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1. INTERACTION AND DIALOGUE BETWEEN FUNDERS AND ART ORGANISATIONS

How can we build dialogue and trust between artists / art organisations and funders? How could we aim for partnerships? Also interaction between funders, dialogue and understanding

Rahoittajien ja taideorganisaatioiden vuorovaikutus ja dialogi
Millä tavoin voimme rakentaa dialogia ja luottamusta taiteenalojen toimijoiden ja rahoittajien välillä? Miten voisimme kulkea kohti kumppanuutta? Myös eri rahoittajatahojen keskinäinen vuorovaikutus ja ymmärrys

TABLE A (Host: Toimitusjohtaja Raija Koli, Frame Contemporary Art Finland, scribe: Silja Pasila, Koneen Säätiö)

Group 1:

The workshop starts with a discussion of feedback, as artists would like to have more feedback on their applications from funders to remove uncertainty: Does their work match with the principles of the funders? Is it noted that feedback is an enormous task; there are no resources for it, even though it's agreed that feedback would be beneficial. For example, Taike has 14,000 applications, and writing a response equally for everyone would be too much work. Would it be possibility to narrow down the number of applicants? However, it is mentioned that dialogue has increased a lot over the last decades; the situation is very different than in the 1980s.

It's stated that from the international perspective, there is no dialogue between artists and funders in Finland – the institutions are living in their own bubbles. Initiatives come from the top down, and there's a lack of creative energy. Small initiatives and a participatory approach should be taken into account; this would lead to increased accessibility to cultural goods. To conclude, we should think about common ground for organizations and funders. Finland also lacks internationalization; it is suggested that we could invite people from abroad to evaluate the processes.

The discussion returns to the feedback: organizations are easier to provide with feedback than individual artists. It takes time, but funders should lean towards giving feedback to organizations. In the case of individual artists, the funders could perhaps help with career building, which would also offer additional skills for writing an application. It's noted that better articulation is needed on the funder's part too: the applicants don't necessarily read the criteria at all. Meeting up could be an option – more incubators, for example.

In Denmark a point system is used for offering feedback to individual applicants; could that work in Finland as well? Organizations are a different case; more discussion with the funders is needed.

The applications evaluation process takes place within quite a small circle; often people who have received a grant are evaluating others' applications – does this form a small but elite group? The funders should also be more in contact with people who don't receive grants, because those who get the grant participate in events, and those who don't do not participate. To sum up, money and feedback move in small circles.

Group 2:

The discussion begins by talking about trust; open dialogue between sponsors and organisations increases trust. It is a question of whether there is dialogue throughout the grant process and not just in connection with the publication of grants given. In the dialogue, the criteria for funding are key: does the applicant's application satisfy them or not? Are the activities carried out according to these criteria? Can the criteria be examined openly?

According to the experience of the group, it is possible to receive feedback from some sponsors if you specifically ask for it. However, this may not happen if there is no documentation of the evaluation. Also, applicants often do not know how to ask for feedback.

There are so many applications that it is difficult to give feedback. The group notes that a points system for applications, like that used in the Danish model, would be a start.

The question arises whether dialogue from the sponsor can control the activities and direction of art and whether this is dangerous. What could feedback from the sponsor lead to? To only supporting a few people? Should there also be other types of dialogue (other than the feedback provided after the grant has been given) with more transparent explanations of what the parties are looking for? The group concluded that dialogue before the application process would be beneficial for all parties involved.

For an individual artist and organisation, the issue of dialogue is different. Organisations are better placed to provide feedback. Dialogue between organisations and sponsors could lead us towards partnerships: joint meetings, creating a joint programme. In this way, organisations would also feel that the sponsor is interested in where the money goes and the relationship would become more equal. At present, the

relationship between an organisation and the sponsor often feels like a lottery. The idea is raised that a sponsor could also assist in finding synergies among the applicants; this would create the idea of a Tinder for grants that would form pairs or "Matching Grants".

The discussion highlights the fact that a lot of money is being spent on maintaining structures – what is the relationship between this and the money that goes towards actual art? However, evaluators, for example, have to be paid a fee, which is ultimately in the interests of artists too.

Finally, it would be a good idea to have other kinds of dialogue, not just financial. It would be useful to consider the situations in which artists and sponsors meet in general. Could the dialogue relate to the contents of art and how to move forward? What has the art striven to achieve? And how has it changed the world?

<u>Keskustelu käyty suomeksi:</u>

Keskustelu aloitetaan nostamalla esiin luottamus; avoin dialogi rahoittajien ja organisaatioiden välillä kasvattaa luottamusta. Kyse on siitä, käydäänkö keskustelua koko apurahaprosessin ajan, ei pelkkien myöntöjen julkistamisen yhteydessä. Dialogissa rahoituksen kriteerit ovat keskeisessä asemassa: täyttääkö hakijan hakemus ne vai ei? Toteutetaanko toimintaa kriteerien mukaisesti? Pystytäänkö kriteerejä tarkastelemaan avoimesti?

Ryhmäläisten kokemusten mukaan joiltakin rahoittajatahoilta voi saada palautetta, jos sitä erikseen kysyy. Tämäkään ei kuitenkaan välttämättä toteudu, jos arvioinnista ei ole dokumentointia. Hakijat eivät myöskään usein osaa kysyä palautetta.

Hakemuksia on niin paljon, että palautteen antaminen on vaikeaa. Todetaan, että Tanskan mallin mukainen hakemusten pisteytys olisi ainakin alku.

Esiin nousee kysymys, voiko dialogi myöntäjän puolelta ohjata taiteen toimintaa ja suuntaa ja onko se vaarallista. Mihin myöntäjän antama palaute voi johtaa? Siihen, että tuetaan vain muutamaa ihmistä? Olisiko hyvä olla myös muun tyyppistä dialogia (kuin myöntöjen jälkeen annettua palautetta), jossa kerrotaan avoimemmin mitä toivotaan?

Todetaan, että dialogi ennen hakuprosessia olisi kaikkien osapuolien kannalta hyödyllistä.

Yksittäisen taiteilijan ja organisaation kohdalla kysymys dialogista on erilainen. Organisaatioille on paremmat mahdollisuudet antaa palautetta. Dialogia organisaatioiden ja rahoittajien välillä voisi viedä kohti kumppanuuksia: yhteisiä tapaamisia, yhteisen ohjelman tekemistä. Näin myös organisaatioille tulisi tunne, että rahoittaja on kiinnostunut siitä, mihin raha menee ja suhteesta tulisi tasa-arvoisempi. Nykyisellään organisaation ja rahoittajan suhde tuntuu organisaatioiden mielestä usein lotolta. Nousee esiin ajatus, että rahoittaja voisi auttaa myös löytämään synergioita hakijoiden joukosta; idea apuraha-Tinderistä, jossa muodostuu pari "Matching Grants".

Keskustelussa nousee esiin se, että rakenteiden ylläpitämiseen kuluu paljon rahaa – mikä on sen ja itse taiteeseen menevän rahan suhde? Esimerkiksi arvioijille tulee kuitenkin maksaa palkkiot, se on lopulta myös taiteilijoiden etu.

Lopuksi pohditaan, että olisi hyvä olla myös muunlaista, kuin pelkkää rahoitukseen liittyvää dialogia. Olisi syytä miettiä, minkälaisissa tilanteissa taiteilijat ja rahoittajat ylipäätään kohtaavat. Voisiko dialogi liittyä taiteen sisältöön ja eteenpäin menemiseen? Mitä taiteella on tavoiteltu? Entä miten on muutettu maailmaa?

Group 3:

The discussion starts with a question: Why do we need dialogue between funders and organizations? From an art organization's perspective, you put a great deal of effort into applications, but once the decision has been made, one receives only silence and the decision is not explained at all. The absence of transparency and dialogue leads to misunderstanding and distrust.

It's agreed that there are not enough resources to give feedback to everyone, but someone suggests that the funders could at least give it to the recipients. For example, a response would be needed if the recipient receives less money than applied for: Does the recipient still have to accomplish his/her/its (as in a group) original project plan, or do less?

This is related to the ongoing discussion about the monetary value of art: What's the work worth in euros? Nothing can change if we always undervalue our work.

Corporations are suggested as new funding possibilities for art, in addition to public support. This hasn't really happened yet, but it is said that the companies would be interested. However, this transition can't be made in one day. Companies as funders would also be problematic, since they have their own goals and interests. Nevertheless, having more partnerships and funders could increase dialogue.

It's not only the money that is applied through the application processes – it's also the services: e.g., Kone Foundation supports the grant recipients through its Grants+ service. The group members discuss what kinds of services Taike could offer. Could they help with the administrative issues that require lots of effort from grant recipients?

The discussion goes back to partnerships. Most of the art organizations don't have the resources to search for corporate funding. If more collaborations and partnerships existed, perhaps the funding could happen as a side-effect? Partnerships would probably also provide a feeling of sustainability, developing and learning – and the fear of failing wouldn't be that oppressive.

The application processes are frustrating for art organizations: you have to have resources to apply (the processes take several months per year) and even though you can become an expert, it is still a gamble and a guessing game. Grant advice before and after the application processes is needed to decrease uncertainty, increase trust and show how the art organizations' and funders' goals match with each other.

Finally, the group considers how to start a dialogue with companies. The emphasis should be on collaboration to reduce fear of exploitation.

TABLE B (Host: Kumppanuuspäällikkö Veikko Kunnas, Helsingin kaupunki, scribe Reetta Haarajoki, Suomen valokuvataiteen museo)

Group 1:

The workshop starts with discussion of what kind of dialogue could take place between applicants and funding bodies: How do the applicants go through the application process, and how do the funding bodies help or how could they help with it? During the application process, applicants must figure out what their application should look like, and for this process a mediating organization could be helpful. AVEK is mentioned as a good example: within their organization, application advisors give feedback based on the application draft.

It is noted that feedback with the funding organization during the application process is much needed. At the moment, the application process is very passive: someone reads the application and possibly gives you money. General transparency within the process would help applicants. Transparency is also something that everybody respects. One example of transparency would be the act of launching the application jury prior to the selection process. It is mentioned that Saastamoinen Säätiö does this.

One problem is that there are so many different kinds of organizations, and the applicant might have to wonder if she or he is the right kind of applicant. Providing some kind of service during the application process could also help figure this out. How could applicants and funding bodies

meet face to face when there is a shortage in resources to meet with everyone individually? One solution could be group meetings and information-sharing events, perhaps in a "speed-dating" format. At the moment, applicants feel that it is very hard to meet up, for example, with the decision-makers at the city of Helsinki.

The application process could be made easier by structuring it as a two-phased process: the first phase would be just ideas and the second phase the application. This might make the application process more flexible.

One important thing is that companies should get tax deductions when they support the arts. It should be made easier to get the companies involved in other ways too. What kind of system could be built to get companies involved more easily? In other terms, how could organizations more easily sell their ideas to companies? Could there be workshops to start dialogue and collaboration or something conducted by a mediating organization?

More dialogue is needed to change the structure as well to get the different sides to meet. One question is: Is there enough dialogue between private foundations and state funders? One should bring these sides together: This would enable a state-funded institution to work in a more flexible manner, not just doing their own "basic work" but with more flexible funding make different kind of collaborative projects possible. We need matching funding where there is not just one funding organization but several and where grants can be used more flexibly too.

So what could be a forum where all the different groups, artists, government funders and so forth could get together and discuss the same issues they are all figuring out by themselves? A "world café"

method could be one way to get together. Further, communications from the funding bodies could be strengthened.

In a nutshell: We need more transparency, more dialogue, more collaboration. We need to meet up face to face, and also we need to revise the application processes and make them less intense and more flexible.

Group 2:

At the beginning of the workshop, a summary of the previous discussion is given, and the discussion of this particular workshop starts with the idea of organising, for example, a funding day where all the various actors would accumulate as if for a trade fair. An example of a similar event is the Art Sponsor Days held in Turku. From the perspective of foundations, for example, it is not possible to meet every applicant, and so it is a good idea to consider a meeting with a lower threshold.

Also, a two-step application process might work well: The problem with different application processes is that they often have a big headline, such as "equality" or "multiculturalism", and the applicants need a better understanding of what the different "spearheads" mean and how applications in such cases are evaluated. For example, sponsors could open up various application criteria in joint workshops. Artists often have similar questions, and the structure of various seminar days could be, for example, to first go through the common themes and then move on to more specific questions. Sponsors could also present a range of case examples of previously funded projects.

All the parties would benefit from such an encounter. From the point of view of a sponsor, it would be good to meet people working in the field. Not all the meetings held would require extensive organisation:

Sponsors could, for example, provide a low-threshold event at their premises: an open day with a coffee buffet. Such encounters would increase the participants' understanding of the way others think, with a low stake. Morning coffee sessions could be arranged three times a year; for example, the City of Helsinki could invite players to the lobby of their new offices. These kinds of activities would also increase transparency. The important thing would be to gather people together, share information and talk face to face. The availability of information and peer support is important, but the key would be a bidirectional exchange of ideas, instead of sharing information one way. Different organisations would have an opportunity at these events to explain how different funding models have worked for them. This method would create a sense of community and increase confidence between the applicants and the organisations, while stripping away some of the bureaucracy.

The problem smaller organisations and artists face is applying for funding through various EU applications where the information is often very bureaucratic and the application process is considered difficult. It would be very useful to also organise events where EU sponsors could present funding models and explain application processes for potential applicants.

Finally, the question of how to increase autonomy in the field of art would be considered. Would it be possible to create a funding model where all the money would be put in the same "box" and grants would be applied from just one source.

Keskustelu käyty suomeksi:

Workshopin alussa kerrotaan tiivistelmä edellisestä keskustelusta ja tämän workshopin keskustelu lähtee liikkeelle ajatuksesta, että voisi järjestää esimerkiksi rahoituspäivät, joihin kaikki erilaiset tahot kerääntyisivät yhteen "messutyyppisesti". Esimerkkinä mainitaan Turussa järjestettävät Taiderahoittajien päivät. Esimerkiksi säätiöiden

näkökulmasta ei ole mahdollista tavata kaikkia hakijoita, joten pohditaan matalamman kynnyksen tapaamista.

Myös idea kaksivaiheisesta hausta voisi olla toimiva: Erilaisten hakuprosessien ongelmana nähdään se, että niiden yläotsikkoina on usein isoja aiheita, kuten "yhdenvertaisuus" tai "monikulttuurisuus" ja hakijoiden keskuudessa tarvittaisiin ymmärrystä siitä, mitä erilaisilla "kärjillä" tarkoitetaan ja miten tällaisiin hakuihin tulevia hakemuksia arvioidaan. Esimerkiksi yhteisissä workshopeissa voitaisiin rahoittajien taholta avata erilaisia hakukriteerejä. Taiteilijoilla on usein samoja kysymyksiä ja erilaisten seminaaripäivien rakenne voisi olla esimerkiksi sellainen, että käytäisiin läpi ensin yhteisiä aiheita ja siirryttäisiin sen jälkeen spesifimpiin kysymyksiin. Rahoittajat voisivat esitellä myös erilaisia tapausesimerkkejä rahoitetuista hankkeista.

Kaikki tahot hyötyisivät kohtaamisesta. Myös rahoittajan näkökulmasta olisi hyvä tavata kentällä toimivia ihmisiä. Kaikkien järjestettävien tapaamisten ei tarvitsi vaatia suurempia järjestelyjä: Rahoittajat voisivat esimerkiksi pitää tiloissaan matalan kynnyksen tapahtuman: avoimet ovet ja kahvitarjoilun. Tällaiset kohtaamiset lisäisivät toisten ajattelun ymmärrystä pienellä panoksella. Aamukahvitilaisuuksia voitaisiin järjestää vaikkapa kolme kertaa vuodessa, esimerkiksi Helsingin kaupunki voisi kutsua toimijoita uuden toimistotilansa aulaan. Tämän kaltainen toiminta lisäisi myös läpinäkyvyyttä. Tärkeää olisi ihmisten kerääminen yhteen, tiedon jako ja kasvotusten keskustelu. Tiedon saanti ja vertaistuki olisivat tärkeitä, mutta etenkin yksisuuntaisen informaation jakamisen sijaan kaksisuuntainen ajatusten vaihto olisi avain asemassa. Eri organisaatiot pääsisivät tilaisuuksissa kertomaan, miten erilaiset rahoitusmallit ovat toimineet heille. Tämä metodi loisi yhteisöllisyyttä, kasvattaisi luottamusta hakijoiden ja organisaatioiden välillä, kun byrokratiaa purettaisiin auki.

Pienempien organisaatioiden ja taiteilijoiden ongelma on hakea erilaisissa EU-hauissa rahaa, sillä informaatio on usein hyvin byrokraattista ja haut koetaan hankalaksi. Olisi tarpeen järjestää myös tilaisuuksia, joissa EU-rahoittajat voisivat esitellä rahoitusmalleja ja avata potentiaalisille hakijoille hakuprosesseja.

Viimeisenä heitettiin vielä ilmoille kysymys siitä, mikä lisäisi taiteen toiminnan autonomiaa. Olisiko mahdollista luoda rahoitusmalli, jossa kaikki laittavat rahat samaan "laariin", ja apurahoja haetaan vain yhdestä lähteestä.

Group 3:

In a nutshell, from the previous workshop: Dialogue and transparency are two very important factors. For example, application advisors are needed. There is a need for dialogue, which could, for example, be "application clinics" or "speed-dating" events, open houses or regularly organized morning coffee events – events that can be easily organized. This is something we could start to do almost immediately.

The discussion starts with the idea of feedback: What if those who get funded could get feedback from their main funders, and they could get to know why they have been funded so that the applicants would not have to guess? This evaluation process could also get the funders to engage more deeply with your project. As an artist, for example "you father a report and never hear back".

The idea of "speed-dating" is worthy, as at the moment the funder is not approachable, located in sine far-off kingdom. From the funder's perspective, time goes to the decision-making process and reporting. But if the applicants knew the criteria for the processes, it could be easier.

We do not need a total change or something that needs a huge amount of money; dialogue can be enough. But what is the goal if the funders and the applicants meet up? What would be the agenda and the topic? For example, institutions could explain their policies and the decision-makers could meet up with the applicants face to face.

The applicants could talk about their work. The artist view is: "I am not just a one-project person. I am committing my life to a body of work." There is a need to communicate this to decision-makers. Funding should allow more freedom in your work and what you do and not only make

you work project by project. Further, funding could enable touring with the projects and not make them merely exist; it could and also enable one-time "shows".

To create change, we also need dialogue between the funding organizations, as we need matching funding to provide more self-governance and freedom to artists and organizations. This would enable more experimental projects. At the moment, funding is very categorized; for example, if you receive funding for dance, you are not able to do a performance. However, many organizations and artist are not in "boxes" but are overlapping.
We need to present the reality to funding bodies: "What is it to carve a life from applications." We do not need just pitching; we need conversation and understanding of the applicants' lives. We also need understanding of different "languages", as writing is just one way of presenting one's work. As well, something bigger might arise from dialogue, something that the lonely, application process does not bring out.

TABLE C (Host: Erityisasiantuntija Johanna Ruohonen, Suomen Kulttuurirahasto, scribe: Stephanie Roiko, HIAP)

The discussion started with the importance of **openness** and how this may be compromised due to the fear of lobbying. However, if there are open criteria, such fear isn't warranted. Individuals and organizations should be open and honest about their ideas. Could the arts and culture sector learn from the pitching culture of the startup scene?

Another comparison to the business/startup world was also made: What if the first funder would help the applicant find other funders, similar to

how investors look for other investors? This could lead to a greater **commitment** from the funder's side.

Some reflections were made about the relationship between curator and artist that could serve as a model for the relationship between applicant and funder. Art, in our society, is marked by risk-taking. When a curator works with an artist who fails, the curator stands by the artist. From the funder's perspective, is it ok to **fail**? Again, in the business world, the concept of "learning by failing" is well known; failure is even seen as a pathway to success. Permission to fail requires trust between the funder and applicant. On the other hand, how do we even know if we have failed – and in whose eyes? Once the project ends and the report is submitted, one rarely receives feedback from the funder.

The notion of **trust** was also tackled in the discussion. It was argued that open, measurable criteria create trust. Many applicants are uncertain what the criteria are to get funding, and an argument about the lack of criteria for evaluating art is often used in political decision-making as an excuse to not to increase funding for arts and culture. Measuring the impact of art in a society where everything is evaluated in quantitative terms is indeed difficult.

More solid dialogue is needed in different levels of the art world, not just between funders and organizations. It's a question of how different art organizations can be in dialogue and still support each other, building a healthy ecosystem. An initiative from the funders' side could be to invite organizations to discuss how they place themselves in the field.

It was brought up that the funders would benefit from honest **feedback** from the applicants, but due to the power dynamic, this proves difficult. One way to enhance the dialogue between applicant and funder would be to arrange annual meetings. However, this solution would only serve

organizations, as it would not be feasible to introduce such a practice to individual artists.

Among the artists, there tend to be many conspiracy theories about the funders, claiming some secret agenda behind the evaluation process. One way to crack this myth is to use peer reviewers. Equally important is to reach the individual artists who don't receive grants, instead of those who are already at the top, as well as to offers services, especially to young artists who are new in the field.

Art incubators could help artists develop their applications. Buying a grant-writing service could also be an option for some. In addition, the importance of dialogue between peers cannot be emphasized enough and is something that should be taught and encouraged in art schools.