

PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL CENTRES IN DENMARK

Birgit Eriksson
Louise Ejgod Hansen
Karen Nordentoft



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All pictures are by the participating co-researchers themselves unless otherwise specified



INTRODUCTION



Photo Culture Shift's

There is at least one cultural centre in every municipality in Denmark – in the vast majority of municipalities, many more. This means that cultural centres are probably the most widespread form of cultural institution in Denmark. So, it is surprising that there is a lack of knowledge about them. This report provides insight into a central, yet underexposed area of cultural life in Denmark. The report is part of the DELTAG (English: 'Participate') project (2019-23), funded by the Nordea Foundation and initiated by the Culture Centres in Denmark association and Aarhus University.

The objective of DELTAG is to investigate and build the capacity of cultural centres and other cultural institutions which involve citizens. We focus on cultural centres as a framework for, and facilitator of, citizens' participation in culture, both as audience and producers of culture and as volunteers responsible for activities and for the organisation and management of the centre. In recent years, a broader spectrum of cultural institutions has evolved in ways that make them more similar to cultural centres, for example by providing citizens with the opportunity to participate in decision-making and to co-create. For this reason, we have included libraries and other cultural institutions that actively involve citizens.

DELTAG's Research Questions

The three core research questions in DELTAG are:

- Which participatory practices take place in cultural centres?
- How do these forms of participation relate to the different organisational features of the cultural centres?
- What are the outcomes and values of (the different forms of) participation for the participants, for the cultural centres and possibly for the local area or a broader area?

The project includes a quantitative and a qualitative study. The quantitative study mainly focuses on the first and second research questions, while the qualitative study addresses all three questions.

The quantitative study is based on a questionnaire sent to managers of cultural centres and public libraries in Denmark in 2021. In the qualitative part of the study, 28 employees and volunteers in cultural centres took part as co-researchers. The centres are dispersed throughout Denmark, including a cultural centre in Greenland. For 1½ years, the co-researchers studied their own centres, thereby increasing knowledge about participation: knowledge that now forms the basis for further development in their own centres. The data was then analysed by the academic researchers who discussed their findings with the co-researchers.

The purpose of the report is to share and disseminate the knowledge created, so it can also benefit a wide range of cultural centres, including those outside Denmark.

Keywords and Concepts

Participation: 'Participation' is a broad term. In cultural centres, it refers to many different practices in which the individual user is part of a larger social context. This could be a shared artistic experience or creative production, a verbal or physical exchange, or a collective learning or decision-making process. Cultural centres provide a framework not only for cultural, but also for social and democratic participation, and it was important to include the diversity of forms of participation that take place in cultural centres. We regard the various forms of participation as equally valuable, and do not distinguish between 'good' and 'less good' participation.

Cultural centre: DELTAG encompasses what we have referred to as cultural centres, and other cultural institutions that engage citizens. In the quantitative part of the study, we only included cultural centres and public libraries. We mapped cultural centres across Denmark using the definition of a cultural centre as an institution and/or place that gives space to professional and amateur cultural activities, provides for a combination of cultural and social activities, allows for citizen-initiated activities and focuses on diversity in activities as well as users.

More detailed descriptions of the project's methodology and results can be found in L.E. Hansen and K. Nordentoft: Kulturfuse i Danmark - et kvantitativt studie af et mangfoldigt felt 2020 www.pure.au.dk/portal/da/publications/kulturfuse-i-danmark and B. Eriksson, L.E. Hansen and K. Nordentoft: Deltagelse i kulturfuse

og andre borgerinvolverende kulturinstitutioner 2021 www.ebooks.au.dk/aul/catalog/book/429 In terms of methodology and concept, DELTAG is based on a European research and development project entitled RECCORD, in which participation was also both a research topic and method. Cf. B. Eriksson, C.M. Reestorff, C. Stage: RECCORD:

Rethinking European Cultural Centres in a European Dimension. Final Project Report, 2017, www.pure.au.dk/portal/files/118639411/RECCORD_Report.pdf

In the qualitative part of DELTAG we also included institutions and organisations that are not ‘cultural centres’ in the traditional sense of the word, but which practise and prioritise participation. This applies, for example, to a number of libraries, a theatre, an art museum and a village community organisation without a venue. The qualitative study regards all of them as cultural centres, acknowledging that they all encompass various forms of participation, even though they are very different in terms of organisation, activities, size etc.

Users: We use the term ‘users’ to refer to those people who come to a cultural centre and do something – as volunteers, as producers, as guests in the café or as an audience. This broad definition of users is closely associated with our concept of participation. We chose the term ‘users’ because it covers a broad spectrum, and because it is less value-laden than other alternatives. However, in the report, we also use the word ‘participant’ whenever we want to stress the fact that a person is taking part in something bigger.

Co-researchers: In this report, the term ‘co-researchers’ refers to the cultural centre employees, volunteers and managers who were responsible for DELTAG’s qualitative data gathering. In addition to cultural centre employees, other stakeholders also played a vital role in the research process – particularly representatives of the association Kulturhusene i Danmark (KHID).

This report presents the findings of both parts of the DELTAG project. The first part was a quantitative study based on a questionnaire distributed to a total of 630 cultural centres and libraries in Denmark in 2021. The second part is a qualitative study in which managers, employees and volunteers from 28

cultural centres participated as co-researchers, collecting and analysing data on participation in their own cultural centres.

Reading Guide

This report presents a summary of the DELTAG project’s overall findings regarding participation in cultural centres in Denmark. Chapter 2 presents the methods we applied in the project. Chapter 3 presents the key findings from the quantitative study and provides an overview of facilities, organisations, target groups, size etc. We also present our findings regarding the link between forms of organisation and types of activities and how users are invited to contribute to decision-making processes. Chapter 4 builds on the qualitative part of the project. Here we present a comprehensive analysis of the forms and values of participation in the 28 cultural centres. The structure of this part of the analysis is based on three elements that we regard as key to participation: the framework, the users and the activities. We start by focusing on the importance of the spaces of the centres as a framework for participation. We then examine the various roles of users in cultural centres and the various user groups that visit – and in some cases do not visit – the different cultural centres. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the different forms of participation and their values.

The conclusion sums up the findings of the DELTAG project and reflects on the ways in which the findings and methods of the project can be applied elsewhere, demonstrating especially the value of the huge effort of the co-researchers who tested the methods, collected data and in collaboration with the academic team produced knowledge on participation in cultural centres.



Culture night at Union Photo Daniel Liversage

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The Questionnaire

In the spring of 2020, the Centre for Cultural Evaluation, Aarhus University sent a questionnaire to managers of cultural centres and libraries throughout Denmark. The cultural centres had been identified beforehand on the basis of comprehensive mapping of the field of cultural centres in Denmark in 2019. The mapping was a prerequisite for the questionnaire, since there is no national legislation or support schemes for cultural centres and therefore no clear delineation of what a cultural centre actually is. In Denmark, there is a multitude of very different types of cultural centre – different in terms of organisation, funding and content. The study thus had to identify and define what a cultural centre is before distributing the questionnaire. The definition was based on findings from the RECCORD project and developed in collaboration with the association Kulturhusene i Danmark:

Cultural centres:

- 1. give space for both professional and amateur cultural activities on a stage, in exhibitory rooms, in open workshops, in open spaces and/or other facilities for the practice of art and culture;**
- 2. provide for a combination of cultural and social activities, the latter often supported by access to food & beverages;**
- 3. allow for citizen-initiated activities, the organisation of which is often supported by employees or volunteers; and focus on diversity in activities as well as users/user groups.**

To identify the cultural centres based on the criteria, we

opened the questionnaire with the question: How many of the following five facilities does the cultural centre have?

- 1. Workshops (e.g. fabric, wood, media/IT, maker space, paint, pottery)***
- 2. Food and beverages (e.g. sales from a café or user access to kitchen facilities)***
- 3. Stage/exhibition space for the presentation of e.g. theatre, film, music, pictures or lectures.***
- 4. Areas, open spaces or rooms with free access that users can use for self-organised activities and social interaction.***
- 5. Employees or volunteers responsible for assisting users who want to initiate and organise activities.***

Only cultural centres that have at least three of these facilities were invited to answer the rest of the questionnaire. Knowing that this selection mechanism did not capture the great heterogeneity of the field, we included an open question for those respondents who did not meet the criteria. This question was: "We would like to know a little more about your cultural centre and what you provide for citizens." These responses were assessed qualitatively, and some of these respondents were then re-invited to answer the questionnaire.

In the questionnaire, we chose consistently to include public libraries in all municipalities in the country. In some cases, libraries and cultural centres are fully or partly merged, and in many municipalities, libraries perform various functions similar to those of the cultural centres. In the study, we focused on libraries as cultural centres and did not include other aspects of their activities or functions such as the lending of books and other materials, for example.

A total of 308 managers of cultural centres completed the full questionnaire, which corresponds to about two-thirds of those who fulfilled the criteria for being a cultural centre.

The Qualitative Study

The co-researchers from the various cultural centres played a crucial role in the qualitative part of DELTAG. It could not have been done without them. Methodologically, DELTAG was based on participatory research methods. Applying participatory methods means that the academic researchers need to share the right of decision-making and definition. Different epistemological interests and forms of knowledge must be recognised, and the academics must be open to suggestions for adjusting concepts and methods, for example. The participatory method also meant that:

- *During the project, concepts and understandings were developed that contain elements from the diverse practices of the cultural centres and from current participation theories.*
- *Along the way, methods were adapted and applied by the co-researchers to match the reality of their specific cultural centres.*
- *In network groups, the co-researchers shared and discussed with each other their experiences of data collection and their analyses and reflections.*
- *As part of the research process, the academic researchers presented and discussed preliminary analyses with the co-researchers and received feedback that qualified their understanding of data.*

In other words, the analyses were discussed with the co-researchers on several occasions. This was out of respect for the fact that, while the academic researchers are experts in research methods and theories of participation, the co-researchers are experts in their own cultural centres and in the values and forms of participation existing there.

Where Do the Co-Researchers Come From?

The choice of cultural centres which the co-researchers in the qualitative, participatory part of DELTAG come from, has had a substantial impact on the findings. The cultural centres that took part were selected on the basis of an open call made by the Kulturhusene i Danmark association. 35 of the 52 applicants were selected by the project's steering committee based on an overall assessment of motivation and opportunity to take part in the project, an overall diversity of organisations, sizes, activities etc. as well as a geographical distribution of the cultural centres throughout Denmark. Already in the group of applicants, we identified certain imbalances that were transmitted to the group of selected centres. For example, there were relatively few applicants from Funen, and the region of South Zealand. Among the group of cultural institutions that are not cultural centres, the majority were libraries, while only one art museum and one theatre took part. There were relatively few applications from volunteer-run cultural centres. This was reinforced during the project, as more of the volunteers dropped out as co-researchers. Altogether 7 co-researchers dropped out, partly due to the COVID-19 shut-down of both cultural centres and the university. But other circumstances such as work pressures or job changes among the co-researchers also played a role. There is a list of the centres and co-researchers that took part on Page 36-37.

In DELTAG, each of the co-researchers studied their own cultural centre using five qualitative methods: graphical mapping, document analysis, observation, interviews and auto-ethnography. The combination of several methods enabled us to shed light on the topic of participation from different perspectives. We hereby improved the chances of finding aspects of participation that might have escaped attention if we had used fewer methods. In addition, the use of five very different methods – based on collected and produced, creative and systematic, visual and linguistic data – made it more likely that all co-researchers could productively use their skills and ways of working, learning and thinking. Not everyone succeeded with all methods, but overall the diversity of both methods and co-researchers secured a highly comprehensive and rich data set.

Data type	Data received
GRAPHICAL MAPPING	61 photos of maps 6 explanations, 2 others
DOCUMENT ANALYSIS	215 files (photos and PDFs of documents such as flyers, posters, statutes as well as analyses of the documents)
OBSERVATION	107 photos 42 structured observations 5 field notes 8 other documents 3 audio files
INTERVIEW	6 photos 104 audio files 79 transcriptions 41 analyses 28 methodological reflections
AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY	27 texts 3 photos

INTERVIEWS aim to gain insight into the perspectives of the interviewees. In DELTAG, the purpose of the interviews was to investigate how users experience and understand their own participation in the activities of the cultural centre. However, the numerous interviews also address other topics that the interviewer and/or user deemed important.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHY is a method that can be used to retain one's own experience, reaction and reflection during the research process. The method seeks to describe and analyse personal reactions in order to understand them as cultural experiences. The method can make it easier to become aware of one's own pre-understanding and how it can influence the data gathering process. Autoethnography is a subjective method, allowing for personal reactions, thoughts, and insights.

Autoethnography by the co-researcher at Institute for (X)

- A FIELD TRIP

asphalt, stable gravel, red stone, paths, corridors, spaces, someone installs a window in a container, others serve coffee out of one, the sound of a table saw, the smell of cigarette smoke, inside the old freight railway workshop (C), the ceiling is high, always a new construction project underway, i feel welcome, tree, i feel at home, tree, being greeted, hi, containers, now in layers, an artificial lake, a kiosk, the smell of spray paint, the ring road bridge in the distance, a path leads me all the way out there, distance, position, access, nails, building (K), clay, music from a sound studio, vikings with tools, a communal kitchen, same path, new mood, life that pulls, back, the sound of a screwdriver, remember to spot firewood, a bicycle repair shop, a wine cellar, i smell smoke from a fire wagon, trains in rows, skate ramps, hi, steel, rust, plants, signs, letters, A, C, E, F, buildings, i have two keys, DAK, Design, Architecture, Art, offices, speakers, an old degassing oven, always coffee, toilets, shower, bar, a copy-space is deleted, a tattoo artist opens, place, practice, space, my practice is invisible, loft, domesticity, jam, cat limb, private, public, inside, outside, construction fence, neighbours, lidl, the new school of architecture, housing construction, piling, the smell of fried chicken, i'm going home, i'll be back, i have to give them something back, in, out, near, far from, in the middle of, "STAY CONFUSED",



Godsbanen ceramics workshops Photo: Godsbanen Aarhus

The quantitative study covers a wide range of cultural centres in Denmark, including public libraries. In the study, we asked about the five facilities we had defined as characteristics of a cultural centre: workshops, food and beverages, stage/exhibition space, open spaces and employees/volunteers supporting the users' own activities. Of these five facilities, cultural centres on average have four, the most common of which is a stage or exhibition space (92%) and the least common is workshop facilities (52%). The data shows that cultural centres provide a physical setting for a wide range of activities: those in which users themselves can be active producers, those where they can be an audience and those where they can meet for social purposes.

More than 50% of the centres have either no or 1-3 employees, while the remainder are distributed evenly between 4 and 50 employees. Due to the fact that the majority of cultural centres has a low number of employees, and because cultural centres aim to facilitate user-initiated activities, the vast majority of cultural centres have a significantly higher number of volunteers than paid staff: only 10% of the cultural centres have no volunteers, 43% have between 11 and 50 volunteers, while 5% have more than 200 volunteers.

Activities

One of the findings of the study is that users come to the cultural centres for a variety of reasons. Approximately one third of the users come to express themselves practically/creatively (33% to a high degree) or to see art created by others (32%). Because cultural centres provide both options, it is interesting that they play an equally important role for users. However, users are not motivated solely by the activity itself. They also come to engage in societal issues or contribute to civil society (20%), and to educate themselves and learn new things (29%). However, the most important motivation for coming to cultural centres is to be part of a social community, and the managers of the cultural centres indicate that this is a hugely important motivation for more than half of their users (61% to a high degree).

Cultural centres offer a wide range of activities, in which citizens can participate as an audience and as active producers (see figure 1 and 2)

All the listed audience activities feature in at least 50% of the centres. This demonstrates that the cultural centres provide a wide range of audience activities. The activities in which citizens are active producers are also common across the cultural centres, although the figures for each individual activity are generally lower than for audience activities.

Figure 1: Activities in which users can actively participate

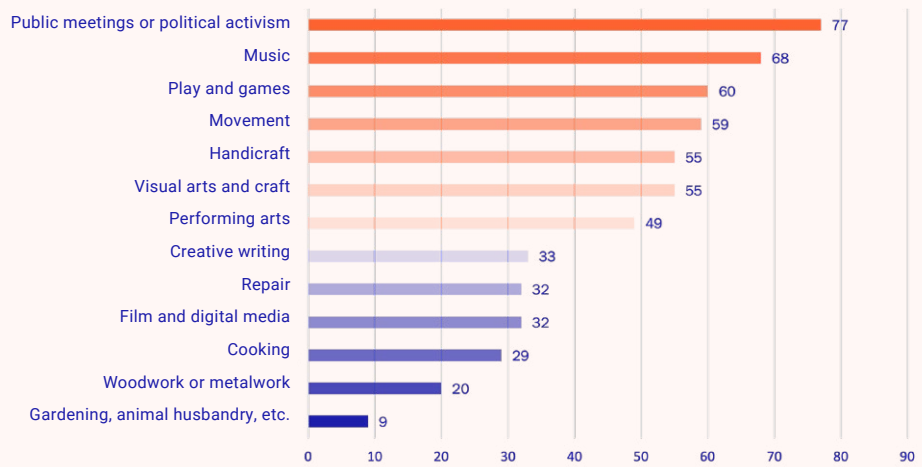
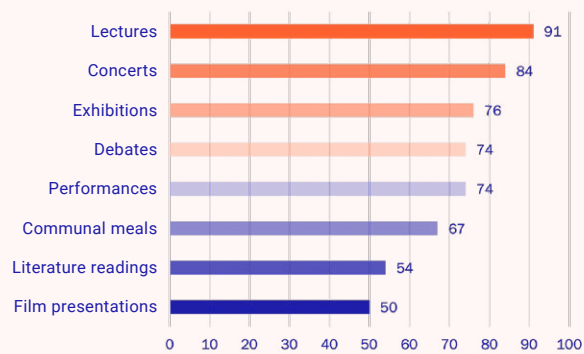


Figure 2: Audience activities



Involvement of Citizens and Different Groups of Organisers

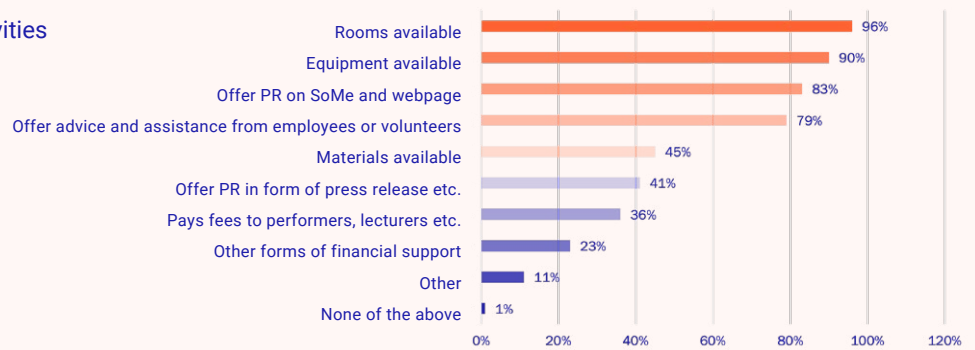
One important hallmark of cultural centres is the fact that users not only have the opportunity to participate in a number of cultural activities, but also to get involved in the organisation of specific activities or the cultural centre in general. Only 1% of cultural centres do not support citizens' initiation of cultural activities. The remaining 99% of the cultural centres encourage users to initiate and implement activities and support that in various ways.

The figures indicate that cultural centres provide a wide range of facilities and support (equipment, premises, digital communication platforms). In addition, between a third and half of the centres provide materials, offer PR in the form

of press work, and pay fees to performers. These forms of facilitation require more additional resources from the cultural centre, either in terms of finance or staff.

It is first and foremost the employees and the permanent volunteers who organise activities in the cultural centres, but other users as well as different associations are also responsible for a fair share of the events, while people from the municipal administration and professional artists are much less active. Thus, together with the salaried staff, it is predominantly members of the community who organise events and activities in cultural centres.

Figure 3: Initiation of cultural activities

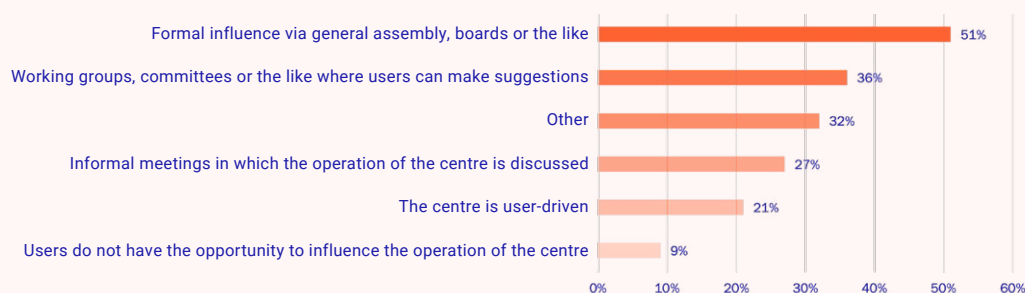


The Influence of Users on the Work of a Centre

For the vast majority of cultural centres, it is important that users can influence the activities and operation of the centre. 60% of the cultural centres strongly agree with this, while 28% partially agree. By extension, the vast majority of centres provide users with various opportunities to exert influence. In 50% of the centres, the users have formal influence through the annual general meeting, a seat on the board or the like. In just over

a third of the cultural centres there are working groups, user committees etc., where users can come up with ideas and make suggestions. Almost as many centres provide more informal ways of influencing via e.g. meetings and the opportunity to propose new ideas. Only just under 10% of the cultural centres do not give users any influence on the operation of the centre. About every fifth centre is user-driven, which means that all responsibility and decision-making are in the hands of the users.

Figure 4: Opportunities for users to influence the operation of the centre



User Groups and Numbers

As a part of the study, we investigated the number of people using the cultural centres, who the typical target groups are, and what is important for the cultural centres in terms of their users. In general, it is most important for cultural centres to have a broad audience (72% completely agree), but many also find it important to have a large number of users (59% completely agree), and that the different users meet and interact (54% completely agree). The fact that different user

groups are under the same roof and often also interact with each other demonstrates that cultural centres function as democratic institutions stimulating dialogue and exchange of points of views. Because cultural centres are generally multifunctional, they can provide a setting for interactions between people with different backgrounds, values, lifestyles, education etc.

Most cultural centres aim to attract a wide range of different target groups. The two most prevalent target groups are adults and the elderly, who are regular users of nine out of ten cultural centres. Children, young people and families with children regularly visit six out of ten centres, while socially vulnerable citizens and citizens from ethnic minorities are regular users in just over every third centre. Relatively few of the cultural centres have specific target groups. Those that do tend to be cultural centres for children and young people, and only exist in large towns and cities.

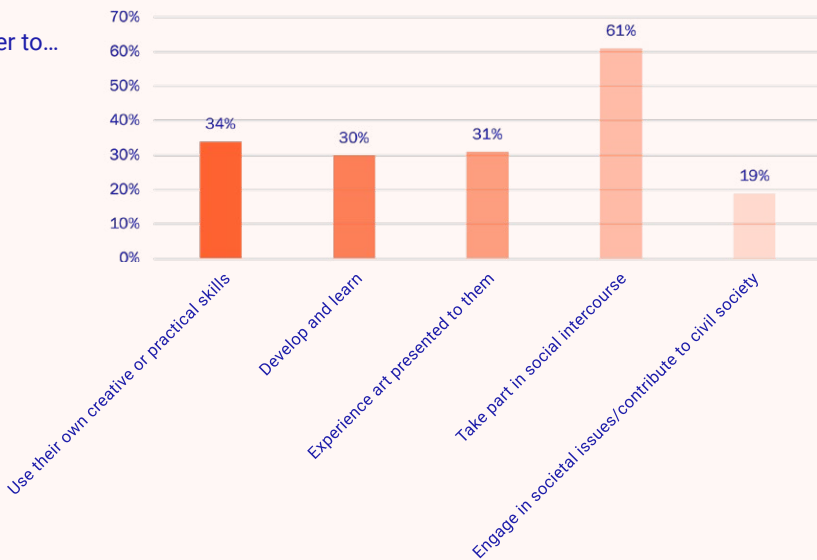
There is huge variation in terms of how many users the cultural centres have, and this is spread relatively evenly across the whole spectrum from under 5,000 a year to up to 500,000 visitors. Just under 30% of the centres have up to 5,000 visitors, another 30% have between 5,000 and 50,000. Approximately 30% have 50,000-500,000 users, while 4% have more than half a million users a year. About one-tenth

answered that they do not know the number of users, which may indeed be difficult to calculate, given that these are open centres, where users can come and go without registering or paying an entrance fee.

The study shows that cultural centres not only offer citizens the opportunity to participate in various cultural activities, but also provide a setting for citizens to organise their own cultural activities and take part in decision-making, either on the basis of formal user democracy or some other forums that involve citizens. Cultural centres in Denmark are very diverse which means that there is no such thing as ‘the typical cultural centre’.

The diversity of cultural centres is equally evident in the second part of the study – the qualitative study – in which co-researchers from 28 cultural centres and other citizen-involving cultural institutions investigated the facilitation and practices of participation in their own cultural centres.

Figure 5: Why are the users visiting?
Proportion of users estimated to attend in order to...



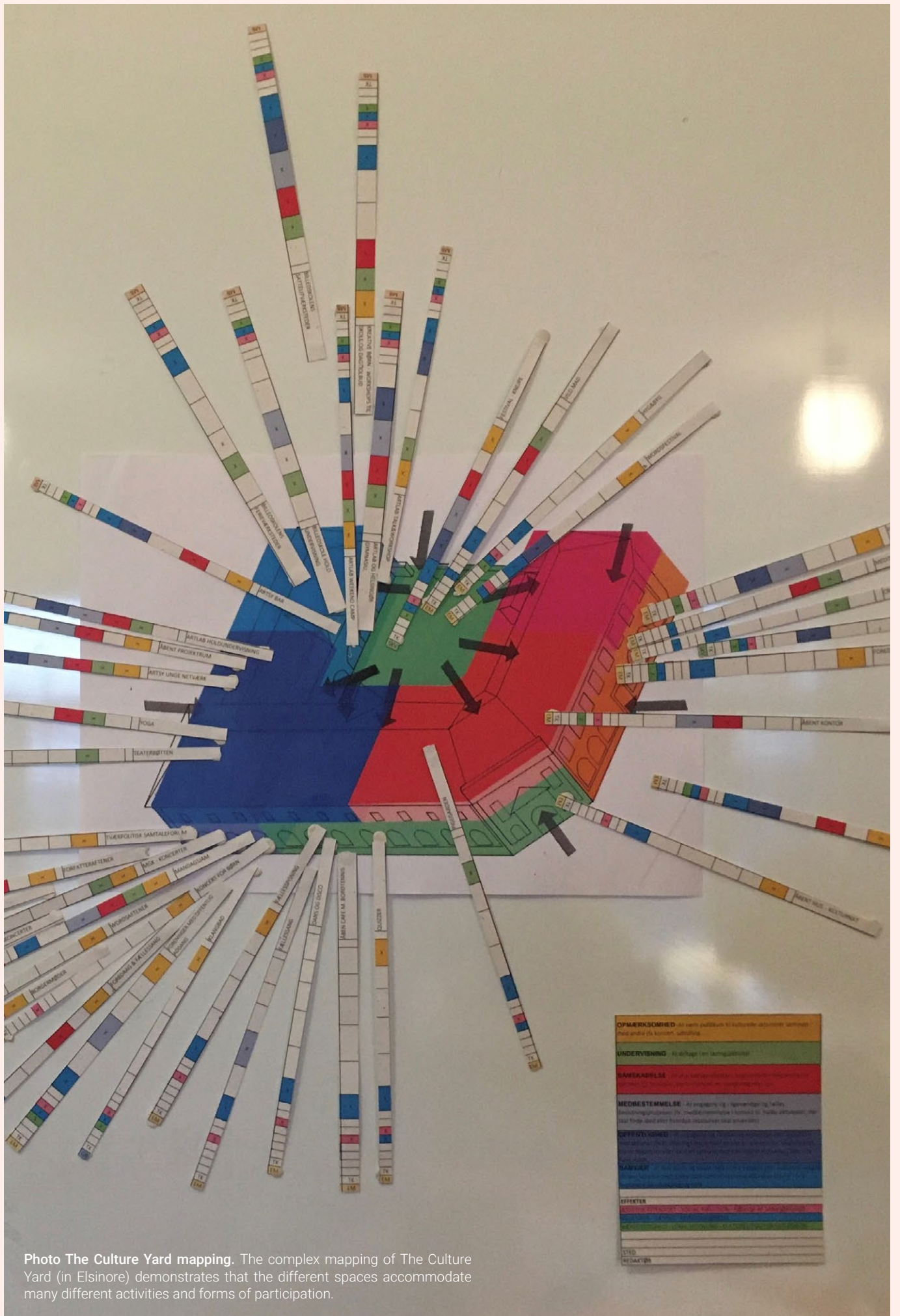


Photo The Culture Yard mapping. The complex mapping of The Culture Yard (in Elsinore) demonstrates that the different spaces accommodate many different activities and forms of participation.

This part of the analysis reviews the data that the co-researchers from the various centres generated by applying the five methods: graphical mapping, interview, observation, document analysis and autoethnography. We examine patterns and outline the common challenges, the importance of different institutional contexts and the values of the cultural centres' diverse forms of participation.

The analysis begins by looking at the importance of space as a framework for activities and communities in cultural centres. We then present the different people who come to cultural centres as volunteers, users etc. Finally, we examine the forms of participation that take place in cultural centres and the values associated with participation in cultural centres.

Spaces in Cultural Centres.

It almost goes without saying that a cultural centre is a physical setting for various cultural activities. What is not quite as obvious, but what our study makes clear, is the fact that the physical framework, the activities and the participation of citizens are closely interlinked. We understand the interaction between space and forms of participation broadly and are not solely interested in tangible, physical spaces (e.g. the number of square metres) but in what goes on in the spaces: how they frame, facilitate and sometimes hamper different forms of participation. A central trait of cultural centres is that they provide many different activities, so usually this requires multifunctional spaces that cannot be designed for a single purpose or targeted at one particular user group.

The diversity of cultural centres clearly reveals that there is no single, ideal, physical form of a cultural centre. It depends on the local context, on the users and on what forms of participation the centre needs to provide a setting for. It is worth bearing in mind that the value of space is largely created in interaction with people and activities. Many interviews conducted by the centres highlight the social aspect and its importance in terms of how the spaces are experienced. However, there is no doubt

that physical space has its own contribution to make, and that this contribution is important to consider in everything from the overall architecture to the arrangement and placement of people in the space. Does the activity require a small space that provides density and intimacy, or is a large space with room for movement better? Should the atmosphere be homely and cosy, or is something more neutral called for?

Another important aspect to consider is how different user groups meet or do not meet each other in the cultural centre. Does crossing paths create disruption and frustration? Or does it create interaction and mutual inspiration? In this respect too, physical space is essential. Many of the observations highlight the size of the rooms. It may be that when a room is too large it creates a less comfortable atmosphere. But there is no question that too little space can also be a problem, especially when it affects the quality of an activity. The size of the physical room is thus crucial and can help facilitate different forms of participation and, for example, support the feeling of togetherness around the activity.



Photo of Fredensborg Library. An observation from a gamer workshop at Fredensborg Library. The co-researcher says: "The space in the room allows the participants to freely move and run around, and jump etc. They can easily see what's happening on each other's computer screens and what the others are doing."



Photo of The Tobacco. A room in The Tobacco in Esbjerg. The study discovered that some people regard it as homely, and some as promoted.

Our study identifies different aspects of spaces in cultural centres.

The Social Space

To a great extent, cultural centres constitute a framework for social spaces and communities. These are described, for example, as a “family” with “the same spirit and values”. But the social space also affords the opportunity to meet (a diversity of) other users, whom one would not otherwise meet or interact with. The hallmark of the social space is the fact that it accommodates many different activities at the same time, and that these activities can either be physically delimited (for example, by taking place in different rooms) or mixed to varying degrees.

The Homely Space

A number of observations describe the atmosphere in cultural centres as “homely” or “cosy” – in contrast to institutional and formal spaces with a lack of atmosphere and emotional connection. What is valuable here is the fact that, despite being cosy, a cultural centre is not a private space, but a neutral area, to which everyone has an equal claim. Given that for cultural centres social intercourse is important, a positive emphasis on a homely atmosphere makes sense. However, in this context, there is an important question. Cosy for whom? Our data shows that what some people regard as homely has an alienating effect on others. It is, therefore, a dilemma and a balancing act. On the one hand, a homely, cosy atmosphere engenders social intercourse, creating a positive contrast to the institutional aspect. On the other hand, there is something positive about the fact that a cultural centre is not ‘someone’s’ home. In this way it can serve as a third place where different users can meet without anyone being on home turf.

The Inviting Space

Especially for target groups who experience different kinds of barriers vis-à-vis entering a cultural centre, it is important for a centre and its spaces to come across as inviting, and for it to communicate what opportunities the centre offers. Quite simply, it is important for people to easily find their way around the centre and to see what kind of activities it provides and where these takes place. The inviting space is also a space where we feel welcome and do not have to worry about doing something 'wrong'. In some cultural centres, the architecture is a barrier to the intention of creating an inviting space. Fancy architecture does not necessarily communicate the diversity of life and opportunities for expression inside the building. This means that the physical building in itself may act as a barrier for some people. In this context, new physical facilities or measures outside the building itself may attract users who do not normally visit the cultural centre. This may be important for any cultural centre that wishes to reach new target groups.



Photo of Medborgerskab (Co-citizenship). An outdoor. space that, during the corona pandemic, created another form of exchange and community which did not require simultaneous physical presence. Nor did people have to enter the actual building of The Town's House in Roskilde.

The Exclusive Space

Many cultural centres accommodate a number of different target groups and work actively to ensure that they all feel welcome. Often spaces such as the café, where people can come without pre-booking or any affiliation to the centre, are important. However, the fact that a café is located in a cultural centre can also keep people away. As one user said in an interview, "culture" can be "a very scary word." Accommodating many different user groups is clearly a challenge. However, even within a narrow user group, it is important for the existing participants and managers in the centre to work consciously to ensure that new users feel like part of the community.

The spaces of cultural centres are not only constituted by the physical setting. They also interact with the local community of which they are part. Whether a cultural centre has its own building, shares a building with others or is spread out over several premises, location and local context have an impact on how the physical spaces work. The local context and the physical centre help create a physical, cultural, architectural and social framework for the (local) people who come to cultural centres.

The users of cultural centres do not only come to participate in cultural activities organised by others. At the heart of citizen involvement in cultural centres is the fact that the citizens who come are regarded not only as consumers of culture who receive a product or service, but also as active users. This means that there is no clear distinction between organisers and participants, and that (as we also saw in the quantitative analysis in Chapter 3) those responsible for activities vary from centre to centre. They can be centre employees, local associations, small companies, public agencies, permanent volunteers, private citizens, artists, various cultural actors or NGOs that have office space in a centre. Of course, not all cultural centres have such a broad spectrum of organisers. In many of the small cultural centres there are no or few employees, and the vast majority of the activities are typically organised by associations and groups of volunteers. But even in large, established cultural centres, the involvement of civil society in organising and arranging activities is crucial.

The fact that there are many organisers and groups of organisers in cultural centres also means that citizens can participate in the work and activities of centres in a number of different roles and through several channels. For example, they can come to the centres as audience members, as producers and as users of the rooms and facilities of the centre. They can help organise the activities of the centre as individual non-organised citizens, as volunteers, as owners/employees/ associates of an association or small business – all with a more or less stable association with the centre. They may also be members of the board or other bodies in the centre, or employees.

Of course, the different roles and functions may overlap. Take, for example, someone who sits on the board of a cultural centre. They will also take part in voluntary, practical work and use what the centre has to offer. Thus, organisationally, the various actors responsible for organising activities for themselves, each other and/or others make up a complex picture.

In general, many cultural centres clearly aim to embrace both broad and specific target groups, attempting to balance the different considerations for the different target groups. We did not specifically ask the co-researchers to investigate the composition of their user groups, but the material they submitted illustrates certain patterns, examples of which we will now highlight.

Volunteers

There are many ways in which individuals can get involved as volunteers. In many cultural centres, volunteers are generally associated with some specific ongoing activities, for which they have a specific task. They move in areas out of bounds to other users and help to organise and host events. They are more 'at home' in the centre than others and both feel and take co-ownership of the events in the centres. In our interviews, many of the volunteers describe this as something extremely significant and rewarding in their lives, but some of the young volunteers also refer to the risk of burnout when working for free.

One way in which volunteers take co-ownership is by developing their own 'Volunteer Vision', which has been the case at KU:BE. The Volunteer Vision is more operational than an overall vision document, focusing, for example, on how the involvement of citizens can be achieved on the basis of specific actions. The vision also caters for niche interests and new trends in the surrounding community.

Cultural centres can also be platforms for volunteers who regard themselves as activists. In our qualitative data, this applies mainly to young users. One of them describes what she and the others do as "creative activism", emphasising the quality of the fact that there is a short distance from idea to action. A user from another cultural centre reiterates this idea.



Photo of Senior Citizens Communal reading in Roberthus - Vejle Libraries

Through the community, she engages in social debate and encourages other young people to do the same. Her interest is climate activism. But activism can be directed towards a wide range of topics, and for her it is important to help establish an alternative space with "a community that really takes action – a community that wants to change things."

As can be seen, volunteers in cultural centres contribute to, and are motivated by various agendas. What they all have in common, though, is the fact that they assume responsibility and (co-)ownership for something bigger than themselves: whether brewing coffee for an event, working with a vision for the development of the cultural centre, creating exciting activities, establishing comfortable communities and forums for political debate, or working for an even greater and far-reaching common good.

Senior Citizens

Senior citizens are generally a very widespread user group in Denmark's cultural centres. The questionnaire reveals that

88% of cultural centres view senior citizens as regular users, surpassed only by a few percent by the most prevalent target group – adults. Senior citizens are a valued target group, and many of them greatly appreciate the activities. But several cultural centres regard their predominance as an issue. There are several thoughts about why, and what challenges it creates. One user says:

"When you come in, there are wheelchairs and a bit of a bingo atmosphere. There really is. (...) We have just accepted it as part of character of the town, given that there are many senior citizens in the residential areas where we live."

The user views the large proportion of elderly people in this cultural centre as a result of the demography. She expects the cultural centre will change in tandem with the demographic evolution of the town. However, several of the cultural centres would like to attract a more diverse range of users.

Young People

Some of the cultural centres that want to be for ‘everyone’ also want to attract more young people. Many find them a difficult target group to reach. The questionnaire shows that only about half of all cultural centres in Denmark have young people coming regularly. This includes libraries and the youth-specific cultural centres.

When focusing on young people in our empirical data, they come across as a very heterogeneous user group, ranging from teens to young adults. There is also a difference between how the cultural centres approach young people and how they are perceived by other user groups.

KU.BE, a cultural centre for children and young people, works strategically to attract more users from the young core target group. According to the co-author’s document analysis, they do this on the basis of separate communication:

“There’s only one bulletin board at KU.BE, and it is dedicated to what’s going on for young people in the centre. There are not many young people in the centre, and since KU.BE opened in September 2016, it has been difficult to attract this particular target group. So, this issue is nothing new, and we are working on several fronts to develop the centre to make it more youth friendly.”

Another way in which KU.BE is attempting to make the centre attractive to young people is to consistently separate children and young people by providing different access options for the two user groups. The reason is that young people do not want to go to places where children also are, or which indicate that children also go there.

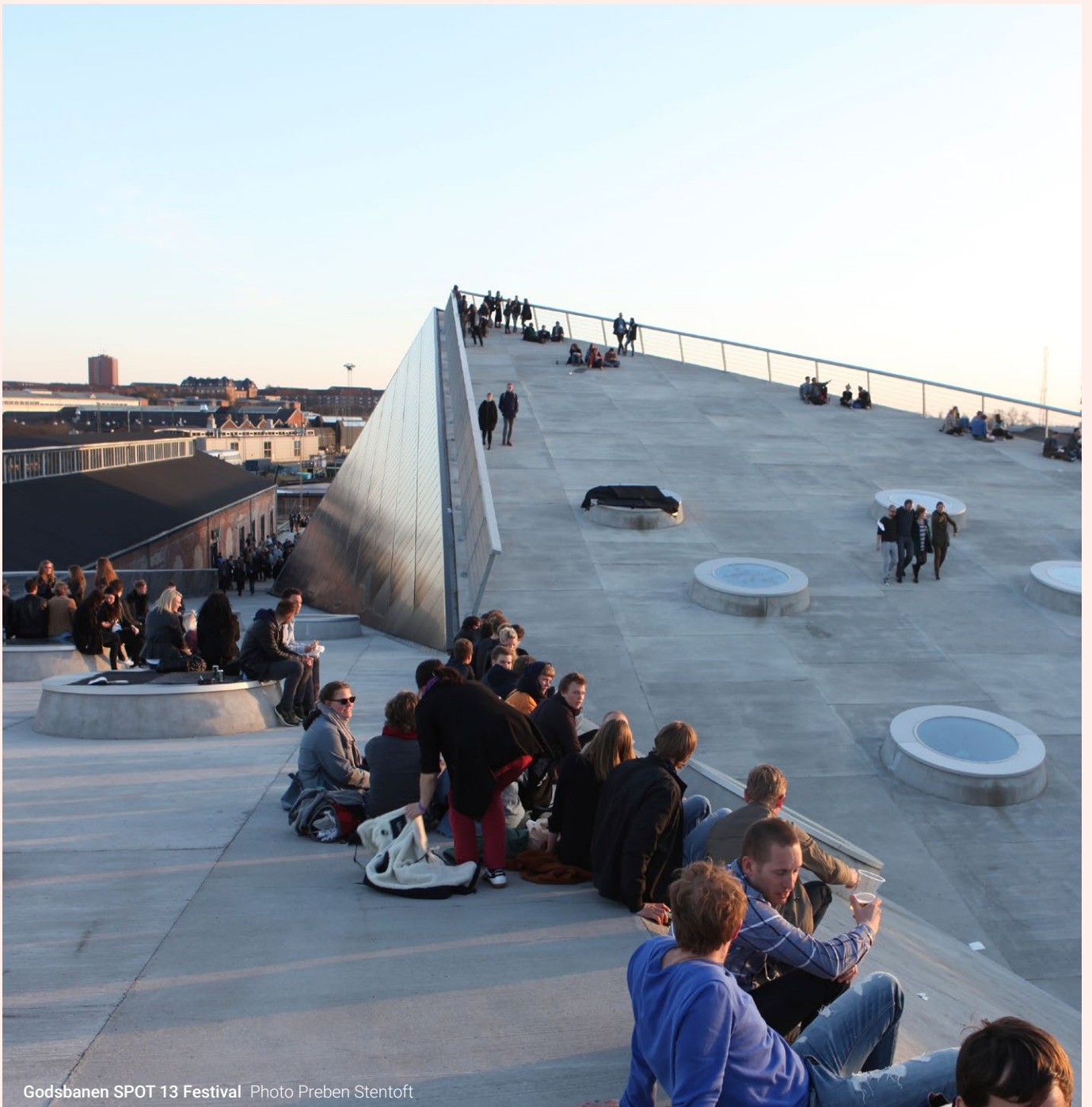
Several of the co-researchers come from cultural centres for young people, which provide opportunities to create frameworks and targeted activities for creative young people.

For example, UKH, a cultural centre for young people, is both a cultural production venue and a place to hang out, eat together and experience other people’s art, and which has an associated residence for a mix of vulnerable and well-off young people. According to the interviews, the users are mainly creative youths and international students. Some of the interviewees highlight the diversity of the user group, while others point out that there is a lack of both young people with minority backgrounds and “young, smart people from downtown.”

There is a wide gap between the interests and needs of older children, teenagers and young adults, and even within the different age groups there are just as many varied interests as among adults and senior citizens. An interesting observation vis-à-vis young people as a target group is the fact that, to a great extent, it is adults who call for activities and meeting places on behalf of young people. Some find it difficult to accommodate the forms of participation initiated by the young people themselves. In one of the cultural centres, a group of young people took matters into their own hands, which the co-researcher describes in an autoethnographic account:

“They come here – in twos, in groups, alone, and they settle down. With soundbox, with crisps, energy drinks, scooters, cigarettes and a lot of other things that they are not allowed to bring. Last autumn, we tried to make it clear that if they did not have anything specific to do in the centre, they should find another place to hang out. This story ended up in the media and at the political level, and the conclusion was – far from reality – that ‘of course the young people have a right to be in the cultural centre.’”

This and other examples show that cultural centres often lack something that can appeal to the various youth groups. Some centres are just places to ‘hang out’ – places for ‘co-habitation’ – a form of participation described in the following section.



Godsbanen SPOT 13 Festival Photo Preben Stentoft

Cultural centres provide a setting for diverse activities: from pottery courses to concerts, from lectures to communal dining, from bridge to civic meetings, from film screenings to festivals. Forms of participation distinguish how the user is involved or takes part in the activities. The huge variety of both activities and forms of participation is a hallmark of cultural centres. They, and increasingly also other cultural institutions, are experimenting with initiatives where they not only present art, but also become meeting places. This paves the way for a wide range of participatory formats. One of the strengths of cultural centres is the great diversity of forms of participation, where users can not only engage in the ways they expect or plan to participate (e.g. participating as an audience), but also have the opportunity to get involved in other, perhaps unexpected forms of participation.

One important point about forms of participation is the fact that one activity may feature numerous forms of participation. In a pottery workshop, the different participants can, for example, prioritise co-decision, knowledge sharing and social intercourse very differently, just as the organisers of an activity may have imagined forms of participation other than those that play out during the activity. This can sometimes lead to frustrations and conflicts both between organisers and users, and between different user groups. However, the diversity of forms of participation can also coexist or open up new horizons. Something that starts off as a course, in which teaching is key, may evolve so that social intercourse and then co-creation and co-decision become more prevalent forms of participation for the individual or group involved. In our empirical data, these types of transformations occur far more often than conflicts.

Building on the results of the RECCORD project (Eriksson, Reestorff and Stage 2017), in DELTAG we have identified eight different forms of participation. All of these eight forms are prevalent in the cultural centres we studied, and are presented next.

FORM OF PARTICIPATION	DEFINITION
CO-HABITATION	Sharing the centre and its spaces with other users or cultural actors (e.g. using a workshop together or meeting in the café or kitchen)
AESTHETIC ATTENTION	Participating as an audience for cultural events or products (e.g. a concert or exhibition)
KNOWLEDGE SHARING	Attending educational activities (e.g. creative workshops or lectures)
CO-CREATION	Creating specific objects or events together (e.g. a festival, exhibition or communal meal)
PHYSICAL EXERCISE OR PLAY	Participating in physical or play-based activities (e.g. dancing, parkour, cards or board games)
SHARING-ECONOMY	Sharing materials and technical equipment with others and engaging in sharing economies (e.g. related to recycling or lending)
PUBLICS	Engaging in collective, verbal exchange (e.g. at a public meeting or in a reading group)
CO-DECISION	Engaging in democratic decision-making processes (e.g. about the activities of the cultural centre or the role of volunteers)

Co-habitation is by far the most widespread form of participation in our empirical data. In this form, participation consists of sharing the centre and its spaces with others. One key characteristic of cultural centres is clearly that people meet, exchange and share rooms and facilities with other people. This sharing of the centre and its spaces is valuable in so many ways, but is not always without its problems. However, the existence of conflicts between user groups is not necessarily negative. It can form the basis for democratic organisation and agency.

Aesthetic attention, in which we participate as an audience to gain artistic experiences during concerts, exhibitions, performances, readings, festivals etc., is also widespread in cultural centres. Our empirical data reveals a general trend, which is that aesthetic attention, the various ways of experiencing art in cultural centres, is often linked with something other than the art itself. Users often mention the experience of art in the same breath as something else: for example, the feeling of togetherness, the conversations or the new inspiration or knowledge it creates.



Knowledge-sharing is also very widespread. This form of participation covers a wide range: from formal teaching to informal knowledge sharing between users; from one-off lectures to long courses; from the dissemination of information to creative workshops, which in turn include both open drop-in activities and more formalised, continuous courses. However, a distinctive feature of many cultural centres seems to be the often reciprocal, user-to-user knowledge-sharing, often referred to in our empirical data as “helping each other”. This link between learning, helpfulness and, incidentally, also communal coffee making, underscores the informality of the learning situations, meaning that they border on co-creation.



Brainsmart. Lecture at Fredensborg Libraries

Co-creation also exists in many centres and in many forms. In some places, associations or other stakeholders help fill the cultural centre with content (e.g. a cinema, a café or concerts). This is often formalised in fixed agreements and contracts, while the associations themselves may be based on the more informal co-creation of their members. Elsewhere, activities (e.g. concerts or communal meals) are co-created by more informal groups of professionals and users or by individual users alone. Many of the activities in cultural centres would not be possible without this co-creation.



Co-creation with Lego in KU, BE

Physical exercise or play occur in many forms: in board game cafés, computer games, yoga, dance, gymnastics for senior citizens, multiplayer jigsaw puzzles or organised associations dedicated to bridge, chess etc. Interviews and observations describe how all these activities involve great concentration and passion. This form of participation, in terms of sensory concentration and as a social catalyst, may seem similar to aesthetic attention, but is in fact different, as the participant must act physically in order to participate in the activity or game. In some cases, this form of participation may be more playful, relaxed and thus inclusive.



Silent disco in Culture Shift's Play the Line

Sharing-economy includes donations, exchanges and the distribution of tangible objects, for example, the possibility to donate or exchange toys, books or dressing-up clothes. In some centres, different forms of sharing economies are becoming increasingly prevalent. Often combined with repair cafés, sharing physical resources is also about contributing to greater sustainability.

Publics, where we engage in collective debates and conversations, like the other forms, often appear in combinations. According to our interviews, one of the key aspects of this form of participation is the collective conversation with others. Many users emphasise how reading groups or meetings around other artforms spark conversations and open up new horizons with people who are different from oneself. But publics also emerge around activities other than artistic ones, for example at meetings and so on.

Co-decision, in which democratic decisions are taken, happens at both micro and macro levels. In cultural centres, co-decision is not merely about meetings, but also about the right to use physical and other resources – and, for example, also about visibility on bulletin boards, social media etc. In cultural centres with often very limited physical and economic resources, access, visibility and other privileges are often unevenly distributed. However, this uneven distribution can also be positively interpreted as a consequence of the fact that some centres work strategically to support initiatives by particular (groups of) citizens.

Co-decision rarely exists at all levels, but most co-creation processes involve some degree of co-decision in the form of doing things and ‘do-ocracy’ - a popular term in some cultural centres. The users do not often have influence on the organisational framework of their activities - in other words, at the macro level. Who grants access to the different rooms and resources – and to the forums where co-decision takes place? Who defines the goals? Who assigns and carries out tasks?

Who is rewarded/paid for this – and how? Despite these issues, however, our data also reveals that cultural centres provide certain opportunities for participation that do not exist in more traditional cultural institutions.



Exchange shelf in The Town's House



Communal reading in Roberthus



Co-decision Kulturhusene i Danmark

As a single activity can include multiple forms of participation; each form of participation can be valuable for the individual user in several ways. The values attributed to the form of participation can also differ from user to user.

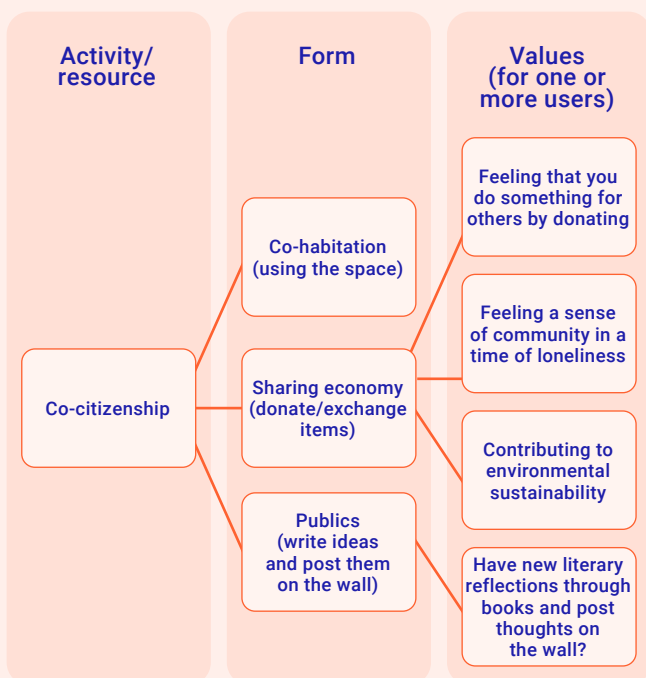


Diagram: Example of relations between activities, forms of participation and values based on Medborgerskab/Co-citizenship.

DELTA – again based on the results from the aforementioned RECCORD project – identified ten different positive values of participation. We also detected certain negative effects of participation. Volunteers, in particular, who do a great deal of work, may need more recognition and influence, and risk stress and burnout. However, in our study, the negative aspects figure far less than the positive values of participation, which we define and describe next to.

The values of participation

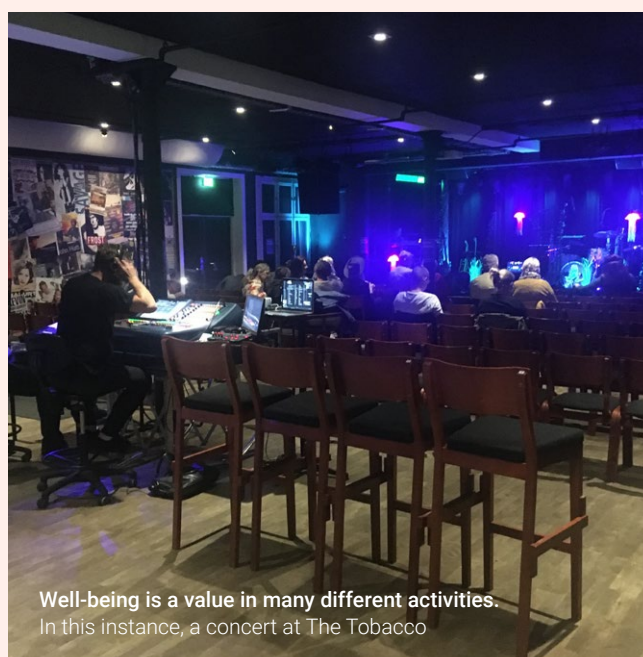
WELL-BEING	Feeling good physically and/or mentally: e.g. by having fun or feeling that you are doing something good for others.
FEELING OF TOGETHERNESS	Getting a sense of belonging with others: e.g. through shared experiences or conversations.
SOCIAL INCLUSION	Including marginalised individuals or groups e.g. by inviting them in, by asking for their advice or by acknowledging them in some other way.
EMPOWERMENT	Achieving agency vis-à-vis self-defined goals: e.g. by having the courage to organise a new music festival or workshop.
CULTURAL/ POLITICAL REFLECTION	Reflecting critically/creatively on society and alternative ways of living together.
SUSTAINABILITY	Creating environmental sustainability.
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT	Changing the cultural centre or the local area: e.g. by transforming an outdoor area or influencing local politicians/officials.
LEARNING	Acquiring special knowledge or skills: e.g. playing music or collaborating.
CREATIVITY	Relating creatively to materials and surroundings.
AESTHETIC INTENSITY	Having one's senses stimulated and being influenced and moved by artistic/cultural experiences.



Godsbanen Photo Anton Jackson

Well-being, when we feel good physically and/or mentally, is the most frequently occurring value in our empirical data. This can result, for example, from being physically active or having a positive artistic experience. A number of examples from cultural centres illustrate that well-being results from a combination of feeling good yourself and experiencing and perhaps contributing to the well-being and joy of others: e.g. by creating good events, helping others or providing coffee and cake. In the vast majority of the descriptions we have, well-being is not only individual, but also associated with the next value: the feeling of togetherness.

The **feeling of togetherness** is also a very frequently occurring value. A sense of belonging to the local community, co-habitation, shared experiences and conversations add up to an important motivation for using cultural centres. In many of the observations, the co-researchers highlight the energetic conversations that different types of users engage in, and how happy they seem to see each other. In our interviews, many users highlight how relationships and communities can arise out of common interests, but also transcend many of the usual divisions. In several places, we see that the feeling of togetherness can extend beyond the cultural centre, when long-term participation forms ties that include much more than the joint activity.



Social inclusion is related to the feeling of togetherness and also entails a sense of belonging together, but specifically includes marginalised individuals or groups. Social inclusion can occur both in activities targeting specific groups or in open activities. A number of cultural centres provide activities targeted at vulnerable groups. In this context, we see descriptions of how users are not only accommodated in relation to their vulnerability, but also get together around – often creative – activities where they get the opportunity to show their strengths and contribute actively. This duality of recognition and openness is an important quality in terms of the inclusivity of cultural centres.

Empowerment, where a person – individually or collectively – finds the courage and drive to realise self-defined goals. This does not occur in an empty space, but often presupposes the realisation of other values. Empowerment can be a value both for a citizen with a diagnosed issue who needs courage to enter into social contexts and for a young creative who is bursting with ideas for events and activities. It does not arise without recognition from the people around them.

Cultural/political reflection is about being stimulated to analyse society critically and creatively, and to consider alternative ways of living together. This can occur in lectures, citizens' meetings etc. In the quantitative study, most cultural centres (76%) state that they provide this activity. In our qualitative study, however, cultural and political reflection is often associated with people creating things. In the context of cultural and political reflection, many users of cultural centres clearly see greater value in creating alternatives locally than in merely thinking about and discussing them (cf. 'do-ocracy' above).



Cultural and political reflection can also arise in the context of art experiences: in this instance, Bee-ing on the Open Stage at Godsbanen.

Sustainability can be environmental, social and economic. In cultural centres, environmental sustainability in particular is a value and figures in their activities. This happens, for example, in the context of exchange and recycling sites, and communal meals. However, it can also be argued that cultural centres work in a way that is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable by being open to many users, who share workshops, equipment etc.

Local development, where people change the cultural centre and thereby perhaps the local area too, is a frequent theme in our data. Interaction with other stakeholders in the local area, such as politicians or officials, is more rarely mentioned. In continuation of the aforementioned 'do-ocracy', many people express a need for, and a great deal of confidence in, citizen- and user-driven change, which makes bottom-up development an important value in cultural centres.

Learning, where users acquire new knowledge or skills, is a value in many situations and for all age groups. Learning can involve the development of practice. This is important in cultural centres, where learning processes also occur in the interaction between employees, permanent volunteers and looser affiliates. This learning can relate to events, technical equipment and participatory processes. Learning is rarely formalised and can also occur in the context of activities such as lectures, which present new knowledge, or workshops, in which people try their hand at new creative skills.

Creativity, where we stimulate our ability to relate creatively to materials and surroundings, is also a frequent value in cultural centres. The joy of creating something oneself – from a small piece of handicraft or a painting to a festival – often comes up in our empirical data.



Sustainable carnival costumes in The Town's House and Creative Exchange Market in Culture Shift.



Volunteers help out with cultural events and thereby influence local development: in this instance, in the bar at a concert in Kulturgrøden at Holbæk Libraries



Creativity for everyone. Babies making art at Nygadehuset - Aabenraa Libraries and Culture Centres

Aesthetic intensity, where our senses are stimulated and we are affected and moved by artistic/cultural experiences, generally occurs in the context of the different artistic genres. Our interviews articulate the different thoughts, understandings, feelings and forms of communication that aesthetic intensity can provide. It is an essential value in many of the experiences available at cultural centres.

The values described above all figure in our empirical data. We could view them as 'effects' of participation. But we do not use that term, because there is no unambiguous causal connection between an activity, via a form of participation, to a value as an effect. As mentioned, one activity can involve many forms of participation, which in turn can have many values, and there is no clear cause and effect between activity and value. The motivation of the users plays an important role in what they participate in (the activities), how they participate (the forms) and what meaning they attach to these activities and forms of participation (the values). Note, we say "plays a role", rather than "determines"; in cultural centres, users can also discover activities they did not know existed, engage in forms of participation they did not plan for, and experience values they had not expected. Cultural centres therefore also play an important role in accommodating a broad spectrum of activities that enable different forms of participation and enhance or at least acknowledge the various values attached to these.



Performance with Marco Flores at Union

Conclusion

DELTA is the first research project to focus on cultural centres in Denmark and on how they create frameworks for different forms of participation. We identified how cultural centres are not only an enormously widespread type of cultural institution, but are also very different from one another. They frame a number of different activities, including cultural experiences in which the users are the audience or active participants, and activities which users have organised themselves. As meeting places, cultural centres are important democratic platforms, because they bring different groups together, because they provide opportunities to engage creatively and join communities, and because the shared decision-making provides direct experience of democratic processes.

Two general conclusions emerge from the questionnaire. The first is the fact that there are a large number of cultural centres throughout Denmark. Cultural centres thus constitute an essential part of the cultural infrastructure, ensuring that all citizens in Denmark have the possibility to practise and experience culture. Therefore, cultural centres are a key – but often overlooked – element in a national cultural policy discussion about access to culture. The second overall conclusion is the fact that there is a great diversity of cultural centres in Denmark. This very diversity means that we cannot paint a picture of ‘the typical cultural centre’ or ‘the average cultural centre’. Especially when it comes to finances, organisation and size, there is a great deal of variation. But overall, our study reveals that the cultural centres have a number of facilities, including open spaces and stage/exhibition rooms, which accommodate a wide range of cultural activities. Another hallmark of cultural centres is the fact that they combine various activities, both in terms of genres and in terms of different forms of participation, in which the users themselves are producers.

The qualitative study identified how cultural centres have a number of different spaces, actors and activities and provide diverse forms of participation. The forms of participation

arise in the encounter between the activities and the physical and organisational opportunities, on the one hand, and the motivations and values of the users, on the other. In other words, a cultural centre can organise certain activities, but cannot create certain forms of participation alone. Conversely, a cultural centre may well make some forms of participation impossible – by not having the spaces, activities and organisations to generate them. Co-habitation can be hampered by the lack of a kitchen or a café. Physical expression and play can be obstructed if it is not prioritised. Co-decision can be impossible if there are no forums for it. Our study shows that cultural centres can facilitate a wide range of forms of participation, particularly by creating inclusive centres with space for, and acknowledgement of, the diverse motivations of the users.

On the basis of the data from the co-researchers, we were able to document that participation involves a range of different values. We did not conduct large-scale, systematic user surveys that clearly map a causal correlation between activity and effect. It was more the opposite. Based on a qualitative study of what values arise in cultural centres, we clarified that values, like forms of participation, cannot be controlled. Of course, a cultural centre can prioritise some values (e.g. learning and creativity) as a guideline for what activities it provides space and resources for. But it has no control over users’ priorities, which may be different and varied (e.g. the feeling of togetherness for some, and aesthetic intensity for others). This in no way alters the fact that participation is valuable, but makes it clear that the values must be found in the specific activities and forms of participation. By developing a participatory methodology and a terminology of the forms and values of participation, DELTA has hopefully provided cultural centres and other cultural institutions with a tool and language that can enhance their perception of when, how and why these values manifest themselves, and the role both they and users can play in these processes.



Godsbanen Photo Anton Jackson

The People Involved in DELTAG

Aarhus University:

- Research group: Professor Birgit Eriksson, Associate Professor Louise Ejgod Hansen and PhD fellow Karen Nordentoft, School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University.
- In addition: Hans-Peter Degn (Head of Centre for Cultural Evaluation), Line Nordentoft (research assistant), Julie Johanne Svendsen (intern) and Rasmus Kvist Boelsgaard (student assistant).

The association Kulturhusene i Danmark:

Members of the DELTAG steering committee:

- From the secretariat: Søren Søeborg Ohlsen (Project Manager until 2021, originator of DELTAG), Mathilde Lund Larsen (Project Manager from 2022) and Jonas Grøn (Strategic Advisor from 2022)
- From the Board: Peter Ørting (Chair until 2020), Mette Strømgaard Dalby (Chair 2020-22), Jan Mols (2021-2022) and Trine Sørensen (from 2022).

Participating cultural centres and co-researchers

- Anders Sejerøe, Holbæk Libraries
- Anne Birgitte Hundahl Langkilde, Roberthus – Vejle Libraries
- Arnakkuluk Jo Kleist, Katuaq, Nuuk
- Bent Jørgensen, Dronninglund Library
- Catalina Odile Sommer, Torup Thing
- Christina Skov Petersen, Fredensborg Libraries
- Elisabeth Fromm and Søs Krogh Vikkelsøe, The Culture Yard and The Toll Chamber, Elsinore
- Erik Schwarzbart, The Arts' Smithy, Roskilde
- Felis Dos, Iben Tryel and Ruth Morell, The Youth Cultural Center UKH, Aarhus
- Hanne Dam, West Town Common House, Horsens
- Inge Vahlgreen, Settle'n Share, Roskilde Festival
- Jan Mols and Ida Maagaard, The Tobacco
- Jesper Lemke and Cheni Marquard Foo, Union, Copenhagen
- Jonas Bøgh Larsen, Institute for (X), Aarhus
- Karsten Damgaard and Anja Marie Aagaard, Odense Youth House
- Lene Bjarke Skov, Culture and Health Center Inside, Hammel
- Lærke Harbo and Andreas Poppelbøl Hansen, Huset, Copenhagen
- Marianne Grymer Bargeman, ARoS Aarhus Art Museum, Aarhus
- Michael Mansdotter, The Triangle Library and Cultural Centre, Nørresundby
- Mie Hein Jørgensen, The Town's House, Roskilde
- Nana Weien Okholm, KU.BE, Copenhagen
- Pernille Hede Moody Jensen, Nygadehuset, Aabenraa Libraries and Cultural Centres
- Rachel Faulkner, Culture Shift, Billund
- Rebekka Evangelia Vetter, The Culture Hotel, Rønne
- Søs Vibeke Nielsen, Children's Cultural Center Amar'
- Trine Sørensen, Godsbanen, Aarhus
- Uffe Borg, Manegen, Sæby
- Ulrik Skeel, Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium – Odin Teatret, Holstebro

The following cultural centres were also involved in the process, but for various reasons did not contribute to the actual data collection: Insp! in Roskilde, Gimle in Føllenslev, Jonstruphus in Jonstrup, Markant in Børkop, House of Residents in Aarhus, Det Nordatlantiske Fyr in Hanstholm and Pulsen in Høje Gladsaxe.

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Participation in Cultural Centres in Denmark

Authors:

Birgit Eriksson

Louise Ejgod Hansen

Karen Nordentoft

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Like the two previous, initial, and lengthy reports, this report is published as part of the research and development project DELTAG (PARTICIPATE), which is carried out as a collaboration between Aarhus University and Kulturhusene i Danmark (The Association of Cultural Centres in Denmark) from 2019 through 2023. Both parties have contributed to the financing of the project, which is furthermore supported by the Nordea Foundation with 3.3 million DKK.

The collaboration between all three parties has been carried out in accordance with general good standards for research, and the researchers have not been subject to any obligations concerning the achievement of specific research results. The overall topics of the two initial reports were discussed with the management of Kulturhusene i Danmark, but were, like the selections published in the present report, texts and images, decided by the authors. Kulturhusene i Danmark has had the opportunity to read all three reports before publication, but there has been no desire or opportunity to influence the results or conclusions drawn. The Nordea Foundation has had the report for review regarding correct crediting of the fund's contribution.

As the report has the character of dissemination rather than a new research contribution, it has not been subject to external review. Peer reviewed research articles published so far are:

Eriksson, B.: *Bonding and bridging: Social cohesion in collaborative cultural practices in shared local spaces* (2023), doi: 10.18261/nkt.26.1.3.

Eriksson, B. and Stage, C.: *How participatory are we really? The pitfalls and potentials of participatory research practices* (2023), doi: 10.2478/tjcp-2023-0002.

Hansen, L.E. and Faulkner, R: *Co-researching participation in cultural centres* (2023).

At Aarhus University, the project is anchored at the Department of Communication and Culture and the Center for Cultural Evaluation.

Cultural centres provide a setting for diverse activities: from concerts to pottery courses, from lectures to communal dining, from bridge to civic meetings, and from festivals to film screenings. They exist all over Denmark and are spaces for citizens' participation in culture. The vast variety of activities, users and forms of participation is a hallmark of cultural centres, which bring people together as audiences and producers of culture and as co-organizers of activities and frameworks. The report presents results from the first research project on these cultural centres.



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