



FLEX: COLLABORATION

Festivals Learning Exchange Program



TOOLKIT: COLLABORATION WITH SOCIETY



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ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT: COLLABORATION WITH SOCIETY

WorkInCulture's [Festivals Learning Exchange \(FLEX\)](#) Toolkit of learning content and resources will help you learn the basics of creating and implementing a collaboration for your festival or organization.

In this toolkit you will look into the theories and strategies of participation, transition and experimentation that can inspire new collaborations both within and outside of the arts & culture sector.



The following content was developed and curated by Fanny Martin of Art of Festivals, a not-for-profit strategic production agency that partners with artists, institutions and communities to bring more art into everyday life and more life into the arts sector. The original content was developed and delivered as part of a pilot program held between January – May 2022 for arts and heritage festival organizations located in Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa, and Sudbury.



Meet our Curriculum Consultant and Facilitator: Fanny Martin



Fanny is an international creative producer & facilitator specialised in festivals, networks, interdisciplinary projects and art in public space. Born and educated in France, she developed an eclectic freelance project portfolio in the UK before moving to Canada and founding [Art of Festivals](#), a creative company that designs transformative events to spark change and enchant everyday life. In collaboration with artists, educators, researchers, technologists and activists, her work focuses on producing memorable shared experiences, shaping change strategies, experimenting with participatory frameworks and designing learning & evaluation programmes.



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KEY CONCEPTS

COLLABORATING WITH SOCIETY – How do you broaden the impact of your festival?

To consider:

What happens when you shift your focus from what your organization, artists and typical audience member needs, to the question of **‘what does your city need?’**

- Are you able to view the work you produce and present through a lens of how your festival can make a stronger link between people in a given place?
- How can art support the social fabric and wellbeing of the region you host it in?
- How can you make your festival more inclusive to those who are not part of your traditional audiences or outreach?
- What is the role of art in terms of reflecting and responding to social changes and challenges in your community or region?
- How do you get people around you to say ‘yes’ to something new and radical? Not just your usual contacts, but perhaps other potential stakeholders you don’t traditionally work with (e.g. municipalities, social services, educational institutions, etc.).

WATCH: [TEDTalk with Helen Marriage](#) (12mins): *Public art that turns cities into playgrounds of the imagination*

REFLECT: What does your city **need**? What do you want people to say **YES** to?



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EXERCISES

COLLABORATING WITH SOCIETY →

Collaborative exercises to play with, twist and rewrite for your needs

The aim of these questions—those suggested below and the ones you make up with and for your own team—is to support deep-dive discussions into artist collaborations. There may be a point that catches your attention, a couple of good questions you can combine, a logical link you can rename in a better way: they're yours to mix up, truncate, augment, try out solo or together. It's an invitation to structure your team discussions, invent new meeting rules, research and create your own ways of working well.



What compelling stories are emerging from your festival (events, programming, partnerships, etc.?)

Reflection: are there interesting experiences, interactions, or engagements happening that could lead to changes in how you work and program your festival? Which stories do you think you could start acting on right now? Which ones might need more time to address? (e.g., new audiences, unexpected engagement with an art piece, interest from a new partner, etc.)



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What does your city need?

What are your impressions about what your city needs?

Who do you work for? Who do you serve? *(If you are part of an organization, where does it fit in this conversation?)*

Who holds power? *(In your region, in your area of the sector, etc. Is it an institution? A group? An individual? Can you name them?)*

How do we get to “yes”? *(What needs to happen? What timelines do you need to consider? Who else needs to get involved?)*



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Conclusion:

Additional Resource: [Cultural Audit \(Deveron Projects\)](#) – an article that explores the concept of ‘town is the venue’ and invites the reader to look beyond the traditional confines we often present and experience art in.

Identify a NEED → express your NEXT STEP to collaborate to meet a NEW area (physical or conceptual) (e/g. neighbourhood, cultural community, environment...)

What will you now do differently in your collaborations with peers, artists and/or society?

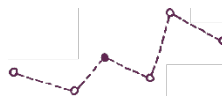
What is ONE STEP you will take to meet your city needs through collaboration?



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PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Continue your learning and application of these collaborative concepts and processes by watching the following **FLEX interview**. Also make sure to check out our [FLEX Spotlight Sessions](#), featuring a number of international case studies contextualized for the Canadian sector, and accompanying resources on our website: <https://www.workinculture.ca/flex>



FLEX COFFEE BREAK SERIES

Also available on [WorkInCulture's YouTube Channel](#), this series features insights from past participants of WorkInCulture's FLeX (Festivals Learning Exchange) Program on the overarching topic of collaboration. Learn from 4 festival leaders located in Kingston, Sudbury, and Toronto about how they approach collaborating with Peers, Artists, and Society.

To complement the key concepts and exercises above, watch these following clips featuring **Katya Kuznetsova** of [Dance Together Project/Festival](#) in Toronto on how to collaborate with society and create stronger relationships with a partner base outside of the arts.



A conversation with [Katya Kuznetsova](#) of [Dance Together Project/Festival](#) in Toronto



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