

# SUCCESS



# STORIES

A magazine about successful collaboration when SCIENCE meets ARTS

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

# 10

## **Success Stories**

Detailed description,  
extensive information  
on implementation  
and direct links to the  
artists.



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Stéphanie Petit,  
InteractionSeeds Project  
Coordinator  
(Dowel Innovation)



## Dear reader,

When we began InteractionSeeds, we were guided by a simple yet demanding question: how can art and science meet in ways that genuinely matter for society? As this magazine brings the project to a close, the ten Success Stories gathered here offer concrete, situated answers. They show that collaboration across disciplines is not an abstract ideal but a practical method for engaging people with the challenges shaping our lives.

Over 20 months, the project supported 20 science-art interventions across four different ecosystems, testing more than 16 artistic approaches and reaching close to 1,200 citizens. It also fostered 10 new local partnerships, many of which are set to continue beyond the project's duration.

Across health and well-being, the digital age, democratic change and the climate environment, art is not used to decorate research. It functions as a civic interface. It translates complexity into lived experience, turns passive audiences into active participants, and makes room for emotions, memory and imagination alongside facts. That shift matters. It is often the difference between awareness and agency.

Within these domains, the Seeds addressed a wide range of societal themes, including AI literacy and digital footprints, biodiversity protection and the Sustainable Development Goals, sustainable fashion and urban planning, science empowerment, the transformation of cultural spaces and traditions, as well as health, well-being and democratic participation.

Because such collaborations can appear difficult to initiate, we conclude the magazine with two practical tools designed for immediate use.

The Step-by-Step Guide distils two years of experimentation into a set of clear principles: start small but early enough for artistic collaboration to shape the questions; work with artists as partners rather than service providers; cultivate local ecosystems through facilitation and trust; design engagement with purpose; value process as much as outcomes; and strengthen initiatives through learning cycles.

The Citizen Engagement Self-Assessment Tool complements this approach. Developed for research and innovation stakeholders, it supports critical reflection on how artistic methods contribute to meaningful participation and knowledge valorisation. By exploring citizen engagement, solution development, and collaborative capacities, the tool helps teams visualise strengths and gaps and identify concrete pathways for deeper impact.

This is the common thread running through every Seed in these pages. When art and science truly meet, they do not merely communicate results. They transform how people relate to evidence, to one another, and to the futures they are being asked to shape. I invite you to explore the stories with this perspective in mind, and to keep the guide and the self-assessment close at hand. They are there to make the next collaboration easier to begin and more robust to sustain.

**Stéphanie Petit**  
Project Coordinator, InteractionSeeds



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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



You need to use GenAI as a tool to guide you where you want to be, and to learn.

**Isabelle Galy, OTESIA**

## 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.



As opposed to Artificial Intelligence, making arts means taking your time.

**Killian Alaari, Poetry-slam artist**



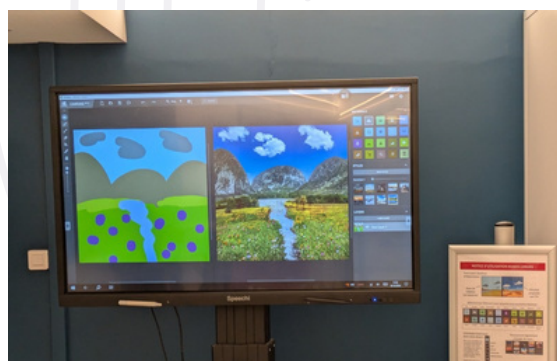
# Good practices for replication

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.

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# Inclusive and culturally-rooted Energy Communities



**Domain:**  
Climate Action and  
Environnement



**Place:**  
Gernika-  
Lumo, Spain



**Duration:**  
One day



**Target audience:**  
Citizens, larger public



## In a Nutshell

# IMPACT

Unleashing creativity

Emotional connection to nature

Stronger sense of cultural communities

Reflective process for behavioural change

Raising awareness on sustainable practices

### 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.

# 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.

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# Welcome to our Elderly Futures

RI.  
SE



**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.**







...And that's very important to me, to keep the future alive.

**Visitor/ Participant**

## 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.



It's very hard to grasp that you are thinking about this for yourself in the future, not for someone else.

How do you really feel about that in the future?

**Visitor/ Participant**

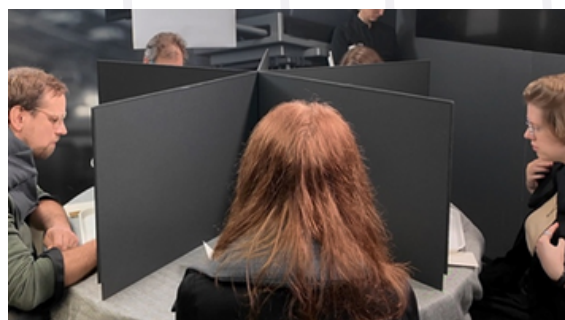
# Good practices for replication

**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.

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# Inclusive Museums: Addressing Neurodivergence in Cultural Spaces



**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.

## 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.

## 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

## 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:

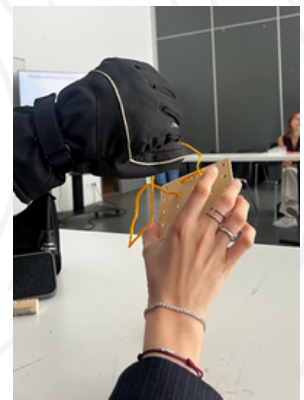
**Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration.** Start with small objectives, allow time for trust-building, and involve all partners equally in co-creation and decision-making so their expertise and perspectives shape the project.

**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.



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# LEAZARINES OF KROKOS

## How is climate crisis affecting Intangible Cultural Heritage?



**Domain:**  
Climate action &  
Environment



**Place:**  
Krokos,  
Greece



**Duration:**  
Two-days event



**Target audience:**  
Women (including  
younger girls)



# 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.

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Bioeconomy & Environment Cluster  
Western Macedonia



# Climate Swipe App: Engaging citizens for Kozani 2030 climate objectives



**Domain:**  
Climate action &  
Environment



**Place:**  
Kozani,  
Greece



**Duration:**  
Long-term presence of  
the app on Kozani's  
webiste



**Target audience:**  
Citizens



# In a Nutshell

## Mission

The Declaration of Climate Neutrality of Kozani “Kozani 2030 - A Green and Smart City” aims at developing immediate and decisive climate action by “engaging citizens who are not only political actors in a governance structure, but also users, producers, consumers and owners”. To do so, CluBE has been inspired by the “Climate Swipe” app, that aims to engage citizens in exploring and adopting sustainable lifestyle choices while enabling the municipality to understand their needs, preferences, and obstacles, ensuring tailored support for their transition—all through a simple, interactive app.

## Engagement activities

CluBE’s researchers developed the Kozani’s Climate Swipe App, integrated directly on the website of “Kozani 2030” where participants are invited to express their opinions, concerns and suggestions for the future of the city.

## Artistic activities

The core artistic activities of the Climate Swipe app were the photos that illustrated each of the questions. .

# IMPACT

Citizens participation to the local challenges

Artistic approach visualising Kozani’s transition

# WHAT HAPPENED?

This interaction was developed through close collaboration between CluBE, which led the technical development and conceptual framing, and the Municipality of Kozani, the researchers at Kozani 2030 initiative, and the Region of Western Macedonia, responsible for digital transition.

Researchers identified key strategic questions related to Kozani's transition to climate neutrality, while a team of photographers was tasked to translate these challenges into visual form. This ensured that the resulting content was both scientifically grounded and artistically engaging.

A major strength of the project lay in transforming complex topics such as mobility, energy, waste management, and nature into accessible, user-friendly questions accompanied by striking visual prompts.

The prototype app was first introduced to the public at the Thessaloniki International Fair (HELEXPO), on the stand of the Region of Western Macedonia. Building on this debut, regular presentations are now planned throughout next year to encourage broad citizen participation and strengthen public awareness of Kozani's climate transition.

## PARTICIPANTS ENGAGEMENT

The early exchanges between the researchers at Kozani2030, CluBE and the group of young photographers focused on aligning scientific priorities for the municipality with artistic interpretation.

Representatives from Kozani2030 defined the core questions reflecting Kozani's path toward climate neutrality, ensuring that these questions addressed both future developments and citizens' current needs.

The young photographers then set out across the city to capture images that expressed these themes (mobility, energy, waste management, and nature) through their own creative perspectives. After reviewing the initial material, an app developer noted the need for higher-quality visuals to match the professional design standards of the app. A professional photographer was subsequently engaged to take additional photos, in continued dialogue with the Kozani2030 team.

Once the app integrated both the visual material and the thematic questions, it was presented to the Municipality of Kozani, followed by a public pitch at the Thessaloniki International Fair. More than 100 visitors explored the prototype during the event, with around 20 engaging in in-depth conversations about Kozani's sustainable future. The next phase foresees ongoing presentations by CluBE and the local institutions to sustain public engagement.

# Artistic activities

The artistic value of this interaction lies in the collaboration between young local photographers and a professional artist, guided by the researchers of the Kozani2030 initiative. Together, they transformed abstract sustainability topics (mobility, energy, waste management, and nature) into a series of powerful visual narratives.

Each question in the app is paired with a carefully selected photograph taken around Kozani, creating a dialogue between image and text. The user experience begins with a striking full-screen photo and a question inviting reflection. With a simple swipe, participants move between images, choosing guided answers to express their opinions.

The color palette of the app draws on the visual identity of the InteractionSeeds project. It makes the interface both playful and visually distinctive, encouraging intuitive participation. The navigation arrows and smooth transitions further contribute to a fluid, engaging rhythm, making reflection on climate transition feel effortless rather than academic.

The photographic process itself became a creative exploration of Kozani's identity in transition. The young photographers roamed the city and its surrounding landscapes to capture the best shots to illustrate each question. Their early submissions revealed genuine enthusiasm and curiosity, though not all images initially met the technical needs of the app.

To refine the visual narrative, a professional photographer was invited to mentor the youth group, providing feedback and capturing additional high-quality images.

This collaboration became a learning journey, blending fresh, local perspectives with professional expertise. The professional ensured consistency in lighting, framing, and quality, while preserving the authenticity and spontaneity of the youth's work.

Meanwhile, the app developer acted as a creative partner rather than a purely technical one.

The design of the interface required thoughtful experimentation with layout, font, and flow to ensure that the photographs remained central to the experience. The developer also helped balance functionality and aesthetics, ensuring that the artistic dimension wasn't overshadowed by usability.



# Impact of the interaction

The app, available on the Kozani2030's website, opens a new channel of dialogue between the municipality and citizens. Through a simple swipe-based interface, users can reflect on issues such as energy, mobility, waste, and nature—transforming abstract policy goals into personal reflections and everyday choices.

The photographs, captured by local youth, added an emotional and visual depth to these topics, allowing residents to see their own city through the lens of climate neutrality. Art here served as a bridge between science, policy, and lived experience, making complex sustainability goals tangible and relatable.

For the young photographers, this was more than a technical assignment, it was a creative contribution to Kozani's vision for a sustainable future. Their participation fostered a sense of ownership and demonstrated how intergenerational collaboration can enrich innovation ecosystems.

**The app itself became a shared product of this diverse partnership, showing how artistic input can enhance scientific and policy-oriented work. Its presentation at the Thessaloniki International Fair gave the project visibility beyond Kozani, positioning the region as a pioneer in art-science engagement for climate action.**

**The dissemination of the app will continue in 2026, through several events and presentation organised both by CluBE and the municipality of Kozani.**

**Although introduced as a prototype, the app now exists as a scalable, living tool that can be reused and adapted (for schools, public consultations, or awareness campaigns) ensuring lasting impact beyond the initial event.**

# Good practices for replication

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

**Engage local artists early.** Involving young photographers gave authenticity and a strong local identity to the project. Their photos served not just as decoration, but as visual entry points for public dialogue. Future replications should adapt the artistic medium to the local context, but maintain this principle of creative co-ownership.

**Balance creativity and quality.** While youth involvement brought energy and authenticity, the addition of a professional photographer ensured visual consistency and polish.

**Involve municipalities from the start. Early institutional engagement ensures that artistic experiments translate into policy-relevant tools.**

**Use simple, playful interfaces.** The swipe format proved highly effective, intuitive, interactive, and inviting. Tools for public engagement should prioritise accessibility over complexity.

**Plan for continuity.** An app alone does not create impact; it requires ongoing activation through presentations, school use, and city events. Future replications should plan from the outset how to integrate the tool into local education, engagement, and sustainability strategies.



## Resources

or this project seed, CluBE covered the main costs:

- Application development: 120€
- Professional photographer (mentoring and final production): 500€

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# M

GAIA

## izelioa: Art to Raise Awareness of Soil Biodiversity



**Domain:**  
Climate Action  
and Environment



**Place:**  
Urdaibai reserve  
and Bilbao, Spain



**Duration:**  
One month long  
exhibition



**Target audience:**  
Citizens, larger public



# In a Nutshell

## Mission

Soil biodiversity is rarely understood: for many citizens, it is “just dirt.” This lack of awareness limits public engagement in soil protection and, ultimately, undermines efforts to address environmental challenges. The Basque Soil Living Lab, coordinated by GAIA and its partners, therefore identified soil literacy as a priority for action: helping people see soil not simply as ground to walk on but as a living, breathing ecosystem essential to life.

## Engagement activities

The interaction focused on presenting and celebrating the outcomes of a collaborative process linking science, art, and community engagement around soil health and biodiversity in the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve. It was designed as both an exhibition of artworks and an interactive learning experience to raise public awareness of soil as a living ecosystem and to explore how creativity can foster ecological literacy.

## Artistic activities

30 fine arts and pedagogy students developed unique artworks based on material and inspiration they drew from field immersions in the Urdaibai reserve. These art pieces were then exhibited at the BBF Bilbao.

## IMPACT

Create lasting art work

Change public perception on soil

Develop educational material on soil literacy

Encourage intergenerational dialogue between citizens, artists, and experts

# WHAT HAPPENED?

The interaction was conducted by the Basque Soil Living Lab (coordinated by GAIA) in close collaboration with the Basque District of Culture and Creativity (BDCC), the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), with 30 fine arts and pedagogy students, and local actors such as the Forua Town Council, San Fidel Ikastola.

The primary objective was to highlight the hidden beauty and significance of soil biodiversity through art and sound, and to stimulate dialogue and reflection among citizens about the role of creativity in fostering ecological awareness and land stewardship. An art exhibition was the visible result of a learning and co-creation process in which fine arts and pedagogy students immersed themselves in the Urdaibai environment, observed soil indicators, and translated these findings into artistic works. Thanks to the connection and exchanges with local partners, the interaction aimed not only to produce creative outputs but also to foster a sense of shared responsibility for the soil and ecosystems of Urdaibai.

The willingness of these artists to fully engage in co-creation processes with scientists, educators, and local communities was a decisive factor in the success of the interaction. This success translated into the art exhibition attracting hundreds of visitors during the one-month display period at BBF Bilbao.

## PARTICIPANTS ENGAGEMENT

The artistic activities culminated in a public exhibition on 18 June 2025 at the BBF space in Bilbao, where the final artworks (drawings, paintings, mixed media works, and the soundscape) were displayed. Visitors could walk through thematic zones representing the soil biodiversity story, listen to the soundscape, and interact with the artists, thus transforming scientific data on soil and biodiversity into an engaging cultural experience. The exhibition was opened by representatives of the Basque Soil Living Lab, who introduced the purpose of the exhibition, the importance of soil biodiversity, and its link to the EU's Mission Soil.

Round Table Discussions featuring experts and local stakeholders focused on the role of the Basque Living Lab and how soil health challenges are addressed in Urdaibai, the experiences of student-artists, who explained how the landscape, biodiversity, and cultural identity of Urdaibai inspired their creative work, and how art can be used as a medium for raising environmental awareness. Pedagogy students then presented a unique auditory art piece capturing the natural soundscape of Urdaibai, translating the reserve's ecological richness into an immersive sensory experience.

During the exhibition, participants got the opportunity to interact with the artists, and discuss the links between soil, biodiversity, and community well-being. Therefore, the exhibition was more than just about art: it was a shared space for reflection and co-learning, engaging citizens, students, scientists, and local authorities in thinking about the importance of soil and our collective responsibility to care for it.

# Artistic activities

The artistic activities for this interaction were designed to translate soil biodiversity and ecosystem indicators from the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve into visual and auditory forms that could communicate with a wide public audience: the process combined field-based learning, studio-based artistic creation, and a final public exhibition.

## Field Immersion and Inspiration

The activity began with an immersion visit to Urdaibai, where students observed and learned about biodiversity indicators used by the Basque Soil Living Lab. These included dragonflies, beetles, butterflies and moths, migratory birds, and even soil organisms such as mycelium networks. The students documented textures, colours, and forms of these species and their habitats through photographs, sketches, and notes, which served as the creative basis for later artwork.

## Thematic Drawing and Painting

Students of the Fine Arts faculty (UPV/EHU) worked in teams to create thematic artworks, each group focusing on one specific insect, representing an ecological indicator. For example, dragonflies (Libélulas) represent water quality and ecological balance, and beetles (Escarabajos) symbolise habitat health and sensitivity to environmental change.

These themes were approached using multiple drawing techniques (graphite, ink, and mixed media) and lateral thinking creativity methods, such as the “random word” technique of Edward de Bono, encouraging conceptual connections between species traits and artistic expression.

## From Sketches to Final Artworks

Initial sketches explored anatomical details and symbolic associations, later evolving into final compositions that combined realism with abstraction. Works included: detailed anatomical studies of wings, shells, and feathers; and abstract compositions emphasising ecosystem processes like migration or soil humidity.

The final artworks included mixed media pieces integrating found materials and embroidery to evoke soil textures and biodiversity interactions. Many works were produced on 50x50 cm formats, using acrylics, oils, watercolours, graphite, embroidery threads, and even natural pigments such as turmeric, symbolizing organic connections with soil.

## Soundscape Creation

A unique component was developed by Pedagogy students: a soundscape (paisaje sonoro) of Urdaibai. Inspired by R. Murray Schafer's concept of soundscape composition, it blended recordings of birds, insects, water flows, and human environmental sounds, aiming to raise awareness of human impact on natural sound environments. This auditory artwork added an immersive sensory layer to the final exhibition experience.

## Publication: The Fanzine Mizelioa

The creative process and results were documented in the fanzine “Mizelioa – Art to Raise Awareness”, which combined images of artworks, conceptual texts, creative exercises (such as word puzzles and horoscopes inspired by nature), and educational references for further learning. This publication acted both as a memory of the project and as an educational tool for future replication.



**Download the  
exhibition's  
fanzine here!**



# Impact of the interaction

By selecting an art-driven scheme, the project created an attractive and memorable citizen experience where art served as an effective medium to make invisible ecological processes visible, allowing citizens to see, hear, and feel the beauty and vulnerability of soil biodiversity through paintings, drawings, and a soundscape. This approach made soil literacy interactive and accessible: rather than being told why soil matters, people were invited to experience and reflect on it themselves.

The interaction generated a collection of art work and educational resources, that can now be used in new contexts, to increase its impact. Indeed, 30+ visual artworks were created (paintings, drawings, and mixed-media works), reflecting on biodiversity indicators such as dragonflies, beetles, migratory birds, butterflies, and forest microhabitats. The creative process that led to these artworks is now documented in the “Mizelioa” fanzine, providing an educational tool for future use in schools, communities, and Living Lab outreach.

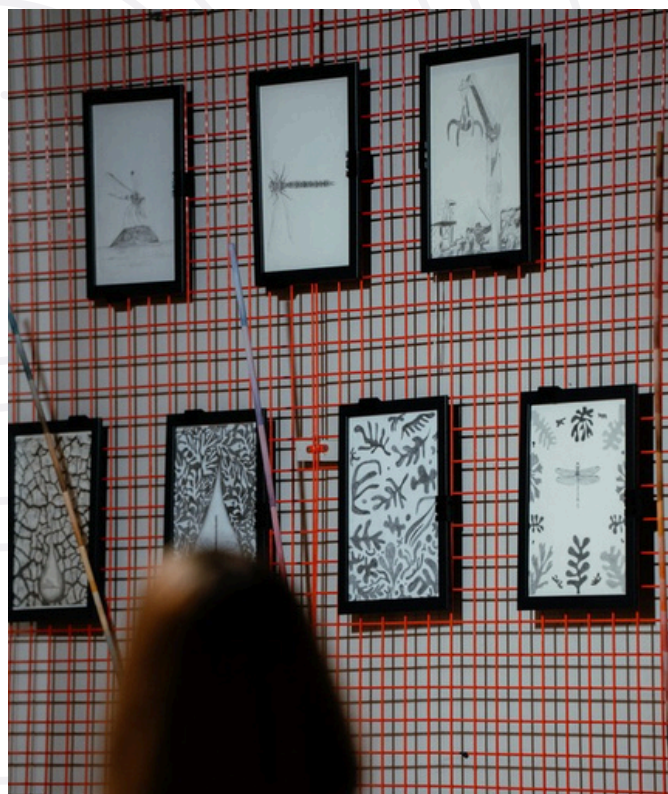
The interaction involved 30 university students, primarily women (approx. 70%), thus contributing to youth and gender inclusion. Students gained experience in interdisciplinary collaboration, combining scientific knowledge and artistic creativity, with a strong emphasis on societal impact. They were able to further share the outcomes of the interaction with their own networks.

The co-organisation of the interaction with several partners (the Basque Soil Living Lab, UPV/EHU, Forua Town Council, San Fidel Ikastola, GAIA, KSIgune, and local cultural actors) strengthened their relationships. New connections were created between emerging artists, educators, and environmental stakeholders, laying the groundwork for potential future collaborations and replication of similar initiatives.

Finally, the exhibition attracted around 50 participants during the opening and hundreds of visitors during its one-month run at DOCK Bilbao, ensuring broad visibility and community involvement. Visitors engaged in dialogues with students and other participants, creating a space for reflection on the relationship between people, soil, and nature.

Overall, the interaction demonstrated the effectiveness of art-based approaches for engaging communities on environmental issues, delivering immediate educational and cultural value while also planting the seeds for future collaborations and public awareness initiatives.

# Good practices for replication



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

**Engage local education and cultural actors early.** Partnering with universities, art schools, and local educational institutions ensures access to motivated young talent and supports skill development in parallel with awareness raising.

**Integrate field immersions for the artists.** Starting with a field visit (e.g., in Urdaibai) allowed participants to experience the natural environment first-hand, inspiring authentic artistic responses and strengthening emotional engagement.

**Include multisensory elements.** Combining visual artworks with auditory experiences (like soundscapes) enhances accessibility and provides a more immersive learning environment.

**Publish and document results.** Producing materials such as the Mizelioa fanzine provides a tangible legacy and supports future outreach and replication efforts.

**Foster collaboration across sectors.** Bringing together artists, scientists, educators, local authorities, and community members creates synergy and ensures long-term impact beyond a single event.

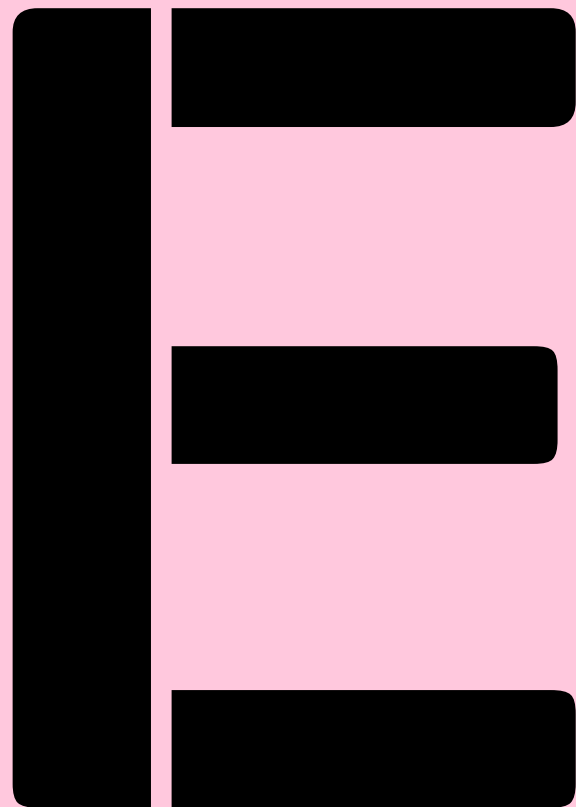
## Resources

The implementation of the interaction required modest but strategic investment, mainly focused on supporting the co-creation process, event logistics, and public dissemination. The costs can be broken down as follows: Equipment and Materials: 700€, Location and Logistics: 300€, Communication and Dissemination: 1800€.

Besides, the interaction benefited from BBF, providing the space for the exhibition, the Forua municipality, hosting the visit of the students, and a strong involvement of its organisers, and in-kind contributions.



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# ncouraging sustainable practices for the Mercantour National Park



**Domain:**  
Climate Action and  
Environment



**Place:**  
Nice, France



**Duration:**  
Long-term



**Target audience:**  
General public/  
younger generation



# In a Nutshell

## Mission

As a mountainous national park, the Mercantour has been facing an unprecedented influx of hikers since the COVID-19 pandemic and the related lockdowns. While this surge in visitors reflects a growing public interest in outdoor activities, it also presents new challenges for protecting the park's fragile biodiversity. In the past, the Mercantour mainly attracted experienced mountain enthusiasts who were familiar with good environmental practices. Today, however, it draws a younger, more urban audience and visitors who may be less aware of the delicate balance of its ecosystems and, as a result, may unintentionally engage in harmful behaviours. The management team of the Mercantour National Park, already highly active in public engagement and environmental education, sought innovative ways to raise awareness and encourage more responsible behaviour among these new visitors.

## Engagement activities

The aim of this interaction was to use social media as a tool for communication and education, presenting good practices in a format that resonates with younger audiences. To this end, five short videos were produced, each designed to highlight key aspects of the park and to provide practical recommendations for visitors.

## Artistic activities

For the videos to be more engaging towards the younger generation, a manga esthetic was developed.

# IMPACT

Education and sharing of good practices in a fragile ecosystem

Protection of local biodiversity

Development of formats accessible to the target audience

## WHAT HAPPENED?

For this interaction, DOWEL partnered with the Mercantour National Park and PlayAzur Prod, a local media company specialising in science communication and social media engagement. This collaboration brought together the scientific expertise of the Park with PlayAzur Prod's creative experience in engaging younger audiences around scientific and environmental topics.

During the concept phase, several approaches were explored, including the idea of in-person interactions. However, the decision was ultimately made to focus on digital content distributed via social media. These platforms were identified as the main channels through which younger generations seek information when planning outdoor activities.

While the Park already offers numerous on-site educational tools (such as panels) these are often overlooked by visitors eager to reach the mountain peaks. The addition of engaging, visually appealing online content therefore complements existing efforts, enriching the Park's already extensive public engagement strategy, which also includes film screenings, drawing classes on local fauna, and photography hikes.

## PARTICIPANTS ENGAGEMENT

**Five videos were developed, each addressing a specific topic:**

### **Introduction to the National Park:**

Explaining what a National Park is and what makes it distinct from other natural areas.

**Coexisting with Wildlife:** Focusing on how to interact responsibly with wild animals. The Mercantour is home to a remarkable variety of species, some of them endemic, that can easily be disturbed by human activity.

**External Impacts:** Addressing the effects of external elements such as dogs, drones, and waste, and how these can negatively impact fragile ecosystems. Although this may seem obvious to some, the Mercantour (now seen as a refreshing refuge near a rapidly warming coastal environment) has recently witnessed the rise of inappropriate and unaware behaviours due to a growing number of visitors.

**Mountain Safety:** Outlining the basic principles of mountain safety in response to an increasing number of emergency calls from hikers not prepared enough. Archaeological Heritage: highlighting the Park's cultural richness, too often overlooked, including remarkable archaeological remains such as prehistoric rock carvings.

**Beyond the local collaboration, this interaction also connects with the Interreg BiodivTourAlps project, which aims to address the challenges of preserving biodiversity by reducing the environmental impact of tourism, improving knowledge, and better managing the interactions between humans and nature in protected areas.**

# Artistic activities

To reach and engage the younger generation, the videos adopt a manga-inspired aesthetic. Two human-like characters (a girl and a boy) alternate as narrators throughout the series. Accompanying them is a cute mascot, similar to a Pokémon, serving as the link between the videos.

The mascot often embodies the “wrong” behaviours visitors might display in the Park (leaving waste, approaching animals too closely, or using drones irresponsibly) while the two human characters gently correct and explain the proper actions to take. This narrative choice introduces humour and lightness, making the videos both educational and entertaining. The viewer learns through empathy and laughter, rather than guilt or admonishment.

All manga-style illustrations were hand-drawn by an artist from the PlayAzur Prod network, reinforcing the project's commitment to authentic artistic creation. From the beginning, the partners made a deliberate choice not to use AI-generated visuals, despite the efficiency it could offer. Instead, they opted for shorter, handcrafted videos to preserve the human touch and creative integrity of the artwork.

The videos combine motion design techniques to remain cost-effective without sacrificing visual quality. Though not fully animated, they feature expressive human characters and the mascot, placed within real photographs of the Mercantour landscapes. These photographs, drawn from the Park's own image database, were captured by professional and recognised photographers, adding a layer of authenticity and grounding the animated elements in the beauty of the actual environment.

Through this fusion of real imagery and stylised art, the project achieves an engaging balance between realism and imagination, bringing the Park's good practices to the knowledge of new audiences.



# Impact of the interaction

Although dissemination of the videos has not yet begun, the initiative has already laid strong foundations for long-term impact in communication, education, and scientific outreach.

The videos are designed for multi-platform dissemination ensuring adaptability across different social media channels (Instagram, YouTube shorts, TikTok, etc.). In particular, the Park is considering launching a TikTok account, a strategic step that would allow it to reach a younger audience, which is often less active on traditional platforms but highly engaged with short, visually dynamic content.

Each video will be accompanied by links to relevant scientific research and resources in its caption, bridging popular content with reliable, evidence-based information. This approach not only strengthens the Park's educational mission but also supports a deeper understanding of the scientific principles behind biodiversity conservation, ecosystem management, and sustainable tourism. Viewers will be able to move from entertainment to education, discovering concrete studies, articles, or ongoing research related to the video's topic.

Furthermore, the connections of the Mercantour Park with other French and European National Parks (notably with Italian ones, in relation with the BiodivTourAlps project) open the door to potential replication and shared dissemination strategies. Once published, the videos could be adapted to other protected areas, fostering a common European approach to environmental education and sustainable tourism communication.

# Good practices for replication

**For successful replication, DOWEL provides the following lessons learnt and good practices:**

**Adapt the formats to your audience.** For this interaction, partners really wanted to address a specific audience. The artistic format and content came second, to propose a tailored answer to the difficulty of addressing this audience.

**Encourage local artists rather than the use of generated AI.**

**Use humour to teach behaviours without moralising or alienating the audience.** Avoid portraying visitors as “bad” or irresponsible. Instead, help them identify with a character who models good behaviour and gently educates others — so they feel empowered to share and reproduce these messages themselves.



## Resources

The costs for the drawing and videos were of 3,000€.



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# ustainable Fashion: Power in the remake



**Domain:**  
Climate Action and  
Environment



**Place:**  
Norrköping,  
Sweden



**Duration:**  
Half-a-day workshop



**Target audience:**  
Young girls



# In a Nutshell

## Mission

The EU textile waste directive, implemented on 1 January 2025, is part of a wider push toward sustainable and circular textiles, aiming to reduce waste, extend product lifespans, and encourage recycling. But regulations alone cannot shift the industry: lasting change also depends on how people consume and value clothing in their everyday lives. Rethinking habits and expectations around fashion, especially among younger generations, is key to lowering the sector's ecological impact and opening space for more responsible, creative, and durable ways of engaging with what we wear.

## Artistic activities

A fashion designer was invited to train young girls to customise secondhand clothing.

## Engagement activities

This interaction took the form of a workshop that aimed to empower girls with the enthusiasm, confidence and basic skills to customise secondhand clothing so that they would change their mindsets towards secondhand textiles.

# IMPACT

Boosting confidence and creativity

Rethinking habits and expectations around fashion

Creating connections for a more sustainable fashion system

Broadening horizons of young girls from a socially vulnerable area

## WHAT HAPPENED?

This interaction was setup thanks to the collaboration between Olle Bush (ollebush apparel) a fashion designer who sews and designs clothes from recycled materials, Stadsmission, a non-profit, non-governmental organisation focused on providing social and humanistic services to those in need, and design researchers from RISE.

The objective was to engage with and inspire young girls in the conversation about the quality of textiles and their attitudes towards second-hand clothing. Participants were invited from Stadsmissionen and Trygga Orten; "Power in da Hood", an initiative that invites girls from a socially vulnerable area to activities that strengthen their empowerment and self-leadership.

### **PARTICIPANTS ENGAGEMENT**

The workshop took place in a community space in Navesta, Norrköping, where Power in da Hood gather once a week. The community space is in an old shopping mall that has been repurposed into spaces and offices for community gathering and social support services.

The invite was sent to members of "Power in da hood" as an additional event to their weekly gathering, and 20 girls signed up.

The two-hour workshop was hosted by the fashion designer with the support of the social leader and design researchers. The community space was arranged together by the organising collaborators to make the space feel tactile and engaging. Secondhand clothing was hung across the room, 2 large group tables set up with piles of clothes, tools, trims and other materials. Inspirational clothing pieces made from secondhand clothing and textiles from Olle Bush and from Stadsmission's own brand ReMake hung on clothing rails to be touched and tried on.

The social leader, innovation manager, and design researchers also joined in part of the workshop in addition with supporting the fashion designer during the workshop.

To round up the workshop, the girls had dinner together, during which those who wanted to could share any reflections they had of the workshop.

# Artistic activities

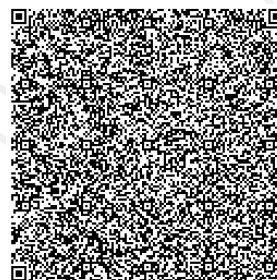
For the workshop, a wide selection of secondhand clothes (jeans, skirts, jackets, trousers, tops and more) was sourced from local second-hand stores run by a social organisation. Alongside these garments, a rich array of creative tools and materials was made available: needles, thread, fabric paint, stencils, and a variety of trims such as ribbons, chains, and buttons. Together, these resources created a playful and accessible starting point for experimentation.

The session began with the fashion designer sharing a series of his own creations, offering concrete examples of how discarded clothing can be transformed into something new, personal, and expressive. This introduction provided inspiration while also highlighting a set of techniques that the participants could try during the workshop.

Once the presentation was over, the participants were invited to choose pieces of secondhand clothing that spoke to them. With complete freedom to alter, embellish, or radically reshape their chosen garments, they explored a hands-on process of reimagining fashion. The atmosphere was intentionally relaxed, encouraging each participant to follow her own curiosity, while also fostering dialogue and exchange of ideas.

Throughout the session, the designer moved between the participants, answering questions, offering demonstrations, teaching small skills, and engaging in conversations about creativity, style, and sustainability. His role was less that of an instructor and more of a guide, helping the girls to unlock the potential of the materials in front of them.

By the end of the workshop, the garments had begun to take on entirely new identities, reflecting both individual imagination and a collective exploration of how fashion can be reinvented sustainably.



**vimeo**

Find the video on Vimeo !



# Impact of the interaction

The collaboration between the social organisation Stadsmission and the design researchers from RISE has laid the foundation for a long-term partnership, including the preparation of a joint application to a Horizon Europe call on the future of sustainable textiles. This connection bridges academic research, social innovation, and community engagement, showing how different actors can come together around the shared goal of creating a more sustainable fashion system.

For the young participants, the workshop did not end when the session was over. Many expressed a desire to continue experimenting with secondhand clothes, eager to build on the skills they had begun to develop. To support this, they were given the tools and materials needed to finish their individual projects at home, and a collective box of supplies was prepared for their community space, thus ensuring that creativity and learning could continue beyond the workshop. This gesture turned the activity into an ongoing resource, encouraging collaboration and shared ownership within their peer group.



The girls got started much faster than I thought, and many of them had an idea of what they wanted to do almost immediately. It felt like the majority of the participants were positively surprised by the workshop and would love to do something similar again.

Fashion designer

Several participants also articulated a wish to deepen their knowledge, asking to learn more advanced techniques such as machine sewing. For some, the experience sparked an ambition to pursue education in fashion design, highlighting how a single creative encounter can broaden horizons and open up new possibilities for the future.

Finally, the workshop will have a life beyond the participants themselves. A short film capturing the process and the energy of the event is being produced by Power in da Hood, who will share it within their networks. This not only amplifies the voices of the young people involved but also spreads awareness of sustainable fashion practices to a wider audience, demonstrating the ripple effects that such small-scale interventions can have.

# Good practices for replication

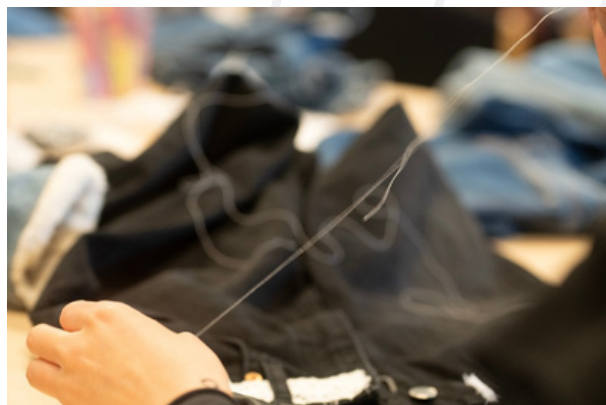
Looking to replicate this impactful experience? RISE has identified a few key ingredients to ensure success:

**Collaborate with a fashion designer whose style and personality connect with the participants.**

**Introduce low-barrier techniques that are easy to learn quickly and require simple tools.**

**Be flexible in what happens during the workshop, and let participants engage in a way that they are comfortable with.**

**Leave tools and materials for participants to continue after the workshop.**



## Resources

The second hand clothes were brought by the social organisation.

**Contact for more information:**

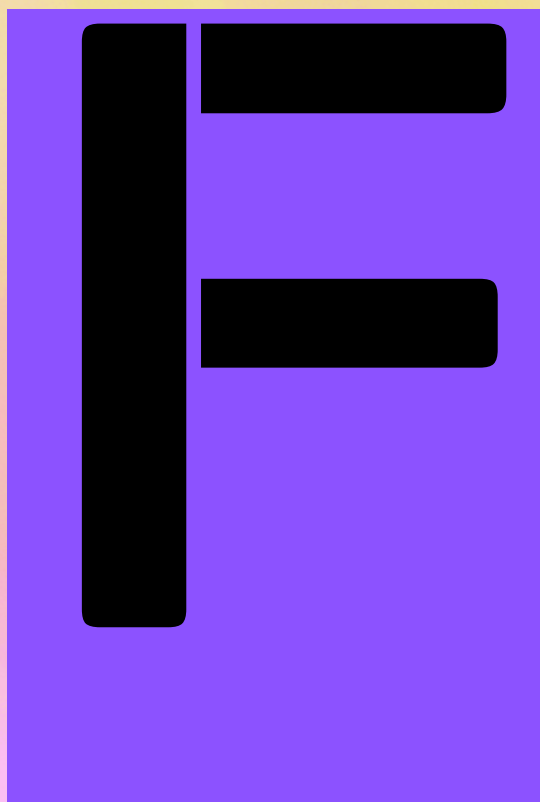
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# uture sound of cities



**Domain:**  
Climate Action and  
Environnement



**Place:**  
Helsingborg,  
Sweden



**Duration:**  
One day including a  
walk and a workshop



**Target audience:**  
General public, public  
authorities, researchers



## In a Nutshell

### Mission

In Sweden, efforts to reduce car dependence are closely tied to the vision of creating 15-minute cities, where daily needs can be met within a short walk or bike ride. The presence of cars shapes more than mobility: it fills public space with constant noise that affects health and wellbeing, often without people being fully aware of it. By paying closer attention to the sounds that define urban environments, municipalities can gain valuable insights into how streets and neighbourhoods are experienced, opening pathways to design cities that feel more livable and human-centred.

## IMPACT

Co-designing the city with citizens

Dialogue on people-centered urban areas

Linking mobility reduction to livability

Raising researchers and policy makers awareness on one of the impacts of mobility

### Engagement activities

TAs part of an EU funded research project (UVAR4US) about reducing car dependence to enable 15-minute cities, researchers at RISE had an interest in working with participatory experiences through multiple senses as a way to engage citizens in co-designing the future of their urban environments. The interaction was held during the kick-off meeting of the research project, ensuring that all researchers would be aware of the importance of engaging citizens to co-design.

### Artistic activities

The interaction was built on a collaboration with sound artist and musician Richard Widerberg, leading to two activities performed at the same time as visiting the city of Helsingborg: a soundwalk, and a sound recording workshop.

# WHAT HAPPENED?

The UVAR4US project explores how Urban Vehicle Access Regulations contribute to achieving the vision of a 15-minute city and affect the liveability of neighbourhoods. If such regulations aim to reduce car dependency, an underlying question emerges: what new social practices will fill the spaces once occupied by cars?

To engage citizens in co-designing the future of their urban environment, we first need to understand, and experience, the city through different senses.

The artistic intervention, developed through a common research process and discussions on the past artworks and experiences of a sound artist, revealed the importance of sound in shaping urban life, not just as noise to be removed and controlled, but as a defining part of a city's experience and identity.

## **PARTICIPANTS ENGAGEMENT**

To a sound artist, a city's soundscapes are like a musical composition with harmonious and dissonant elements that can be recombined in different ways. Artistic methods such as soundwalking help people to become attentive of how we are affected by sound and noise when living in cities, and how they shape our experience, sometimes even without us knowing it.

Such approaches have been explored in Helsingborg, in connection with, and during the kick-off of UVAR4US, with researchers, municipal representatives and citizens. Two activities were organised by a sound artist: a soundwalk, open to the public through municipality channels, and a sound recording workshop.

### **What is a soundwalk?**

A soundwalk is a guided walk that focuses on listening to the environment, all the sounds around us, and the atmosphere they create. Unlike walking with headphones, participants are invited to slow down and open their ears to the city's natural soundscape. It's a way to experience, based on many points of view. In Helsingborg, the soundwalk concluded with a group reflection on what participants had heard and how they felt.

The sound artist arrived on location prior to the activity to explore the city, learn about its history and related soundscape, and identify contrasting sound environments to prepare the route.

### **For the sound recording workshop,**

project consortium members had been asked to prepare audio recordings from their cities. Some participants emailed or uploaded these audio beforehand, while others played it from their phones during the activity.

# Artistic activities

**Richard Widerberg**, the artist, has worked for years with cities, urban experiences and participatory sound exploration in artistic and pedagogical settings. This long experience nourished the two activities designed for the interaction:

## Soundwalk

A public soundwalk was hosted with researchers and local resident citizens. He had curated a path through the city that the group walked together in silence behind the artist with the instructions to pay attention to the sounds and how they made you feel. The walked mixed busy intersections with silent back streets and both indoors and outdoors environment. Just as the artist said, learning to become attentive to soundscapes takes a while and as the activity progressed participants slowly entered a different state of mind, almost meditative, where more and more sounds became present and identifiable. The walk ended with participants standing in silence with closed eyes and taking in a soundscape down in the harbour that Richard had selected. Afterwards, the artist led a discussion about sound and urban environments. Participants shared their experiences of the walk, what was pleasant or unpleasant as well as memories of sounds in the city and how urban soundscapes evolve over time. It led to broader conversations about the changing environment of cities and the future soundscapes.

## Sound recording workshop

The second activity took place the day after, with researchers and municipality representatives from 4 cities. Researchers and city representatives from 6 different countries that gathered at the kickoff, previously had been asked to walk through their cities and record two sounds from their home cities with their mobile phones: one sound that they enjoyed and want to hear more off and one sound that annoys them and that they want to hear less of. These were used as a basis for a discussion about how we want soundscapes to be transformed in our cities and what interventions would lead to them changing. Interestingly, most annoying sounds consisted of traffic, highlighting the issues that the research projects wants to address, while the enjoyable sounds featured a great variety of both calm and busy locations.



[The Artist webpage](#)



# Impact of the interaction

Both the reflection with citizens after the soundwalk and the workshop with the sound recordings provided researchers with valuable insights into how people experience sound in cities and what it means to them. Those insights would not have been possible without the artistic method, which first enabled participants to become attentive to how sound is experienced through embodied activities. Indeed, walking together as a group and following a sound artist makes it easier to focus on listening rather than getting lost in your thoughts.

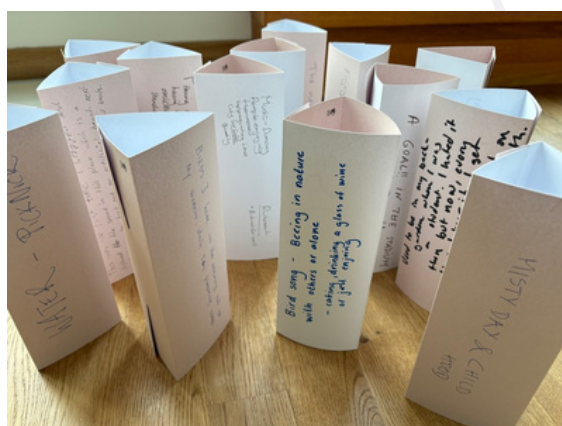
The research project will explore participatory methods in different phases of urban transitions and the collaboration with the sound artist has transformed the approach for how to engage citizens with artistic methods and how the project will work with incorporating different senses and experiences in working with citizens about future urban spaces.



A sound walk opens up our perception on several levels and always sparks engaged and interesting discussions. That was also the case this time in Helsingborg.

The method of working with sound artists in urban transformations is a method to be promoted further since local sound artists are probably the residents of a city that have paid most attention to how the city sounds and how those soundscapes affect us. Given the importance of soundscape for health, well-being and enjoyment in cities, and the ability of artistic methods to engage citizens in an emotional and embodied way, these collaborations could form important components of transformations of urban spaces to more livable and enjoyable environments.

# Good practices for replication



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

Do **not share the route in advance** and let participants simply follow the guide/ the artist and focus fully on listening.

**The soundwalk should last at least 10 minutes**, as it often takes around 5 minutes for participants to start noticing sounds they hadn't heard before. It can last up to 30 minutes, or even an hour in some cases.

Choose an obvious **place to meet up**, somewhere well-known to locals.

Be ready to **adjust the walk depending on the weather**. Tell the participants to dress accordingly for an outdoor activity and plan an indoor place to gather and end it if it starts raining.

## Resources

Intervention of a sound artist for two days : 2 500€

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# 20 SUCCESS STORIES

20 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:** CCIIs, environmental educators, Women



**Digital Clean Up Day (Sweden)**  
**Target groups:** professionals



**Rhymes 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





### **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



### **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)**

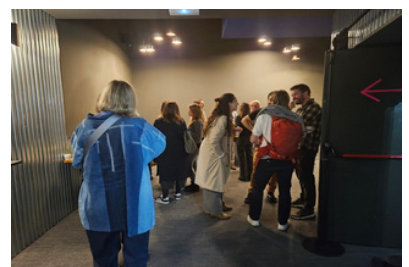
**Target groups:** women, including younger and elderly, general public



### **Empowering Tomorrow through skills development (France)**

**Target groups:** Students and Professionals

**HEALTH, WELL-BEING  
& DEMOCRATIC  
CHANGE** →



### **Smart-Spaces for reduced Stress and Well-Being (Spain)**

**Target groups:** CCI and Researchers

## HEALTH, WELL-BEING & DEMOCRATIC CHANGE



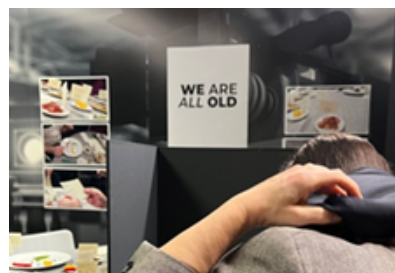
**Collaborative approaches for societal issues (Sweden)**

**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 edery 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.



In the Basque region of Urdaibai, where a fragile biosphere meets mounting environmental pressure, the project Mizelioa set out to do precisely that. Bringing together fine arts students, early childhood educators and scientific research, the initiative explored soil, mycelium and sound as both material realities and metaphors for interdependence.

**Koro Arregi Arrate, a cultural manager and consultant at DIVERSE** with a strong background in collaborative and cross-disciplinary work, was part of the core team behind the project. In this conversation, she reflects on the role of art as a driver of ecological awareness, the value of art-science collaborations and the quiet networks that sustain both ecosystems and communities.

**Ms Arregi, looking back on your path in cultural and project work, which personal experiences and convictions do you bring to your collaboration with GAIA and to an initiative such as InteractionSeeds?**

*I have always believed that creativity and art are powerful tools for social and cultural transformation, and that conviction has shaped all the projects I have worked on over the past years. Whether through an art exhibition or an audiovisual piece, I have no doubt about the impact artistic expression can have in shaping ideas and shifting mindsets. With this project, we wanted to explore how the arts could help raise awareness about the importance of caring for our local biospheres and ecosystems.*



**Koro Arregi Arrate, a cultural manager and consultant at DIVERSE**

# Arts beneath the Surface

**What specifically prompted you to become involved in the project “Mizelioa: Art, soil and a soundscape from Urdaibai”? Was there a particular moment when you realised you wanted to help shape this initiative?**

*My colleagues Ane, Gorka and I, with whom I worked on Mizelioa, come from a background in open innovation methodologies, which we studied at university. There, we learned that meaningful and impactful innovation happens when diverse perspectives meet. That is why I am naturally drawn to collaborative and cross-disciplinary projects like this one. There is something deeply stimulating about working with people whose expertise differs from your own, and that curiosity made me interested in joining the Mizelioa team from the very moment the project was presented to us.*



**“Mizelioa” brings together art, soil ecology and soundscapes. How would you explain, in a few sentences, what this format is essentially about to someone encountering it for the first time?**

*As I mentioned earlier, art has historically been used to shape ideas and raise awareness around important issues. With Mizelioa, that is exactly what we set out to do. The project was developed in collaboration with more than forty students from the Faculty of Fine Arts at EHU. Their works became tools for raising awareness about the ecological challenges facing the Urdaibai biosphere, approached through artistic perspectives. At the same time, two students from the Early Childhood Education degree created a soundscape to accompany the exhibition. The resulting fanzine brings these works and their creative processes together, acting as a bridge between academic research and artistic practice.*

**The Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve is a very particular place. How did its landscape, history and community shape your curatorial and conceptual decisions?**

*Urdaibai is indeed a singular and deeply meaningful place, not least because it is a protected area with strong significance for the local community. In recent years, however, it has also faced threats from proposed ecosystem alterations aimed at replacing natural spaces within the reserve. This tension made Urdaibai a compelling starting point for Mizelioa. It allowed us to explore not only the importance of soil health, but also the broader relationship between human intervention, conservation and nature.*

**You work at the intersection of cultural management, consultancy and collaborative projects. How does working with researchers and scientists reshape your role as a cultural manager?**

*I cannot imagine working in cultural management without collaborating with people from other fields. Research-driven and scientific expertise is just as essential as the cultural and creative dimensions. One cannot exist meaningfully without the other. I find it inspiring to co-create projects where art and science intersect, because although they may appear distant at first glance, both are driven by a desire to explore, decode and shape how we experience the world. These collaborations not only strengthen the work itself but also expand the collective knowledge we can ultimately offer to society.*

**Art and science collaborations are often dismissed as experimental or merely “nice to have. What did you observe in Mizelioa that challenges this view?**

*Describing art science collaborations as “nice to have” feels overly simplistic. In my view, these initiatives play a fundamental role in reshaping how people engage with culture and knowledge. With Mizelioa, we clearly saw how the project sparked genuine curiosity among those who encountered it. Scientific content can feel intimidating to non-specialists, often because it relies on technical language and prior knowledge. When those insights are communicated through art, they become far more accessible. Art creates a narrative and an emotional entry point that helps people connect and understand. Far from diluting science, this approach amplifies it and enables audiences to engage with complex ideas on their own terms.*



**Soil, mycelium and sound play a central role in Mizelioa, both as metaphors and as objects of investigation. What new perspectives did this approach give you personally?**

*This was my first time working on a project with such a strong scientific component, and I can say without hesitation that it fundamentally changed how I understand the environment, particularly in Urdaibai. The fanzine opens with the line: "The mycelium spreads through the soil, forming invisible networks that connect ecosystems." Before this project, I had no idea how essential mycelium is to soil health. I immediately recognised it as a powerful metaphor for the project itself. Much of what sustains our ecosystems happens quietly, without recognition, and is often overlooked. The structure of the fanzine reflects this idea, beginning with minimal spores and ending in a fertile space where ideas can ferment and transform. Through this process, I came to understand that change begins with small gestures, and that our future depends on nurturing these invisible layers of life.*

**Can you describe a situation where an artistic or auditory element enabled a discussion that conventional environmental education would struggle to open?**

*Two recent cultural works come to mind. Rosalía's album LUX and Alauda Ruiz de Azúa's film Los Domingos are very different artistic expressions, yet both succeeded in opening conversations that conventional communication often fails to initiate. LUX uses music and imagery to bring questions of spirituality, religion, identity and transcendence into mainstream discourse. Los Domingos tells the story of a teenage girl who chooses to become a nun, prompting reflection on emerging religious tendencies among young people. In both cases, art engages an entire generation in conversations around topics that would otherwise remain taboo.*

**Looking at your experience with InteractionSeeds, what conditions are necessary for art and science collaborations to become long-term practices rather than one-off flagship projects?**

*The uncomfortable reality is that many institutions support such initiatives out of obligation, or even as a form of greenwashing. It is crucial that they resist this impulse and instead commit to transparency, honesty and responsibility. Institutional and financial support is essential, but it must be grounded in integrity rather than appearances. Only then can we develop sustainable long-term practices instead of isolated and fragile initiatives.*

**If another European region wanted to launch a similar project connecting art, environmental research and local communities, which lessons from Mizelioa would you want to share?**

*First and foremost, it is vital to listen carefully to local voices. They often offer insights that go far beyond scientific data, revealing how people live in the region and perceive environmental challenges. At the same time, it is essential to involve experts from as many disciplines and artistic fields as possible. Multidisciplinary teams are key to innovation and originality. Finally, I would strongly recommend an intergenerational approach. Mizelioa was intentionally student-based, but I believe the project would have benefited from perspectives across age groups. The more diverse the viewpoints involved, the richer and more meaningful the outcome will be.*



# STEP BY STEP GUIDE

## How to make Art-Science Collaborations and Engagement work?

Artistic engagement is not an add-on to research and innovation projects. When implemented with intention, the collaboration between Art and Science becomes a powerful level to strengthen the societal impact of research projects and engage citizens meaningfully. Based on two years of experimentation across Europe, InteractionSeeds partners highlight a few essential principles for replication.

1

### **Start small but start early**

You don't need a large budget or a fully formed concept to involve artists. Some of the most impactful interactions began as modest interventions embedded in already planned outreach or consultation activities. What matters most is timing: Artistic collaboration works best when introduced early enough in a research project to shape questions, not only to illustrate answers.

2

### **Work with artists as partners, not providers**

The strongest outcomes emerged when artists are involved as co-creators rather than commissioned at the end. Artistic processes unfold differently from standard R&I workflows; allowing space for experimentation, iteration, and uncertainty is essential.

3

### **Cultivate local ecosystems with care and facilitation**

Art-Science collaboration thrives on trust, proximity, and attentive facilitation. Working with local cultural organisations, artists, schools, community groups and public authorities helps anchor projects in real local needs. Skilled facilitation and care create safe spaces for dialogue and mutual understanding, ensuring artistic processes empower participants rather than overwhelm them.

4

### **Design engagement with purpose**

Artistic approaches should respond to a clear intention: inspiring, listening, opening dialogue, or co-designing solutions. Avoid "art for art's sake" or one-off animations. Instead, choose and multiply the experiences that match the stage of your project and the purpose you seek; e.g. from soundwalks and murals to role-play, storytelling, or immersive experiences.

5

### **Value the process as much as the output**

Not all impacts are immediately measurable. Trust-building, shifts in perception, and new relationships often matter more than tangible outputs. Monitoring short- and long-term effects, and closing the feedback loop with participants, is key to credibility and learning.

6

### **Build maturity over time**

Meaningful Art-Science collaboration grows through learning cycles. Use self-assessment tools to reflect on your practices, identify gaps, and progressively move from testing to integrating, and ultimately leading innovative engagement approaches.



# Start now! - Seeds Self-Assessment Tool

Supporting the replication guide, the Citizen Engagement Self-Assessment Tool helps project teams reflect on and strengthen how they engage with citizens and stakeholders.

Designed for R&I stakeholders and intermediaries running citizen-focused projects or interventions, the tool examines how artistic approaches are integrated into engagement processes and how they contribute to meaningful participation and knowledge valorisation.

It assesses project practices across three dimensions: citizen engagement, turning research results into solutions, knowledge and skills, and the strategic integration of the arts. The tool can be used at different moments of a project—at the start, midway, and at the end—making it both a diagnostic and a learning instrument. By visualising strengths and gaps across these dimensions, teams can identify priority areas for improvement and choose concrete pathways to deepen impact and collaboration.

Macro topic	Subtopic	Circ-boost	Reconstruct	BIOBUILD	Inguma
Circular Economy	Circular design processes	x	x		
	Eco-friendly materials	x	x	x	
	Circular solutions in construction		x	x	x
	Sustainable value chains		x	x	x
Waste Management and Material Recovery	Efficient recovery and recycling of construction materials	x	x		
	Waste minimisation	x	x		
	Material reuse across sector	x	x		
	New technologies / digital solutions and platforms	x	x		
	Digital technologies enabling circular				

**WHAT'S NEXT?**

Get in touch [stephanie.petit@dowel.eu](mailto:stephanie.petit@dowel.eu)  
 Check the project resources for inspiration [www.interactionseeds.eu](http://www.interactionseeds.eu)

**How to move to the next level ?**  
[Read our guidelines, and check the progression pathways !](#)

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**YOUR PROJECT**

Please tell us who you are

Contact person  
 Name  
 Organisation  
 Position  
 Role in the project  
 Email (\*)

Please provide some information about your initiative or project:  
 Title (\*)

**WHAT'S NEXT?**

Get in touch [stephanie.petit@dowel.eu](mailto:stephanie.petit@dowel.eu)  
 Check the project resources for inspiration [www.interactionseeds.eu](http://www.interactionseeds.eu)

**How to move to the next level ?**  
[Read our guidelines, and check the progression pathways !](#)

**Level 0 - Starter**

No or very limited action has been taken on the three dimensions.

**Level 1 - Explorer**

Initial actions are implemented on an occasional or experimental basis. Engagement or artistic approaches exist but are not yet structured or embedded.

**Level 2 - Integrator**

Approaches are intentionally designed, integrated into the project's core activities and repeated over time.

**Level 3 - Leader**

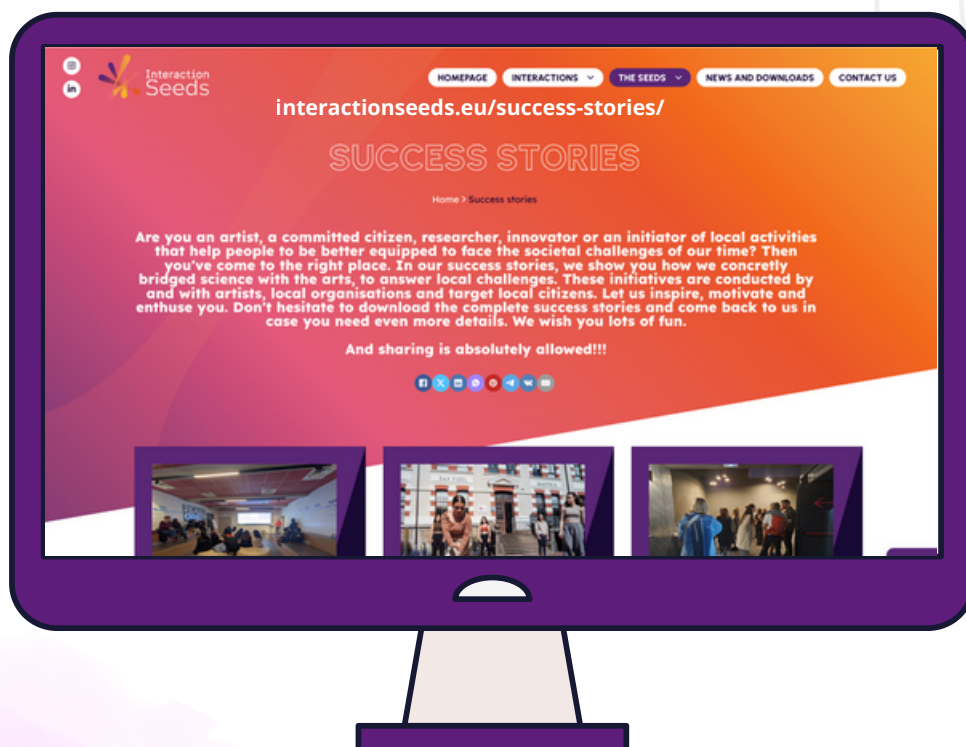
Engagement and artistic approaches are fully embedded in project activities, and sustained beyond individual activities. It demonstrates strong impact, learning loops, and the ability to inspire others.



Download - The  
Citizen Engagement  
Self-Assessment Tool.

# All Success Stories Online

The 20 success stories have inspired you, and you want to learn more. On our website [www.interactionseeds.eu/success-stories/](http://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!



GIE 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.



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