, attendees witnessed firsthand how creative processes can address real-world issues in Energy Communities and sustainable practices. By framing sustainability as not just a technical challenge but as an opportunity for imaginative and holistic thinking, the event demonstrated how inclusive and collaborative approaches can lead to impactful solutions that drive results.

Building Community Through Collaboration:
The collaborative spirit of the artistic performances, featuring local artists and San Fidel students, created a powerful sense of community among participants. Working together in a Living Lab grounded in co-creation illustrated the shared efforts required to build successful energy communities, reinforcing the idea that everyone's contribution is valuable. The sense of shared purpose and belonging, cultivated through the artistic approach, encouraged attendees to see themselves as active contributors to their local communities, fostering initiatives that align with sustainability principles.

> Integrating art into our discussions about energy and sustainability brought a new dimension to our understanding.
> It's not just about the technical solutions, but about how we, as a community, connect with these changes on a deeper, cultural level.
> **Jose Maria Gorroño Echebarrieta, Mayor of Gernika-Lumo**

Rethinking Public Engagement:
The cultural and artistic approach demonstrated new, creative ways to communicate complex topics like energy, sustainability, architecture, urbanism, and Nature-based Solutions. Through storytelling, visual arts, and performance, participants—particularly public authorities and local administrations—learned how to connect with their audiences in more engaging and relatable ways. This approach provides tools to inspire citizens, making societal and environmental challenges accessible and actionable for diverse audiences.

Inspiring Personal Reflection and Change:
Art has the power to spark personal reflection, encouraging individuals to rethink their behaviours, beliefs, and roles within broader systems. The performances and artistic activities prompted participants to consider their personal environmental impact and how they can actively contribute to a sustainable future. This reflective process is expected to inspire meaningful behavioural changes, as attendees integrate the values of sustainability and energy consciousness into their everyday lives. From adjusting energy consumption habits to engaging in local initiatives, the ripple effects of this experience will extend well beyond the event.

Good practices for replication

To ensure the successful replication of its innovative approach, GAIA highlights five essential strategies:

Build a Collaborative Framework. Use the Quadruple Helix model to engage academia, industry, government, and civil society with clearly defined shared goals.

Promote Active Participation and Co-Creation. Facilitate regular workshops and inclusive co-creation sessions to develop innovative solutions involving all stakeholders.

Leverage Cultural Narratives and Art. Transform technical concepts into compelling stories. Through storytelling, art and media make energy efficiency and sustainability tangible, relatable, and inspiring for a wider audience.

Start small, think big. Implement pilot projects to test innovative ideas, document key learnings, and develop real-life case studies. Share successes and challenges to inspire and guide others toward broader adoption.

Monitor, Evaluate, and Evolve. Define clear metrics for success and establish regular feedback loops. By continuously assessing impact and refining methods, ensure the approach remains relevant and effective over time.

Resources

The organisation of the event in San Fidel costs €770.

Contact for more information: vidorreta@gaia.es

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Domain:
Democratic Change
& Society

Place:
Gothenburg,
Sweden

Duration:
Two days: one day
workshop
and one exhibition

Target audience:
General public

In a Nutshell

Mission

Elderly care is a priority in Sweden, but it is becoming an increasingly complex issue given the ageing population, increased cultural diversity and the pressures on caregiving. Ongoing discussions are taking place on how to sustain and improve elderly care in the future, and involving the public in this conversation is essential to shaping that future. Sweden has embraced technological solutions in elderly care, but this also brings the danger of dehumanising care and exacerbating inequalities. Finding ways to engage the public, including children, in the conversation about elderly care beyond quick-fix technologies is important for creating a future elderly care system that is inclusive, humane and long-term.

Artistic activities

A performance artist (i.e. comedian) and a photographer were hired for this interaction, guiding visitors to reflect on their own elderly future and bringing them to the realisation that it will happen to them too.

Engagement activities

The interaction was organised at the Universeum Science Museum of Gothenburg, through a pop-up event on the first day, and a pop-up exhibit the second day.

IMPACT

Suggest the context of a multi-cultural future

Raise awareness on issues around Elderly care

Invite the younger generation to question their future

Inspire participants and visitors to act for their own desired future

WHAT HAPPENED?

The aim of the interaction was to encourage citizens to reflect on their own ageing and future as elderly individuals. To ensure openness and accessibility, the activity was conducted in a public museum to directly engage visitors in an open and accessible space. Over the course of two days, a pop-up event was hosted by an artist who guided participants through a series of creative and conversational activities around a table, inviting them to imagine their own old age and to discuss what a desirable future might look like for them.

This interaction was designed to support research focusing on the theme of "Elderly Futures." The interaction further developed the research by exploring how collaboration with artists could reach a public audience.

PARTICIPANTS ENGAGEMENT

The design research framing the interaction developed methods and props to facilitate meaningful conversations about the future of elderly care. These included proposed discussion themes and a set of creative elements that participants could combine to spark their imagination and envision possible futures for ageing. The goal was to create an embodied, sensory experience that would allow participants to momentarily feel what it might be like to grow old, to encourage deeper reflection and conversation about their own elderly futures.

On the first day, participants gathered around a table for a metaphorical dining experience. They were first invited to imagine themselves as elderly, before entering a discussion with the other participants on how ageing made them feel and exchanged thoughts and emotions.

The session concluded with an open conversation about what they would prefer for their future instead, leading to the creation of personal wish cards where each participant wrote down their hopes for their own later life. Throughout this immersive experience, the performance artist acted as the host, while two design researchers, in the role of waiters, guided the participants through each step. The flow of the session was choreographed to mirror the rhythm of a multi-course dining event.

On the second day, the interaction shifted into an open, museum-based experience. Visitors, including school groups, were either directed to the exhibit or discovered it as they explored the museum. The installation showcased the table setting from the previous day's event along with photographs capturing moments from the interaction. The performance artist continued to host the space, guiding visitors to imagine themselves as elderly and encouraging them to reflect on their feelings and preferred futures.

At the end of each visit, those who wished to delve deeper into the themes or the research could engage directly with the design researchers present, creating opportunities for more detailed conversations and feedback.

Artistic activities

A multi-lingual performance artist was recruited to host both the event and the exhibit. After preparing an initial script, he improvised throughout the event and exhibit, seamlessly blending English, Spanish, and Swedish as though they formed a single, fluid language. The balance and choice of languages were adapted depending on the audience, for example, using more Swedish when engaging with school children. The deliberate use of multiple languages was intended to evoke the idea of a multicultural future and, at times, to introduce a light sense of confusion, while ensuring clarity when necessary. Visitors' responses and engagement served as real-time feedback, allowing the artist to adjust and refine his approach throughout the day.

The performance artist not only set the tone but also actively guided participants, interacting with them directly and personally. He structured and managed the groups of visitors to ensure meaningful contact with each of them, creating a tailored experience. Through language and performance, he conveyed key elements of the design research: the suggestion of a multicultural future, a gentle disorientation, and the comforting sensation of being looked after. These dimensions were carefully integrated into the interaction as essential components of the experience.

The photographer also played a significant role in shaping the atmosphere of the pop-up environment. In preparation for the event, he conducted a pre-visit to plan the staging, determine lighting arrangements, and creatively mask the permanent exhibition elements to craft a distinct, immersive space. His photographs, captured during the first day, were edited and printed overnight to form a visual exhibition on the second day. These images not only documented the event but also became part of the narrative, influencing how subsequent visitors engaged with the topic.

Both artists were fundamental to the delivery of the interaction. Their work was not simply added to the event, but deeply embedded in the design process. The design researchers collaborated closely with them to shape the entire visitor experience, ensuring that their creative contributions directly supported the research objectives.

Finally, the design research connected to elderly care had designed graphic elements, colour and material palette, and a music soundtrack that were used for the interaction. The music playlist, in particular, was refined through several iterations to incorporate more multicultural influences, aligning with the event's themes of diversity and a shared future. This playlist was played continuously throughout the event, subtly reinforcing the atmosphere and helping to immerse participants in the intended sensory environment.

The implementation was inspired by the multi-lingual participatory performance of Jorma Heart Jorma Soul (a Swedish/Finnish musician).

As a final outcome, **a video was produced to showcase the interaction.**

Impact of the interaction

The interaction successfully invited visitors to reflect on a topic that is often viewed as something distant or only relevant to others. In this case, participants were asked to consider what they personally want and do not want for their own futures, actively engaging in conversations about the future of elderly care. The experience encouraged them to think about the actions they could take now to help shape the future they desire. For younger visitors, the interaction planted the idea that they have a choice and can influence their own ageing journeys, especially if they begin reflecting on these possibilities early in life.

Thanks to the artistic interaction, this human-centered approach was essential in shifting the focus away from the purely technological or economic narratives that frequently dominate discussions about ageing. By placing individual hopes, fears, and values at the center, the interaction helped participants see the topic in a more personal and emotionally resonant light.

The artistic staging created by the performance artist played a pivotal role in this transformation. The surreal restaurant setting, which placed participants outside of time and space, transported them into a unique, symbolic world. This allowed them to step away from their current selves and project them into their imagined futures with greater openness and curiosity. Participants genuinely enjoyed the conversations that emerged around ageing, autonomy, and their shared future as an ageing society. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many describing the experience as deeply thought-provoking and emotionally impactful. Several participants expressed a desire for the installation to travel, suggesting that the format could successfully engage wider audiences and further support the ongoing research project. The event not only sparked meaningful reflection but also demonstrated a compelling, creative model for public engagement on complex societal topics.

Good practices for replication

Looking to replicate this impactful experience? RISE has identified a few key ingredients to ensure success:

Collaborate with performance **artists** and photographers **who are flexible to improvise and take the initiative,** and trust their expertise. They very much contributed in the direction of the final outcome.

Check the location beforehand and bring additional tools and materials for the unexpected when setting up the pop-up.

Allow for more time than you think for the set-up and the pack-up. When coordinating with a venue, there is a lot of running around, trying to find people, find things out.
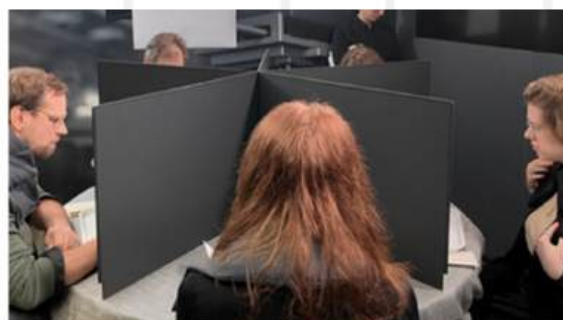
Resources

The event was hosted by the Universeum Science Museum of Gothenburg. The budget could therefore be allocated mostly to the performance artist and the photographer. Some additional budget was spent for the printing of graphic materials, materials for setting the scene (eg. Fabric, clips) and snacks and beverages for participants of the event.

Contact for more information:
magnus.eriksson@ri.se
hayley.ho@ri.se
elsa.vaara@ris.se

Inclusive Museums: Addressing Neurodivergence in Cultural Spaces

Dowel innovation

Domain: Health

Place: Nice, France

Duration: 2 months

Target audience: Designer and General public

In a Nutshell

Mission

Museums are often considered safe, inspiring spaces where people can learn, explore, and engage with culture in meaningful ways. While this holds true for many, it is not the case for all. For some neurodivergent people with dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, autism, or sensory processing differences, museums can be an overwhelming environment. Crowds, noise, lighting, textures, and traditional educational formats may create significant barriers to access, comfort, and learning.
The Inclusive Museums initiative aims to foster inclusive cultural spaces by integrating neurodiversity into space design education and by raising awareness of cultural institutions.

IMPACT

Emotional trigger

Engaging interactions with a broad audience on complex topic

Explore various scenography towards more inclusivity

Put participants in the shoes of neuroatypical children

Engagement activities

This interaction was structured around the following main activities:

An awareness-raising and training session for design students aimed to help them understand neuroatypical experiences before starting their projects.

A space design challenge where 1st year space design bachelor students developed inclusive scenographic solutions adapted to an ocean-themed exhibition.

A scientific conference mediated by an artist, transforming complex content into an engaging, imaginative performance.

Virtual reality experiences simulating dyslexia.

Artistic activities

Art was at the heart of the initiative: artist Janna Zhiri's space-themed storytelling and planetary decor, an inclusive space design exhibition by the students, and a VR immersion, all offered creative, accessible ways to experience neurodiversity.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Developed in collaboration with a design and applied arts school (École de Condé Nice), a cultural institution (Villa Arson), special education counsellors (POP06), a biomedical start-up specializing in neurodevelopmental diagnostics (O-KIDIA) and an artist (Janna Zhiri), the project introduces a multidisciplinary and participatory model for inclusive museum design.

It began with an awareness workshop at the École de Condé, where O-KIDIA cognitive scientists introduced students and teachers to neurodiversity and its societal challenges. POP06 counsellors then guided first-year space design students through the realities of ADHD, DYS disorders, and sensory differences, complemented by a VR simulation of dyslexia provided by Smile & Learn, an EdTech platform specialised in inclusive learning tools, in collaboration with NaturDive. Over five weeks, students developed scenographic solutions for an ocean-themed exhibition at Villa Arson, combining creativity, functionality, and inclusivity with regular feedback from their tutors and experts.

The collaboration culminated in a public event held two months after the project began, featuring VR simulations, a scientific talk by O-KIDIA enriched with artistic mediation by Janna Zhiri. The evening closed with six students pitching their projects during a dinner cocktail to soften the ambience and encourage exchanges and interactions.

PARTICIPANTS ENGAGEMENT

Inclusive design space sprint

Students from École de Condé engaged in a five-week design sprint to create scenographic solutions for an ocean-themed exhibition at Villa Arson. Guided by their coordinator, POP06 experts, and the facilitators of the initiative, the students worked independently while receiving targeted feedback during intermediate reviews. They also carried out interviews with people living with ADHD, DYS disorders, and sensory differences, including some participants directly involved in the process. The process balanced creativity and empathy, allowing students to test ideas, refine them, and integrate accessibility as a core design principle. The sprint resulted in six projects presented at the public event, where students pitched their concepts to a jury and received direct feedback from experts and the community.

Scientific Conference and artistic facilitation

The scientific conference, led by O-KIDIA researchers, was designed to make complex knowledge accessible and engaging. With the support of artist **Janna Zhiri**, scientific insights were transformed into an imaginative, outer space-themed experience. The artist's mediation brought warmth and creativity to the discussion, blending facts with storytelling to highlight neurodivergence not only as a challenge but also as a source of strength. This unique format encouraged the public to connect emotionally with scientific knowledge and to reflect on inclusivity in a new way.

Artistic activities

The artistic activities carried out across the phases of the project were central in fostering empathy, understanding, and creative engagement with neurodiversity. These activities combined immersive technology, sensory experiences, artistic facilitation, and public dialogue to deepen awareness and inspire inclusive design.

Immersive VR Video as an Artistic Medium
A groundbreaking component was the use of immersive virtual reality (VR) videos, which allowed participants to experience the sensory and emotional world of neurodivergent individuals firsthand. This VR experience, provided by Smile and Learn, offered a powerful first-person perspective, vividly portraying the challenges faced by a child with dyslexia in a classroom setting. Through the gradual distortion of text and emotional layering—the impatience of teachers, peer mockery, and rising anxiety—the video bridged abstract knowledge and emotional empathy. Participants could viscerally feel what sensory overload and academic struggle mean, thus deepening their emotional connection to neurodivergent experiences. The immersive storytelling elevated the learning process beyond traditional methods, making neurodivergence tangible and relatable.

Experiential and Sensory Activities
Complementing the VR experience, specialised counsellors led hands-on sensory exercises designed to simulate the perceptual differences common among neurodivergent individuals, such as hypersensitivity to sounds, light, and textures. These experiential activities allowed participants to embody altered sensory realities, enhancing their understanding of how neurodivergent visitors perceive space differently. Such insights were critical for students studying space design, equipping them to create more inclusive environments that respond thoughtfully to diverse sensory needs.

Artistic Facilitation in Scientific Communication and Public Engagement
The artist collaborated with researchers during a live conference, using expressive gestures and poetic storytelling to animate scientific content. For example, the poetic reading of "Mia's Magical World and the Imagination Notebook", a therapeutic tale about a girl channeling ADHD into creativity, helped humanise and celebrate neurodivergence as a source of strength.

The inclusive atmosphere was supported by thoughtful measures like self-soothing kits and clear program guidance, ensuring comfort for all participants. Attendees experienced the VR installation, viewed student-designed inclusive space projects, and engaged in open conversations about neurodiversity, co-creation, and destigmatising language.

A particularly moving moment was when a young autistic man spontaneously joined the stage during the poetic performance, communicating through movement and gesture, an unplanned but powerful demonstration of inclusion in practice. The event ended with a reception fostering exchange among stakeholders, reinforcing ongoing commitment to neuroinclusive design and collaboration.

Check out artist Janna Zhiri's portfolio

> **The VR experience helped me understand what my dyslexic brother feels like.**
> **A student**

Impact of the interaction

The Inclusive Museums initiative has created meaningful and lasting change by empowering individuals, transforming institutions, and fostering inclusive cultural ecosystems. For students in space design and scenography, the project provided hands-on experience addressing real-world challenges faced by neurodivergent visitors. During the design sprint, 48 students explored inclusive scenographic solutions, learning to make accessibility a core principle rather than an afterthought. This approach is shaping how future cultural spaces will be imagined and built.

For museums and cultural institutions, the initiative served as a catalyst for change. Encouraged to move beyond basic compliance, museums are beginning to create environments that truly welcome neuroatypical children and their families. This shift is supported by a local taskforce led by Villa Arson, which brings together museums and cultural institutions to collaborate and sustain inclusive practices at the local and regional levels. After the event, Villa Arson organised a private visit to an ongoing exhibition for a local autism association whose members had attended the event.

The public also benefited significantly from the project. Approximately 80 participants engaged with immersive VR and interactive experiences that raised awareness of the everyday challenges neurodivergent children face. These encounters encouraged more inclusive attitudes and behaviors in community spaces, educational settings, and personal relationships.

Additionally, the initiative supported research by facilitating new participant engagement for O-KIDIA, strengthening the connection between clinical advancements and community benefits. Ultimately, the Inclusive Museums initiative bridges design, science, education, and the arts. It encourages empathy, inclusion, and a sustained commitment to accessibility among students, professionals, and the wider public alike.

> **I now feel more informed and open to others, and I would like to explore how this initiative could grow beyond its current scope.**
> **Director of Villa Arson's art centre**

Good practices for replication

For successful replication, DOWEL provides the following tips:

Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration. Start with small objectives, allow time for trust-building, and involve all partners equally in co-creation and decision-making so their expertise and perspectives shape the project.

Leverage local networks and institutions. Partnering with established regional organisations like Villa Arson builds trust and mobilises resources.

Incorporate immersive, empathy-building tools. Using virtual reality and similar experiences creates emotional connections to neurodivergent challenges, deepening understanding among the various groups. A facilitator should guide the VR experience, explain its purpose, and host the debrief - fostering dialogue and shared reflection while helping participants feel comfortable and confident engaging with the technology.

Bridge science and sensory learning. Hands-on workshops led by special education professionals complement theory, enabling students to physically experience perceptual differences and encouraging reflective design

Resources

The total budget for the initiative was **€7,200**, covering various essential components. Key expenses included workshop interventions and experts involvement (€2,500), artist mediation (€2,000), VR headset rental (€1,500) to deliver immersive experiences and student rewards (€250) to recognize outstanding contributions. Additional costs encompassed catering (€935) for the public event. This breakdown offers a practical overview for those looking to replicate the project within a similar financial framework.

Contact for more information:
yassamin.kouraichi@dowel.eu

LAZARINES OF KROKOS

How is climate crisis affecting Intangible Cultural Heritage?

CluBE
Bioeconomy & Environment Cluster Western Macedonia

In a Nutshell

Mission

The Lazarines is an age-old celebration and cherished local tradition from the region of Kozani. This interaction was carefully designed to explore how intangible cultural heritage, such as this festival, can serve as a powerful vehicle for strengthening community resilience and raising environmental awareness, particularly in the face of the climate crisis.

Artistic activities

The celebration showcases the young girls and women of Krokos, who dance and sing, embodying the ritual traditions of the Lazarines. In preparation for the festival, the elderly women of the community carefully craft traditional costumes, complete with handmade flower headpieces, preserving the art and cultural heritage of the event.

Engagement activities

The interaction focused on engaging women and girls from the local community, who are the traditional bearers of this springtime ritual, and connecting them with the challenges of climate change. Through storytelling, hands-on experimental activities, and open dialogue, the participants were invited into a meaningful space to reflect on how traditions get affected by climate change and evolve over time. The interaction explored how these cultural practices can become valuable tools for fostering climate awareness, promoting gender inclusion, and ensuring cultural continuity in a changing world.

IMPACT

Highlight the artistic value of tradition

Raise awareness on climate change in relation to cultural heritage

Creation of a safe intergenerational space for women and girls to collaborate

WHAT HAPPENED?

The Lazarines interaction unfolded as a two-day journey linking cultural heritage, intergenerational exchange, and environmental awareness. It brought together young girls, adult women, and elders of Krokos - the traditional bearers of the Lazarines ritual — alongside scientists, local organisations, and facilitators. The process combined dialogue, artistic practice, and symbolic action. Participants reflected on climate change through open dialogue, storytelling and a participatory whiteboard exercise, connecting scientific insights with their own lived experiences and local environmental knowledge. This reflective exercise encouraged participants to consider how climate change not only threatens nature but also influences cultural practices and seasonal rituals deeply connected to the natural world.

The encounter was not limited to discussion: it was also performative. A symbolic flower planting in the public square, where the celebration takes place each year, linked ecological care with cultural renewal. The interaction culminated in the Lazarines performance itself, where songs, dance, and costume became a powerful expression of resilience and continuity - showing how tradition can evolve to address today's challenges while strengthening social bonds.

PARTICIPANTS ENGAGEMENT

Ahead of the Lazarines celebration, participants engaged in an open and thoughtful dialogue with Lecturer Vasileios Evangelopoulos from the Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of Western Macedonia. This conversation created space for the community to explore how scientific knowledge about climate change connects with their own observations and lived experiences. Local women shared personal stories about changing weather patterns, shifting agricultural seasons, and the ways these changes are beginning to influence the Lazarines tradition itself.

Scientists from the Geotechnical Chamber contributed with practical insights into how climate change is already affecting agriculture, water resources, and daily life in the region. One particularly meaningful discussion focused on how the changing seasons are impacting the blooming of flowers: an important element of the Lazarines tradition. As flowers now bloom earlier than before, the community is adapting the materials used in the handmade floral headpieces, showing how traditions can evolve in response to environmental change.

The workshop closed with a symbolic flower planting in the public space where the Lazarines celebration took place. This simple yet powerful gesture represented both environmental care and the continuity of cultural heritage. The Lazarines performance followed with women and girls dancing and singing in traditional costumes.

Artistic activities

In Krokos, the local cultural association played a key role in bringing together the women and girls who perform singing, dancing, and costume-making at the Lazarines.

The traditional songs and dances were at the heart of the Lazarines celebration, welcoming the arrival of spring. These performances are living art forms, passed down through generations, and are led by the women and girls of the village. The rehearsal for the main celebration started a few days ahead while the interaction was taking place. These rehearsals were not just preparation, they were moments of artistic creation in themselves, where rhythm, movement, voice, and costume merged into an expressive ritual that celebrates nature's renewal.

The songs are traditional chants that speak of rebirth, the awakening of nature, and community ties. They are typically performed a cappella in small groups, as the girls move from house to house. The dances, though simple in steps, carry deep symbolic meaning, forming circles that represent continuity, female solidarity, and the natural cycles of the seasons. These artistic traditions are preserved orally and through practice, making each performance a living memory of the ancestors.

Elder women played a central role in preparing the handmade costumes and floral crowns. The costumes (embroidered dresses, aprons, and carefully crafted headpieces made from local flowers and plants) are unique folk art pieces that reflect the seasonal identity of the region. Each item holds cultural and artistic significance.

The symbolic flower planting that followed the rehearsal added another layer of meaning. This act was more than just a gesture of environmental care: it became a performative expression of the Lazarines' traditional role in 'bringing spring' to the community. It beautifully connected cultural heritage with ecological awareness.

Together, these artistic practices (song, dance, costume-making, and symbolic action) created a vibrant cultural performance. They not only preserved an important local tradition but also reimagined it as a space for resilience, environmental reflection, and intergenerational artistic expression.

Impact of the interaction

The interaction had a deep impact on the local community, the participating artists, and the collaborating stakeholders. It strengthened the role of intangible cultural heritage as a living, dynamic space for dialogue and raised awareness about climate and social challenges. Importantly, it empowered the women and girls of Krokos to see their traditional practices not just as cultural preservation, but as meaningful contributions to today's urgent conversations.

Culturally, the event revitalised the Lazarines tradition. It invited participants to see their songs and dances not as distant folklore, but as contemporary, living acts of artistic and ecological storytelling. This reactivation of heritage gave the performers an opportunity to reflect, reinterpret, and reframe their practices in light of climate change and shifting seasonal patterns.

Socially, the interaction created a safe, intergenerational space where women and girls could come together to share, create, and exchange perspectives. It strengthened community ties, celebrated local knowledge, and fostered mutual learning between cultural bearers and scientific experts.

Environmentally, the workshop helped participants connect broad climate concepts to their own lived experiences. Activities like the participatory whiteboard reflection and the symbolic flower planting made climate impacts tangible and sparked meaningful awareness at the local level.

The local participation added a valuable layer to the conversation:

The Geotechnical Chamber of Western Macedonia provided concrete insights on how climate change is already affecting soil, water resources, and agriculture, particularly in relation to saffron, a key local crop.

The Chamber of Commerce of Kozani emphasised the importance of linking cultural heritage to sustainable economic development, ensuring traditions can thrive in a changing world.

The Saffron Producers' Cooperative offered direct stories from the field, sharing how climate shifts are impacting their farming practices and highlighting the need for innovation rooted in local knowledge.

These diverse perspectives enriched the dialogue and demonstrated the strength of cross-sector collaboration. The initiative became a platform where scientific knowledge, business concerns, cultural values, and artistic expression could meet to explore shared challenges.

At a broader level, the project showed how arts-based, community-driven approaches can actively contribute to research and innovation. It opened the door to new partnerships and demonstrated the value of weaving tradition, emotion, and local identity into climate resilience strategies. Ultimately, the interaction proved that intangible cultural heritage can be a powerful catalyst for environmental reflection, social connection, and future-oriented thinking. It provided an inclusive, place-based model for addressing global issues at the local level, bridging generations, disciplines, and perspectives to build community resilience.

Good practices for replication

For successful replication, CluBE emphasises the importance of focusing on the following key aspects:

Start from the local community and treat cultural participants as artists. Work with people who are already involved in keeping local traditions alive, like cultural associations, older women, or local groups.

Use traditional rituals to start conversations and connect generations. The Lazarines tradition became a way to talk about bigger issues like climate change and caring for nature. Because it's familiar and meaningful, it helped people feel comfortable joining the discussion. The involvement of both young girls and older women allowed for sharing knowledge and experiences between generations, something very valuable that should be repeated in other places.

Include local experts, businesses, and cooperatives as part of the discussion. Scientists, local business people, and members of the saffron cooperative joined the event and shared useful information about how climate change is already affecting farming, water, and daily life in the region. They were not just "guest speakers", they were part of the community conversation. This made the exchange more balanced and relevant to real local challenges.

Adjust the method to fit the local context. Each place is different. What worked in Krokos might look different elsewhere. The goal isn't to copy the event exactly but to use the same process, work with the community, support collaboration, and link culture with social and environmental issues. It's important to be flexible and respect local customs, rhythms, and people

Resources

CluBE benefited from the graceful participation of its members, and financially supported the flowers planting activity and the uniforms.

18 SUCCESS STORIES

18 success stories that demonstrate that collaboration between art and science can have a lasting impact. On the following pages, you will find an overview of all the seeds (initiatives) that the project partners have supported. The collaborative goals are oriented towards addressing the social challenges of the digital age, democratic change, health, climate action, and protecting the environment.

DIGITAL AGE

House of AI - raising awareness on AI literacy (Greece)
Target groups: CCIs, environmental educators, Women

Digital Clean Up Day (Sweden)
Target groups: professionals

Rhyms and algorithms - poetry slam for AI literacy (France)
Target groups: secondary-school students and teachers

CLIMATE ACTION & ENVIRONMENT

Reducing stress through creativity and nature (Greece)
Target groups: environmental educators

Nature-based Solutions for coastal resilience and marine biodiversity (France)
Target groups: general public

Climate Swipe (Greece)
Target groups: citizens

CLIMATE ACTION & ENVIRONMENT

Future sound of cities (Sweden)
Target groups: researchers, municipalities' representatives and citizens

Mizelioa – Artistic Visions of Soil Biodiversity (Spain)
Target groups: general public, students in fine arts and pedagogy

Power in the Remake - Sustainable Fashion workshop (Sweden)
Target groups: young women

A summer to empower young women in Science and Engineering in (France)
Target groups: young women

Immersive Experiences for Sustainability & Industry 4.0 (Spain)
Target groups: citizens, education institutions, industry professionals, and public

Mercantour Tales - Protecting Nature, Hiking Safely (France)
Target groups: general public with a focus on young people

Credit: Tasos Mansour - Unsplash

Scape room - Team up to solve the energy transition (Spain)
Target groups: citizens with a focus on families

Inclusive and culturally-rooted Energy Communities (Spain)
Target groups: citizens and local authorities

LAZARINES OF KROKOS (Greece)
Target groups: women, including younger and ederly, general public

HEALTH, WELL-BEING & DEMOCRATIC CHANGE

Collaborative approaches for societal issues (Sweden)
Target groups: students and local communities

Inclusive Museums - Addressing Neurodivergence in Cultural Spaces (France)
Target groups: design schools, cultural institutions, general public

Welcome to our ederly future (Sweden)
Target groups: general public

InteractionSeeds Domains

The seeds are creating positive change in a few **DOMAINS**. These domains are derived from complex societal challenges that directly and strongly impact citizens' daily life and that, as such, have been prioritised by EU policies and represent the main concerns and sources of knowledge developed in the partner's ecosystems.

Embracing the opportunities and challenges of the **DIGITAL AGE** is crucial for societal advancement. By focusing on the trust in the digital age, we can ensure equitable access to technology, promote digital literacy and critical thinking, and harness innovation for economic and social development. Addressing digital challenges also involves managing data privacy, cybersecurity, and ethical considerations.

The urgent need to combat **CLIMATE CHANGE** and protect the environment is paramount for the survival and well-being of current and future generations. By addressing this issue, we can promote sustainable practices, advance renewable energy / bio-based solutions, conserve biodiversity, and mitigate the impacts of environmental degradation on communities and ecosystems.

Promoting democratic values, participation, and governance is essential for fostering inclusive societies and upholding human rights. By addressing **DEMOCRATIC CHANGE**, we can advocate for transparent and accountable institutions, empower marginalized groups, combat corruption, and strengthen civil society engagement in decision-making processes.

Improving societal **WELL-BEING** and public health outcomes requires holistic approaches that address social determinants of **HEALTH**, healthcare access, and health disparities. By focusing on this issue, we can promote health equity, support mental health and well-being, address social inequalities, and enhance community resilience.

All Success Stories Online

The 18 success stories have inspired you, and you want to learn more. On our website **www.interactionseeds.eu/success-stories/** you will find in-depth information about artists, scientific methods, the location and much more. In addition, there is a detailed PDF available for download for each initiative. It's worth it, scan the QR code and get started.
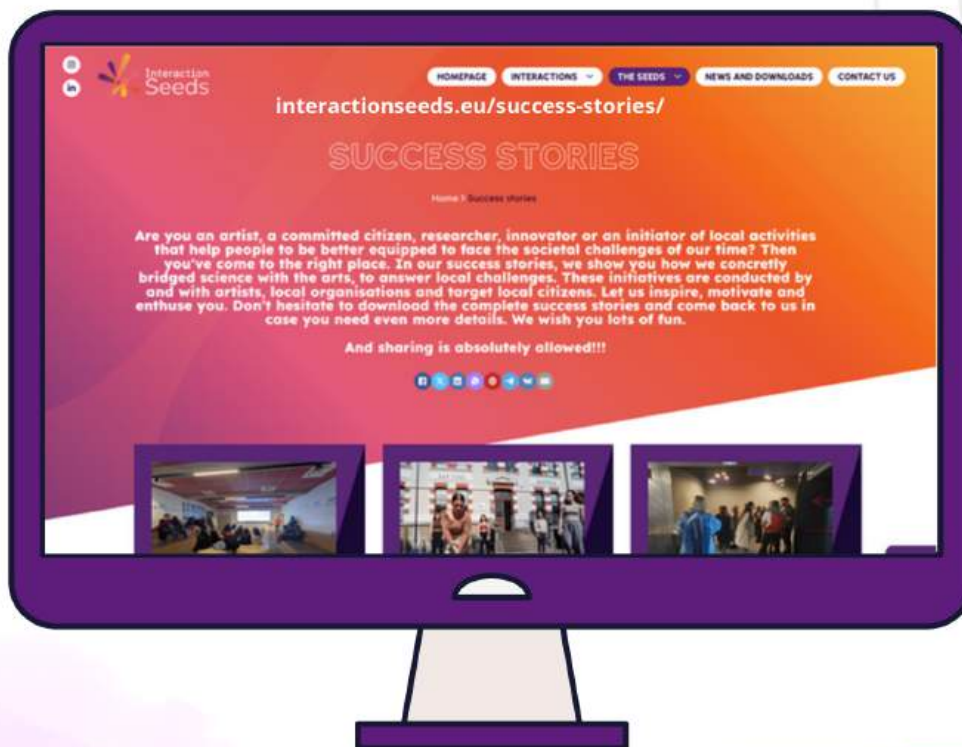
You will find all InteractionSeeds Success Stories online.

A comprehensive PDF is available for download for each success story.

All success stories at a glance. The landing page provides a perfect overview of all implemented project seeds. Additional information about artists, technologies, partners and impact can be found in the user-friendly drop-down menu.

THE TEAM

The InteractionSeeds team is a community spanning five nations. A partnership combining science, creativity, professionalism and passion.

For two years, the InteractionSeeds team led by Stéphanie, Magnus, Hayley, Iztiar, Julie, Sandra, Karine, Eleftheria and Patrick researched, developed, inspired, communicated and disseminated.

InteractionSeeds Partners

The consortium is composed of five partners in 5 countries.

GAIA is the Association of Applied Knowledge and Technology Industries in the Basque Country, and brings together over 300 companies in this sector. It is a reference in Collaborative Innovation solutions based on own Knowledge and Technology (Consulting, Engineering, Electronics, Computing, Telecommunications and Gamification).

RISE is Sweden's research institute and innovation partner, with more than 3 000 researchers. Through international collaboration with industry, academia and the public sector, they ensure business competitiveness and contribute to a sustainable society.

Dowel Innovation is a consulting company specialised in innovation management with a recognised experience in research valorisation and European projects. It is based in Sophia Antipolis, a major European science park on the French Riviera.

CluBE operates in the Region of Western Macedonia, in NW Greece. CluBE is implementing many innovative research and development projects in the region and is leading the effort for a green and sustainable shift in the regional economy. For example, it coordinates the Climate City Contract of the City of Kozani, which has been recently admitted among the first 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030!

G!E is a Europe-wide network of eco-innovation experts, dedicated to maximising the impact of publicly funded research. Its members span the research and innovation value chain – from research centres through to industrial clusters, innovation.

Stéphanie Petit
Project coordinator
DOWEL Innovation
stephanie.petit@dowel.eu

Patrick Rembe
Media & Communication
Greenovate! Europe
p.rembe@greenovate-europe.eu

www.interactionseeds.eu