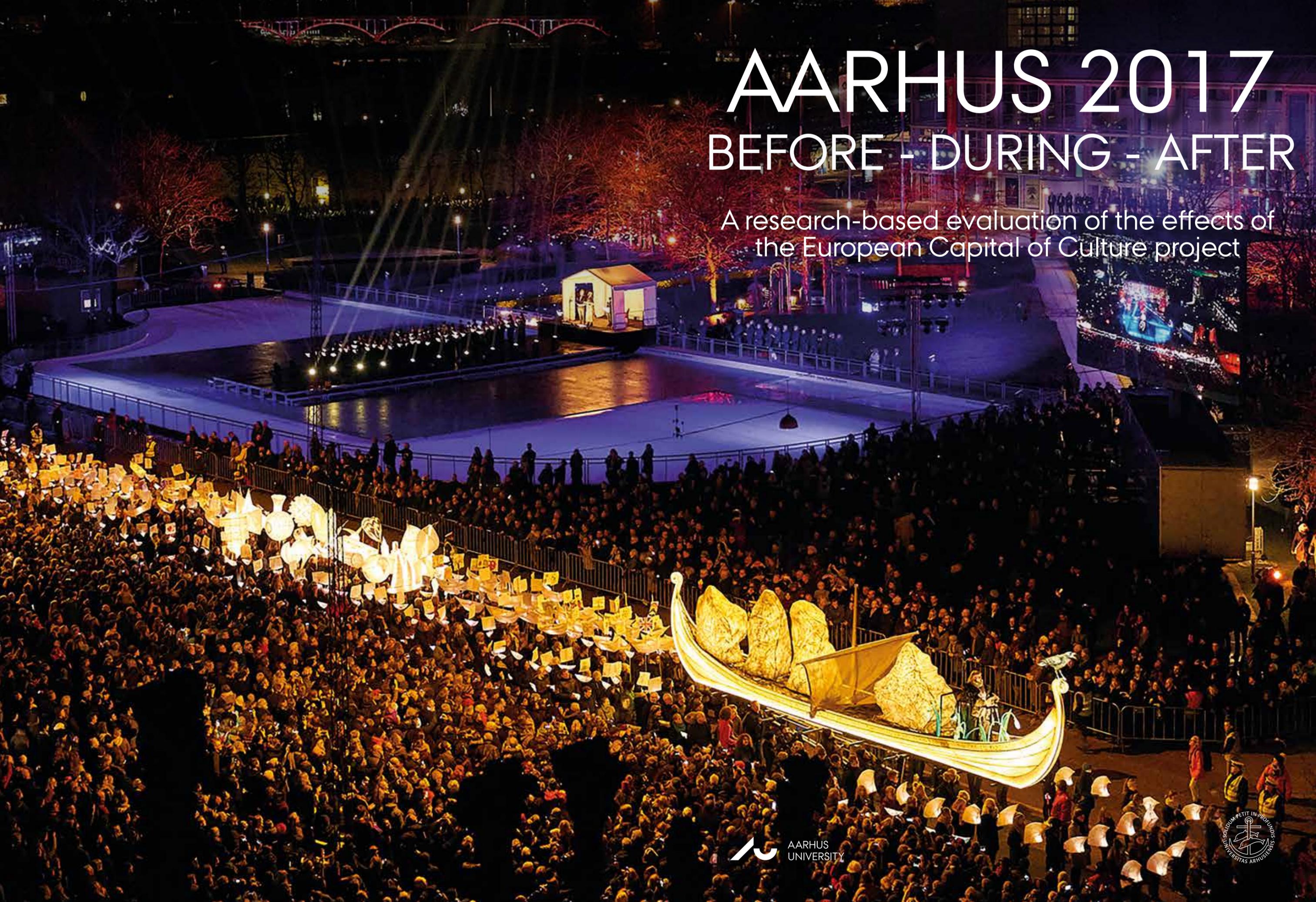


AARHUS 2017

BEFORE - DURING - AFTER

A research-based evaluation of the effects of
the European Capital of Culture project



COLOPHON

Title	AARHUS 2017. BEFORE - DURING - AFTER.
Subtitle	<i>A research-based evaluation of the effects of the European Capital of Culture project.</i>
Authors:	Hans-Peter Degn, Louise Ejgod Hansen, Nanna Thomsen, Line Nordentoft, Johannes Rolighed Xie, Michala Dahl Hansen
The following persons have contributed to data collection and data processing:	Hanne Lynghøj, Morten Falbe-Hansen, Christina Godsk Mogensén, Julie Langdal Andersen, Charlotte Høy Jensen, Mille Borup T, Line Quarter Castle Vestergaard, Mathias Pedersen, Marie Christine Andreasen
Proofreading	Christian Michael Villadsen
Translation	Lenore Messick, Events and Communications Support, Aarhus University
Graphic design	CDR Forlag
Printing	Ecograf
Cover photo	Jan Emperor
Year of publication	2018
Publisher	rethinkIMPACTS 2017 at Aarhus University
Organisation	rethinkIMPACTS 2017 is a project organisation based on a strategic partnership between Aarhus University and the Aarhus 2017 Foundation. rethinkIMPACTS 2017 is responsible for the research-based evaluation of Aarhus as European Capital of Culture in 2017. The evaluation includes the publication of a series of research and evaluation reports which are collectively intended to shed light on the social, cultural, political and organisational, image and identity-related and economic effects of Aarhus 2017. This report, the seven affiliated theme reports and other publications can be found on the project's website.
Website	http://www.projects.au.dk/2017



CONTENTS

Summary	7
1 The framework and basis of the evaluation	13
1.1. The scope of the European Capital of Culture project	14
1.2 Aarhus 2017 from start to finish	16
1.3 Evaluation of Aarhus 2017	20
1.4 The basis of the evaluation	22
1.5 Data used and reporting	23
2 A joint project	31
2.1 Many forms of collaboration	33
2.2 Strengths and weaknesses of a decentralised structure	39
2.3 A stable foundation	45
2.4 Continuation of collaborations	50
3 The European Capital of Culture project and the audience	53
3.1 The themes and values of the programme	55
3.2 The composition of the programme	57
3.3 The accessibility of the programme	64
3.4 The audience's experience	67
3.5 Audience composition	69
3.6 Rethinking culture	76
4 Citizen engagement and involvement	78
4.1 Co-producing citizens	81
4.2 Volunteering	83
4.3 The citizens' voice	88
4.4 Citizens' future involvement	95
5 The story of Aarhus 2017	97
5.1 On the map	98
5.2 Fair winds and foul	108
5.3 The identity is formed	112
5.4 The future story	113
6 The strength of culture	117
6.1 The changed role of culture	118
6.2 The citizens' perspective	125
6.3 The sponsors' perspective	127
6.4 The cultural institutions' perspective	128
6.5 The value of culture	132
6.6 The geographical weighting of the effects	136
6.7 Culture in a future perspective	140
7 Rethought	142
7.1 Short and long term effects	144
7.2 Unfulfilled potential	147
7.3 Self-evaluation	155



Photo: Mikkel Jezequel

SUMMARY



The effects of the European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017 are examined through a research-based analysis conducted by rethinkIMFACTS 2017 at Aarhus University. The evaluation is based on five years of collection and processing of large amounts of diverse data (interviews, questionnaire surveys, monitoring data, document analysis, etc.). The analyses of this data have been presented in a number of thematic reports as well as this main report. The evaluation of Aarhus 2017 points to the following major findings:

INTERDISCIPLINARY COOPERATION – AARHUS 2017'S DNA

- A particular strength of Aarhus 2017 was that the European Capital of Culture project was

based on many different types of collaboration. These collaborations included cross-municipal cooperation as host of Aarhus 2018, decentralised programme production with the involvement of many cultural operators and sponsorship cooperation with the business community.

- Central Denmark Region and all the region's municipalities supported Aarhus as European Capital of Culture. The cross-municipal cooperation has continued after Aarhus 2017 in the form of the European Region of Culture project, initially over a two-year period, 2018-2019.

- Sponsors have expressed considerable satisfaction with their cooperation with the Aarhus 2017

Foundation. Some of the sponsors are interested in the preservation of the platform Aarhus 2017 created. This might take place through the business clubs of the local cultural institutions.

- Many new relationships, networks and constellations have been created and developed as a result of cooperation with and between local cultural institutions.

MANY PEOPLE CONTRIBUTED TO THE REALISATION OF THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE PROJECT

- Eighty per cent of the programme production was handled by other culture operators than the Aarhus 2017 Foundation itself, primarily local content providers (cultural institutions, artists and others). In this way, the European Capital of Culture project challenge participating institutions and culture-producing environments in the region, as well as helping them become more visible and competent.

- Aarhus 2017 Foundation had various roles along the way, as funder, monitor, artistic content producer and co-developer. For some cultural institutions, this led to frustration and confusion, while others expressed recognition of the fact that the artistic dialogue with the foundation helped improve and develop projects.

- Aarhus 2017 Foundation placed a high emphasis on cooperation with reliable, stable partners, and placed a somewhat lower priority on collaboration with up-and-coming players and some of the newer and smaller cultural operators.

- The Aarhus 2017 Foundation was operationally reliable, stayed within its budget, lived up to its

own key performance indicators and managed to sustain political support for the project.

- The loan of employees from the municipalities and the region to the Aarhus 2017 secretariat contributed to the reduction of the foundation's operating expenses, a smoothly operating secretariat and competency development for the employees.

LARGE PROGRAMME – FOR THE TRADITIONAL CULTURE AUDIENCE

- The programme was of high international artistic quality. The traditional cultural genres constituted most of the programme.

- The foundation's own programme contributions were particularly focused on internationally renowned artists. Only to a lesser extent were connections made between these artists and local artists.

- The theme 'Rethink' worked well as a framework for a rich cultural programme, and balanced the qualities of being binding, inclusive and inspiring in an appropriate way. On the other hand, the three values (democracy, sustainability and diversity), only had peripheral significance.

- The vast majority (90%) of the audience had a positive experience of the various events.

- Overall, the composition of Aarhus 2017's audience reflected the usual cultural audience. The majority of the audience members were already regular cultural consumers.



Photo: Aarhus 2017

- One-third of the cultural institutions believe that they reached out to new audiences during the European Capital of Culture year.
- A significant barrier to audience participation was the perception that the programme and how it was communicated were confusing. A clearer programme structure and better communication about the programme could have made citizens' access to cultural experiences easier.
- No effects on general cultural consumption can be demonstrated as a result of Aarhus 2017.

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP CENTRED ON THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

- In relation to active citizenship, the volunteer programme 'ReThinkers' had a major effect. Volunteer work was centred in and around Aarhus. A quarter of the participating ReThinkers were 'new volunteers'.
- The volunteers' experience with the work was positive, and in particular they stress the high degree of variation in and influence on the performance of their tasks.
- The most extensive involvement of citizens took place in the application phase. Subsequently citizen involvement primarily took place in relatively few specific cultural projects in which citizens were involved and co-producing in various ways.

VISIBILITY AND STORYTELLING

- Aarhus 2017 achieved high visibility, not least in local and regional news media. At the same time, the European Capital of Culture project achieved a high degree of awareness among the inhabitants of the region – and the rest of the Danes.

- The media's presentation of Aarhus 2017 was composed of many different stories. These stories were generally positive and not marked by major crises. In this way, Aarhus 2017 distinguishes itself from quite a few other European Capital of Culture projects.
- Aarhus 2017 became a positive brand that citizens associated themselves with, especially on Instagram. In this way, the European Capital of Culture project made both the city and culture into positive identity markers for citizens.
- To an increasing degree, citizens in the Central Denmark Region perceive both Aarhus and Central Denmark Region as "an interesting place for culture".

EFFECTS ON THE ROLE AND VALUE OF CULTURE

- The role and value of culture has received increased attention among politicians, government officials and sponsor companies.
- In the wake of the European Capital of Culture project, politicians and local government perceive culture as a relevant development driver to a higher extent, also in addition to the cultural sector.
- On the other hand, this is not accompanied by an increased economic prioritisation of culture, understood in terms of municipal spending on culture per capita.

- The European Capital of Culture project has made a local and regional impact. Especially in the City of Aarhus, the European Capital of Culture project has had a major impact, while its significance has been slightly lower in the region's other municipalities. The national impact is very minor.
 - The European dimension is particularly visible in connection with the establishment of international partnerships and networks. In terms of content, the European/international dimension is less apparent.
- In conclusion, Aarhus 2017 has already had effects, particularly in relation to the development of interdisciplinary cooperation and a strengthened role for culture.



Photo: Emilia Theresel

1

THE FRAMEWORK AND BASIS OF THE EVALUATION



This report presents the main results of the independent research-based evaluation of European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017¹. The evaluation was performed by rethinkIMPACTS 2017 at Aarhus University.

The objective of the report is to contribute to reflection, both on the part of the many players involved in the European Capital of Culture project, and on the part of a more general readership interested in the insights generated by a large, ambitious project such as Aarhus 2017. In looking back on the European Capital of Culture project Aarhus 2017, we not only evaluate the strengths, weaknesses and effects of the project. We also look towards the future, create a foundation of knowledge and provide inspiration on how to tackle other projects and continue to build on the experiences gained through Aarhus 2017 – while we also reveal unexploited opportunities and warn against possible pitfalls.

The report is divided into seven chapters.



Photo: Per Bille

THE CONTENTS OF THE REPORT

- Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction to the European Capital of Culture project and the basis for the evaluation.
- Chapter 2 analyses the different kinds of interdisciplinary collaboration and their effects.
- Chapter 3 illuminates the structure and evolution of the European Capital of Culture programme as well as audience reactions to the programme.
- Chapter 4 examines citizen involvement in the European Capital of Culture project.
- Chapter 5 focuses on media and citizen narratives about Aarhus 2017.
- Chapter 6 analyses the extent to which Aarhus 2017 has strengthened culture.
- Chapter 7 summarises and contextualises the report's conclusions, with a focus on short-term and long-term effects and unrealised possibilities.

1.1. THE SCOPE OF THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE PROJECT

While Aarhus held the title of European Capital of Culture in 2017, the European Capital of Culture project was also a regional project, with activities throughout all 19 municipalities in Central Denmark Region. During the application phase, a project secretariat was responsible for the European Capital of Culture project. Subsequently, the project was handled by a commercial foundation.

¹ In this report, we will distinguish between 'Aarhus 2017', which refers to the European Capital of Culture project 'European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017' and 'the Aarhus 2017 Foundation' or 'the foundation', which refers to the organisation responsible for carrying out the European Capital of Culture project.

The European Capital of Culture 2017 project had a total budget of DKK 461 million², and was primarily financed by public funds from the central government, the City of Aarhus, Central Denmark Region and the 18 other municipalities in the region. A total of 124 corporate sponsors and 26 private and public foundations also supported the project financially. 71% of the budget was spent on programme activities, 13% on PR, marketing and communication and 15% on wages and administration.³

The framework theme for the European Capital of Culture project was 'rethink'⁴. The European Capital of Culture year programme centred on 442 core projects, of which 306 projects were realised in events⁵ during the European Capital of Culture year itself. There were 628 different events and a total of 13,708 event days⁶ over the course of 2017. The European Capital of Culture programme included

four 'mega-events' and 12 'full moon events'. 40% of the European Capital of Culture projects were co-produced with international partners.

Aarhus 2017 reached a total estimated audience of 3.3. unique visits⁷, primarily among the region's

² The Aarhus 2017 Foundation budget. In addition co-financing was contributed by the many cultural institutions and other bodies which contributed to the European Capital of Culture project.

³ The figures for the funds granted and their distribution are based on the annual audited financial statements for the Aarhus 2017 Foundation for the years 2013-2018 and financial reporting for 2018 as of 1 October 2018.

⁴ As the European Capital of Culture drew closer, the theme was revised and communicated as 'Let's rethink'. The change was primarily the result of communication strategy considerations and had very little effect otherwise.

⁵ The term 'events' refers here to concrete events aimed at an audience, for example a performance, concert, exhibit or the like. If the content or location of an event is changed, it is defined as a new event.

⁶ 'Event days' refers to a tally of the number of days/times during which an event can be experienced. For example, an exhibition that is open every day for three weeks has 21 event days.

⁷ The total attendance figure is the sum of all audience visits. The attendance figures for the individual events were compiled by the project owners themselves. The 3.3 visits are not equivalent to individual visitors, as many citizens attended more than one Aarhus 2017 event.

TABLE 1.1. FUNDS GRANTED TO THE AARHUS 2017 FOUNDATION

	CONTRIBUTION IN DKK	PER CENT
The central government	129.0 million	28%
City of Aarhus	116.4 million	25%
Central Denmark Region	58.9 million	13%
The other 18 municipalities in the region	43.5 million	9%
EU (Melina Mercouri award)	11.1 million	2%
Foundations	66.8 million	14%
Sponsors	15.5 million	3%
Services in kind	5.8 million	1%
Other	14.3 million	3%
Total	461.3 million	

Source: revised financial statements for the Aarhus 2017 Foundation for the years 2013-2018 as well as financial reporting for 2018 as of 1 October 2018.

own citizens, as well as major media coverage, with approx. 14,000 articles in Danish new media in the period 2007-2018. In addition, there was international media coverage of Aarhus 2017 in 70 countries all over the world, particularly in Germany, the United States and Great Britain.⁸

1.2 AARHUS 2017 FROM START TO FINISH

The European Capital of Culture project process lasted over a decade, and the life cycle of Aarhus 2017 can be divided into four phases (see also pages 18-19).

- The application phase (2007-2012)
- The establishment and development phase (2013-2016)
- The implementation phase (2017)
- The execution phase (2018)

THE APPLICATION PHASE (2007-2012)

In 2007, after the European Commission's announcement in 2005 that one city in Denmark and Cyprus respectively were to be awarded the title of European Capital of Culture for 2017, the City of Aarhus decided to enter the competition for the title. The Municipality of Sønderborg was Aarhus' only competitor for the Danish title. In 2008, a temporary project secretariat in the City of Aarhus was established, and in January 2009, the Central Denmark Region became involved in the project, and the process of getting the other municipalities in the region involved was initiated. In the years 2008-2011, a broadly inclusive idea generation process was carried out, in which an estimated 10,000 citizens and commercial and cultural sector representatives participated. The 'rethink' theme

- 442 core projects
- 628 audience events in 2017
- 13,708 event days
- 3.3 million audience visits
- Eighty per cent of the programme was produced by local cultural institutions and other cultural players. Twenty per cent of the programme was produced by the Aarhus 2017 Foundation.

arose out of this process, and the foundation for a considerable number of the concrete European Capital of Culture projects was also laid here. The first application to the EU was submitted in September 2011, and the second was submitted in June 2012, with the result that it was announced on 24 August 2012 that Aarhus had been awarded the title of European Capital of Culture for 2017 (along with Paphos on Cyprus). At this point, the process of establishing the foundation which would be responsible for realising the project had already begun.

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PHASE (2013-2016)

The transition from the application phase was a dramatic shift, among other reasons because the promises made in the application were now to be translated into concrete action. The Aarhus 2017 Foundation secretariat commenced its work in 2013, and after some personnel changes and restructuring, the final management team, under the leadership of Rebecca Matthews, fell into place

⁸"Welcome future", the Aarhus 8 Foundation (2017), p. 128.

⁹ The Aarhus 9 Foundation annual report for 2017, p. 29.

in the summer of 2015. In the period towards 2017, the foundation's staff was gradually enlarged, and had reached 50 employees by the beginning of the European Capital of Culture year.⁹ The foundation's work in relation to designing the programme was based on a decentralised programme production model which delegated the development and realisation of the specific events in the programme to various other players. The funds for the project were allocated through a number of funding application rounds. A total of DKK 329 million was spent on programme activities in the period 2013-2018, the first portion of which was allocated in 2013.

THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE (2017)

European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017 was officially opened with a mega event in Aarhus on 21 January 2017. The day before, the children's opening event *the Land of Wishes* took place in all of the municipalities in the region, the first of twelve full moon events. On 9 December 2017, European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017 officially ended with closing ceremonies in Hvide Sande and Aarhus. The year's events were divided among Aarhus and the rest of the region, with 59% of the events taking

place in Aarhus and 39% in the other municipalities in the region. In addition, one per cent took place outside the region (for example in Paphos, Cyprus), while one per cent were non-site specific events.

THE EXECUTION PHASE (2018)

By the end of 2017, the number of employees at the foundation was already falling rapidly, and the majority of the remaining employees left in the spring of 2018, including parts of the management. The foundation's final official events took place in April 2018, when the foundation presented its data and its own review of results and preliminary effects at a conference entitled *Welcome Future*.

In the spring of 2018, the foundation allocated funding to the legacy projects which will continue some of the Capital of Culture activities. Additional future-oriented activities have been assigned to the newly established European Region of Culture, a continued collaboration between the municipalities in the region, as well as to the municipalities, institutions, and individuals.

The foundation's activities ceased on 1 October 2018. The foundation applied for dissolution at the end of 2018.



Photo: Kaare Viemose

THE APPLICATION PHASE 2005-2012

2005	2006	2007	2008
2005 Denmark and Cyprus are appointed as host countries in 2017 for the European Capital of Culture			September 2007 Aarhus decides to apply for the title of European Capital of Culture.
			Early 2008 Project secretariat established. Trevor Davis is employed as project manager
2009	2010	2011	2012
<p>January 2009 Central Denmark Region decides to get involved in the European Capital of Culture project</p> <p>2009 User involvement process. 10,000 citizens, business people and cultural operators contribute. The 'rethink' concept is conceived</p> <p>Jan-aug 2009 Forhandlinger med regionens øvrige 18 kommuner om at deltage</p>	<p>January 2009 Central Denmark Region decides to get involved in the European Capital of Culture project</p>	<p>May-Aug 2011 The regional council and the 18 city councils approve appropriations for the project</p>	<p>August 2011 The City of Aarhus approves the final grant for the project</p> <p>December 2011 Aarhus and Sønderborg proceed to second round of applications</p> <p>September 2011 First application submitted to the EU</p> <p>June 2012 Second application submitted to AU</p> <p>Oct-Nov 2012 the Aarhus 2017 Foundation is established and the board is constituted</p> <p>August 2012 Aarhus selected as European Capital of Culture 2017</p>

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PHASE 2013-2016

2013	2014	2015	2016
<p>January 2013 Initial funding paid out to the first 117 projects</p>	<p>June 2013 Rebecca Matthews and Gitte Just hired as CEO and programme director respectively</p>	<p>May 2014 First official round of applications. Grants awarded to 44 strategic projects</p> <p>June 2014 The Danish government's grant to Aarhus 2017 is confirmed</p>	<p>April 2015 Juliana Engberg becomes programme director</p> <p>April 2015 Presentation of project catalogue at exhibit in Ridehuset (Aarhus)</p> <p>November 2015 Open call. Grants awarded to 45 projects</p> <p>January 2016 Highlights from the European Capital of Culture programme are presented</p> <p>October 2016 Publication of the final programme</p>

THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE 2017

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<p>January Full moon event: Land of Wishes (all municipalities in the region)</p>	<p>February Full moon event: Liberate the Church Service (Aarhus)</p>	<p>March Full moon event: Festival of the Century (Aarhus)</p>	<p>April Full moon event: Off Road (Herning)</p>	<p>May Full moon event: Freedom Prison (Horsens)</p>	<p>June Full moon event: Snapsting (Viborg)</p>	<p>July Full moon event: Eutopia (Aarhus)</p>	<p>August Full moon event: River Art and Silkeborg Fire Festival Regatta (Silkeborg)</p>	<p>September Full moon event: Watermusic (Randers)</p>	<p>October Full moon event: Rethink the Reformation (Aarhus)</p>	<p>November Full moon event: Move for Life (entire region)</p>	<p>December Full moon event: Aarhus 2017 Finale – A Shared Moment (Hvide Sande)</p>
<p>21 January 2017 Mega event: Official opening (Aarhus)</p>			<p>April-Sept 2017 Mega event: The Garden – Beginning of Times, End of Times (Aarhus)</p>	<p>May-June Mega event: Red Serpent (Aarhus)</p>							<p>9 December 2017 Mega event: Aarhus 2017 Finale – Celebrate The Year (Aarhus)</p>

THE EXECUTION PHASE 2018

2018	
<p>April 2018 the Aarhus 2017 Foundation reports its results at the conference 'Welcome Future'</p>	<p>December 2018 The evaluation of Aarhus 2017 is published</p>

1.3 EVALUATION OF AARHUS 2017

The proposal to carry out the official evaluation of the European Capital of Culture project in collaboration with Aarhus University was raised quite early, in connection with the application process. In 2013, the project organisation rethinkIMPACTS 2017 was established as a partnership between Aarhus University and the Aarhus 2017 Foundation. One of the main objectives of the project organisation was to perform an official, research-based evaluation of the effects of the European Capital of Culture project. The activities in the project were designed in dialogue with the two partners as well as the two local grant makers, the City of Aarhus and Central Denmark Region. The rethinkIMPACTS 2017 portfolio of tasks was agreed on by the parties through this dialogue, including the prioritisation of the focus of the evaluation.

In order to guarantee the impartiality of the results of the evaluation, rethinkIMPACTS 2017 was organisationally anchored at Aarhus University. The project was financed by DKK 5 million from the Aarhus 2017 Foundation and DKK 5 million from Aarhus University. The project ended at the end of 2018, when rethinkIMPACTS 2017 presented the results of the independent evaluation – including in the form of this report. Subsequently, future activities, including any follow-up, have been transferred to the Centre for the Evaluation of Culture, which Aarhus University has established in order to continue to build on the work and experience gained from the evaluation of the European Capital of Culture project.

The brief for rethinkIMPACTS 2017 was to carry out an evaluation of Aarhus 2017 with two objectives: first, the performance of a so-called formative evaluation

which contributed to generating insight throughout the Aarhus 2017 process, and in part a final so-called summative evaluation aimed at documenting the effects of Aarhus 2017, and by extension whether the goals for the project were achieved. This means that rethinkIMPACTS 2017 was tasked with contributing to learning and quality development of the European Capital of Culture project's framework and contents throughout the process, through critical, constructive dialogue and feedback. In this connection, as part of its collaboration with the Aarhus 2017 Foundation, rethinkIMPACTS 2017 contributed to quality control of the foundation's monitoring data gathering. These data were in part used by the foundation itself in connection with project management and final reporting, and in part were included as a supplement to the data gathered by rethinkIMPACTS 2017's independently. Since the end of the European Capital of Culture year, the major task of rethinkIMPACTS 2017 has been the drafting of the summative evaluation of Aarhus 2017, primarily based on an analysis of our own data collected in the period 2014-2018. In this final evaluation, we have attempted to include a future-oriented learning perspective which reaches beyond Aarhus 2017, in order to make the insights and results we present here as accessible as possible to a larger audience.

Alongside the evaluation, rethinkIMPACTS 2017 held a number of conferences on central European Capital of Culture themes: *Rethink Participatory Cultural Citizenship*, 14-16 November 2013, *RE-DO. On Sustainability and Culture's Role in Sustainable Futures*, 28-31 October 2015 and *Re-Value. Rethinking the Value of Arts and Culture*, 8-11 November 2017, in addition to the closing conference on 10 December 2018 at which the results of the evaluation were presented.



1.4 THE BASIS OF THE EVALUATION

Aarhus was awarded the title on the background of an application which laid out six strategic objectives¹⁰, which were as follows:

- 1 Aarhus 2017 will support the long term development and also underpin the significance of arts and culture. The cultural programme will contribute to a strengthening of the diversity of European culture.
- 2 Aarhus 2017 will increase awareness, visibility and attraction value of the city and the region, nationally and internationally, while creating a higher level of cultural cooperation and dialogue with Europe.
- 3 Aarhus 2017 will employ creativity, innovation, knowledge and experimentation to fuel human development and economic growth.
- 4 Aarhus 2017 will aim to secure a more active citizenship through comprehensive and active participation, while increasing involvement from the business, the cultural and the research and learning communities.
- 5 Aarhus 2017 will support the development of open and vibrant urban environments to further cohesive cities with diversity.
- 6 Aarhus 2017 will be a platform for interdisciplinary collaborations focusing on the challenges arising from urban communities, furthering the vision of a sustainable future – locally as well as globally.

However, it became necessary to further specify how these objectives could serve as evaluation criteria, in part because the six strategic objectives

were formulated in such general terms that they allowed great scope for interpretation, and in part because the European Capital of Culture project itself developed in the process. In developing the evaluation criteria, we have also included the foundation's long-term outcome objectives as formulated in the foundation's strategic business plan¹¹.

The different stakeholders who participated in the evaluation design process along the way made an important contribution to the development of the evaluation criteria. At a series of workshops during the development process, the first five of which took place in the spring of 2014, qualified stakeholders from cultural life and city government participated in the interpretation of the objectives for Aarhus 2017 and identified different effects which were to be evaluated if possible. In this way, the stakeholders involved in this process were involved in interpreting and weighting the different aspects of the European Capital of Culture project, and thus contributed to the definition of the evaluation criteria for the project.

On the basis of the process outlined above, a list of specific evaluation criteria was drawn up which covered all aspects of the strategic objectives. To frame the evaluation, rethinkIMPACTS 2017 categorised the different possible effects in five different categories: cultural, social, economic, image and identity-related and political-organisational effects.¹² It was decided that the evaluation should cover all of these areas to the

¹⁰ Aarhus 2017 Candidate European Capital of Culture 2017 – final application. Department of Culture, City of Aarhus (June 2012), page 8.

¹¹ European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017 – Strategic Business Plan, the Aarhus 2017 Foundation (December 2015).

¹² These five areas were selected on the background of research on the effects of European Capitals of Culture, see for example "European Capitals of Culture: Success strategies and long term effects", Beatriz Garcia and Tamsin Cox (2013).

extent possible. We have chosen not to focus on purely economic effects. Both because the foundation already has performed an analysis of short-term economic effects (carried out by COWI), and because the data we collected did not include concrete economic data. The evaluation criteria were prioritised in collaboration with the Aarhus 2017 Foundation, the City of Aarhus and the Central Denmark Region, and the evaluation was carried out on the basis of this prioritisation.

1.5 DATA USED AND REPORTING

The evaluation of Aarhus 2017 is based on extensive data which has been analysed in seven theme reports, each of which illuminates the different aspects of Aarhus 2017. This main report summarises the overall conclusions of the evaluation of Aarhus 2017. The conclusions of the main report

THEME REPORTS

- Theme report no. 1: Aarhus 2017 – program and audience experiences
- Theme report no. 2: The involvement of cultural institutions in Aarhus 2017
- Theme report no. 3: Aarhus 2017 as a political project
- Theme report no. 4: Aarhus 2017 from the citizen perspective
- Theme report no. 5: Aarhus 2017 in the media
- Theme report no. 6: The involvement of the business community in Aarhus 2017
- Theme report no. 7: The organisation of the European Capital of Culture project Aarhus 2017



Photo: Jesper Voldgaard

are supported in the respective reports.

The evaluation of Aarhus 2017 is based on a number of sources of data. rethinkIMPACTS 2017 collected most of the data. This applies to the qualitative and quantitative data listed in table 1.2. In addition, the evaluation is also based on quantitative data collected by the Aarhus 2017 Foundation in the period 2013-2018. In addition, we have used a number of written sources, including

records of decisions from the municipalities and the region, EU decisions, the official applications, the Aarhus 2017 Foundation's strategic business plans, etc.

In connection with the development of the evaluation design, we identified a number of different relevant populations: citizens, audiences, cultural institutions, politicians, government officials, sponsors, media, etc. As a general rule, we have

TABLE 1.2 DATA COLLECTION PERFORMED BY RETHINKIMPACTS 2017

Population	Data collection	Date
Audience	Questionnaire survey of a representative sample of the audiences at all mega-events and full moon events as well as selected standard events	Throughout 2017
	Interviews with audience members at selected events	Throughout 2017
Cultural institutions	Questionnaires for selected cultural institution executives	January 2017 and January 2018
	Interviews with selected cultural institution executives	2016 and 2017
Politicians	Questionnaires for all city council and regional council politicians in the Central Denmark Region	January 2017 and December 2017
	Interviews with selected politicians (primarily chairs of culture committees)	2016, 2017 and 2018
Government officials	Questionnaires for government officials in all municipal departments of culture in the region	2016 and 2018
	Interviews with government officials in selected municipal departments of culture	2016 and 2018
Population	Questionnaires for a representative sample of the Central Jutland and Danish population	Late 2015, late 2016, all four quarters in 2017 and early 2018
	Focus group interviews with citizens of selected municipalities in the region	Throughout 2016-2018
Media	Articles in the news media (print and online)	2007-2018
	Posts on social media (Facebook and Instagram)	2007-2018
	Case studies of three debates related to Aarhus 2017	2017
Sponsors	Questionnaire to Aarhus 2017's corporate sponsors	December 2017
	Interviews with selected corporate sponsors	2018
The Aarhus 2017 Foundation	Interviews with selected Aarhus 2017 Foundation staff members	2016, 2017 and 2018
	Interviews with the executive management of the Aarhus 2017 Foundation	Throughout the period 2014-2018
	Questionnaires for loaned employees	2018
Volunteers	Questionnaires for Aarhus 2017 ReThinkers	April 2017 and December 2017
	Focus group interview with volunteer ReThinkers	March 2017



Photo: Jan Rasmussen

combined qualitative and quantitative methods in order to arrive at a nuanced and complete picture of both overall patterns and their underlying causes. In most cases, data was collected in several rounds, primarily immediately before and after the European Capital of Culture year.

In addition to the main report and the theme reports, rethinkIMPACTS 2017's analyses have been communicated through talks, workshops, conferences etc. Throughout the process, the various stakeholder and the foundation have been kept informed, in accordance with the formative approach to the evaluation. In addition, the evaluation has been accompanied by 18 in-depth research projects carried out during the period by researchers and guest researchers at Aarhus University. The subjects of the research projects include value creation in culture projects, volunteerism (cruise ship hosts), cultural micro-projects, sustainability, public administration aspects, and more. In addition, 25 studies carried out a very diverse range of Master's thesis projects in collaboration with rethinkIMPACTS 2017.¹³

¹³ All reports and publications will also be available at: projects.au.dk/2017.





Photo: Lena Kilchitskaya



2

A JOINT PROJECT



Photo: Mikkel Berg Pedersen

The many different collaborations and networks behind the European Capital of Culture project contributed to mobilising a variety of contributors and competencies. The fundamental motivation for this can be found in the European Capital of Culture application, which stresses that “Aarhus 2017 will be a platform for interdisciplinary collaborations”.¹⁴ In this chapter, we analyse how these interdisciplinary collaborations functioned, and what effects this fundamental approach to collaboration produced. In addition, we illuminate the current and potentially lasting effects of the interdisciplinary collaboration.

2.1 MANY FORMS OF COLLABORATION

Aarhus 2017 was built on the foundation of many kinds of interdisciplinary collaboration: across municipalities, institutions and organisations, across sectors, professional specialisations and geography, and between artists, sponsors and citizens. The number, extent and variety of these collaborations was thus a core characteristic of Aarhus 2017, and one of the most successful aspects of the European Capital of Culture project.

COLLABORATION IN RELATION TO HOSTING AND FINANCING

Unlike most European Capital of Culture projects, Aarhus 2017 was the project of an entire region, rather than a single city/municipality. Central Denmark Region and the other eighteen municipalities in the region contributed 22% of Aarhus 2017s’ total budget. As early as the application phase, the region and the municipalities made the decision to organise

¹⁴ Aarhus 2017 Candidate European Capital of Culture 2017 – final application. Department of Culture, City of Aarhus (June 2012), page 8.

their collaboration in a network structure, with a regional advisory steering committee comprised of senior civil servants officials from the region and the municipalities.

The organisation of the Aarhus 2017 Foundation reflected the cross-municipal nature of the collaboration. Six of the foundation's board members were politicians from the City of Aarhus, Central Denmark Region and the different culture regions, and one member was appointed by the region's Growth Forum. The other six members of the board were representatives from business and industry, volunteer associations and culture, selected on the basis of their personal competencies and network. The secretariat was in part staffed by employees on loan from the participating municipalities and the region (through the 'employee loan-out model'). In this way, the formal structure and staffing of Aarhus 2017 reflecting underlying cross-municipal

Unlike most European Capital of Culture projects, Aarhus 2017 was the project of an entire region, rather than a single city/municipality.

European Capital of Culture collaboration.

Unlike local and regional government, which played an active role in the project, the central government was confined to the role of grant giver. The central government contributed DKK 129 million to the European Capital of Culture project budget – 28% of the total budget. There were no requirements or demands attached to this contribution, and there was no systematised collaboration between the European Capital of Culture project and the central government. The central government also contributed DKK 6 million to VisitDenmark's budget, earmarked for international marketing of European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017, as well as DKK 10

million via the regional culture agreements with the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces.

The amount of funding from local and regional government was set before the conferral of the Capital of Culture title in 2012. Although Denmark had been selected as a host country for the European Capital of Culture in 2005, the central government's decision to co-finance the European Capital of Culture project was not made until June 2014, almost two years after Aarhus won the title. The central government decision to co-finance was reached quite late in relation to the foundation's development of collaborations and the programme. In addition, the government grant was considerably lower than anticipated – approx. 65% of the anticipated amount. Those expectations were based on government grants to other comparable European Capital of Culture projects.¹⁵ The delayed government grant affected collaborations in different ways, as it presented a challenge to several of the foundation's development processes and possibilities for entering into collaborations with suppliers to the programme. This period of uncertainty about central government economic

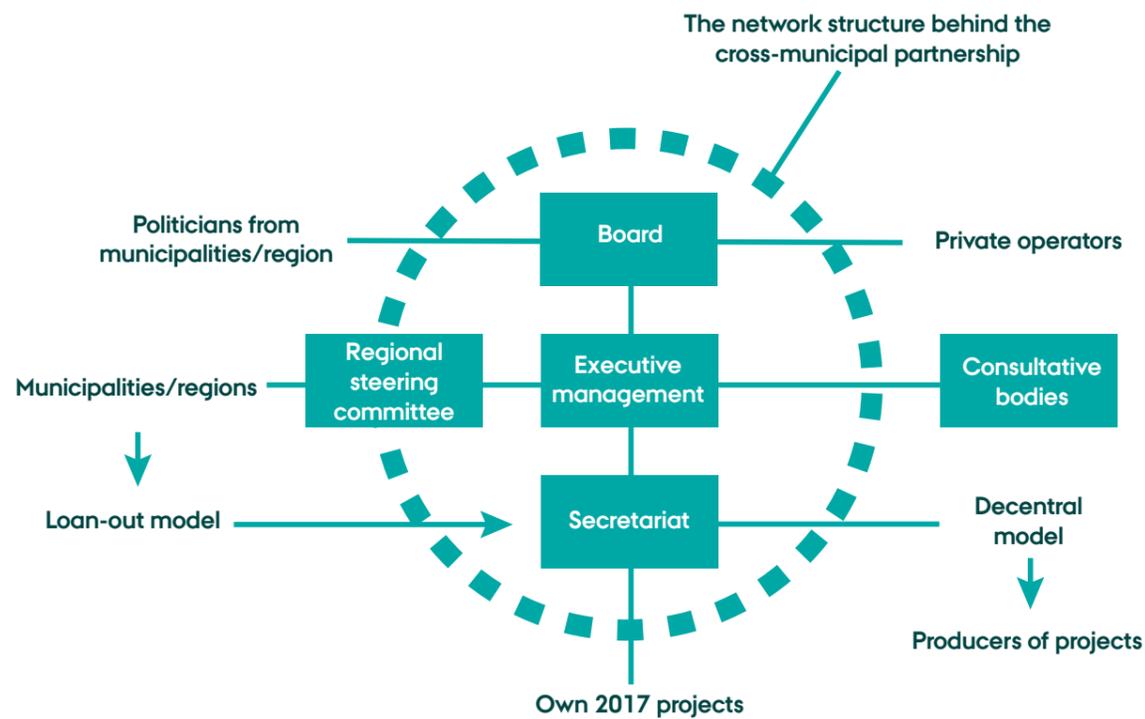
support subsequently ended up colouring the project owners' experience of cooperation with the foundation.

COLLABORATION WITH BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY AND FOUNDATIONS

The financial foundation of the European Capital of Culture project also included grants and support from foundations and private companies. The Aarhus 2017 Foundation developed a special partnership programme aimed at sponsors from foundations and business and industry which included the option of establishing cross-company collaborations and direct collaborations between sponsors and specific culture projects. And naturally, there was collaboration aimed at creating positive PR for both Aarhus 2017 and the sponsors.

The Aarhus 2017 Foundation fundraised a total of DKK 82.3 million¹⁶ from foundations and business and industry, 16% of which was contributed by

FIG. 2.1. THE OVERALL STRUCTURE – THE AARHUS 2017 FOUNDATION



¹⁵ Aarhus 2017 Candidate European Capital of Culture 2017 – final application. Department of Culture, City of Aarhus (June 2012), page 103.

¹⁶ In addition, in-kind donations valued at DKK 5.8 million were received.

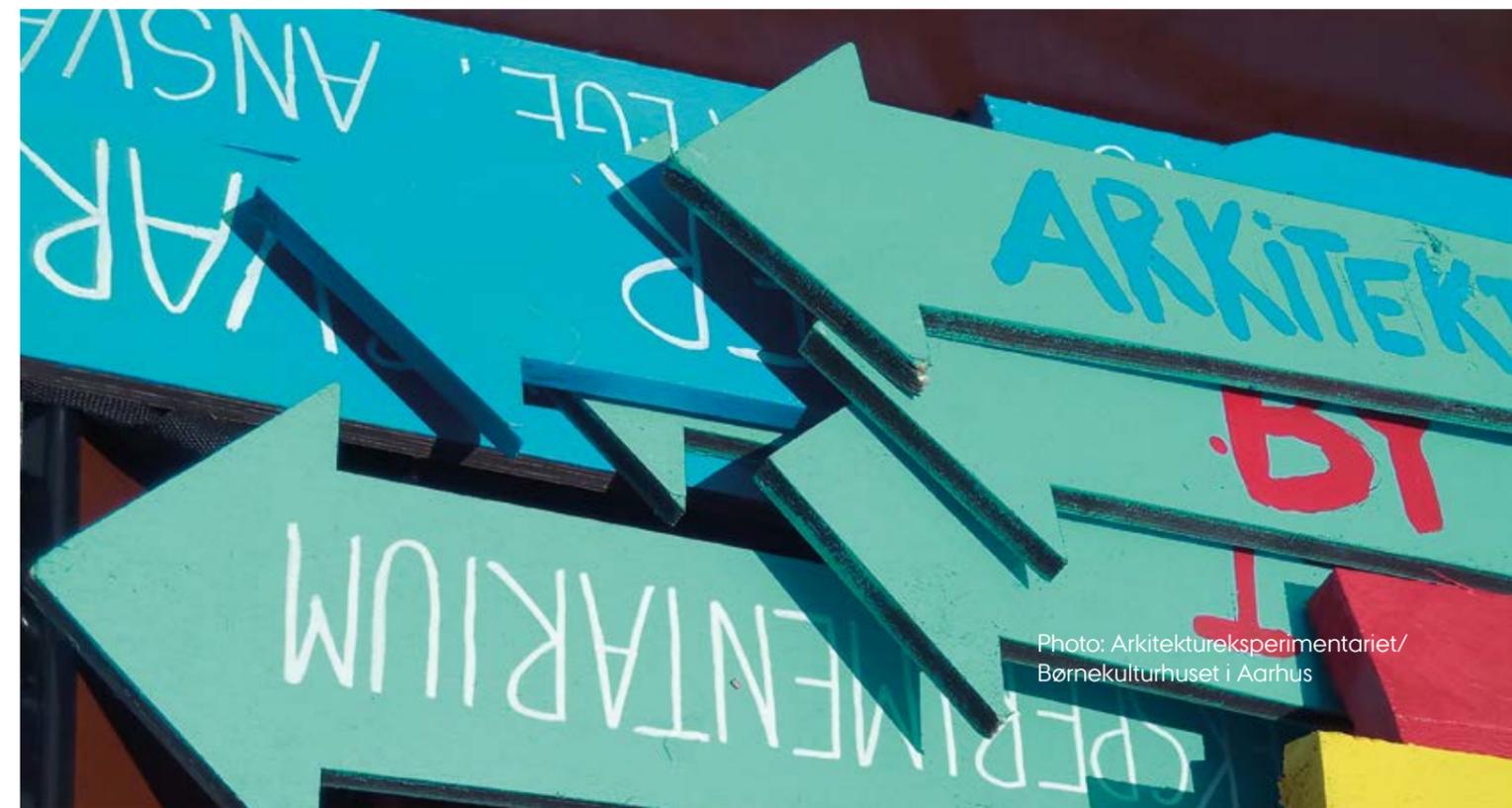


Photo: Arkitektureksperimentariet/ Børnekulturhuset i Aarhus

business and industry, and 81% of which came from public and private foundations. The Salling Foundations alone provided DKK 22.5 million in funding for the European Capital of Culture project as a whole. In general, grants from foundations were earmarked a specific Aarhus 2017 Foundation project. For example, the Nordea Foundation supported *My Playground*.

In addition to these grants, the individual project owners did fundraising for their specific projects, and this combination of central and decentral fundraising gave rise to some confusion and frustration. Several project owners had the experience of contacting a foundation only to be informed that it had already awarded support to Aarhus 2017. This was characterised by a number of project owners as counterproductive competition between the projects and the Aarhus 2017 Foundation. With regard to corporate sponsors, the Aarhus 2017 Foundation made a conscious choice not to contact local businesses outside Aarhus, precisely because they were obvious candidates as sponsors for local projects in the region.

The intention was to create new forms of sponsorship through the partnership programme, in which sponsors were active co-creators rather than passive financial partners. This intention was realised in the partnership with Arla, for example, which focused on rethinking Danish food culture. However, this active participatory approach was only practiced in a few of the business partnerships.

Although the EU awarded the title of European Capital of Culture, the EU only contributed financially in the form of the Melina Mercouri Prize, a grant of EUR 1.5 million, which is the EU's standard grant to European Capital of Culture projects. Otherwise, the collaboration with EU was more formal in nature, as the EU as the grantor of the

title required confirmation that Aarhus 2017 was in compliance with the agreed ground rules and the goals outlined in the application. This was ensured by the monitoring process which took place during the preparations for the European Capital of Culture title year, during which the EU's monitoring panel contributed concrete recommendations twice, among other things in relation to strengthening the European dimension and the development of clear messaging.¹⁷

COLLABORATION ACROSS BOUNDARIES

The collaborative nature of the European Capital of Culture project was also apparent in various other forms of collaboration. Interdisciplinary collaboration was a central focus of the European Capital of Culture project from the very beginning, when

¹⁷ Cf. the reports "First monitoring" and "Second monitoring", the Monitoring and Advisory Panel (November 2014 and April 2016).

the City of Aarhus involved citizens and cultural operators in the drafting of the European Capital of Culture application in 2008. Citizens also played a major role in connection with the realisation of the European Capital of Culture project, namely as volunteers (cf. section 4.2).

In the establishment and development phase, collaboration was prominent among the foundation's award criteria for the different suppliers of content for the programme. In connection with project support grants, the foundation emphasised interdisciplinary collaboration in relation to geography, professional specialisations, participants, etc. Similarly, one of the grant criteria was that some of the projects were to get involved in international collaborations. The core of the projects' international collaborations was a series of co-productions – approx. 40% of the projects under Aarhus 2017 had European co-producers.

From the very beginning, interdisciplinary collaboration was a research priority area for the European Capital of Culture project.

There were also various exchanges for international artists as well as a number of foreign productions.

In relation to tourism, a consortium was established between the City of Aarhus, the Central Denmark Region, VisitDenmark, VisitAarhus and the former Central Denmark Tourism Foundation as well as the Aarhus 2017 Foundation. The goal of the consortium was to use the European Capital of Culture project as a branding opportunity for Aarhus and the region as a cultural tourism destination. This collaboration was aimed at increasing Aarhus' international visibility and increasing tourism. Working together to achieve these goals would enable the consortium partners to anchor the effects of Aarhus 2017, allowing them to



Photo: Kåre Viemose and Christian M. Andersen

FISH-Á-DELI CIRCUS

Fish-á-deli Circus was presented by SMAG and the Central Denmark Region, and was part of both Aarhus 2017 and the European Region of Gastronomy 2017. The performance was a travelling food circus that visited several different municipalities in the region. Musicians, actors, acrobats and cooks recreated an 18th century travelling circus, and the performance was centred on a 10-course menu based on sustainably harvested fish and local ingredients from the region. The travelling food circus continued its tour in 2018.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

The Seven Deadly Sins was a collaborative exhibit involving the Museum for Religious Art in Lemvig, the Skovgaard Museum in Viborg, Randers Art Museum, the Glass Museum in Ebeltoft, MUSE@UM in Skive, Horsens Art Museum and Holstebro Art Museum. Each museum staged an exhibit on one of the seven deadly sins: gluttony, pride, lust, sloth, envy, wrath and greed. The series of exhibits was part of the European Capital of Culture programme and was partially funded by the Aarhus 2017 Foundation.

reach above and beyond the European Capital of Culture title year.

In addition, there was a separate initiative involving the creative industries, the Central Denmark Region's growth strategy *More Creative*. This initiative, which primarily focused on competency development through the

development of business clusters was transferred back to Central Denmark Region in 2016, after which the Aarhus 2017 Foundation exclusively retained responsibility for the event component, *More Creative Events*.¹⁸

A STRENGTHENED, EXPANDED FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION

In some cases, one interesting outcome of these various kinds of interdisciplinary collaboration was the emergence of entirely new kinds of cultural outputs. One example is *Fish-á-deli Circus*, which involved collaboration across institutions and professional specialisations – in this case gastronomy and theatre. In other collaborations, participants worked with familiar cultural formats, but in entirely new collaborative constellations. One example of this is *The Seven Deadly Sins*, a series of exhibits jointly staged by seven of the region's museums in which each museum focused on one of the seven deadly sins.

In general, the network-based structure of Aarhus 2017 and the necessity of collaboration in the decentralised production of the programme gave participants extensive experience with interdisciplinary collaboration and relation-building. In this way, a foundation of experience across institutions, players and municipalities was established, and new forms of collaboration were tested which have opened up new possibilities in the future, on which existing and future collaborative relationships can continue to build.

¹⁸ These events were evaluated independently in the report "Evaluation of More Creative Events 2017", rethinkIMPACTS 2017 (2018).

2.2 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF A DECENTRALISED STRUCTURE

As a consequence of the decentralisation of the European Capital of Culture programme, 80% of the projects in the programme were outsourced to external partners. The Aarhus 2017 Foundation produced the remaining 20%.

As the official producer of the total programme, the foundation had final responsibility for the programme's quality, content, etc. For this reason, the foundation performed a variety of different roles,

such as funder, advisor and artistic co-developer, in collaboration with the various artistic content providers. The task of developing the programme was performed by the foundation's programme team under the leadership of the programme director. The team was responsible for application processes, funding award criteria and ongoing contact with the many external projects.

IMPROVING COMPETENCIES IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR

Because the majority of the programme was produced by external content providers, the



Photo: John Shin Hansen

European Capital of Culture project contributed to strengthening the cultural sector in the region. Local institutions and organisations handled major development tasks, which ensured that the competencies and experiences gained were strongly anchored in local communities, and have therefore been retained after the European Capital of Culture title year, rather than simply disappearing after the dissolution of the foundation – which may have been the case if the foundation had been solely responsible for the production of the programme.

By outsourcing the production of the programme and granting funding to a many different artistic content providers, the European Capital of Culture project challenged and developed the individual institutions and organisations in the region. One example of this is Randers Egnsteater (Randers area theatre), which was asked to produce the full moon event *Watermusic*. This project gave the institution and its network an opportunity to develop competencies and create a strong foundation of experience the theatre can draw on in connection with coming projects.

The focus on development and improving competencies in the cultural sector had been described as a significant strategic initiative in the application, where it was referred to in terms of a focus on ‘soft city’ learning. One contributor to improving competencies in the cultural sector was the inclusion of development aspects in many of the projects – especially in the establishment and development phase and (to a lesser extent) in the

execution phase. According to Aarhus 2017’s own figures, an objective for almost half of all projects was to develop the qualifications or competencies of the project participants.

And this competency boost to the region’s culture producers was one of the clearest strengths of the European Capital of Culture project.¹⁹ This structure contributed to the European Capital of Culture project’s strategic objective²⁰ of strengthening the cultural sector, which is an important part of the legacy of Aarhus 2017.

WATERMUSIC

Watermusic was one of the 12 full moon events on the Aarhus 2017 programme. This musical drama show took place on the waterfront in Randers, and both buildings and the water were involved in the spectacular show, which involved several hundred performers and which was experienced by over 15,000 spectators. Performers in Randers Egnsteater’s tale of love between the water and the land included the singer Oh Land, new circus artists, choral singers and dancers.

RESOURCE CONSUMPTION AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Two of the primary challenges associated with decentralised programme production were that this required close communication between the foundation’s staff and the content producers, as well as agreement between the parties on the division of work and roles. In addition, content producers had to be willing to work actively with the strategic objectives of the European Capital of Culture project – not least in regard to the long-term objectives of increased European collaboration or of reaching new audiences, thereby creating a wider audience for culture.

The decentralised programme production demanded considerable resources and made heavy demands on both producers and the foundation. The foundation had to juggle different and at times incompatible functions as funder, supervisory authority, advisor and hands-on artistic co-developer. In this respect, the foundation was different to other culture foundations, which typically operate at a greater distance from artistic and cultural projects.

But because the foundation was also responsible for the programme as whole, the programme team, and in particular the programme director, were deeply involved in the artistic aspects. The intention was to push the project owners to raise their ambitions and pressure them to do their best, while at the same time monitoring and supervising the development of the programme as a whole.²¹

Content providers had mixed reactions to the foundation’s shifting roles. On the one hand, the foundation’s support in relation to their artistic development was inspiring and reassuring. But on the other hand, there was criticism of inadequate communication from the foundation. The root cause of this critique was confusion regarding the division of work and responsibility between the foundation and the content providers, as well as dissatisfaction with supervisory and reporting requirements, which were seen as an unnecessary burden, and considered by many to be out of proportion to the size of the grants.

¹⁹ The effect of this focus area is also referred to as ‘capacity building’.
²⁰ “Welcome future”, the Aarhus 2017 Foundation (2018), p. 12.
²¹ Interview with Programme Director Juliana Engberg, March 2018.

Because the majority of the programme was produced by external content providers, the European Capital of Culture project contributed to strengthening the cultural sector in the region.

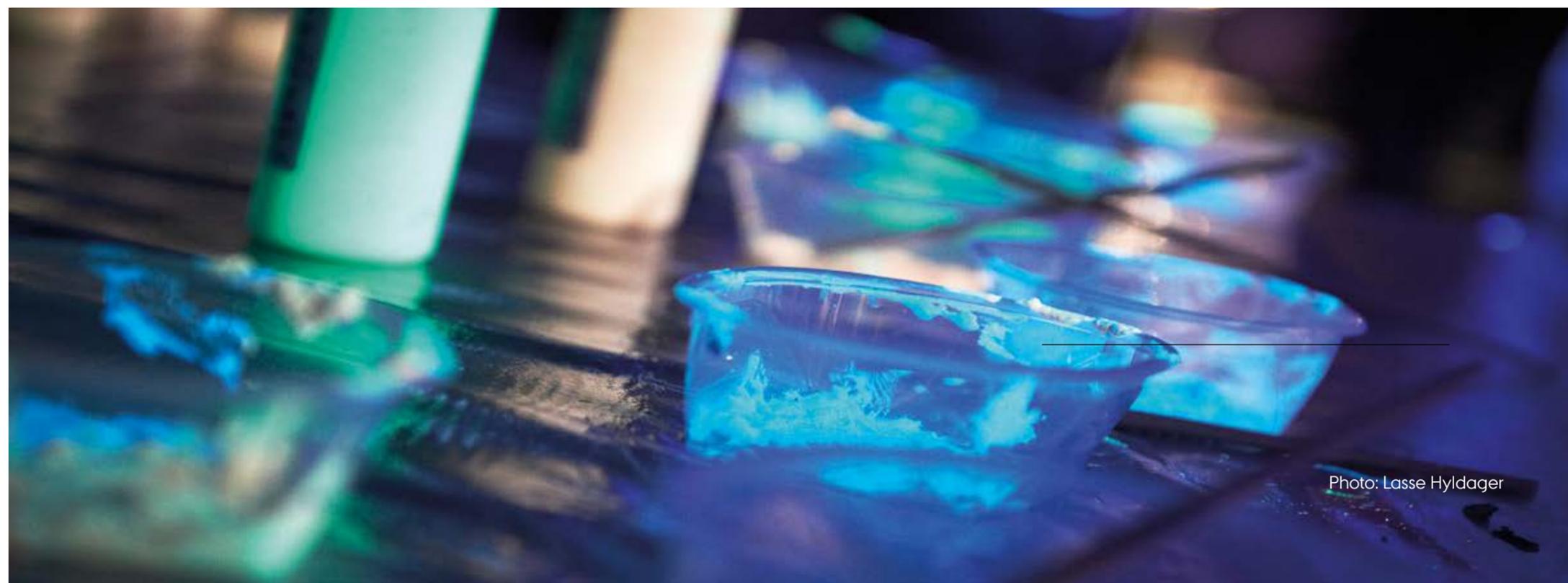


Photo: Lasse Hyldager



Photo: Ulla Rose

THE EMPLOYEE LOAN-OUT MODEL

While the decentralised production of the programme ensured that cultural institutions would develop their competencies, the so-called 'employee loan-out model' functioned as a mechanism that ensured the circulation of knowledge between the foundation and the region. The model was also intended to minimise the foundation's operating expenses. Under the employee loan-out model, the Central Denmark Region and each of the region's 19 municipalities committed to loan a specific number of FTEs to the foundation. Of the 143 FTEs that staffed the foundation in the period 2013-2018, 33% were on loan, of whom the majority were from the City of Aarhus and the Central Denmark Region.²²

Their work at the foundation contributed to the personal and professional development of

²² Welcome future", the Aarhus 2017 Foundation (2018), p. 147.



Photo: Imaginart

employees on long-term loan, which was in fact an important motive for allowing themselves to be loaned out for most of these employees. These

employees also found that their newly-acquired competencies were brought into play when they returned to their original jobs. However, some of these loaned employees expressed a desire for a clearer strategy for how their competencies would be activated, both by the foundation and on their return, and every fourth loaned employee reported that they had to a high degree acquired competencies through their work at the foundation that were not exploited in their current position. The loan-out model produced some organisational challenges, as it meant that the employees in the secretariat were employed under different employment contracts, which points to a need to structure loan-out conditions and work conditions more clearly.

The loan-out model helped provide the

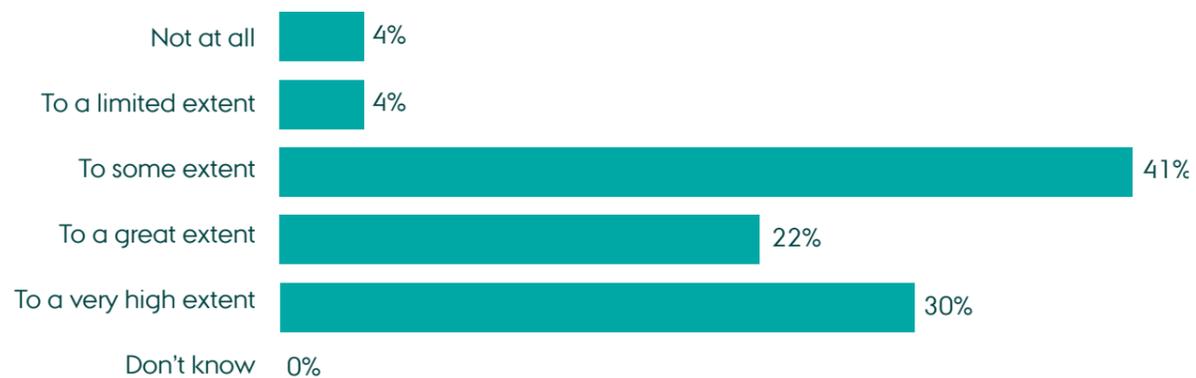
foundation with relevant knowledge about its strategic partners (the municipalities and the region), and made it easier to retain staff. In future, it would be advantageous to deploy use of the loan-out model more strategically in relation to the positions and job functions the employees have – both during and after the loan period. This would create a stronger foundation for lasting effects of the European Capital of Culture project.

2.3 A STABLE FOUNDATION

Two collaborations were especially central in relation to ensuring stability and consensus in relation to the European Capital of Culture project: the joint cross-municipal host partnership behind the project, and the foundation's collaboration with the largest local cultural institutions to produce of the programme content.

The City of Aarhus' decision to reach out to the Central Denmark Region and the other

FIGURE 2.2. LOANED EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION OF WHETHER THEY ACQUIRED NEW KNOWLEDGE OR NEW COMPETENCIES



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire survey of loaned employees (2018). "To what extent did you acquire new knowledge or new competencies during your time as an employee loaned out to Aarhus 2017?". Data used: 27 survey responses.

The loan-out model helped enable the foundation to gain access to relevant knowledge from the municipalities and the region.



Photo: Ravi Deepres

municipalities in the region and involve them in the collaboration on the European Capital of Culture project was strategic, and the objective was to ensure cultural critical mass while at the same time promoting a number of goals across the region, including business development, tourism, growth and the inclusion of rural areas.²³

We understand these extensive collaborations with established culture institutions as a strategic choice with an emphasis on reliability and stability in relation to the production of central parts of the cultural programme. In the application for the European Capital of Culture title, there was an emphasis on strategic exploitation of existing cultural networks and collaborations in the creation of the programme. The realization of this began early, in connection with the foundation's award of programme funding, in regard to which a considerable proportion of the programme budget was awarded to large, established cultural institutions which were also given responsibility for a considerable proportion of the programme's flagship events, including a number of mega events and full moon events.

CROSS-MUNICIPAL COLLABORATION

The City of Aarhus and the Central Denmark Region decided early on to make the European Capital of Culture project more inclusive and add a regional dimension, which served to strengthen the project's

anchoring in the region. The project was made accessible and relevant not just for residents of Aarhus, but for over one million citizens in the region. The regional collaboration also made it possible to draw on a more extensive cultural infrastructure in the entire region. Generally speaking, the regional collaboration created a more stable foundation for the development and execution of the European Capital of Culture project. As a side benefit, it also contributed to creating closer ties between citizens and organisations in the region, and to forming a shared regional identity (see also section 5.3).

In addition, the pledge of collaboration and financing from both Central Denmark Region and all 19 of the region's municipalities at an early stage meant that there was a certain amount of stability in relation to the financial situation, at a point at which the central government's contribution and involvement were still uncertain. This provided a financial foundation for activities as early as 2013, as well as a foundation on which to start fundraising, in that public co-financing was already guaranteed.

For the organisation Central Denmark Region, succeeding in getting the other 18 municipalities involved in the project constituted a success story in itself. The idea of cross-municipal collaboration involving all of the region's municipalities was

²³ Aarhus 2017 Candidate European Capital of Culture 2017 – final application. Department of Culture, City of Aarhus (June 2012), pp. 14-16.

FIGURE 2.3. FIGURE 2017 THREE STRATEGIC ARGUMENTS FOR INVOLVING THE ENTIRE CENTRAL DENMARK REGION IN THE AARHUS 2017 COLLABORATION



ambitious and innovative, as traditionally collaboration has taken place within the local culture regions, which only include a smaller number of municipalities. Before the European Capital of Culture project, there had never been a cultural collaboration involving all of the municipalities in Central Denmark Region, a rather new construction at the time.

GUARANTEE FOR THE MUNICIPALITIES' ROI (RETURN ON INVESTMENT)

The 18 municipalities which co-financed the European Capital of Culture project in addition to the City of Aarhus got involved in the project on the condition that the project's activities would be spread across the entire region. If this condition were not fulfilled, it would have not been administratively or politically sustainable to provide financial support for Aarhus 2017. A precondition for the cross-municipal collaboration was a guarantee that programme support funds would be channelled back to each municipality in the form of programme activities, and that the value of these activities at a minimum corresponded to the individual municipality's contribution to Aarhus 2017.

In order to fulfil this condition, a model for ROI (return on investment) was applied. The purpose of this model was to make it possible to provide documentation to each municipality that a return on this investment had been delivered in the form of programme activities, and it was thus a central tool for ensuring political harmony and continued political support from the 18 municipalities.

Although this model, which calculated the municipalities' return on investment with a single ROI score was simple and easy to communicate politically, it had certain weaknesses. Both government officials and politicians pointed out that the model and the

publication of the ROI scores could lead to internal competition between the municipalities. For this reason, the ROI scores were handled with great caution on the part of the Aarhus 2017 Foundation. This meant that using the ROI model as a political tool presented a challenge for cross-municipal collaboration at times. In general, however, we believe that the ROI model was an effective and perhaps even necessary strategic move to get the region's municipalities to join in the collaboration on the project and contribute to its financing. Despite the intrinsic weaknesses, the model has lived up

AARHUS 2017'S RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI) MODEL

The ROI model was Aarhus 2017 Foundation's solution for implementing the financing principles described in the application for the European Capital of Culture title. The other 18 municipalities were to receive a return on their financial support of the foundation in the form of programme activities.

As specified in the contract between the Aarhus 2017 Foundation and the individual municipalities, each municipality was assured a minimum ROI of 1:1 at the end of the European Capital of Culture year. The calculations were performed using an annual tally by the Aarhus 2017 Foundation of the municipalities in which the individual projects had activities, starting in 2015. The funds a particular project had spent on activities in a particular municipality were included in the associated municipalities' ROI score.

After the end of the European Capital of Culture year, all of the municipalities had achieved a ROI of at least 1:1.



to its overall goal: to create political stability in a cross-municipal collaboration in which all of the region's municipalities participated as co-hosts and contribution to financing the European Capital of Culture project.

COLLABORATION WITH THE BIG 8 AND OTHER ESTABLISHED CULTURAL PLAYERS

The foundation sought to ensure programme quality and the delivery of the planned events by producing some of the central mega and full moon events itself. At the same time, the foundation collaborated on the other key events with well-known, well-proven players in the cultural sphere whose ability to handle the task was assured in advance. This meant that the entire core of the programme was based on collaborations which represented a low risk for the foundation.

With this in mind, 11% of the total programme was awarded specifically to the 'Big 8' – the largest cultural institutions in Aarhus. Each of these institutions was allocated DKK 4 million, a large grant compared to the other grants awarded. In addition, the Big 8 carried out their projects in collaboration with the foundation, which made it possible for both parties to fulfil their wishes for a joint project. This collaboration ensured that the large cultural institutions felt a sense of ownership in relation to the European Capital of Culture project, which contributed to a consolidation of Aarhus 2017.

An additional 20% of the programme funds were given to so-called strategic projects, in relation to which as well the foundation collaborated with large, established cultural institutions. In addition, 17% of the programme funds went to mega and full moon events, all of which required a stable, reliable supplier capable of putting on a large event without

THE BIG 8

The eight largest cultural institutions in Aarhus are sometimes collectively referred to as the Big 8: ARoS, Den Gamle By, Den Jyske Opera, Moesgaard Museum, Concert Hall Aarhus, Aarhus Festival, the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra and Aarhus Teater.

the risk of a fiasco. A few smaller cultural operators were given an opportunity to try their hand with large events, such as Komediehuset in Horsens, which put on Freedom Prison, and Teatret OM, which was the artistic force behind the closing ceremony in Hvide Sande.

Naturally, a project as large as Aarhus 2017 receives considerable attention, and there is no room for (too) serious error. This may explain why the foundation has consistently prioritised reliability and stability. This has admittedly had consequence, both in relation to which parts of cultural life were strengthened – the large, well-established players rather than the up-and-coming talents and free agents – and in relation to how the theme 'rethink' played out. This will be explored in greater detail in chapter 3.

2.4 CONTINUATION OF COLLABORATIONS

One of the most characteristic aspects of Aarhus 2017 is the many different types of collaboration – and something we expect will continue to have lasting effects afterwards. The collaboration-based foundation of the European Capital of Culture project, which was specified by the public sector participants and which also characterised many of the projects, has

demonstrated what kind of synergy and developing interdisciplinary collaboration can create.

The many collaborations between cultural institutions and with civil society and business and industry have both developed the cultural repertoire and expanded the role of culture. At the same time, fertile ground for a variety of new collaborations between cultural institutions has been created, a number of which have continued after Aarhus 2017. An additional strength of the decentralised programme production is how it contributed to upgrading the culture-producing landscape in the region. In themselves, the many collaborations and networks have contributed to fulfilling the European Capital of Culture project's strategic objective of strengthening the cultural sector, and will constitute an important aspect of the legacy of Aarhus 2017.

One concrete offshoot of Aarhus 2017 was that, Central Denmark Region and the 19 municipalities entered into an agreement in November 2017 to continue their collaboration after Aarhus 2017 under the title of 'European Region of Culture'. The European Capital of Culture year has thus directly catalysed future cross-municipal cultural collaboration in the region. To begin with, the project will last for two years, and like Aarhus 2017,

the European Region of Culture will grant funding to cultural projects in the region.

The collaboration with private businesses and sponsors proceeded in a professional manner and benefitted both parties. The Aarhus 2017 Foundation did not rethink its approach to fundraising and sponsors to a significant extent.²⁴ It would be advantageous to sustain this established network of sponsors in future, among the existing business clubs of the large cultural institutions and/or under the aegis of the European Cultural Region.

Generally speaking, experiences with many and new forms of interdisciplinary collaboration have made lasting traces after Aarhus 2017. Many of the different players have expressed that they will be more like to try out new and cross-cutting collaborations in future. In this way, the decentralised programme model, the employee loan-out model and the many kinds of collaboration and new relationships have laid a foundation for more lasting effects, in relation to the development of competencies, networks and traditions for collaboration in and with cultural life in the city and the region.

²⁴ Theme report no. 6: "The involvement of the business community in Aarhus 2017", rethinkIMPACTS 2017 (2018).



Photo: Ulla Rose

3

THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE PROJECT AND THE AUDIENCE

In October 2016, the Aarhus 2017 Foundation announced the complete programme for the European Capital of Culture year. In this chapter, we explain how the programme was developed, as well as what effects were produced by the work of realising the programme. Next, we analyse the programme's contents with regards to parameters such as scope, genres and accessibility in order to investigate the effects produced by the programme and the various events. In addition, we analyse the Aarhus 2017 audience: audience experiences and composition, as well as the extent to which Aarhus 2017 succeeded in reaching out to more and new types of audience members.

Two of Aarhus 2017's strategic objectives are central to the analyses in this chapter: the objective

of strengthening "the long-term development and importance of art and culture", and the objective of contributing to "the development of open and participatory urban environments".²⁵

In addition, we consider audience participation in Aarhus 2017 in the context of the strategic objective of creating "broad and active participation". In this context, we interpret 'breadth' both as an intention to reach *many* citizens and to reach a *wide cross-section* of the population. This is in line with the intentions in relation to audience development formulated in the application, in which "non-users" are singled out as a prioritised target group.²⁶

²⁵ Aarhus 2017 Candidate European Capital of Culture 2017 – final application, Department of Culture, City of Aarhus (June 2012), page 8.

²⁶ Aarhus 2017 Candidate European Capital of Culture 2017 – final application, Department of Culture, City of Aarhus (June 2012), page 27.

3.1 THE THEMES AND VALUES OF THE PROGRAMME

As an overall theme for the programme, 'rethink' struck a good balance between the obligatory and the inclusive, which meant that it functioned well as a the framework for a large cultural programme. The content producers of the programme (cultural institutions, independent artists, associations, etc.) have stated that they found the theme easy and relevant to work with in their projects, and 34 events included the word in their titles (for example, *Rethinking Agricultural History* and *Rethink the Creation*). The producers had to consider the programme theme 'rethink' in advance, and the three underlying values (democracy, diversity and sustainability) in connection with the development

The theme 'rethink' struck a good balance between the obligatory and the inclusive, which meant that it functioned well as the framework for a large cultural programme.

of the projects, including them as an aspect of what they presented to the audience. But it was up to them to define what was to be rethought and how. This produced a variety of different results – from radical rethinking to adaptation or slight adjustment of previously existing project ideas or works.

While the 'rethink' theme provided a framework for and influenced the projects in a number of ways, the values on the other hand receded into the background and were almost invisible, both in the foundation's communication and in the projects. The projects themselves reported the various themes treated in their projects to the Aarhus 2017 Foundation event calendar. But only one-fourth of the projects reported that their projects treated the three values to some extent or other. Similarly, the foundation's project team did not place high emphasis on them. We view the fact the values slipped into the background as a sign of a shift from an application phase which placed a broad emphasis on culture in general, to a performance phase in which there was greater focus on culture as an offer to citizens and visitors.²⁷

²⁷ Aarhus 2017 Candidate European Capital of Culture 2017 – final application, Department of Culture, City of Aarhus (June 2012), page 10.



Photo: Maria Høy Hansen



Photo: Ulla Rose

3.2 THE COMPOSITION OF THE PROGRAMME

The content producers were already involved in the application phase, when a variety of (potential) projects were included in it. This created a certain degree of expectation that their projects would be realised among the project owners, and in fact the majority of the projects were included in the final programme in a more developed form.²⁸ Formally speaking, the projects did not become part of the European Capital of Culture Project until the series of allocation rounds in the period 2013-2015.

The final programme had a broad, interdisciplinary approach to the European Capital of Culture project. Twenty per cent of the total programme budget went to strategic development projects which were intended to both supply events to the programme in 2017 and to work with

The final programme had a broad, interdisciplinary approach to the European Capital of Culture project. Twenty per cent of the total programme budget went to strategic development projects which were intended to both supply events to the programme in 2017 and to work with development activities in the years leading up to the European Capital of Culture year.

development activities in the years leading up to the European Capital of Culture year. This also sent the signal that the European Capital of Culture project was intended to be more than a series of events taking place in 2017: namely a set of long-term development strategies. As the European Capital of Culture year drew near, more and more

²⁸ See detailed analyses in theme report no. 2: "The involvement of cultural institutions in Aarhus 2017", rethinkIMPACTS 2017 (2018).

TABEL 3.1 THE ALLOCATION OF THE TOTAL PROGRAMME BUDGET

	AMOUNT IN DKK	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL PROGRAMME BUDGET
Projects included in the application	48.5 million	15%
Strategic projects	65.7 million	20%
Internal projects	39.2 million	12%
The Big 8	36.4 million	11%
Mega and full moon events	56.7 million	17%
OFFTrack2017 and micro-projects	3.9 million	1%
Open Call	14.7 million	5%
More Creative	41.1 million	13%
Others	23.2 million	6%
Total	329.4 million	100%

Source: revised financial statements for the Aarhus 2017 Foundation for the years 2013-2018 as well as financial reporting for 2018 as of 1 October 2018.

emphasis was placed on the projects' audience-oriented activities.

Five per cent of the total programme budget went to Open Call in 2015, which invited players who had not been involved in the application

OFFTrack2017

OFFTrack2017 was an initiative to support up-and-coming talents and included a funding pool for micro-projects.

This initiative was launched in autumn 2014 in order to support and build on the potential that existed among grassroots players and emerging cultural entrepreneurs. To help the OFFTrack2017 projects, Aarhus 2017 selected eight experienced players representing different artistic and cultural fields, including music, sport, gastronomy, architecture, theatre, dance, film, animation, and more. In this way, OFFTrack2017 also constituted a network in which the various grassroots actors could get help and advice on their projects.

A total of 102 micro-projects received support from the OFFTrack2017 pool.

Examples include:

- INUIT, a cross-aesthetic performance that explored themes such as identity, culture, memory and rootlessness.
- Aarhus Volume, a street party-inspired festival with a focus on collaboration, networks and neighbourhood development which showcased grassroots cultures.
- Non-Space, an experimental cultural platform which gave up-and-coming artists a space in which to test out their projects, concepts and ideas.

phase to apply for funding and inclusion in the programme. In addition, entirely new, smaller players had the opportunity to become part of the programme through the micro-projects, which were organised through OFFTrack2017 (one per cent of the programme budget). OFFTrack2017 made funding available for small projects and up-and-coming and new talents all the way until autumn 2016.

In connection with the funding allocation rounds, there was a certain degree of dissatisfaction among both applicants who received funding and among those whose applications were denied. For the players who were involved from the beginning, some of this dissatisfaction stemmed from the shift from an inclusive, dialogical process in the application phase to a more traditional division of roles in the establishment and development phase, in which the foundation acted as a funder accepting and denying applications. Similarly, some of the project owners were dissatisfied that they were awarded less funding than they had

applied for, and less than they had expected on the background of the dialogue with the foundation in the application phase. This meant that the projects either had to be scaled back or the applicants themselves had to acquire a larger proportion of the funding. For the small players and those who first joined the process at a late date, dissatisfaction was particularly directed at the long planning horizon, which made it difficult to contribute later in the process. Finally, a number of culture sector players found the application process confusing, opaque and resource-demanding.²⁹

THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF THE PROGRAMME

It was a clear requirement on the part of the EU that the programme had to have a European dimension, in relation to both *content* and *collaboration*. A smaller proportion of the events worked with the European dimension in terms of content, for example *European Encounters* at Gammel Estrup Manor, which was about the history of manors in Europe.

In general, the European dimension was not particularly visible in the programme content, whereas it played a more prominent role in relation to international collaboration.

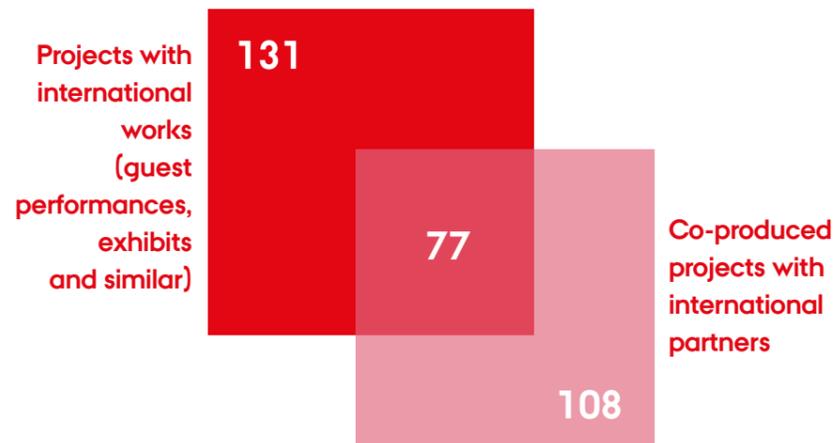
In general, however, the European dimension was not particularly visible in the programme content, whereas it played a more prominent role in relation to international collaboration. 108 (corresponding to 40%) of the projects under the European Capital of Culture umbrella were international co-productions. There were also projects with international elements such as guest performers, exhibitions and so on. A total of 162 projects (60% of the European Capital of Culture projects) were involved in some form of international collaboration. The foundation's foreign programme director and CEO contributed to ensuring that the programme included an international dimension.

²⁹ See detailed analyses in theme report no. 2: "The involvement of cultural institutions in Aarhus 2017", rethinkIMPACTS 2017 (2018).



Photo: Aarhus School of Music, Nicolai Bælum Bech, Mikkel Horne and Troels Nissen

FIGURE 3.1 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE PROJECTS INVOLVING INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION



PROGRAMME CURATION

The programme director was officially responsible for curating the programme as a whole. Gitte Just, the first programme director (2013-2014), was primarily in a position to assess the projects that had been sketched out in the application, although she also initiated others, including *Life Boats* and the *Aarhus Sustainability Model*. In contrast, the foundation's second and primary programme director, Juliana Engberg (2015-2018), made a conscious effort to make a clear mark on the programme, not least through the foundation's own programme contributions. Engberg formulated the programme's artistic vision in the following terms: "Celebration, immersion and provocation aimed at stimulating wonder, dialogue and sometimes debate about the things that unify and divide us as Danes, Scandinavians, Europeans and global citizens."³⁰

One of Engberg's significant contributions was

that she attracted international artists, primarily visual artists and practitioners of experimental and politically engaged art, which was exhibited at the temporary gallery 'O' Space, among other venues.

The focus of curation was not only on creating thematic consistency in the programme, but also on giving it a strongly international slant and ensuring a high standard of artistic excellence. In local cultural circles, on the other hand, this approach was widely seen as favouring international artists over local artists, and it was felt that not enough was done to create connections between the internationally produced and the locally produced parts of the programme, artistic quality was prioritised highly, which was reflected in a programme which achieved a generally high level of artistic quality.

THE CONTENT OF THE PROGRAMME

The four mega events and the 12 full moon events were the central highlights of the European Capital of Culture year. These events received a total of

17% of the programme budget and attracted a total of 1.3 million audience visits (corresponding to 41% of the total attendance figures for the European Capital of Culture programme). There was considerable variation in the audience figures for the different mega and full moon events – from approx. 3,000 audience visits (*Befri Gudstjenesten*, 'Liberate the church service') to almost 600,000 (*The Garden*). Quite a few of the general programme events³¹ also attracted a large audience, for example *Aarhus Stories* (192,700) and *Rejsen* ('The journey') (113,494).

According to the Aarhus 2017 Foundation's figures, the European Capital of Culture programme attracted 628 events in 2017, a total of 3.3 million visits.³² The majority of events were concentrated

³¹ 'General programme events' refers to all other events than the four mega-events and the 12 full moon events.

³² The Aarhus 2017 Foundation's statistics in the report "Welcome Future", the Aarhus 2017 Foundation (2018), page 29.

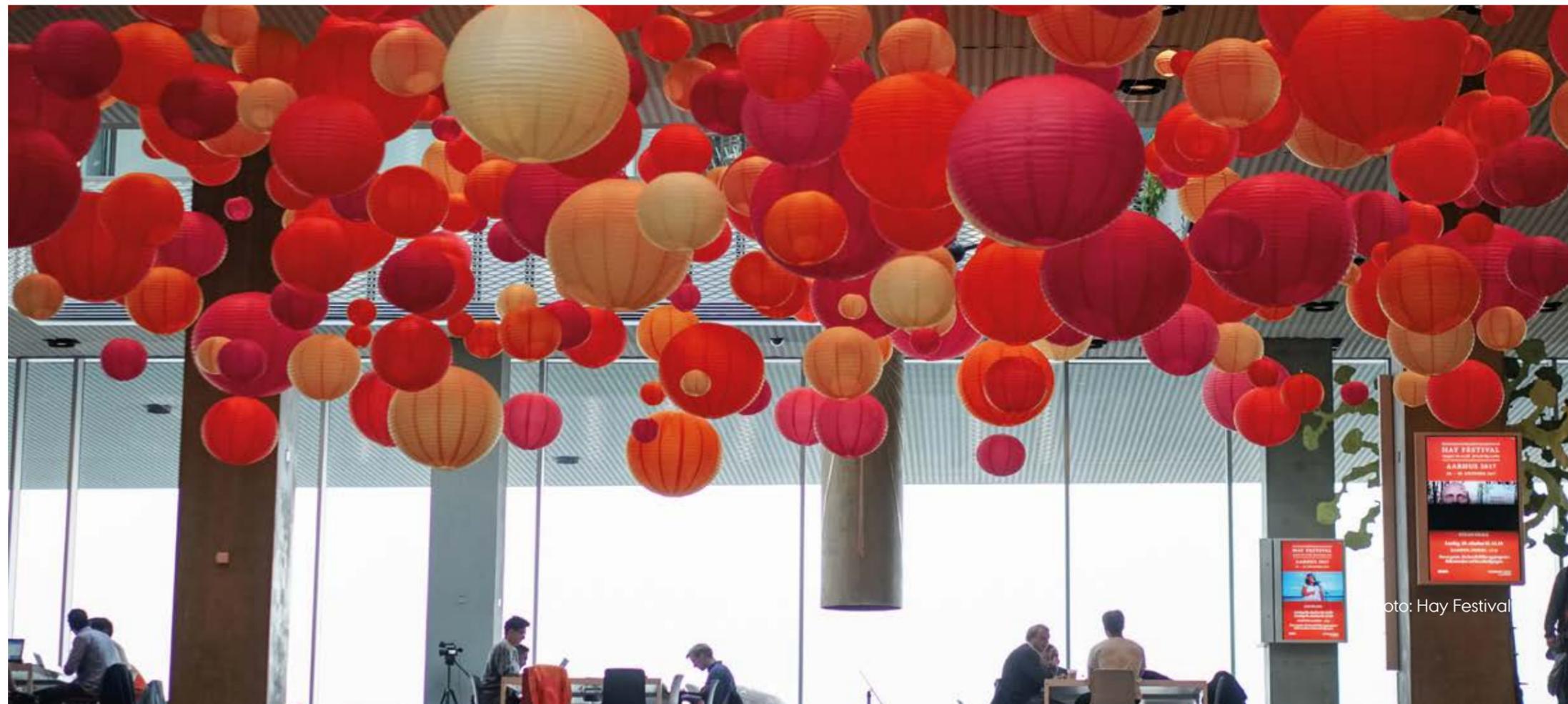


Photo: Hay Festival

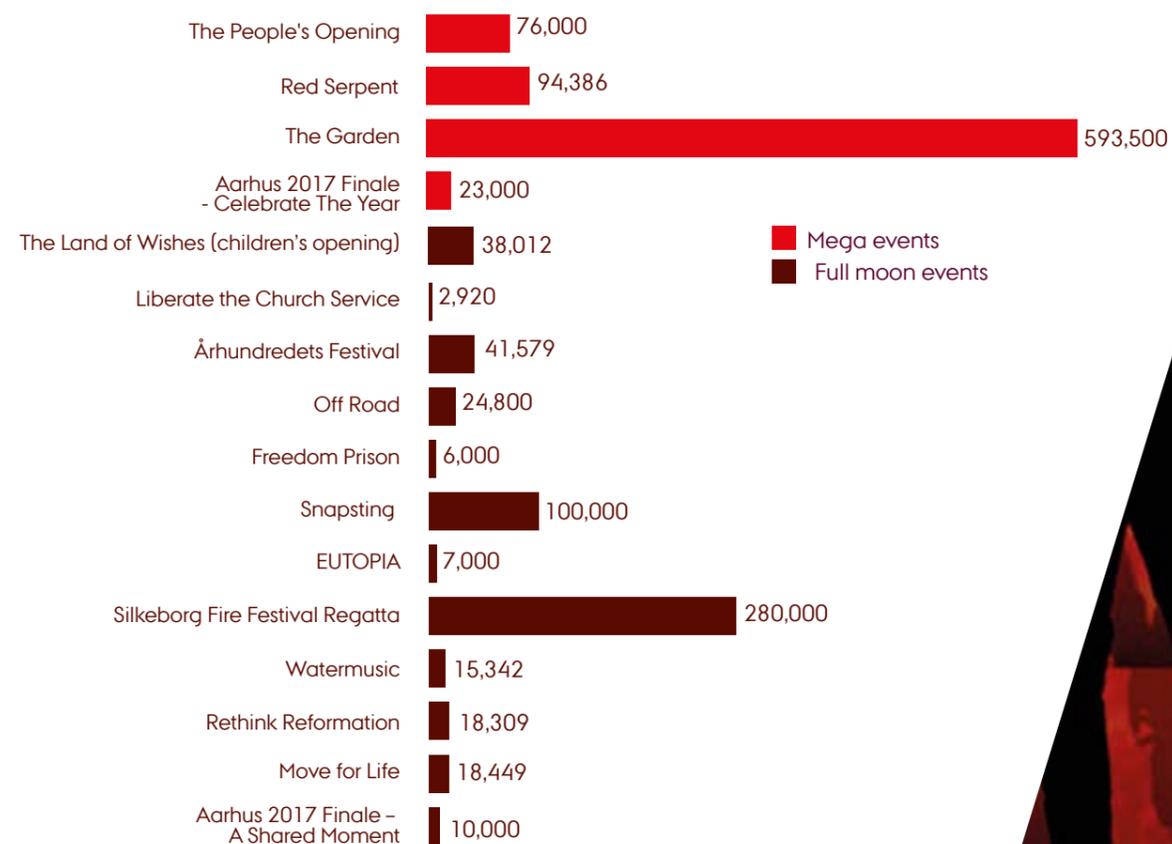
The majority of event were concentrated in the summer months, particularly August and September, not least because of the many outdoor events, while the lowest concentration of events was in the first three months of the year.

in the summer months, particularly August and September, not least because of the many outdoor

events, while the lowest concentration of events was in the first three months of the year. The programme's four mega events took place at the beginning and at the end of the year as well as in the summer months. The greatest concentration of events was in August, with a total of 141 events.

The conventional genres such as 'visual arts and exhibits', 'music and sound' and 'performing arts' filled much of the programme. So although the

FIGURE 3.2 NUMBER OF AUDIENCE VISITS TO MEGA AND FULL MOON EVENTS



Source: Source: "Welcome Future", Aarhus 2017 (2018), page 30.

Although the Aarhus 2017 Foundation took a broad approach to what genres could be included in the programme (including sport and gastronomy), the emphasis was on the conventional genres.

Aarhus 2017 Foundation took a broad approach to what genres could be included in the programme (including sport and gastronomy), the emphasis was on the conventional genres. But a number of events experimented and took a cross-genre approach.

3.3 THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE PROGRAMME

The Aarhus 2017 Foundation did not make use of audience segmentation, which would have made it possible to communicate in a more targeted fashion to different groups about different aspects of the programme. Generally speaking, audiences were conceptualised in terms of broad rather than specific target groups in connection with the events. The only clear division into target groups was by age, in regard to which 15% of the events were aimed at children/families, 57 events were aimed at youths as one among several age

categories, and only seven events were specifically aimed at the young.

Generally speaking, the foundation's approach to making events accessible to a broad audience consisted of several different strategies:

- Free events
- Wide geographical spread
- Events and projects outside the traditional cultural institutions.

The foundation's goal was for half of Aarhus 2017's events to be free.³³ This goal was achieved, as 52% of all Aarhus 2017 events were free.

The European Capital of Culture programme was spread across the entire region. Fifty-nine per cent of

all events took place within the City of Aarhus, while 39% took place in the other 18 municipalities in the region (the remaining two per cent were events that either were not site-specific or which were held outside the region – for example in Paphos on Cyprus, which was also European Capital of Culture in 2017). All four mega events took place in Aarhus. The twelve full moon events were more spread out, with two region-wide events, three in the western part of the region, three in the eastern part and four in Aarhus.

The number of events in Aarhus reflects Aarhus' status as official host city, and that the City of Aarhus invested more in the European Capital of Culture project than the other municipalities. In light of this, the distribution of events and locations across the region was appropriate.

In order to increase accessibility and the diversity of the audience, a considerable proportion of the events took place outside traditional cultural institutions. As Aarhus 2017's own monitoring of the projects shows, every third project in 2017 took place outside the usual cultural institutions. They took place at venues such as schools, outdoors, at cafés etc., just as some projects put on events both within a cultural institution and in another location. One strategy for outdoor events was to present them at central junctions in the towns where there were large numbers of passers-by. One example is the activities on Bispetov square in Aarhus, including the animation show *Aarhus Stories, Saurus* during the ILT17 Festival and Jenny Holzer's *For Aarhus*. According to our interviews with citizens, this type of event, which passers-by more or less accidentally stumbled over, was precisely what they were interested in. Other events took place in more traditional, less accessible venues in

³³ "Welcome Future", the Aarhus 2017 Foundation, (2018), p. 96.



Photo: Kasper Vindeløv

town, for example Aarhus 2017's temporary gallery 'O'Space on the harbour. A few projects and works focused on the villages, such as *Landsbyen Selde*, *Kunsthallen og Landsbyen* and the many activities under *Gentænk Landsbyen* ('Rethink the village'). These were all proactive events which travelled out to meet – and often also engaged – the citizens in a particular rural area. Finally, there were also activities and events in particular neighbourhoods, such as *EUTOPIA International Festival* in Gellerup (Aarhus).

ABILITY TO GET AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME

Generally speaking, citizens found communication about Aarhus 2017 and the programme difficult to comprehend (more on this in Chapter 5). The size of the programme alone contributed to this perceived incomprehensibility. The extensive programme could have been structured with a clearer categorisation of events which citizens could understand and navigate after more easily.

As the users of the Aarhus 2017 website and app were informed, the programme was categorized by theme and by art form. But the two categories were unclear and overlapping. Art form was a genre classification which was only partially applicable, as it included neither sport nor gastronomy. The themes were a combination of intuitively recognisable categories such as 'history' and much less accessible categories such as 'liveability' – categories which ordinary citizens have difficulty decoding. In addition, multiple themes and art forms were indicated for many of the events at the same time, which also contributed to a sense of incomprehensibility. Generally speaking, this reduced citizens' ability to get an overview of and access the Aarhus 2017 programme.

Generally speaking, citizens found communication about Aarhus 2017 and the programme difficult to comprehend.

3.4 THE AUDIENCE'S EXPERIENCE

The great majority of audience members had a positive experience of the European Capital of Culture programme events in all categories, large as well as small. Nine out of ten audience members were positive about the events they participated in.

Some of the words most commonly used by audience members to describe their experiences of Aarhus 2017 events were "inspiring", "sensory" and "fun". In addition, the vast majority of the audience members (eight out of ten) described the events as "innovative" which may encompass several

THEMES	ART FORMS
• History	• Festivals and happenings
• Our values	• Visual art and exhibitions
• Creative industries	• Music and sound
• Liveability	• Highlights
• Generations	• Performing arts
• Sport and games	• Film and animation
• Debates and discussions	• Architecture
• Gastronomy	• Literature
• Nature	• Design
• Faith	

Source: The Aarhus 2017 Foundation event calendar.

THE AUDIENCE'S EXPERIENCE OF THE OFFICIAL AARHUS 2017 OPENING

The majority of spectators described the official opening on 21 January as a good or even fantastic experience.

Despite the winter cold, the opening succeeded in drawing a massive number of citizens out into the city's streets. The spectators emphasised the atmosphere in town, which they characterised as indescribable.

"Aarhus is presented really well here. This makes me think: 'I'll never move away from Aarhus!'"

"This is much, much, much better than what I expected. It's totally amazing! I'm a young whippersnapper of 74, and by gosh, I'll never

have an experience like that again."

A lot of the spectators were residents of Aarhus, and for that reason they felt that the opening was an experience they "didn't want to miss out on".

A number of them emphasised that they felt pride in living in a city like Aarhus which had been chosen as European Capital of Culture in 2017. They stated that a very special atmosphere was created in the city which made them feel like part of it.

"I felt like part of the city – I felt like I was in touch with the videos, the music, the light show and the whole thing – it was really good!" It moved me."

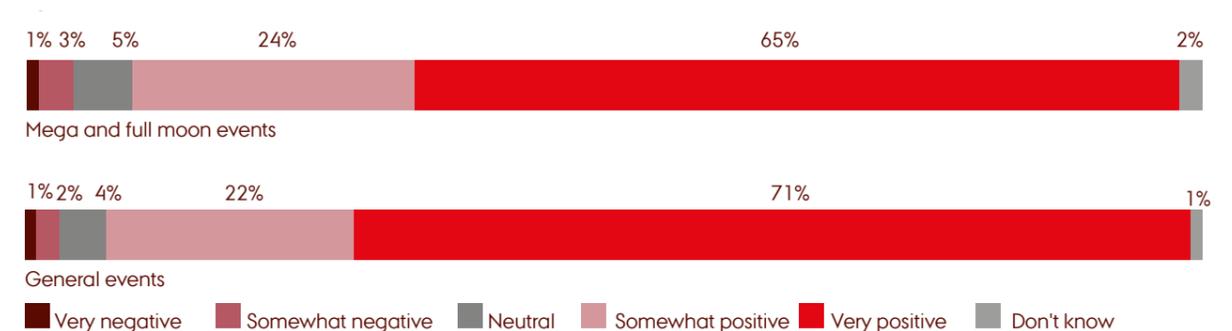
perspectives, including Aarhus 2017's overall theme, 'rethink'.

At the same time, the majority of the audience members perceived the various events as generally democratic in character. In other words, the audience members, who elected to participate in the programme did not perceive the content as

too highbrow (for them). This is supplemented by the fact that the participating audience members themselves generally perceived the events as aimed at a broad and diverse audience. However,

Nine out of ten audience members were positive about the events they participated in.

FIGURE 3.3 THE AUDIENCES' OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EVENTS BOTH MEGA AND FULL MOON EVENTS AND STANDARD PROGRAMME EVENTS



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire survey of audiences at Aarhus 2017 events (2017). "What is your overall assessment of [title of event]?". Sample size, mega and full moon events: 6,189 survey responses. Sample size, standard programme events: 2,367 survey responses.

the audience perceived some events within the genres art exhibitions, performing arts and debate events as more highbrow.

THE AUDIENCE'S EXPERIENCE OF THE AARHUS 2017 FINALE - A SHARED MOMENT IN HVIDE SANDE

While the second part of the finale took place in Aarhus under the title *Celebrate the Year*, the first part took place in Hvide Sande under the title *A Shared Moment*.

The audience in Hvide Sande described the grand finale as a huge and visually stunning experience.

"Fantastic show with light and sound. Beautiful singing and acting. And really beautiful fireworks. Magnificent show!"

"An insanely fantastic experience that appealed to all of our senses – could feel the deep bass in my body, listen to the combination of electronic music and beautiful singing and drums and enjoy the sight of the light show, fire and fireworks against the clear starry sky."

The residents of Hvide Sande had a pronounced degree of pride that such a large and magnificent event could be held in their town.

"The finale, everything included, was a huge once-in-a-lifetime experience. It was so fantastic. Just imagine being lucky enough to experience that, and in my town to boot."

"Hugely grateful that the finale was held in Hvide Sande, which proved that the entire region is important. We totally forgot the cold during the show."

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF URBAN SPACES

The many events in urban spaces played a special role in relation to linking culture and urban development together, cf. the strategic objective to develop of open and vibrant urban environments. Artists worked with this goal actively in a number of these urban events. For example, *Freedom Prison*, which thematised freedom and crime in a stage production of the prison in Horsens, or *Skjulte Steder's* ('Hidden places') different events, which gave the audience new perspectives on Aarhus. On the basis of our investigation of different events in urban spaces, it appears that the audience's experience emerged out of an interaction between the specific urban space and the event itself.³⁴

Temporary events can lead to increased reflection on the identity of a site and of the participating citizens' association with the site, and they can contribute to urban development processes. In addition, an urban site can help focus attention on a specific theme.

A total of 54 projects included urban spaces and urban development,³⁵ including *Aarhus Stories*, where Aarhus Cathedral was used as a canvas for an animation show about Aarhus' history, or *My Playground*, where a mobile playscape investigated the interplay with the different urban spaces in Aarhus, Randers, Denmark, Hadsten and Holstebro. As part of Soft City, the project *Urban Lab* focused on the significance and use of culture in urban development – not in the form of events, but rather in the form of a number of capacity-building activities targeted at professional operators.

³⁴ See also "Art and Culture in Urban Spaces during Aarhus 2017", rethinkIMPACTS 2017 (2018).

³⁵ See also "Art and Culture in Urban Spaces during Aarhus 2017", rethinkIMPACTS 2017 (2018), pages 51-52.

Temporary events in urban spaces can lead to increased reflection on the identity of a site and of the participating citizens' association with the site, and they can contribute to urban development processes.

ART AND CULTURE IN URBAN SPACES

In an analysis of five cases, *Freedom Prison*, *The Art Gallery and the Villages* (Lundø), *EUTOPIA*, *Aarhus Walks on Water* and *Community and a Life in Balance*, we have documented that urban space influences on how these events are experienced in different ways:

1) The urban space as contrast and setting

The urban space intensifies the experience, either by providing a contrast to or by co-creating and becoming an active part of the artwork.

2) The impact of the artwork on the perception of the site

The urban space can be affected by the event, which can contribute to creating new meanings and narratives about a place.

3) The construction of new places by the artwork

The event can contribute to creating a new identity for the place and an new relationship between the audience and the place.

4) The urban space as incitement to debate

When the site creates a direct link to a certain theme, the audience is incited to reflect more intensively on this theme.

5 The significance of the city as an abstract concept

In some cases, it is not only the specific site, but also the history of the city or area that comes into play in the experience and the audience's subsequent reflection.

3.5 AUDIENCE COMPOSITION

The citizens who normally seek out cultural activities comprised the majority of the audiences at Aarhus 2017 events.³⁶ Thus around 65% of the audiences at Aarhus 2017's various events were regular cultural consumers who participate in cultural activities on a monthly basis or more frequently. This should be seen in relation to the fact that 41% of the region's citizens belong to this category. Regular cultural consumers were thus clearly overrepresented among the audiences for Aarhus 2017 events. If we look at the low frequency culture users, citizens who participate in cultural activities once a year or less comprised 9% of the

The citizens who normally seek out cultural events comprised the majority of the spectators at Aarhus 2017 events.

2017 audience, while they accounted for 29% of the regional population.

In regard to the large local flagship events such as *the Aarhus 2017 Official Opening Ceremony* in Aarhus, *Freedom Prison* in Horsens and *Watermusic* in Randers, the composition of the audience corresponded to the composition of the general population to a higher degree.

The audience demographics resembled the typical profile for cultural events. As a consequence, people with second and third-cycle post-secondary degrees were overrepresented at Aarhus 2017 events, and women were clearly overrepresented as well.³⁷ In relation to age groups, there was a marginal

³⁶ See theme report no. 1: "Aarhus 2017 – Programme and Audience Experiences", rethinkIMPACTS 2017 (2018).

³⁷ See theme report no. 1 "Aarhus 2017 – Programme and Audience Experiences", rethinkIMPACTS 2017 (2018).

TABLE 3.2 DISTRIBUTION OF REGULAR AND LOW FREQUENCY CULTURAL CONSUMERS AMONG THE AUDIENCE AND THE POPULATION RESPECTIVELY

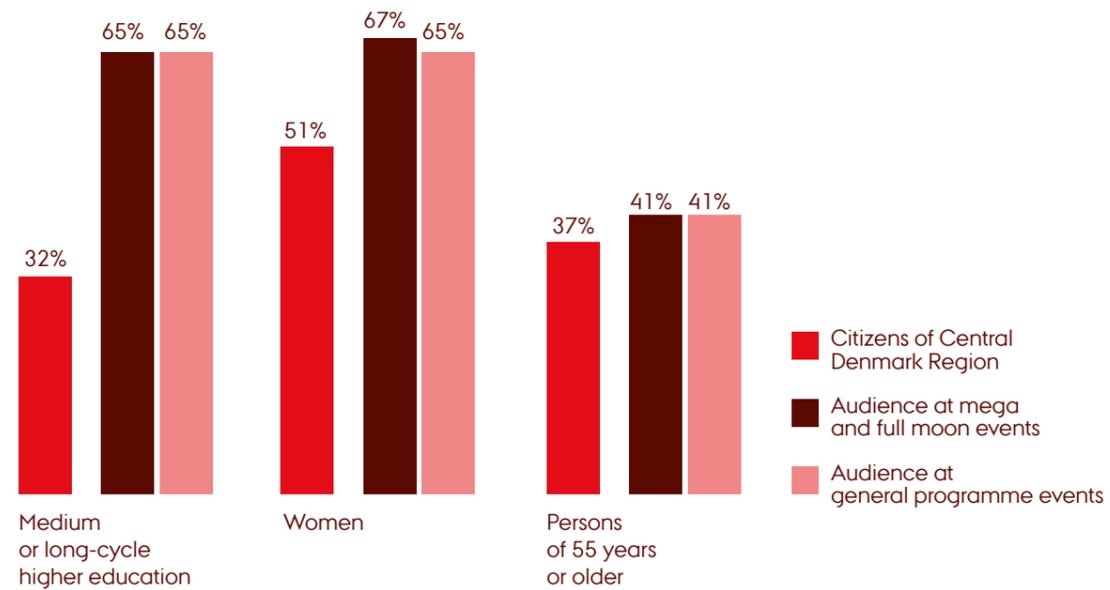
	REGULAR CULTURAL CONSUMERS	LOW FREQUENCY CULTURAL CONSUMERS
Citizens of Central Denmark Region	41%	29%
Audience at mega and full moon events	63%	9%
Audience at general programme events	69%	9%

Note: Regular cultural consumers refers to the segment of citizens/spectators who indicate that they participate in cultural activities on a monthly basis or more often. Low frequency cultural consumers refers to the segment of citizens/spectators who indicate that they participate in cultural activities on an annual basis or less frequently.

Sources: rethinkIMPACTS 2017 's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region (2017) and spectators at Aarhus 2017 events (2017). "How often do you participate in cultural activities in general?" (identical in both studies).

Sample size, regional population (2017): 1,755 survey responses. Sample size, audience at mega and full moon events: 5,269 survey responses. Sample size, audience at ordinary events: 2,218 survey responses.

FIGURE 3.4 THE DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF THE AUDIENCE AND THE POPULATION RESPECTIVELY



Sources: Population statistics from Index Denmark/Gallup (first half of 2017) and attendance figures from rethinkIMPACTS 2017 's questionnaire survey among audience members at Aarhus 2017 events (2017). "What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?", "What is your gender?", "How old are you?".

Sample size, audience at mega and full moon events: 5,739 responses regarding education, 5,794 responses regarding age, 5,830 responses regarding gender.

Sample size, audience at ordinary events: 2,186 responses regarding education, 2,214 responses regarding age, 2,227 responses regarding gender. Sample size, population: 2,848 survey responses.

overrepresentation of people over the age of 55, while young people between the ages of 15 and 29 were slightly underrepresented.

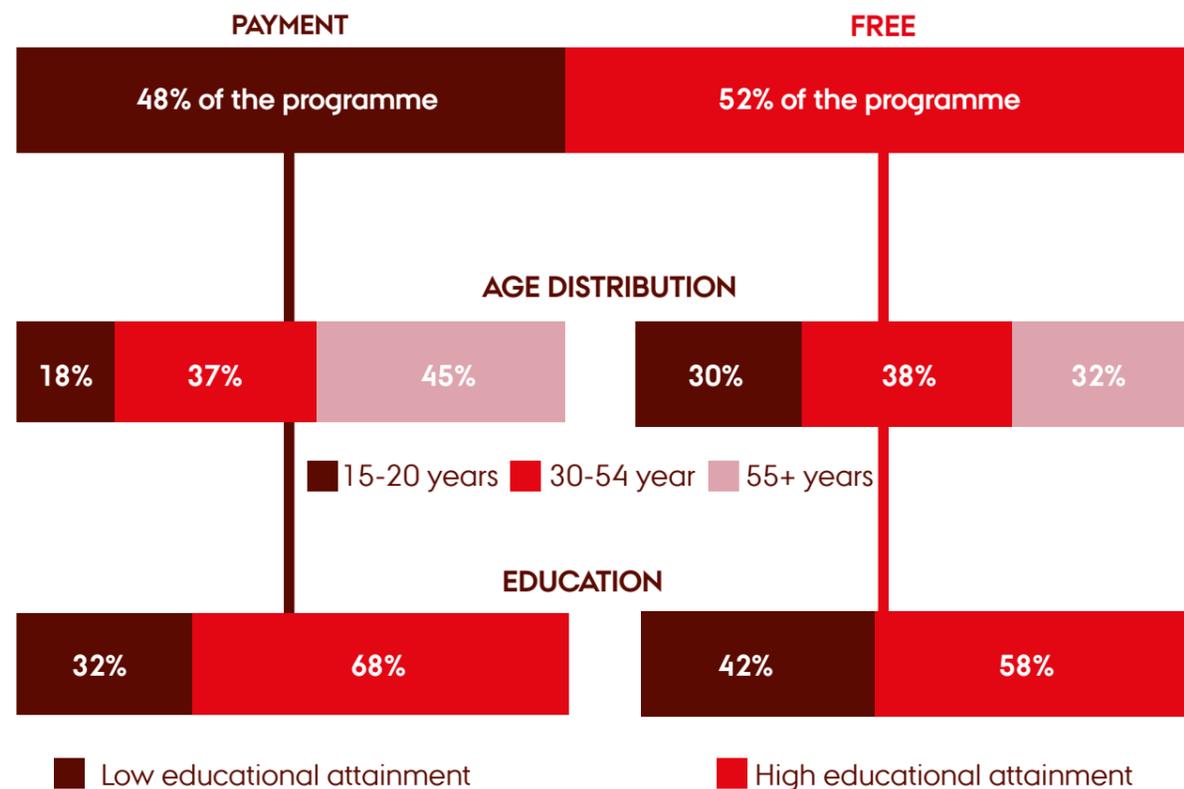
FREE EVENTS

The effect of the strategy of offering half of the European Capital of Culture programme was to reach a wider range of the population. For example, there were more young people and a more equal representation of audience members with different

At free events there were more young people and a more equal distribution between audience members with different levels of education.

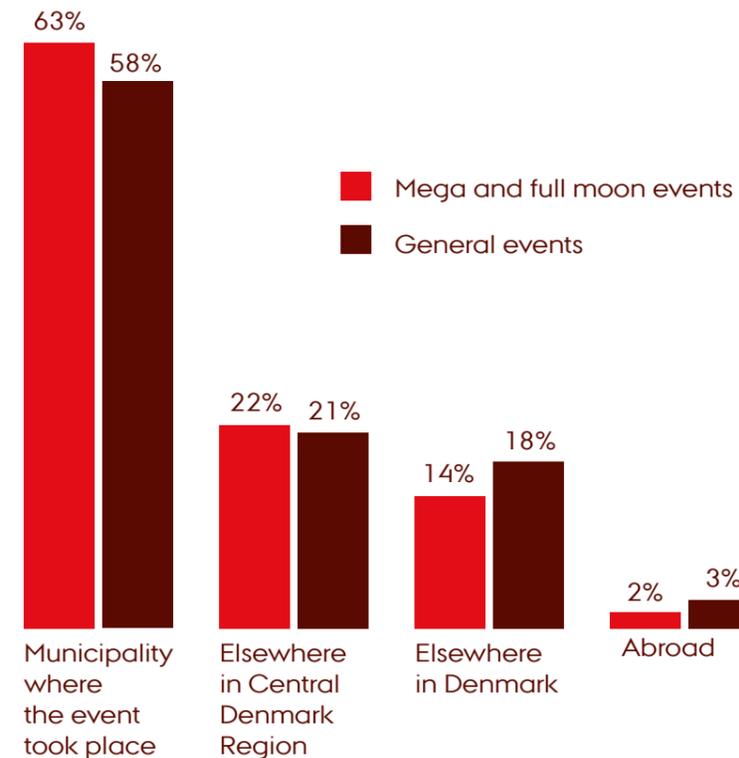
educational backgrounds at free events (more with short or no post-secondary educations participated in free events than in events that charged admission).

FIGURE 3.5 AGE DISTRIBUTION AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION AT PAID AND FREE EVENTS RESPECTIVELY



Source: Aarhus 2017's event calendar data on free and paid events and rethinkIMPACTS 2017's audience survey (2017). "What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?", "How old are you?" 'Low educational attainment' covers no completed degree programme, primary school, secondary school, vocational education and training programme or short-cycle post-secondary degree. 'High educational attainment' covers medium-cycle or long-cycle post-secondary degrees. Sample sizes, audience at mega and full moon events: 5,735 responses regarding education, 5,794 responses regarding age. Sample sizes, audience at mega and full moon events: 2,186 responses regarding education, 2,214 responses regarding age.

FIGURE 3.6 AARHUS 2017 AUDIENCE MEMBERS' PLACE OF RESIDENCE



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire survey of audiences at Aarhus 2017 events (2017). "Where do you live?", "What municipality do you live in?". Sample size, audience at mega and full moon events: 5,812 survey responses. Sample size, audience at ordinary events: 2,208 survey responses.

GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY

The majority of the Aarhus 2017 audiences came from the municipality in which the particular event took place. Local attendance was highest at mega and full moon events, while geographical mobility was a bit higher in connection with general programme events. General events, mega events and the full moon events attracted about one fifth of their audiences from the neighbouring municipalities in the region. On the other hand, the general events succeeded in attracting audiences from the rest of Denmark – and from abroad – to a slightly higher degree than the major events.

According to our audience surveys, museums

were among the venues that had greatest success in attracting visitors in addition to the local community in their home municipality. The large museums in Aarhus attracted visitors from the entire country, particular with *The Garden – The Past* at AROS, *Rejsen* at Moesgaard Museum and *Aarhus Fortæller* in Den Gamle By (the Old Town). These museums also normally have a large proportion of out-of-town guests. The seven slightly smaller regional museums behind the exhibition series *The Seven Deadly Sins*

Audience members at mega and full moon events were primarily local residents. The geographical mobility of the audience was slightly greater in connection with standard programme events.

(as previously mentioned) made a conscious effort to promote the mobility of the audience by creating a coherent concept, thereby motivating guests to see a number of the seven exhibitions. With the exception of *The Garden*, all of these events were standard programme events. This may help explain why precisely the general events had greater success in mobilising out-of-town audiences than the mega and full moon events.

In addition, the geographical location of the events played a role in relation to mobility. For

example, residents of Aarhus are less mobile in their cultural consumption than the other citizens in the region. This pattern is apparent both in the audience for Aarhus 2017 and among citizens in general. Overall, the population in the western part of the region and Aarhus' neighbouring municipalities are most accustomed to crossing municipal borders in order to participate in cultural activities. This may be a matter of generally greater mobility in the suburban municipalities and the

region's western municipalities, which are more accustomed to commuting and traveling across municipal boundaries. But the distribution of cultural activities come into play as well – there is a large supply in Aarhus, and here citizens do not need to move outside municipal boundary to participate in cultural activities.

CITIZENS' CULTURAL HABITS

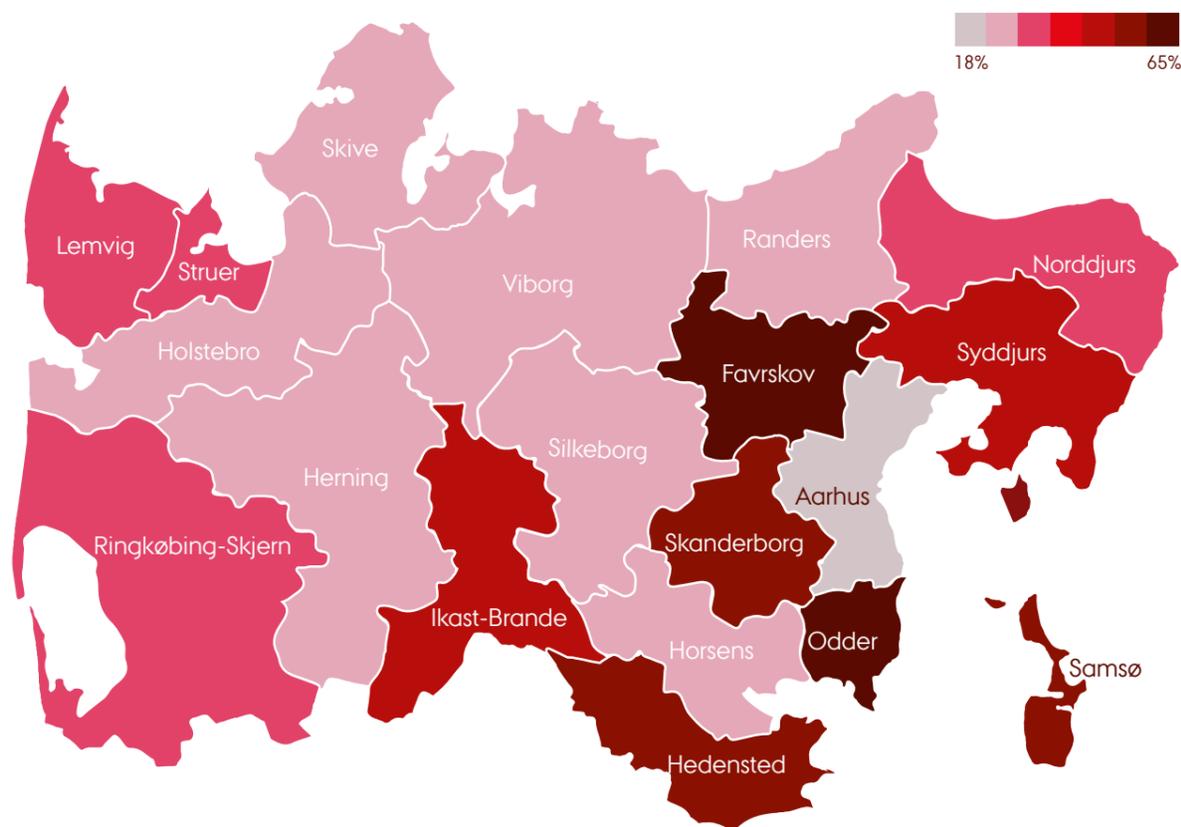
During the European Capital of Culture year, citizens had access to a wide range of cultural activities in the shape of the Aarhus 2017 programme. Nonetheless, this increased supply has not had a noticeable effect on citizens' cultural consumption. The general cultural consumption of citizens in the Central Denmark Region corresponds roughly to

No positive effect on general cultural consumption can be demonstrated as a result of Aarhus 2017.

that of the other four regions' citizens. From 2016 to 2018, there was a decrease in the percentage of regular cultural consumers in Central Denmark Region – from 43% of citizens in Central Denmark Region in 2016 to 36% in 2018. This means that the percentage of frequent cultural consumers in the region's population corresponds to the rest of the country for 2017 and 2018, and no positive effect of Aarhus 2017 on citizens' total cultural consumption can be demonstrated.

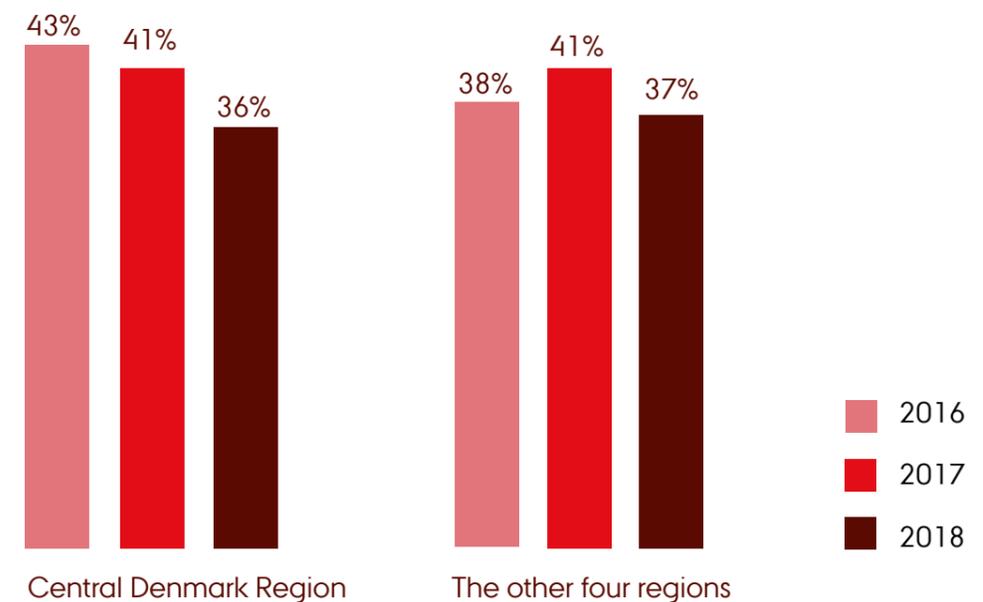
This can be linked to our previous point that to

FIGURE 3.7 CITIZENS' CULTURAL MOBILITY IN CENTRAL DENMARK REGION



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region (2017). The percentages indicate the proportion who responded "neighbouring municipalities" and/or "the rest of Central Denmark Region" to the question "Where have you participated in cultural activities within the last three months?". Sample size: 1,755 survey responses.

FIGURE 3.8 THE DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROPORTION OF FREQUENT CULTURAL CONSUMERS IN THE POPULATION



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region and Denmark (2016-2018). "How often do you participate in cultural activities in general?". Frequent cultural consumers are defined as citizens who respond that they participate in cultural activities once a month or more often.

Sample size, Central Denmark Region: 2016: 1,020 survey responses, 2017: 1,755 survey responses, 2018: 1,121 survey responses. Sample size, other regions: 2016: 895 survey responses, 2017: 1,432 survey responses, 2018: 823 survey responses.

a high degree, the composition of the audience at Aarhus 2017 events was consistent with the typical audience composition at cultural events. It can also be linked to the fact that cultural habits are generally difficult to change, and that this requires a long-term, strategic effort on many levels. Thus, it is not unexpected that Aarhus 2017 has not made a significant impact on the population's cultural habits in general. We will return to this theme in section 6.4, which explores how some of the directors of cultural institutions experienced that their respective cultural institutions had succeeded in reaching new target groups in the course of 2017, and that they expected similar effects in the future. This may indicate that Aarhus 2017 has created more dynamism in relation to typical audience composition patterns. However, our population data shows that this has not affected the population's total cultural consumption.

3.6 RETHINKING CULTURE

The overall theme, 'rethink', worked well as a framework for the cultural capital programme. The theme's ability to balance inclusivity, normativity and inspiration was a clear strength which can serve to inspire future major cultural initiatives.

The programme for Aarhus 2017 was of high international artistic quality. The Aarhus 2017 Foundation's international management team provided access to a strong international network. In future, it would be beneficial to work systematically to ensure that this kind of network is linked more directly to the local cultural operators, so that it contributes to strengthening local networks.

The composition of the audience for Aarhus 2017 events was largely dominated by regular cultural consumers, apart from at the large flagship events. If there is a desire to work to influence citizens' cultural habits more intensively, and especially if the goal is to attract low frequency cultural consumers, then work must be done to design a broader/different programme and more systematic target group segmentation must be performed. In addition, tools such as free access, wide geographical distribution and cultural activities in urban spaces should be exploited. These tools have had a positive effect in relation to reaching a broader cross-section of the population, and if the goal is to change the population's cultural habits, using such tools will be important. This requires a long-term and strategic effort.



4

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT



Photo: Lasse Hyldager

One of Aarhus 2017's strategic goals was "to secure a more active citizenship through comprehensive and active participation".³⁸ To achieve this goal, a variety of different engagement strategies and initiatives were implemented during the lifetime of the project.

The most formalised initiative was the comprehensive programme for involving volunteers, the so-called ReThinkers. The volunteer programme was established in 2015 and has turned out to be sustainable even after the conclusion of the 2017 title year. In 2018, Aarhus is *European Volunteering Capital*, and the volunteerism of Aarhus 2017 will be continued and extended in this connection.

Especially in the application phase, citizens could participate in co-creating in relation to the development of the programme. As debaters on social media or in the news, citizens were also able to express opinions on their city's Capital of Culture status.

In this chapter, we describe and analyse citizens' engagement in connection with the European Capital of Culture project and the effects produced by this engagement.

4.1 CO-PRODUCING CITIZENS

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN THE APPLICATION PHASE

Because the evaluation did not commence until the establishment and development phase, we do not have systematic data from the application phase. But it is clear that the general understanding of the application process

is that citizens helped develop the framework for the European Capital of Culture project. One concrete initiative was the glass container that was placed in different public places around the region and which invited citizens inside, offering them the opportunity to contribute ideas. Another initiative was an exhibition in Ridehuset in the spring of 2010 at which citizens were invited to contribute input. In addition, a wide variety of participatory processes were carried out with various groups of operators, including cultural institutions and business networks. A concrete result of these initiatives was the formulation of the European Capital of Culture's overall theme of 'rethink', which was "found through the involvement of several thousand citizens", as formulated in the application.³⁹

This kind of citizen involvement in the course of the application period has become "best practice" in connection with the European capitals of culture. The European Commission is increasingly focusing on the importance of local anchoring and support. Other examples of this approach to project development include Umeå 2014 and Valletta 2018.

However, there are some challenges associated with citizens in this early phase. At such an early phase, long before the Capital of Culture year itself, most of the citizens who got involved tended to be professional cultural operators and citizens with an interest in culture. The great majority of the citizens who participated would also have difficulty recognising their input in the final Capital of Culture project. This is primarily due to the temporal aspect, in addition to which input was provided through mass consultations in which the concrete ideas and input of individual citizens were not highlighted.

³⁸ Aarhus 2017 Candidate European Capital of Culture 2017 – final application", Department of Culture, City of Aarhus (June 2012), page 8.

³⁹ Aarhus 2017 Candidate European Capital of Culture 2017 – final application", Department of Culture, City of Aarhus (June 2012), page 12.

LIMITED INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROGRAMME

With the transition from the application phase to the establishment and development phase, citizens' involvement at the most general level ceased. After the application phase, there were no initiatives that invited civic participation in relation to the overall programme. Communication to citizens was to a higher degree one-way, and took the form of information about the project and the programme. This change was probably due to two factors: the management change that took place from the application phase to the establishment and development phase, and the transition of the foundation's tasks from the open idea processes to execution. In addition, the European Community-determined process for the European Capitals of Culture made it difficult to incorporate new initiatives and ideas after the application phase, as

the project had to be based on the formulations in the application.

After the application period, citizen involvement in relation to the design of the programme was limited to different kinds of involvement in selected concrete projects. For example, citizens were invited to determine the content of specific events under projects such as *DemokratiStafetten* ('The democracy relay') at the region's libraries and *Pop-Up Kulturhus* ('Pop-up culture house') during the full moon event *Snapsting* in Viborg. The villages around Hedensted were given an even greater role in decision-making through the project *Gentænk Landsbyen*, which accorded citizens full influence on what the activity budget was to be spent on. In other cases, the artistic concept was predetermined, and citizens were co-creators rather than involved in decision-making. For example, this applied to the official opening, for which many of the area's

citizens produced the lanterns used during the procession, as well as participating as choir singers or in the procession itself.

Overall, citizens' influence on the development and production of the programme was thus limited. The foundation itself and the professional cultural operators created the framework and most of the content. The so-called micro-projects, which from 2013 onwards gave citizens the opportunity to realise their own small cultural projects as part of Aarhus 2017, were an exception to this. However, in 2015 the micro-project funding pool became part of the youth and up-and-coming talent initiative OFFTrack2017, which focused more on talent development and on giving new cultural producers a chance to contribute to the European Capital of Culture project than on giving ordinary citizens a framework for creating their own cultural projects.

4.2 VOLUNTEERING

The most common way of involving citizens in the European Capital of Culture project was volunteering, for example in connection with technical work, practical work in connection with events, as extras in performances and so on. The Aarhus 2017 Foundation focused considerable energy on the volunteer programme, which involved around 4,000 citizens.⁴⁰ The foundation exceeded its own goal of involving a minimum of 3,500 citizens in the volunteer programme. About one in four (23%) of these volunteers were 'new volunteers'

The most prevalent way of involving citizens in the European Capital of Culture project was as volunteers.

with no previous experience with volunteer work. 85% of the volunteers were from Aarhus, and the effects of the volunteer programme were primarily local effects confined to Aarhus. In addition, seven out of ten projects had volunteers with a direct connection to the implementation of the individual projects in 2017. Part of this took place outside the ReThinkers programme. Volunteer work was thus the greatest effect the European Capital of Culture project had in relation to active citizenship.

At the same time, the many volunteers played an active and positive role in relation to tourists and visitors. For example, when they performed the role of volunteer hosts for cruise ships docking in Aarhus, where they were given a kind of 'place brand' role

⁴⁰ The Aarhus 2017 Foundation estimated the total number of ReThinkers at 4,535 in their "Welcome Future" report, but 13% were exclusively registered in the database and were never actively involved in volunteering for Aarhus 2017. The actual number of involved citizens was thus under 4,000.



Photo: Anders Hede



FUTURE FEMINIST

FUTURE FEMINIST

and ultimately became a team of informal ambassadors for the city.

The Aarhus 2017 Foundation developed the concept *Volunteerism for all* in an attempt to reach more different kinds of citizens and develop a diverse group of volunteers. In this way, the foundation made an effort to engage citizens who do not typically get involved in volunteering. Nonetheless, there was still an overrepresentation of women and citizens with advanced degrees as well as a large group of pensioners/early retirement pensioners among the Aarhus 2017 volunteers.

These citizens' motivation for getting involved in Aarhus 2017 as volunteers was primarily driven by a desire to learn more about culture, the city and society – along with the feeling of being part of a major event.

VERY SATISFIED RETHINKERS

In our survey, the volunteers generally expressed satisfaction with their volunteer work in connection with Aarhus 2017. They placed particular emphasis on the high degree of variety in the tasks and events, meaningful work assignments that allowed them to influence how they performed them, good volunteer coordinators and the physical environment. The physical gathering place for the volunteers was called GeLinde, a building on the waterfront in Aarhus which fostered the sense of community that had a decisive influence on the volunteers' positive assessment.

The volunteers generally expressed satisfaction with their volunteer work in connection with Aarhus 2017.

Photo: Jan Rasmussen

81% of the volunteers were motivated by a desire to learn more about culture, the city and society

80% of the volunteers were motivated by a desire to participate in a major event

Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire survey of Aarhus 2017's ReThinkers (December 2017). Data used: 1,096 survey responses.

Two out of three ReThinkers indicated in our survey that they would most likely volunteer again elsewhere after Aarhus 2017.

The Rethinkers programme will continue after 2017. The programme will become permanent and will be administered by VisitAarhus and Aarhus Events, with an operating grant of DKK 5 million from the Salling Foundations.

The retention of volunteers is also being linked to

new events from the cultural operators. For example, Moesgaard Museum and the Royal Danish Theatre are collaborating on King Arthur, *major new outdoor drama which draws on the volunteer that were mobilised in connection with the mega event Røde Orm ('Red serpent')*. In addition, Aarhus as European Volunteering Capital 2018 has also served to highlight volunteerism and the continued opportunities for engaging in volunteer work.

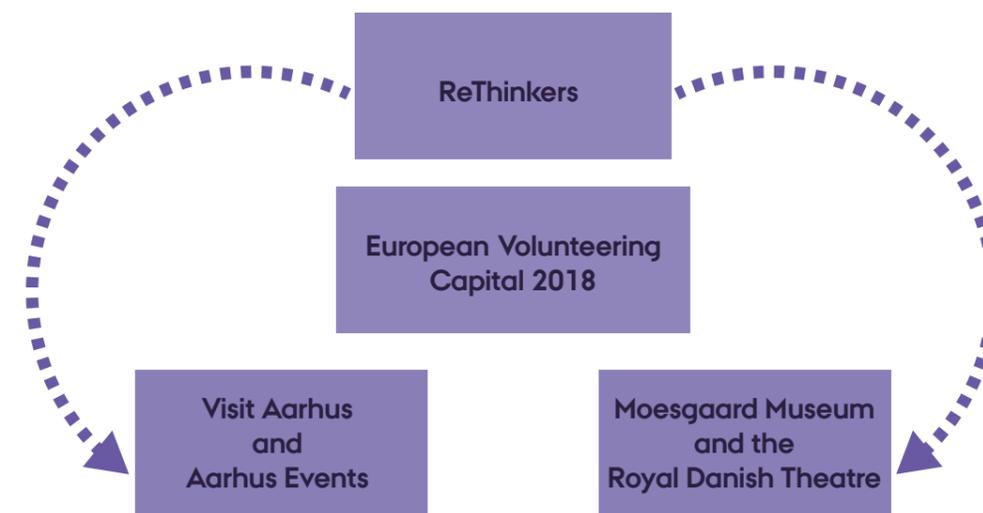
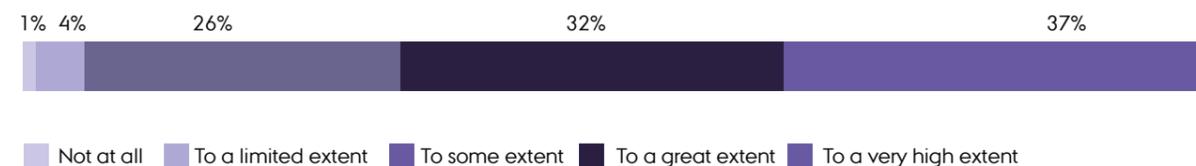


FIGURE 4.1 RETHINKERS' WILLINGNESS TO VOLUNTEER AGAIN IN FUTURE

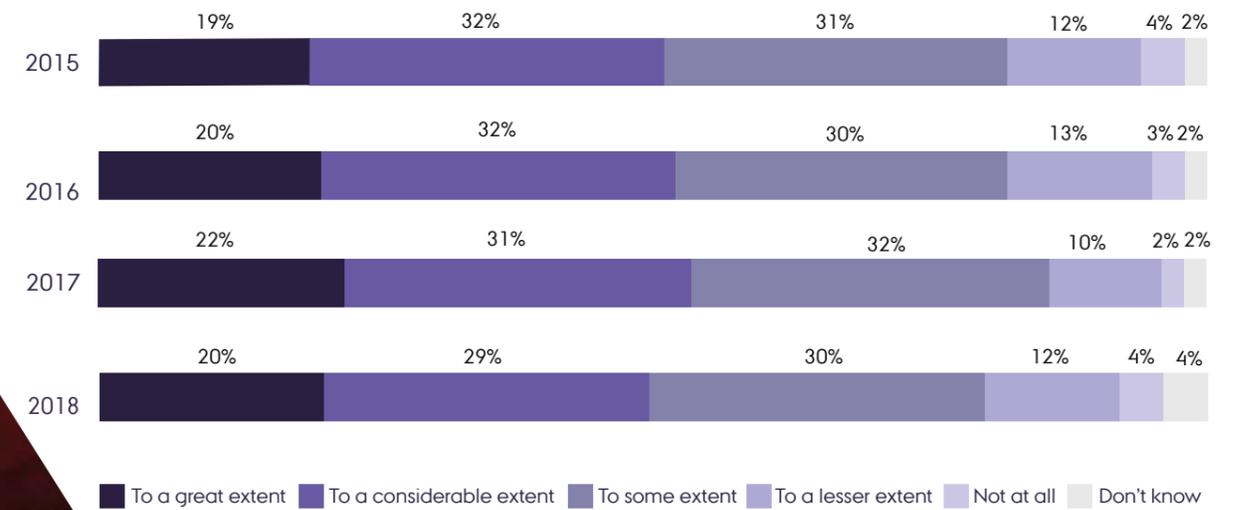


Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire survey of Aarhus 2017's ReThinkers (December 2017). "How likely is it that you will continue volunteering elsewhere than Aarhus 2017?". Data used: 1,096 survey responses.



Photo: Ulla Rose

FIGURE 4.2 DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGIONAL POPULATION'S GENERAL INTEREST IN SOCIAL ISSUES (2015-2018)



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region (2015-2018). "Do you generally stay informed about social issues?". Response indicated on a scale from 1 to 5, from "to a great extent" to "not at all" – as well as the option of responding "don't know".
 Sample sizes: 2015: 1,021 survey responses, 2016: 1,020 survey responses, 2017: 1,755 survey responses, 2018: 1,121 survey responses.

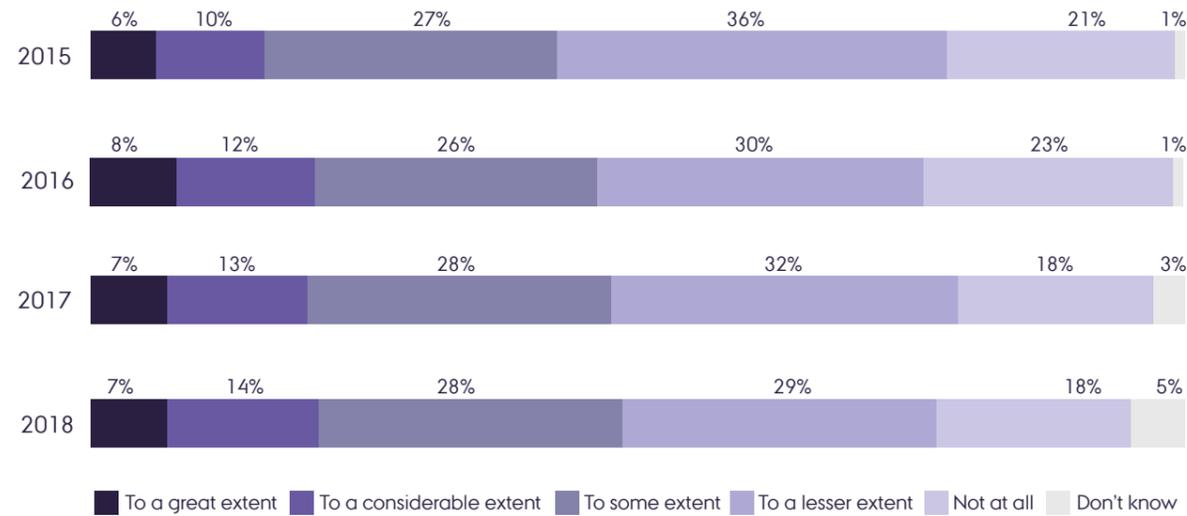
ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP IN GENERAL

When we consider the region's citizens as a whole, the proportion of citizens who are involved in volunteering increased from 35% in 2015 to 43% in 2018. The involvement of the population in this form of active citizenship thus increased by one-fifth in three years. The extent to which this development can be ascribed to Aarhus 2017, the Volunteering Capital or a third factor entirely is not possible to determine.

With regard to active citizenship in the form of general engagement in social issues, no positive effects caused by the European Capital of Culture can be demonstrated. Half of the region's citizens still express a substantial, general interest in social issues, although the proportion decreased marginally from 2015 to 2018 (cf. figure 4.2). Citizens' engagement in their local community has increased slightly, but is nonetheless still relatively low (cf. figure 4.3 on the next page).⁴¹ In connection with Aarhus 2017, there was not as much focus on this aspect as in connection with the volunteer programme.

⁴¹ See also theme report no. 4: "Aarhus 2017 from the citizens' perspective", rethinkIMPACTS 2017 (2018)

FIGURE 4.3 DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGIONAL POPULATION'S GENERAL INTEREST IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY (2015-2018)



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region (2015-2018). "Are you involved in your local community?". Response indicated on a scale from 1 to 5, from "to a great extent" to "not at all" – as well as the option of responding "don't know". Sample sizes: 2015: 1,021 survey responses, 2016: 1,020 survey responses, 2017: 1,755 survey responses, 2018: 1,121 survey responses.

4.3 THE CITIZENS' VOICE

Citizens' involvement in the European Capital of Culture project was also reflected in their participation in the debate about Aarhus 2017, for example in the form of letters to the editor in the newspapers or social media activity.⁴²

CITIZENS' VOICE IN THE NEWS MEDIA

The voice of citizens was not particularly strong in the news media. In the period 2016-2018, citizens and audiences constituted just 6% of all the sources cited in Danish news media coverage⁴³ of Aarhus 2017, while stronger stakeholders such as the Aarhus 2017 Foundation, cultural institutions, individual cultural operators and politicians constituted 71% of the sources cited. Citizens' attitudes towards Aarhus 2017 were thus only represented in the established news media to a lesser extent. One possible cause of

this may be the significant decrease in the amount of editorial and opinion page media coverage of Aarhus 2017 that occurred immediately before and during the European Capital of Culture year, not least as a consequence of the large amount of advance publicity in the media during the European Capital of Culture year. In the period 2016-2018, editorial and opinion-page content constituted just 8% of total coverage of Aarhus 2017 in the news media, as against 22% in the period 2007-2015.

The limited coverage of citizens in the news media in connection with Aarhus 2017 may be related to a general relative lack of interest in the European Capital of Culture project among citizens.

⁴² See detailed analyses in theme report no. 5: "Aarhus 2017 in the media", rethinkIMPACTS 2017 (2018).

⁴³ The news media include printed newspapers and weeklies as well as internet versions of the same, as well as weeklies and magazines and the websites of regional TV stations. Articles from the sources were retrieved from the media archive service Infomedia.



Even during the European Capital of Culture year, only 28% of the population in Central Denmark Region expressed a general interest in Aarhus 2017. When citizens did contribute to news media coverage, this was often in connection with specific events, individual issues or discussions about financial prioritisation.

THE CITIZENS SET THE AGENDA ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Citizens contributed to setting the agenda to a higher degree on social media.⁴⁴ Citizens used Facebook and other social media to express their opinions, although here as well generally on specific events or very specific issues. Citizens often expressed their opposition to Aarhus 2017 by commenting on Facebook pages. For example, the discussion about the work *Untitled* in Mindeparken started on Facebook when a citizen expressed their frustration in a Facebook post. To a large extent, the rapidly formed opinions and immediate impressions of ordinary citizens shaped this debate. Often these exchanges took the form of strong statements of personal opinion rather than genuine discussions or dialogue among users. However, citizens' negative reaction to a concrete case such as *Untitled* was not necessarily negative for Aarhus 2017. On the contrary, the foundation was enthusiastic about the critical yet impassioned debate sparked by the work.

Citizens' critique on Facebook meant that the press subsequently covered the case in question. And citizens' involvement on social media also affected the way the established media presented and told their stories about Aarhus 2017. Thus the debate on Facebook contributed to more nuanced cultural journalism coverage, because the citizens' voice in the debate shaped the cultural journalism coverage of this case.⁴⁵

CITIZENS' VOICES CONTRIBUTE TO MORE NUANCED COVERAGE

Citizens' statements in the media were generally positive, while at the same time adding more nuances to the generally extremely positive media coverage. When citizens were cited in the news media, or when users contributed updates to the Aarhus 2017 operators' Facebook pages, they expressed negative opinions and critique of Aarhus 2017 more frequently than other sources. However, users were typically positive when commenting on Facebook posts by others (typically cultural operators), and often expressed positive support for coverage of the events of the European Capital of

Citizens' statements in the media were generally positive, while at the same time adding more nuances to the generally positive media coverage.

Culture programme in particular (cf. figure 4.4 and 4.5 on page 92).

When viewed in the light of the fact that the population in general did not have a strong interest in Aarhus 2017 while at the same time expressing a generally positive attitude towards 2017 in our population survey, it appears that citizens generally chose to engage in debate when they had a critical attitude towards a concrete event or specific issue. On the other hand, when citizens actively associated themselves with Aarhus 2017 on Instagram, more committed support is evident (see section 5.3).

At the same time, it must be emphasised that our survey only covered the aspects of citizens'

⁴⁴ Section 5.3 focuses on citizens' use of Instagram in connection with Aarhus 2017.

⁴⁵ See theme report no. 5: "Aarhus 2017 in the media", rethinkIMPACTS 2017 (2018).

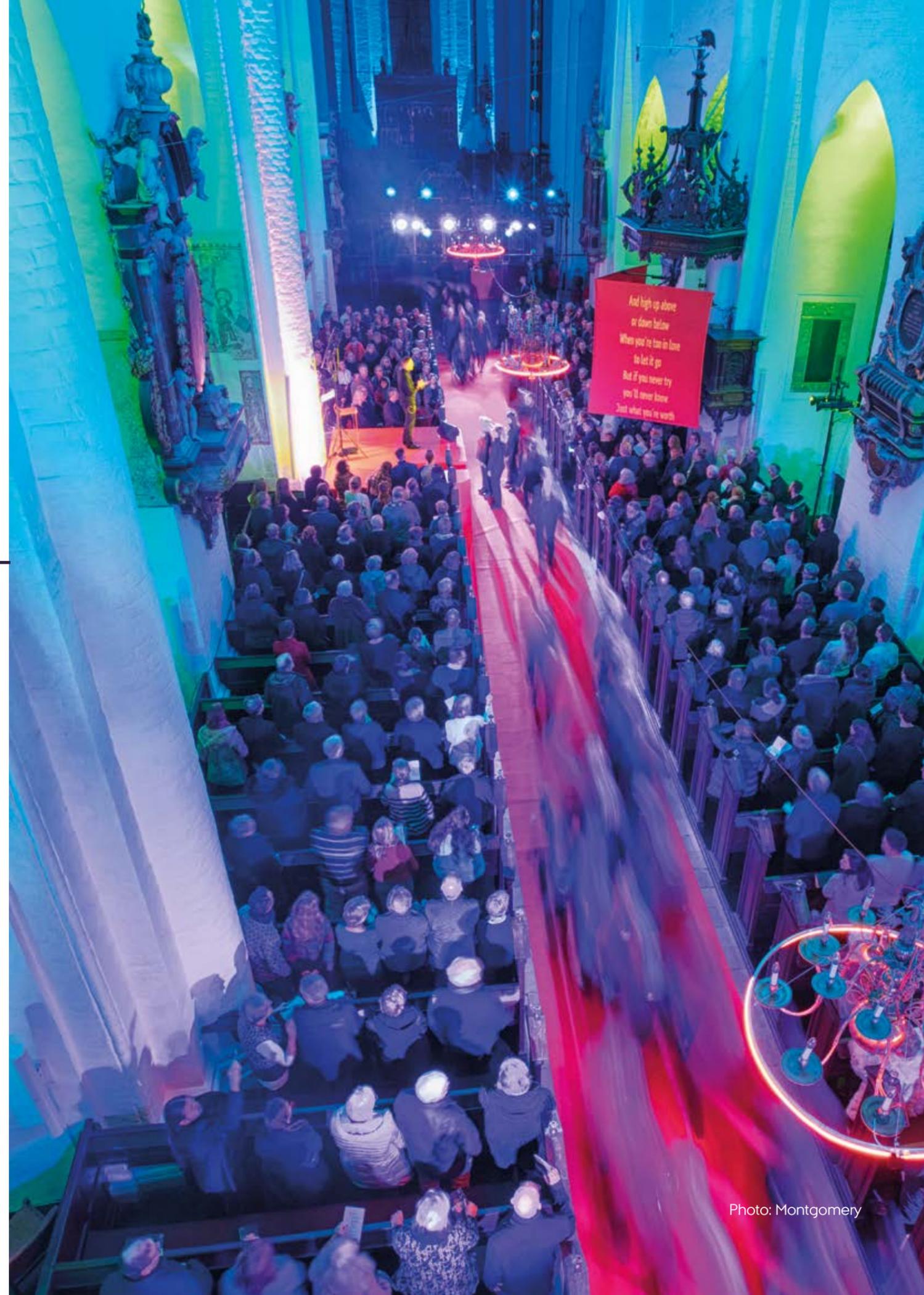
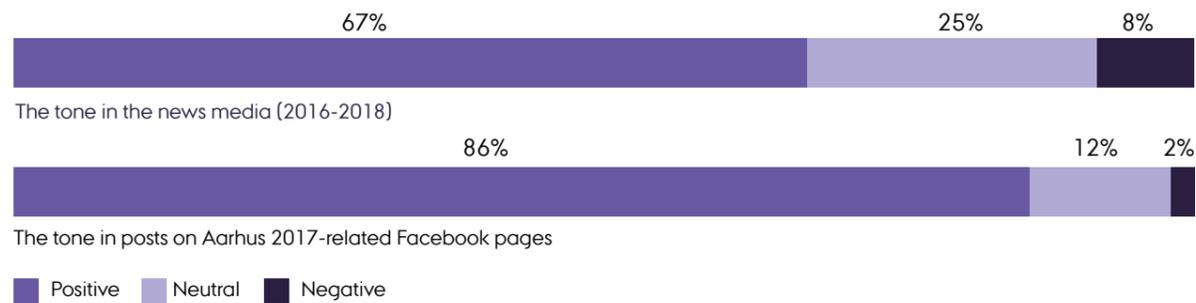


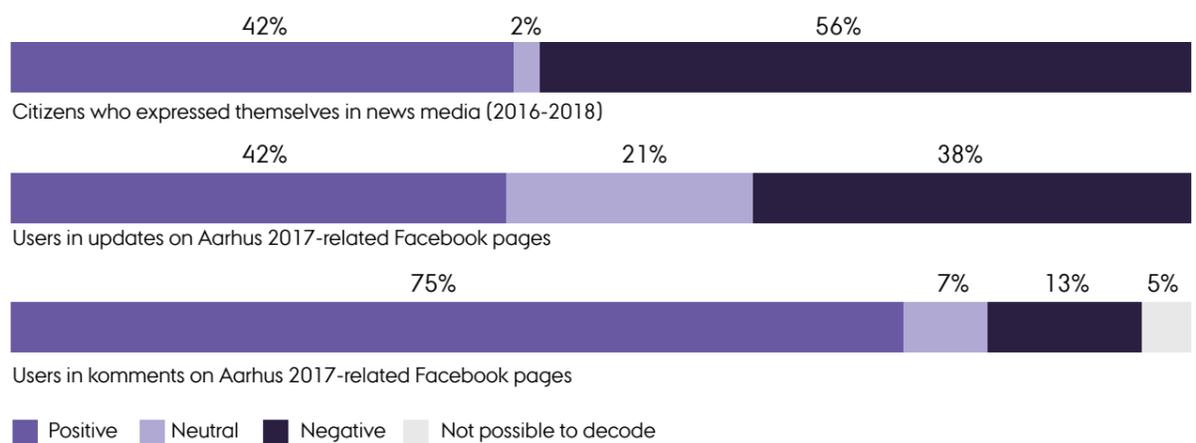
Photo: Montgomery

FIGURE 4.4 THE GENERAL TONE IN THE MEDIA



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's study of coverage in the news media and on social media. Sample size, news media (2016-2018): 1,385 articles. Sample size, Facebook: 562 updates on Aarhus 2017-related Facebook pages. Note: The Facebook posts were primarily generated by the culture institutions.

FIGURE 4.5 CITIZENS'/USERS' TONE IN THE MEDIA



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's study of coverage in the news media and on social media. Sample size, news media (2016-2018): 1,385 articles, 45 of which quoted citizens. Sample size, user updates on Facebook: 24 posts on Aarhus 2017-related Facebook pages. Sample size, user comments on Facebook: 182 comments on Aarhus 2017-related Facebook pages.

engagement in debate that took place in the accessible, mediated public sphere. The debates and involvement that took place around the dinner table, in private fora on social media or elsewhere are not included in the survey.

DEBATE-BASED EVENTS

To some extent, Aarhus 2017 provoked some citizens to engage in debate in the media, as well as live in connection with a number of events that were precisely intended to encourage debate. This part of the programme is a direct consequence of the inclusion of democracy as one of Aarhus 2017's values. Events such as *Århundredets Festival* ('The festival of the century') and *Hypotheticals* made use of new forms of debate, whereby citizens could debate issues such as sustainability, feminism and democracy over the course of the European Capital of Culture year. Linking the adult education aspects of the cultural sphere more closely to a primarily art-oriented cultural programme was innovative. The Aarhus 2017 Foundation itself was an important player in this connection, in addition to the Danish University Extension, the partnership with FO Aarhus, cultural institutions such as Aarhus Teater and Culture and Citizens' Services in the City of Aarhus and the libraries in the region contributed to this.



Photo: Ulla Rose



4.4 CITIZENS' FUTURE INVOLVEMENT

Aarhus 2017 opened up a number of special opportunities for activating and involving citizens – primarily in connection with the initial idea development phase of the European Capital of Culture project, in connection with some concrete cultural projects and in the ReThinkers programme.

In future, the work of increasing focus on dialogue with and involvement of citizens in cultural projects can continue. For example, citizen involvement might be included in the development and execution of the European Region of Culture or other projects if the goal continues to be using culture as an arena for active citizenship.

It is not likely that citizens' participation in media debate will be noticeably impacted by Aarhus 2017. However, the different debate-based events may have encouraged a higher

degree of engagement in the debated issues among participating audience members.

On the other hand, momentum to mobilise citizens to engage in volunteering has been created. Volunteering is far from a new trend in Denmark, where there is a strong tradition of participation in voluntary associations and clubs, but Aarhus 2017 succeeded in involving a large group of citizens (primarily in and around Aarhus) in volunteer work in a way that was meaningful for the volunteers themselves, for the European Capital of Culture project and for the city. At the same time, this has provided the volunteers with such good experiences that they have a desire to continue their involvement in volunteer work. In this way, they themselves also become ambassadors for the recruitment of new volunteers. In 2018, Aarhus is European Volunteering Capital, and in connection with events such as the World Sailing Championships, the city has again demonstrated its ability to mobilise volunteers. Now that responsibility for administering the volunteer programme has been placed with VisitAarhus and Aarhus Events, the Aarhus volunteer programme 2017 will continue to benefit both the cultural sphere and other activities in the city.



5

THE STORY OF AARHUS 2017

The story of Aarhus 2017 is composed of a wide variety of different voices, each of which contributes to the overall narrative of the European Capital of Culture project. The most distinct voices were those of Aarhus 2017 Foundation and the cultural operators. Particularly in the early phases, politicians also chimed in, while the citizens have made themselves heard to a lesser degree.

Aarhus 2017 has provided an occasion to reflect on culture, the role of culture and different expectations of culture. It has challenged citizens' identity, both as individuals and as inhabitants of Aarhus and Central Denmark Region. And it has contributed to the visibility and image of the city and the region worldwide. And in fact, one of Aarhus 2017's strategic goals was "to increase awareness, visibility and attraction value...nationally and internationally".⁴⁶

In this chapter, we analyse how Aarhus 2017 generated awareness and visibility. We examine coverage by news media and on social media with regard to form, tone and content. In this way, we

investigate how media coverage and other forms of visibility and awareness contributed to creating a shared narrative about Aarhus 2017, the city and the region, and potentially forming a shared identity.

5.1 ON THE MAP

Media coverage was extensive, both in the more traditional news media⁴⁷ and among social media users.⁴⁸ Aarhus 2017 thus generated awareness of the European Capital of Culture project itself and its programme, as well as of culture in general. In this way, the European Capital of Culture project put both the city of Aarhus and the rest of Central Denmark Region on the national media map.

News coverage of Aarhus 2017 culminated in the first six months of the European Capital of Culture year, after which media interest declined.

⁴⁶ Aarhus 2017 Candidate European Capital of Culture 2017 – final application, Department of Culture, City of Aarhus (June 2017), page 8.

⁴⁷ Daily and weekly newspapers, both print and digital, weekly and monthly magazines and the websites of TV stations.

⁴⁸ Facebook and Instagram.



14,000

Mentions in news media in the period 2007 - 2017



4,300

Posts on accessible Facebook pages



37,000

Posts with Aarhus 2017 hashtags on Instagram

Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's study of coverage in the news media and on social media.



Photo: Jesper Voldgaard

LOCAL BIAS IN THE NEWS MEDIA

The primary news outlets to cover Aarhus 2017 were local/regional. In the period around the European Capital of Culture year, two-thirds of the total news articles published by local/regional media (a third of which were published in Århus Stiftstidende), and only one-third were published by national media (over half of which were published in Jyllands-Posten, which is based in Aarhus). However, it must be noted that this distribution only partially reflects impact in relation to reaching citizens, because the national media have a considerably larger office. In this sense, impact in relation to reaching citizens was more evenly distributed than the distribution of articles itself would seem to indicate. However, it is still worth noting that the two Aarhus media, Århus Stiftstidende and Jyllands-Posten, together contributed a large proportion (40%) of total news coverage.

In some areas, one might have expected somewhat more interest from particularly national newspapers with heavy cultural coverage, such as Politiken. The foundation itself remarked on the

generally low level of interest on the part of the national media based in Copenhagen.

By the same token, six out of ten citizens in our survey of the regional population found that the news media described Aarhus 2017 as a primarily local or regional events during the European Capital of Culture year.

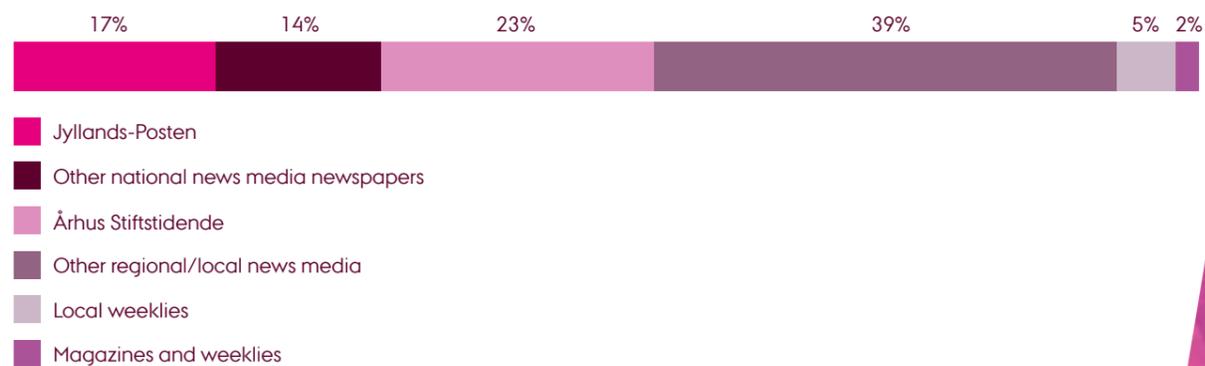
INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION

As European Capital of Culture, the city, region and the project itself also attracted international attention. While at the national level, data on coverage in written Danish media were systematically collected in the media archive Infomedia, there is no source of systematic, comprehensive data on international media coverage. For this reason, rethinkIMPACTS 2017 has elected not to analyse international media coverage. According to the foundation's own records, Aarhus 2017 generated media coverage in 70 countries all over the world, particularly in Germany, the United States and Great Britain.⁴⁹

Aarhus also received considerable attention from tourists. In the period 2012-2017, the number of overnight tourists stays in the municipality increased

⁴⁹"Welcome future", the Aarhus 2017 Foundation (2018), p. 128.

FIGURE 5.1 DISTRIBUTION OF ARTICLES ON AARHUS 2017 IN THE NEWS MEDIA, 2016-2018



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's study of coverage in the news media and on social media (January 2016 - June 2018).
Sample size: 1,385 articles

by an average of 9.7% annually.⁵⁰This increase was relatively evenly distributed across this period, although there was a somewhat greater increase of 11.5% in 2017. In the same period, tourism increased in the region as a whole by an average of 2.8% annually – in 2017 by 4.0%. This regional development is in line with the 2.7% average annual increase at the national level – though just 1.7% in 2017.⁵¹ We are unable to determine the extent to which trends in tourism in Aarhus and Central Denmark Region can be correlated either directly or indirectly with the European Capital of Culture project.

CONSUMER INFORMATION COVERAGE

Advance publicity on events was a relatively prominent focus in news media coverage and

in posts on the Facebook pages of the cultural suppliers. To a considerable degree, this focus on the programme was initiated by the foundation itself through press releases and collaboration with cultural institutions on Facebook. Official marketing of the programme and content was initiated in 2015. Aarhus 2017 succeeded in influencing media coverage to focus heavily on the programme itself and on what audiences could experience.

As described in section 4.3, media coverage of Aarhus 2017 included relatively little editorial and opinion-page content. This does not mean that the media ignored the citizen perspective.

⁵⁰Overnight stays in the City of Aarhus (excluding holiday homes) in the period 2008-2017, VisitDenmark (non-published data).

⁵¹Cf. "Turist: overnatninger efter overnatningsform, område, gæstens nationalitet og periode". (Tourist: overnight stays by type, area, guest nationality and period), Statistics Denmark.

Rather, it indicates that they perceived citizens more as cultural consumers than as individuals with opinions. This media coverage was the expression of a service and consumer-oriented editorial policy that focused on news articles about and advance publicity for events aimed at providing citizens with the information necessary to potentially participate in the cultural activities taking place throughout the year. The kind of nuanced cultural criticism that can shape public debate was not completely absent from the news media, but it was not prioritised as highly as the service journalism about the Aarhus 2017 programme.

HIGH DEGREE OF RECOGNITION

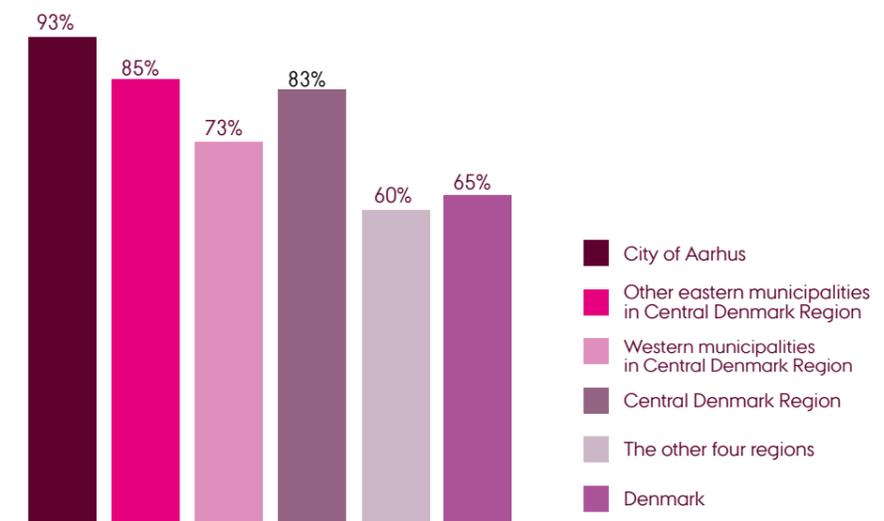
As a result of its extensive coverage in the media, Aarhus 2017 achieved a high degree of brand recognition among citizens. In our population

The main focus of media coverage was on advance publicity for the programme.

studies, 65% of Danes and 83% of citizens in Central Denmark Region could (unaided) name the city (Aarhus) that held the title of European Capital of Culture in 2017.

According to the citizens' own assessment, the traditional news media had the greatest impact on their knowledge of Aarhus 2017 – and to a lesser extent social media. 42% of the regional population used newspapers as a source of information about Aarhus 2017 in general on a regular basis, while almost half as many, 22%, stated that they used social media as a source of information about Aarhus 2017 on a regular basis. Every fourth citizen also found that word-of-mouth publicity from family,

FIGURE 5.2 CITIZENS' AWARENESS OF AARHUS AS EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE IN 2017



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region and Denmark (2018). "What city held the title of European Capital of Culture in 2017?". The response took the form of a free-form text. Sample size, City of Aarhus: 337 survey responses. Sample size, other eastern municipalities in Central Denmark Region: 422 survey responses. Sample size, western municipalities in Central Denmark Region: 362 survey responses. Sample size, Central Denmark Region: 1,121 survey responses. Sample size, other four regions: 823 survey responses. Sample size, national survey: 1,048 survey responses.



83% of citizens of Central Denmark Region and 65% of Danes knew about Aarhus 2017

friends and co-workers often gave them information about the European Capital of Culture project in 2017. Similarly, citizens perceived that when they participated in Aarhus 2017 events as audience members, this was less due to social media than word-of-mouth publicity, which was the audience's greater source of information about events.

Thus the institutionalised news media, including national and local dailies and weeklies were primarily responsible for raising awareness. Nonetheless, the cultural suppliers contributed a lot of information about and publicity for events on their Facebook pages. However, this does not appear to have reached a wide audience among citizens to the same degree as the news media. This may be due to the fact that social media are not important sources of information for citizens in this context. It may also be due to the fact that Aarhus 2017 and the individual events failed to exploit the potential of social media sufficiently.

LACK OF OVERVIEW AND INFORMATION DEPTH

In relation to providing information about Aarhus 2017 and helping citizens to get an overview of the project and the programme, the foundation succeeded to a significantly lesser degree. All of 41% of the citizens in the region found that they received inadequate information in the course of 2017, while only 30% of the citizens in the region and 18% of the national population found that they received adequate information about Aarhus 2017.

This was expressed in greater detail in our interviews with the region's citizens, who expressed considerable frustration about the difficulty of getting an overview of the programme in particular. In the first instance, this may be due to the fact that the foundation apparently prioritised the highest possible degree of *visibility* for Aarhus 2017 and the programme over *providing a logical overview and clarity* for the potential audience. However, the citizens may themselves bear some of the responsibility, because in-depth information was not completely absent from the media coverage.

A large proportion of citizens felt that they had been poorly informed and did not have a clear overview of the programme.

A number of the cultural institutions found that there were unclear expectations and a counter-productive distribution of responsibility in relation to the communication effort. They expressed a desire for more help from the foundation in coordinating communication and improving quality. On the other hand, the foundation complied with the concrete agreements with the project owners in cases in which it was specified that communication and branding were the responsibility of the individual project owners.

The citizens' experience of a lack of clarity and structure in the information about the programme may also have something to do with the fact that the foundation's categorisation of events was not transparent, cf. section 3.3. At the same time, the foundation lacked an overall communication strategy for events as a whole.

The foundation also made a conscious choice not to communicate clearly whether an individual event was affiliated with Aarhus 2017 or was simply an 'ordinary' cultural event. Instead, Aarhus 2017 worked as a catalyst to get the population interested in and to participate in culture generally speaking – whether Aarhus 2017-related events or not. This strategy may have contributed to the increased interest in culture that every sixth citizen in Central

Denmark Region (17%) found that Aarhus 2017 had increased their interest in culture.

In connection with future major cultural events, there should be greater emphasis on making it possible for citizens to get an overview, particularly in the communication of the programme. At the same time, a more differentiated use of the different media platforms can serve to target communication more effectively and give citizens a greater sense of relevance – and thereby commitment – in relation to actively seeking out different channels of information themselves.

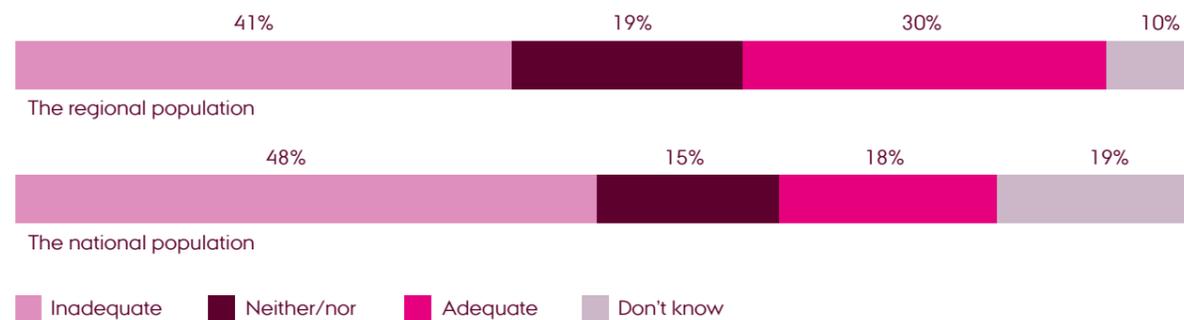
17% of citizens stated that Aarhus 2017 increased their interest in culture.

Aarhus 2017's prioritisation of visibility was a reflection of the foundation's strategy and the KPIs set out in the foundation's strategic business plan, which had a one-sided focus on visibility and generating awareness, rather than on how well-informed the population considered itself, or how citizens engaged themselves, for example in the content shared on social media.

That said, Aarhus 2017 did make a major contribution to putting Aarhus and the rest of the region on the map. Aarhus 2017 provided an important impetus for discourse about and interest in Aarhus and the region and on culture in the area, which has laid the foundation for a more long-term, broader interest in Aarhus and the rest of the Central Denmark Region in future.

A number of the cultural institutions found that there were unclear expectations in relation to the division of labour with the foundation regarding the communication effort.

FIGURE 5.3 CITIZENS' PERCEIVED LEVEL OF INFORMATION IN RELATION TO AARHUS 2017



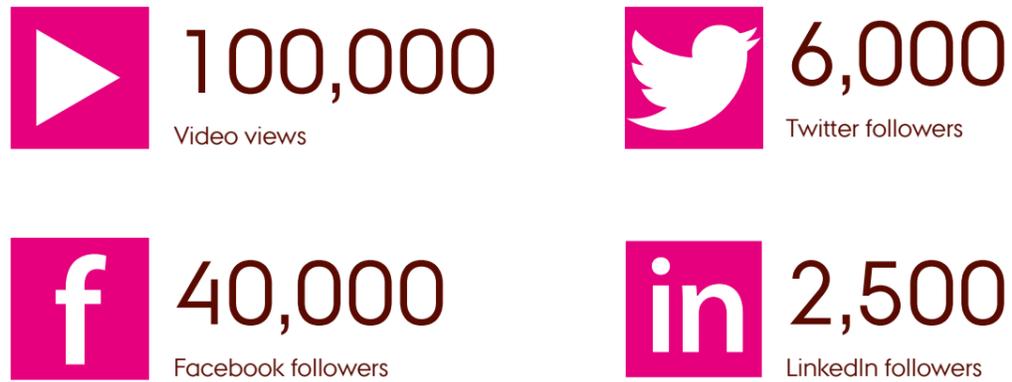
Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017 's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region (2017). "How well-informed about Aarhus 2017 in general do you perceive yourself to be?". The possible answers were indicated on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is insufficiently informed and 7 is fully informed. In the figure, 1-3 on the scale have been merged into "insufficient", 4 represents "neither/nor", and 5-7 on the scale are indicated as "fully informed".

Sample size, regional population: 1,755 survey responses. Sample size, national survey: 1,872 survey responses.



Photo: Joel Chester Fildes

FIGURE 5.4 THE AARHUS 2017 FOUNDATION'S OWN KPIS FOR MEDIA COVERAGE



Source: "European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017 – Strategic Business Plan," the Aarhus 2017 Foundation (December 2015).

5.2 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COVERAGE

POSITIVE COVERAGE IN THE MEDIA

Generally speaking, media coverage of Aarhus 2017 was positive – both in news media articles and social media posts. Coverage presented Aarhus 2017 as a generally successful event. This is partially accounted for by the fact that much coverage in the news media and on Facebook consisted of advance publicity and marketing of events, and coverage of this type is almost by definition positive. Generally speaking, media coverage focused heavily on positive expectations – not only during the European

Capital of Culture year, but also in preceding years – and these forward-looking, anticipatory articles, along with concrete descriptions of experiences from the programme, contributed to setting the tone in media coverage.

The positive tone was also linked to the sources who were quoted in the media. The heavily sender-centred coverage quoted the operators responsible for the programme, the spokespeople for the Aarhus 2017 Foundation and the cultural institutions in particular. The news media also served as an outlet for particular cultural operators and local politicians. All of these sources shared a common interest in presenting Aarhus 2017 in a positive light.

NEGATIVE COVERAGE IN INDIVIDUAL CASES

However, there were also periods in which concrete cases created led to negative coverage in the news media and on social media. One of the most serious of these cases – which was probably the largest

The debate about *The Garden* was initiated by citizens and generated a lot of attention on social media.

communication crisis of the project – was head of communications Benedicte Strøm's departure from and strong public critique of the Aarhus 2017 Foundation in early 2014. The cases made its mark in that the number of articles covering it rose in the first six months of 2014, and that there was a clearly negative trend in the tone of this coverage.

Subsequently, there were a few individual cases during the European Capital of Culture year that gave rise to major debates and media coverage without necessarily constituting 'crises' in the story of Aarhus 2017. These cases were just as much an occasion to debate what culture is and can do. Examples include the event *Befri Gudstjenesten* in the Aarhus Cathedral and the work *Untitled* in Mindeparken, Aarhus.

The debate about *Befri Gudstjenesten* primarily took place in the news media (including *Kristeligt Dagblad*) in editorials, opeds and letters to the editor. The debate took place before the performance and was fundamentally theological: specialists and individuals with a particular interest in religious discussed what culture events can and should be allowed to do in sacred spaces. In contrast, the debate about *The Garden* was initiated by citizens, and it generated considerable attention on social media among a wide cross-section of the local population. The debate centred on what people do to nature, which was precisely what the work intended to highlight. In focus group interviews from early 2018, a number of citizens mentioned the debate about Katharina Grosse's work as something they remembered from the European Capital of Culture year.

BEFRI GUDSTJENESTEN, FEBRUARY 2017

Befri Gudstjenesten was a collaboration between Teatret Svalegangen and Aarhus Cathedral. A performance that lasted seven evening, and which attempted to rethink the traditional church service with the aid of theatre, music, food, debate and reflection.

The choice of Sherin Khankan as a speaker in particular generated considerable debate. A number of vicars took exception to Aarhus Cathedral for inviting a female imam to speak in strong terms.

MEDIA INFLUENCE ON CITIZENS' ATTITUDES

When we compare our studies of media coverage and the population's attitudes, we find that the development in the tone of media coverage and citizens' attitudes are in harmony. In this connect, media coverage may both reflect and shape citizens' attitudes towards Aarhus 2017.

The population's attitudes towards Aarhus 2017 became gradually less positive over the course of the European Capital of Culture year. In parallel, media coverage was most intense in the first months of the European Capital of Culture year, when coverage both in the news media and on social media was characterised by positive expectations about the year to come and concrete events. The official opening ceremony in particular generated a lot of positive coverage. Subsequently the debates about *Befri Gudstjenesten* and *The Garden* took place, and the initial extremely positive expectations gave way to a more nuanced narrative about Aarhus 2017. Overall, the media – both the institutionalised

Focus on expectations of and perceptions of the European Capital of Culture programme contributed to positive media coverage.



Photo: Ulla Rose

news media and the user-driven social media – contributed to shaping the population's attitudes towards Aarhus 2017 by putting specific themes on the agenda.

Another area in which the media's possible influence on citizens' attitudes may be seen was the Aarhus 2017 budget. In our population survey, citizens indicated that too much money had been spent on Aarhus 2017. At the same time, however, the survey also showed that the same citizens overwhelmingly did not have a realistic impression of the budget and costs related to Aarhus 2017. This opinion was thus not founded in factual knowledge, but may well have been founded on a perception shaped by the tone of news media coverage in particular, where the prioritisation of public funding was precisely one of the few topics which received primarily negative coverage.

Conversely, the media also reflected the population's attitudes. For example, when the population initiated debates that subsequently were taken up by the institutionalised media, as we saw in the case of the debate about Katharina Grosse's work *Untitled*, which was started by a citizen expressing their frustration on Facebook.

UNTITLED AND THE EXHIBIT THE GARDEN, JUNE-JULY 2017

The work *Untitled* by the German artist Katharina Grosse was part of AROS' exhibit *The Garden – End of Times, Beginning of Times*. The exhibit took place at AROS and at different locations in Aarhus, including in Mindeparken.

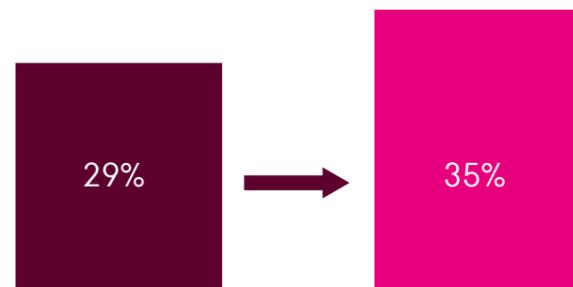
Because it involved using acrylic paint on grass, bushes and trees in Mindeparken, the work was strongly criticised and heavily covered in the media. The debate was initiated by citizens, and to a great extent, citizens used Facebook to express their indignation.

5.3 IDENTITY IS FORMED A UNIFIED REGION

Aarhus 2017 and the Central Denmark Region have followed the same path in more than one sense. 2007 was not only the year in which Aarhus decided to enter the competition for the European Capital of Culture title, it was also the first year of the existence of the new Central Denmark Region (as a consequence of the municipal reform). At that time, the region was a completely new political-administrative body, and the citizens of the new region had no basis for a common regional identity. The narrative of Aarhus 2017 as a major regional project has contributed to the development of a sense of unity and shared regional identity among citizens.

Descriptions of regional collaborations were a recurring theme in the news media, which articulated a cross-regional sense of unity. The locations included in the news coverage of Aarhus 2017 had a broad

FIGURE 5.5 THE DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGIONAL POPULATION'S IDENTIFICATION WITH CENTRAL DENMARK REGION

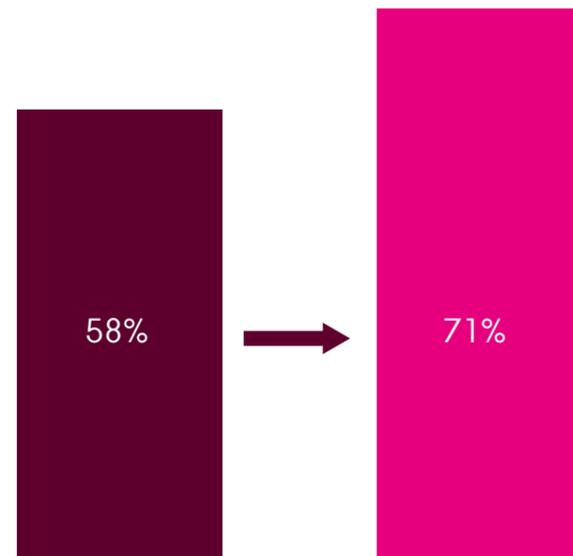


Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region (2015 and 2017). "To what extent do you identify with the Central Denmark Region?". The possible answers were indicated on a five-point scale, from "to a high degree" to "not at all" as well as "don't know". The figure shows the percentage of citizens who identify with the region "to a considerable degree" or "to a high degree". Sample sizes: 2015: 1,021 survey responses, 2017: 1,755 survey responses.

regional focus. The local news media in particular linked Aarhus 2017 with a range of locations around the region in connection with coverage of local events. In this connection, our population surveys show that the proportion of citizens in the region who felt a connection to the region increased by one-fifth (from 29% to 35%) from 2015 to 2017. This development indicates that the European Capital of Culture project may have contributed to increasing a sense of unity among citizens across the region.

At the same time, citizens' interest in both Aarhus and the region as a "place for culture" developed. The proportion of citizens in the Central Denmark Region who thought that the Central Denmark Region was

FIGURE 5.6 THE DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGIONAL POPULATION'S PERCEPTION OF CENTRAL DENMARK REGION AS AN INTERESTING PLACE FOR CULTURE



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region (2015 and 2017). "How much do you agree with the following statement: Central Denmark Region is an interesting place for culture". The possible answers were indicated on a five-point scale, from "agree completely" to "disagree completely" as well as "don't know". The figure shows the percentage of citizens who answered "agree somewhat" or "agree completely". Sample sizes: 2015: 1,021 survey responses, 2018: 1,121 survey responses.

The proportion of citizens in Central Denmark Region who found that Aarhus was an interesting place for culture increased from 62% in 2015 to 75% in 2018. The proportion who found that Central Denmark Region was an interesting place for culture increased from 58% to 71%.

an interesting place for culture increased from 58% in 2015 to 71% in 2018, while the proportion who believed that Aarhus was an interesting place for culture increased from 62% to 75%. Quite a marked development, which in light of Aarhus 2017's major role in cultural life in this period must to a high degree be ascribed to the European Capital of Culture project.

Although Aarhus 2017 gave rise to coverage of the entire Central Denmark Region in the news media, Aarhus played the leading role in the way in which the project was generally portrayed. For the news media, this applied to national and international coverage in particular. This tendency was even clearer on social media: 86% of all geotagged photos on Instagram related to Aarhus 2017 were from the City of Aarhus. Thus there are indications that despite the fact that the Aarhus 2017 Foundation and the cultural suppliers collaborated with local news media in particular to present the project as primarily regional, the majority of citizens perceived it as a predominantly Aarhus project.

AARHUS 2017 AS AN IDENTITY MARKER

Many posts on Facebook and especially on Instagram revealed a sense of pride related to Aarhus 2017. Users often portrayed themselves as cultural consumers or marked a sense of affiliation with Aarhus as a city. Aarhus, the European Capital of Culture project and/or culture were generally used as identity markers in citizens' self-presentations on

Citizens' expressions of pride were often linked to specific events, for example the official opening ceremony, in relation to which citizens expressed strong positive feelings.

social media. The European Capital of Culture project thus contributed to the construction of engagement in culture as something positive that users wanted to associate their personal image with.

In several instances, citizens' expressions of pride were linked to specific events, for example the official opening ceremony, which users described in emotional, grandiose terms, and in relation to which numerous posts expressed pride and an emotional investment in the project. On the other hand, there were also cases that challenged citizens' support for and identification with the project. This was seen not least in the debate on Facebook and elsewhere about Katharina Grosse's work in Mindeparken. Opposition was in part motivated by the sense that the work was incompatible with what some citizens perceived as what it meant to be a citizen of Aarhus and the values they themselves associated with their identity as Aarhusians.

In general, however, the dominating theme was the pride associated with being a part of the European Capital of Culture project, and many citizens acted as ambassadors for Aarhus 2017 on social media.

5.4 THE FUTURE STORY

Many stories have been created about Aarhus 2017, and it is as yet difficult to determine which of them will dominate, and how it will contribute to the larger story of the European Capitals of Culture. Aarhus 2017 was not characterised by major scandals, and there was a generally high level of



Photo: Aarhus School of Music, Nicolai Bælum Bech, Mikkel Horne and Troels Nissen

popular and political support for the project. This cannot be taken for granted, as other European Capital of Culture projects elsewhere in Europe teach us.

One characteristic of Aarhus' term as European Capital of Culture is that most of its effects have been intangible rather than tangible. Not including physical infrastructure projects in the European Capital of Culture project was a deliberate strategy – unlike many other European Capital of Culture projects, including Aarhus' twin capital Paphos, where the most significant legacy of the title is a completely renovated city centre. This means that the story of Aarhus 2017 must be told through intangible effects and testimony.

For citizens and audiences, the core of their recollection of Aarhus 2017 will be their experience of the title year. The opening ceremony became a touchstone in many people's stories about Aarhus 2017 even during the year itself. The director of the foundation, Rebecca Matthews, put it this way: The individual citizen bears Aarhus 2017 forward as a memory. Thus there will continue to be a multiplicity of personal narratives among those who experienced Aarhus 2017.

But a more collective story will most likely take shape as well – about a European Capital of Culture project that achieved high visibility and not least contributed to accelerating urban and cultural development in Aarhus. The Aarhus 2017 Foundation's own concluding account of the European Capital of Culture project, the report *Welcome Future* that was presented in March 2018, is one contribution to this process of storytelling. In this report, the foundation presented its narrative of a successful European Capital of Culture project that achieved its goals. The EU's official monitoring report, published in November 2018, also contributed to telling the story of how Aarhus 2017 went.

By the spring of 2018, it appeared that citizens in the region had already become more positive about Aarhus 2017 than they had been when it ended. This suggests that the story of Aarhus 2017 will continue to be a positive story about a successful European Capital of Culture project. If we look at other European Capitals of Culture like Liverpool 2008, for example, we see that their narratives have developed over the years, and that the positive tone has been sustained. We predict that the positive story about Aarhus 2017 will be one of the permanent effects of the European Capital of Culture project.



6

THE STRENGTH
OF CULTURE

One of the strategic objectives for Aarhus 2017 was to “support the long term development and also underpin the significance of arts and culture”. Another strategic objective was for Aarhus 2017 to contribute to encouraging “human development” and “economic growth”.⁵² In accordance with this, we have taken a broad approach to analysing the value of and value added by culture. In this section, we explore the extent to which political and economic prioritisations of culture have changed as a result of the European Capital of Culture project, how citizens and private companies perceive the importance of culture, and the extent to which the cultural sector has experienced effects, for example increased visibility, larger audiences, and so on.

Finally, we will discuss how the evaluation perspective regarding the value of culture can be developed in future. We have worked with economics professor Trine Bille to clarify an

approach to developing and rethinking methods of assessing the value of culture.

6.1 THE CHANGED ROLE OF CULTURE EFFECTS ON CULTURAL POLICY

Culture has gained a more strategic role in the political system as a result of the European Capital of Culture project – especially in the City of Aarhus and Central Denmark Region. After the European Capital of Culture year, three out of four regional council politicians found that Aarhus 2017 had strengthened the prioritisation of culture at the regional political level. The Regional Council involved itself in the project early on, which means

52 “Aarhus 2017 Candidate European Capital of Culture 2017 – final application”, Department of Culture, City of Aarhus (June 2012), page 8.

that Aarhus 2017 was going on virtually throughout the entire short history of the region. It has made a mark on the role culture has gained in Central Denmark Region, which views culture as an important aspect of regional development, both in its own right and in connection with other areas.

On the Aarhus City Council, three out of four politicians likewise found that the European Capital of Culture project had a positive effect on the prioritisation of culture. The City of Aarhus has a long tradition of working with clear political objectives and development strategies in relation to culture. In this context, the European Capital of Culture initiative may be seen as a continuation of previous cultural policy initiatives. At the same time, Aarhus 2017 in itself was a major initiative that has clearly marked culture as an important element in development of and in the City of Aarhus.

With regard to the other municipalities in the

Three out of four Aarhus politicians and regional council politicians find that Aarhus 2017 has led to a higher prioritisation of culture in the region.

region, the effects of the European Capital of Culture project are less pronounced. About one-third of city council politicians in these municipalities found that Aarhus 2017 contributed to a higher prioritisation of culture in their municipality. Over half did not find that the project had an effect on their municipality's prioritisation of culture.

In addition to the political prioritisation of culture, a change in the role of culture has also taken place: culture has gained greater attention and recognition as a driver of development, including in contexts in which culture did not previously play a role. For many politicians and government officials, the European Capital of Culture project has led to a





Photo: The Architecture Experimentarium/The Children's Culture House in Aarhus

FIGURE 6.1 AARHUS 2017'S INFLUENCE ON POLITICAL PRIORITISATION OF CULTURE IN THE REGION'S ADDITIONAL 18 MUNICIPALITIES



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region (2018). Data from the other 18 municipalities - in addition to the City of Aarhus. "Has Aarhus 2017 changed how culture is prioritised politically in your municipality?". Data used: 102 survey responses.

Particularly in the City of Aarhus, there is a perception that there is greater focus on collaboration between the different municipal departments, and that culture is included strategically in other policy areas.

greater awareness of how culture can be part of a solution in another area of public administration, for example city planning. Particularly in the City of Aarhus, there is a perception that there is greater focus on collaboration between the different municipal departments, and that culture is included strategically in other policy areas - for example through the projects *Rethink Urban Habitats* and *Den Gode Galskab* ('sane madness'). This development can be directly linked to the European Capital of Culture project's focus on rethinking: The value culture can have has been rethought, and this value cuts across policy areas.

RETHINK URBAN HABITATS was an Aarhus 2017 event that focused on natural history. The objective of the event was to rethink the city's green spaces, with a focus on biodiversity and new ways of communicating about the wild natural world and its potential. The project was a collaboration between the Museum of Natural History in Aarhus, the City of Aarhus and a large number of volunteers and associations. The initiative will continue after the European Capital of Culture year, with contributions from the City of Aarhus and various associations and citizens' groups.

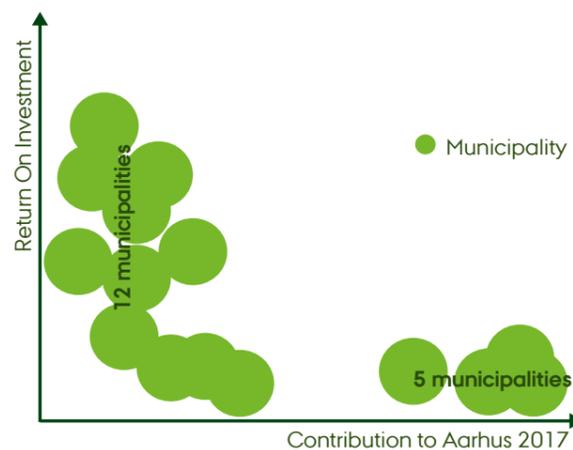
DEN GODE GALSKAB ('Sane madness') was a project aimed at getting citizens with mental health problems and other at-risk groups involved in the production of art and culture for Aarhus 2017 events. The project was a collaboration between the association *De Splittergale* ('the stark raving mad'), the City of Aarhus social services department and VIA University College.

Source: "Images | European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017", Department of Culture, City of Aarhus (April 2018), pp. 25 and 29.

THE MUNICIPALITIES' CONCRETE BENEFITS

There are differences in the nature and scope of what municipalities have gotten out of Aarhus 2017. As we described in section 2.3, the municipalities' return on their investment in the programme was ensured thanks to the ROI model. According to the calculations of ROI, all of the municipalities received slightly or much more than their own contribution to Aarhus 2017 in return (in the form of Aarhus 2017 activities in the individual municipalities). The municipalities with the highest ROI received Aarhus 2017 activities worth up to 7.5 times their own contribution to the European Capital of Culture project, while the municipalities with the lowest achieved an ROI of between 1:1 and 1:1.5.⁵³ The relatively large differences in ROI must be understood in relation to the size of the individual municipalities' contribution to Aarhus 2017. The five municipalities (in

FIGURE 6.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONTRIBUTIONS TO AARHUS 2017 AND ROI FOR 17 MUNICIPALITIES (EXCL. AARHUS AND HERNING)



Source: The Aarhus 2017 Foundation's internal calculations of ROI.

In the period 2013-2017, politicians shifted from a strong focus on Return on Investment to a broader perspective on the benefits to the individual municipality.

addition to the City of Aarhus) which invested the most money in Aarhus 2017 have the lowest ROI, while ROI for the municipalities that invested under DKK 2 million was considerably higher relatively speaking. In addition, the municipalities' contributions to the European Capital of Culture project were calculated according to a scale with three levels that linked the level of investment per inhabitant to distance from Aarhus.

Government officials in the cultural arena generally shared the perception that politicians shifted from a strong focus on 'return on investment' in the beginning of the period 2013-2017 to a much broader focus on the benefits that accrued to the individual municipality – both in the shape of a broader understanding of value creation at the local level and a focus on the synergy created by cross-municipal collaboration. In this sense, a shift took place among the municipalities towards a less competitive view of each other.

ECONOMIC PRIORITISATION OF CULTURE IN THE MUNICIPALITIES

Taken in isolation, 2016 and 2017 were the two years in the past decade in which the municipalities' culture-related expenditure per inhabitant in Central Denmark Region were highest. But if we examine the

⁵³ Herning Municipality and the City of Aarhus are not included in the data. Source: The Aarhus 2017 Foundation.

⁵⁴ Based on the Ministry of Economic Affairs Municipal Key figures, as published at www.noegletal.dk. In these calculations, it is necessary to take into account that funds may have been spent on culture from elsewhere in the municipal budgets than the culture budget which are therefore not itemised under culture-related expenditure.

period 2007-2018 as a whole, from Aarhus' decision to compete for the European Capital of Culture title to end of the European Capital of Culture year, the economic prioritisation of culture in the region's municipalities has remained relatively stable.⁵⁴ In this period, budgeted culture-related expenditure per inhabitant increased by a total of 3.5%⁵⁵ (in real terms, for all of the region's municipalities as a whole). By comparison, the municipalities' net operating costs increased by 13.5% over the same period.

This means that the increased understanding of the strategic role of culture described above did not translate into a positive effect on the prioritisation of municipal culture budgets. The small growth in culture budgets does not correspond to the total growth in municipal budgets as a whole. This also applies to the City of Aarhus, where culture-related expenditure per inhabitant actually fell by 5.0% in the period 2007-2018.⁵⁶ In other words, the municipality's culture expenditure per inhabitant after the European Capital of Culture was lower than in 2007, when the decision was made to apply

The increased understanding of the strategic role of culture described above has not translated into a positive effect on the prioritisation of municipal culture budgets.

for the title. It may seem remarkable that the City of Aarhus was able to be European Capital of Culture without a significant increase in its culture budget. The primary explanation is that the municipality's extra expenses in connection with the project (the DKK 116 million allocated to Aarhus 2017) were financed through the sale of municipal properties and similar non-recurring income.

In this connection, it should also be noted that the City of Aarhus added 40,000 new inhabitants in the period from 2007 to 2017, corresponding to

⁵⁵ This covers the budget items for 'pure' culture-related expenditure. If library services are included, total culture and library services costs fell by 7.4% in this period.

⁵⁶ At the same time, the City of Aarhus' net operating costs per inhabitant increased by 9.5%. The municipality's total culture and library costs fell by 10.6%.



Photo: Norddjurs Library

a population increase of 14%.⁵⁷ Although culture-related expenditure per inhabitant has decreased, culture budgets have increased.

The 3.5% increase in culture-related expenditure in the region's municipalities is weak in comparison with developments in the country's other four regions. Only the Capital Region of Denmark shows a smaller increase (1.4%). In North Denmark Region, the Region of Southern Denmark and Region Zealand, increases in culture budgets have been significantly greater, and at the same time, these municipalities are more or less at the same level in terms of the development of their net operating budgets – in fact, Region Zealand has given culture-related expenditure a significantly higher priority.

Aarhus 2017 has thus not resulted in a higher economic prioritisation of culture among the region's municipalities (particularly if library services costs are not included). Where the City of Aarhus is concerned, the prioritisation of Aarhus 2017 took the form of non-recurring budget items, and broadly speaking, the municipality's culture-related expenditure lags behind developments in both the municipalities' total net operating budgets as well as the country's other regions.

⁵⁷ At the end of 2007, there were 298,500 citizens in the City of Aarhus, and the figure was approx. 340,500 at the end of 2017. Source: "Befolkningens udvikling efter kommune, bevægelsesart og køn (2006-2017)" (Population development by municipality, type of movement and gender 82006-2017), Statistics Denmark (2018).

6.2 THE CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVE

During the European Capital of Culture year itself, the region's citizens prioritised culture slightly higher than previously – and subsequently. For example, in 2017, seven out of ten citizens in the region agreed that it is important to have access to local cultural activities. However, the percentage fell again in early 2018, which may indicate that while the major focus on culture in 2017 increased citizens' awareness of and support for the meaning of culture, this may have been a short-term effect. Generally speaking, the citizens of the City of Aarhus lie above average for the region as a whole in relation to prioritising local cultural activities.

Similarly, the majority of the citizens agree that culture has a value that goes beyond the purely economic. In particular, they agree that culture "binds us together as citizens", provides "important new input" and "increases quality of life and well-being". In relation to these three aspects, about two-thirds agree (and in addition, about 20% respond neither/nor, cf. table 6.2, page 126). There was already relatively strong support for the value of

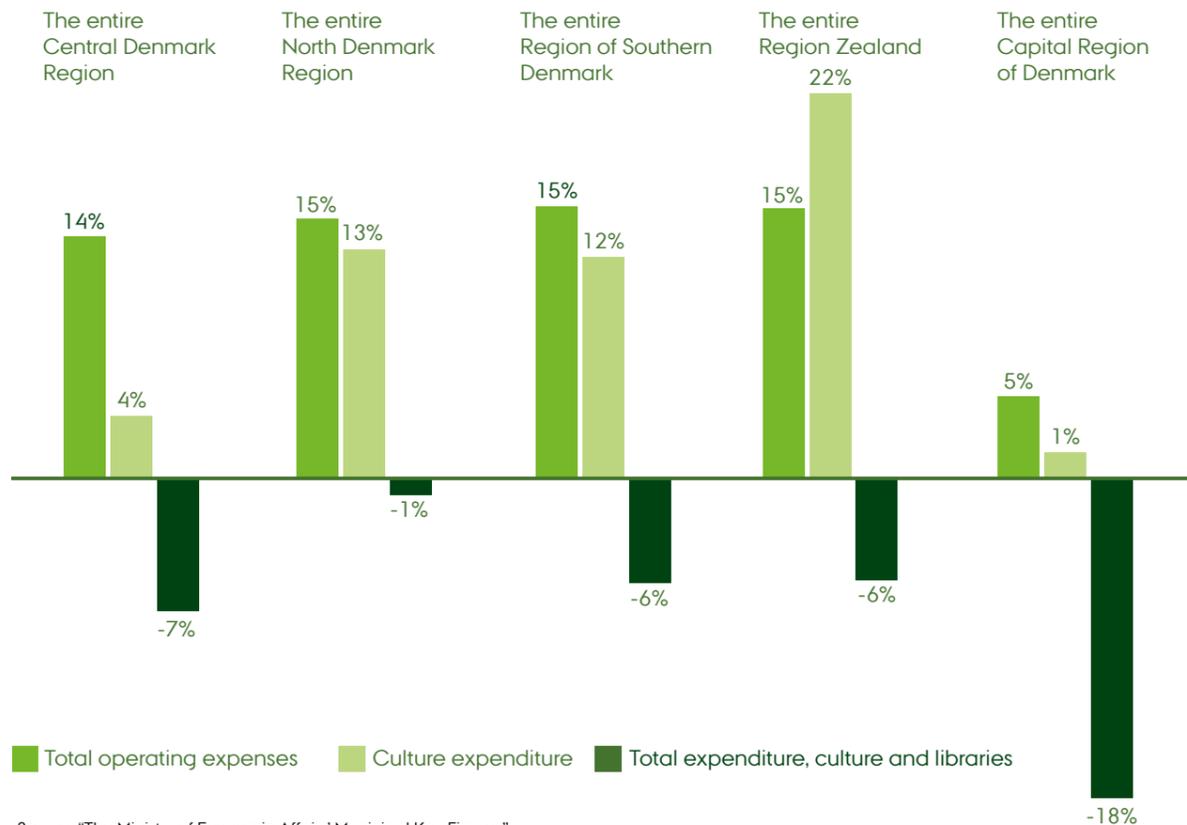
In 2017, seven out of ten citizens in the region agreed that it is important to have access to local cultural activities.

culture in our first survey in 2015, which may explain why there was only a marginal change in attitudes as a result of the European Capital of Culture project.

After the end of the European Capital of Culture year, 17% of citizens in Central Denmark Region agreed that Aarhus 2017 had increased their interest in culture, while one in three citizens found that this was not the case (table 6.3). In chapter 3, we saw that the audiences at Aarhus 2017 events were to a large extent the same as the audiences for cultural offerings in general. In this connection, it is positive that Aarhus 2017 appears to have increased citizens' interest in culture, even though this was not clearly expressed in the form of attracting non-cultural consumer audiences. Appropriate efforts to develop audiences would be able to translate these attitudes into attracting new cultural consumers.

Despite citizens' recognition of the value of culture, they are not strongly inclined to channel more public funding to culture, an attitude that

FIGURE 6.3 DEVELOPMENT IN THE MUNICIPALITIES' EXPENDITURE PER INHABITANT IN 2007-2018 (INDEX-LINKED)



Source: "The Ministry of Economic Affairs' Municipal Key Figures".

TABLE 6.1 PERCENTAGE OF CITIZENS WHO AGREE THAT ACCESS TO CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IS IMPORTANT

	CITIZENS IN THE ENTIRE REGION	CITIZENS IN THE CITY OF AARHUS
2015:	65 %	74%
2017:	70%	79%
2018:	65 %	70%

Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region (2015-2018). "To what extent do you agree with the following statement? It is important for me to have access to good cultural activities in my local area?". Answers were indicated on a five-point scale, (from "agree completely" to "disagree completely") as well as "don't know".

Sample size, Central Denmark Region: 2015: 1,021 survey responses, 2016: 1,020 survey responses, 2017: 1,755 survey responses, 2018: 1,121 survey responses. Sample size, City of Aarhus separately: 2015: 282 survey responses, 2017: 479 survey responses, 2018: 337 survey responses.

TABLE 6.2 THE MEANING OF CULTURE FOR CITIZENS OF CENTRAL DENMARK REGION (IN 2017)

	AGREE SOMEWHAT OR COMPLETELY	NEITHER /NOR	DISAGREE SOMEWHAT OR COMPLETELY	DON'T KNOW
Cultural activities bind us together as citizens	67%	20%	6%	7%
Culture gives me important new input	65%	21%	9%	5%
Cultural activities give me increased quality of life and well-being	68%	19%	8%	5%

Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region (2017). "To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Cultural activities bind us together as citizens, Culture gives me important new input, Cultural activities give me increased quality of life and well-being". Answers were indicated on a five-point scale, (from "agree completely" to "disagree completely") as well as "don't know". Sample size: 1,755 survey responses.

TABLE 6.3 AARHUS 2017'S INFLUENCE ON THE REGIONAL POPULATION'S INTEREST IN CULTURE

SOMEWHAT AGREE OR TOTALLY AGREE	NEITHER /NOR	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE OR TOTALLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
17%	41%	32%	10%

Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region (2018). "To what extent do you agree with the following statement? Aarhus 2017 has increased my interest in culture". Sample size: 1,121 survey responses.

TABLE 6.4 THE DEVELOPMENT IN THE POPULATION'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EXPENDITURE OF PUBLIC RESOURCES ON CULTURE FROM 2016 TO 2018

	FAR TOO FEW RESOURCES ARE SPENT	AN APPROPRIATE AMOUNT OF RESOURCES ARE SPENT	FAR TOO MANY RESOURCES ARE SPENT	DON'T KNOW
Population of Central Denmark Region	31% → 22%	24% → 34%	32% → 32%	12%
The rest of the Danish population	32% → 25%	25% → 30%	24% → 24%	19 → 21%

Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region and Denmark (2016-2018). "In general, what do you think about the expenditure of public resources on culture?". Sample size, regional population: 2016: 1,020 survey responses, 2018: 1,121 survey responses. Sample size, the rest of the population: 2016: 895 survey responses, 2018: 823 survey responses.

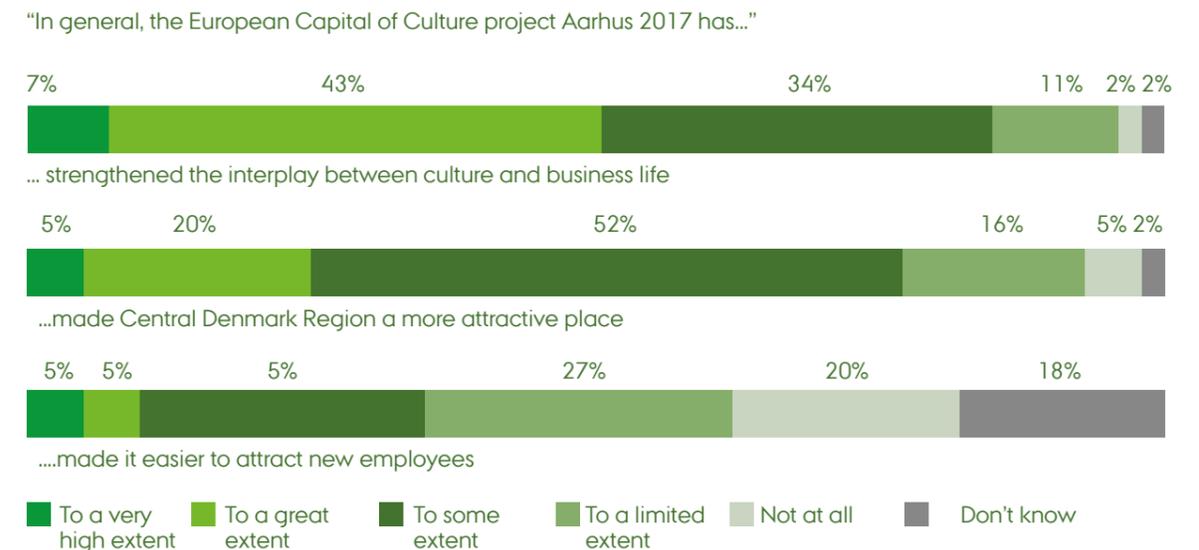
is parallel to politicians' priorities (cf. table 6.4). From 2016 to 2018, the percentage of Danes who supported spending more public funding on culture fell – instead they supported maintaining current levels. This can hardly be due to Aarhus 2017, but oddly enough, citizens in Central Denmark Region were less willing than Danes as a whole to increase public spending on culture, before, during and after the European Capital of Culture year. Whether this is because the large public investment in Aarhus 2017 resulted in a particularly critical attitude towards public cultural spending or a perception that 'we have already spent enough on culture' cannot be determined with certainty. However, we have observed that there were critical voices involved in the debate about economic priorities.

6.3 THE SPONSORS' PERSPECTIVE

The involvement of business and industry in Aarhus 2017 can be analysed on the basis of data from the sponsors. Generally speaking, the sponsors found that the partnership with Aarhus

Three-fourths of the sponsors find that the European Capital of Culture project has made Central Denmark Region a more attractive place for their employees to live and work. On the other hand, only one-third find that it has become easier for the companies in the region to attract new employees as a result of Aarhus 2017.

FIGURE 6.4 AARHUS 2017'S EFFECTS FOR SPONSORS



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire survey of loaned employees (December 2017 - January 2018). "To what extent do you agree with the following statements? The European Capital of Culture project Aarhus 2017 has generally strengthened the interplay between culture and business, the European Capital of Culture project Aarhus 2017 has made Central Denmark Region a more attractive place for our employees to live and work, the European Capital of Culture project Aarhus 2017 has generally made it easier to attract new employees to companies in the area". Answers were indicated on a five-point scale, (from "agree completely" to "disagree completely") as well as "don't know". Data used: 46 survey responses.

2017 had a positive effect on the image of business and industry – not least because the high level media exposure of Aarhus 2017 generally rubbed off on the participating companies. In addition, the sponsors emphasise that the interplay between culture and business and industry has been strengthened as a result of Aarhus 2017.

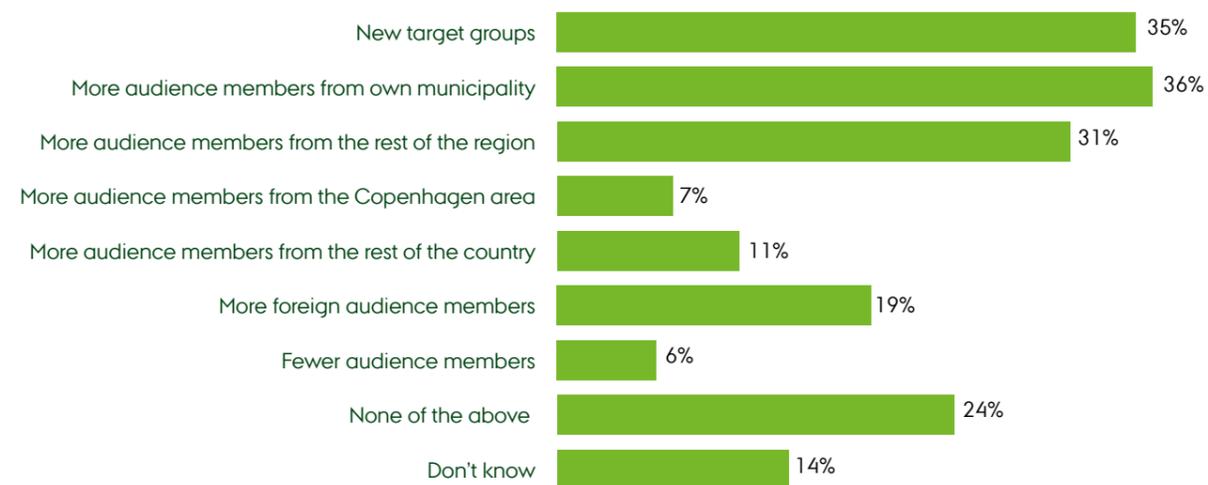
Three-fourths of the sponsors find that the European Capital of Culture project has made Central Denmark Region a more attractive place for their employees to live and work – and in fact, one-fourth also find that Aarhus 2017 has made a major contribution to this.

On the other hand, only one-third find that it has become easier for the companies in the region to attract new employees as a result of Aarhus 2017.

At the same time, several of the sponsors have indicated that recruiting new employees was already easy for them, and thus it is to be expected that Aarhus 2017 has not significantly influenced this.

The engagement of business and industry in the European Capital of Culture project was primarily driven by philanthropic motives and a desire to demonstrate local engagement and support for culture and civil society – rather than financial motives and an expectation of quantifiable returns. The sponsors we interviewed have not received financial gain for their own companies in connection with Aarhus 2017, and they do not see a direct link between the European Capital of Culture project and financial growth in their companies.

FIGURE 6.5 CULTURAL INSTITUTION DIRECTORS' ASSESSMENT OF AARHUS 2017'S IMMEDIATE EFFECTS ON THE AUDIENCE OF THEIR INSTITUTIONS



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire survey of directors of cultural institutions (2018). "In what way do you find that Aarhus 2017 has had an effect for your institution during the European Capital of Culture year itself?". More than one response can be selected. Data used: 102 survey responses.

6.4 THE CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS' PERSPECTIVE

A large proportion of the directors of the region's cultural institutions found that the European Capital of Culture project increased attendance figures for their institutions in 2017 – primarily by attracting local visitors (own municipality or the rest of Central Denmark Region), but also to some extent nationally and internationally. At the same

time, one-third of the cultural institutions found that they reached new target audiences.

According to the foundation's reports⁵⁸, some cultural institutions experienced major increases in audiences. One much discussed example is Museum Jorn, which saw attendance figures increase by 124%. However, the increases experienced by individual institutions such as Museum Jorn does not express a general trend for the region's museums. National museums statistics⁵⁹ show that there was no general increase in the number of museum visits in the region in 2017, which indicates that there were increases at some museums and a decline at others.

Aarhus 2017 was a major impetus for encouraging cultural institutions to dare to raise their ambitions, and that there is now a considerably greater focus on the importance of culture in public planning and development.

⁵⁸ "Welcome future", the Aarhus 2017 Foundation (2018), p. 33.

⁵⁹ "Activities at Danish museums by museum category, museum type and activity", Statistics Denmark (www.statistikbanken.dk), in Danish.



Photo: Natascha Thiara Rydvald

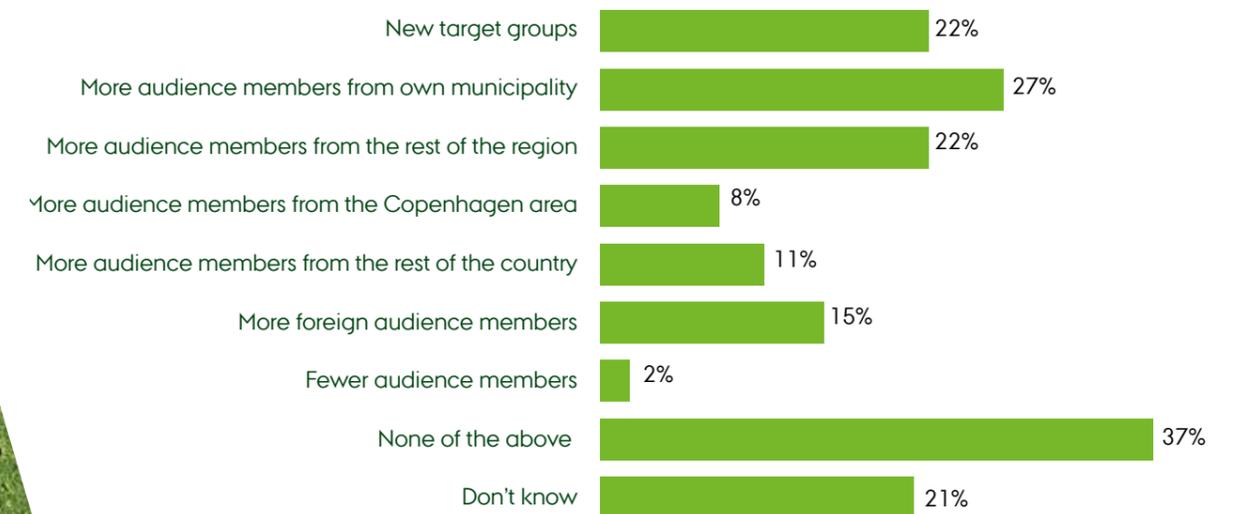


Some of the directors of cultural institutions anticipate an effect in the years following 2017. 27% anticipate increased museum visits from their own municipality, while 22% anticipate development in the composition of their audiences by reaching new target groups.

In addition, several cultural institutions found that they and the sector as a whole have achieved a stronger strategic position. Increased visibility and new collaborations have been created. The cultural

institutions state that Aarhus 2017 has been a major impetus for encouraging cultural institutions to dare to raise their ambitions, and that there is now a considerably greater focus on the importance of culture in public planning and development – fully in line with the political-administrative assessment described in section 6.1.

FIGURE 6.6 CULTURAL INSTITUTION DIRECTORS' ASSESSMENT OF AARHUS 2017'S LONG-TERM EFFECTS ON THE AUDIENCE OF THEIR INSTITUTIONS



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire survey of directors of cultural institutions (2018). "In what ways do you expect that Aarhus 2017 will have an effect for your institution in the years after the European Capital of Culture year?". More than one response can be selected. Data used: 102 survey responses.

FIGURE 6.7 CULTURAL INSTITUTION DIRECTORS' ASSESSMENT OF AARHUS 2017'S LONG-TERM EFFECTS ON OTHER PARAMETERS



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire survey of directors of cultural institutions (2018). "In what ways do you expect that Aarhus 2017 will have an effect for your institution in the years after the European Capital of Culture year?". More than one response can be selected. Data used: 102 survey responses.

6.5 THE VALUE OF CULTURE

The Aarhus 2017 Foundation commissioned an analysis of the short-term economic effects of Aarhus 2017 immediately after the end of the European Capital of Culture year. The analysis was performed by the consultancy COWI.⁶⁰

A number of researchers have questioned the

THE AARHUS 2017 FOUNDATION'S ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC EFFECTS

COWI analysed the market economic effects of Aarhus 2017 on behalf of the Aarhus 2017 Foundation.

COWI's report is based on some of the standard models for calculating effects of this kind. The central conclusions derived from these calculations are that Aarhus 2017 has:

- Created 1,403 jobs in the private sector
- Created 562 jobs in the cultural sector
- Generated increased turnover of DKK 1,185 million in the private sector
- Generated a return on public investments in cultural capital project of 1:3

report's conclusions. For example, Asger Mose Wingender⁶¹ has stated that COWI's conclusion that Aarhus and surrounding areas saw almost a million additional overnight stays in 2017 as a consequence of the European Capital of Culture year is a "massive overstatement".⁶² According to Wingender, tourism has been increasing by about 10% annually in Aarhus for many years, and he concludes that while this growth is real, it cannot be linked directly to Aarhus 2017, as COWI does.

In a memo prepared for rethinkIMPACTS 2017⁶³, Trine Bille also assessed COWI's analysis.⁶⁴ In the memo, Bille concludes that while the type of economic performance measurement performed for Aarhus 2017 by COWI is the standard method of evaluating the economic effect of a major

⁶⁰ "Economic Impact Assessment of Aarhus 2017", COWI (April 2018). The report employed a so-called EIA Event model (Economic Impact Analysis) supplemented with a model for measuring effects on employment.

⁶¹ Asger Mose Wingender, assistant professor at the Department of Economics, University of Copenhagen.

⁶² In connection with the programme Detektor on DR, <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/faktatjek-var-aarhus-kulturhovedstad-en-godforretning>.

⁶³ "Rethink Økonomisk Impact. Fra økonomisk impact til samfundsøkonomisk værdi" (Rethink Economic Impact. From economic impact to social economic value), Trine Bille (2018), in Danish.

⁶⁴ Trine Bille, professor with special responsibilities (MSO), Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy, CBS.





Photo: Moesgaard Museum

cultural event,⁶⁵ applying it to the cultural sector is problematic. These models aim to calculate the additional turnover generated in an area, primarily on the basis of whether tourists come and spend money in the area. Bille's conclusion is that despite extensive studies, analyses and calculations of this type suffer major flaws. They tend to be based on questionable assumptions and/or data and data generation methods, and their results often exaggerate the real economic effects. In addition, economic performance studies only include short-term, narrowly market economy effects, not more long-term effects. In practice, it is very difficult to calculate the long-term market economy effects, not least in regard to demonstrating a causal relationship with a (major) cultural project.

Bille points out that these purely market economy performance studies should be replaced by studies which also shed light on welfare economic values. One aspect of the value of culture is market economic and can be bought, sold and valued in market terms. Another important aspect of the value of culture has no tangible market value. This aspect can be termed the 'non-marketable value' of culture, and can be defined in terms of the value of culture for citizens.

As we have shown in the preceding analyses, Aarhus 2017 has had value for citizens, companies and cultural institutions. In the international research, methods have been developed for measuring the total value of a cultural initiative, including the non-marketable values.⁶⁶

6.6 THE GEOGRAPHICAL WEIGHTING OF THE EFFECTS

European Capital of Culture projects can potentially have effects locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, depending on how the individual projects weights the different geographical perspectives. For the EU, the central goal is to bring the EU's populations closer together, and thus there is an initial emphasis on the importance of European Capital of Culture projects having an effect at the European level.

Some European Capital of Culture projects have also emphasised making the project a catalyst for the host country as a whole. Other European Capital of Culture projects have clearly emphasised the local perspective, and in recent years there have also been examples of more regionally oriented projects. In this regard, it is interesting to examine the geographical weighting of the effects of Aarhus 2017.

For Aarhus 2017, the effects have primarily been felt at the local and to some extent regional levels, while the effects of the project on Denmark and Europe have been very limited.

⁶⁵ Analyses of this kind have also been carried out in connection with other European Capital of Culture projects (for example, Salamanca 2002, Liverpool 2008 and Mons 2015)

⁶⁶ The most widespread of these methods is the Contingent Valuation Method (CVM), which is based on the population's willingness to pay (for example through taxation) for a particular cultural offering. Current research in the field is still moving in this direction, because the consensus in regard to research on cultural economy is that evaluations of the value of culture should be based on the broader welfare economic value, rather than the narrow market economy value. This method has not been applied in connection with European Capitals of Culture.

EFFECTS ON AARHUS AND THE REGION

The European Capital of Culture project has most clearly left its mark on Aarhus. Although Aarhus 2017 was described as a cross-municipal project, Aarhus was the official holder of the title, the main contributor, the primary initiator and the driving force of the strategy behind the project – and at the same time the region's major city with the most developed cultural infrastructure. For this reason, it is natural that Aarhus has reaped the greatest benefits from the project with regard to a number of effects. The City of Aarhus also developed its cultural policy for the period 2017-2020 on the basis of and as a continuation of the European Capital of Culture project.

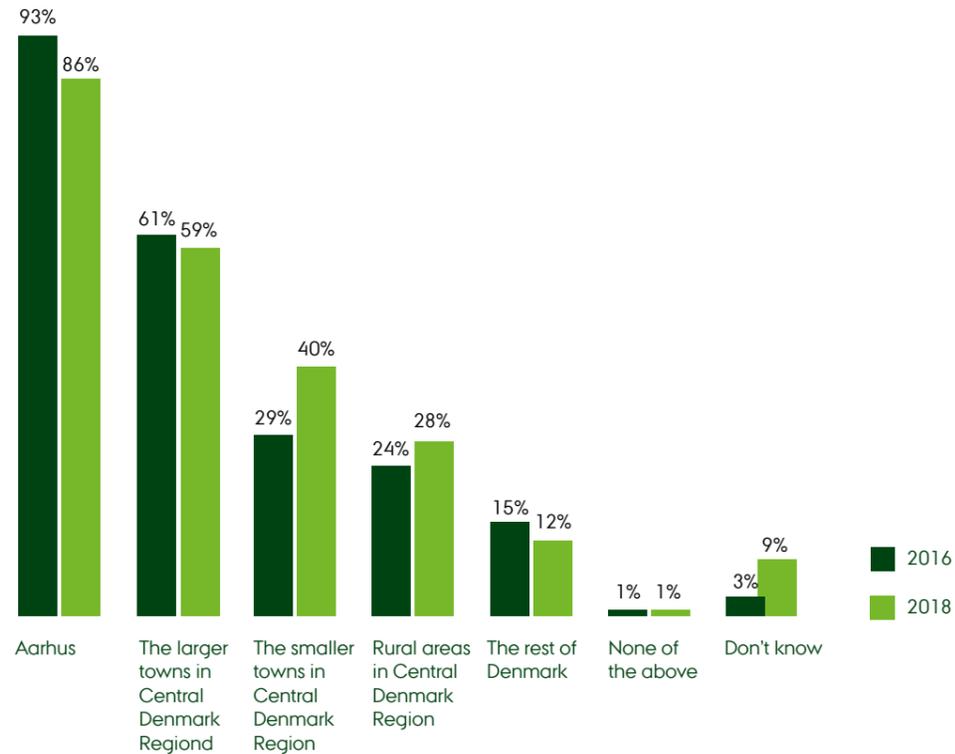
While other municipalities in the region were important contributors, any lasting effects here are connected in part to the extent to which the individual municipality involved itself strategically in Aarhus 2017, and in part to how the municipality prioritises support for and continued development of the local results of the project in future.

Future regional effects are to a considerable extent dependent on Central Denmark Region as an organisation as well as to a certain extent of the success of the European Cultural Region project. Central Denmark Region incorporated Aarhus 2017 into the cultural and business strategies for the region as a whole. Collaboration on the project across the region has contributed to enhancing cross-municipal collaboration generally, including in areas other than culture.

When politicians take stock of what they have gained from the European Capital of Culture, they – in agreement with the above – find that Aarhus in particular as well as the larger cities in the region have benefited from Aarhus 2017. However, a small shift relative to before the European Capital of



FIGURE 6.8 POLITICIANS' PERCEPTION OF AARHUS 2017 'S BENEFITS BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region (2016 and 2018). "In your opinion, which areas in Central Denmark Region are getting something out of the European Capital of Culture project Aarhus 2017?". More than one response can be selected. Data used: 2016: 147 survey responses, 2018: 116 survey responses.

Culture year is evident, in that the extent of Aarhus' benefit is perceived as less than anticipated prior to the project, while the smaller cities and rural areas are perceived to have received greater benefits than expected.

In our population survey as well, we see a certain development after the project, whereby citizens perceive that the benefit of Aarhus 2017 to have been less centred on Aarhus than they had anticipated.

On the basis of the above, we can conclude that the benefits were more evenly distributed geographically than had been anticipated. All parties – including the City of Aarhus and especially Central Denmark Region – contributed to this by

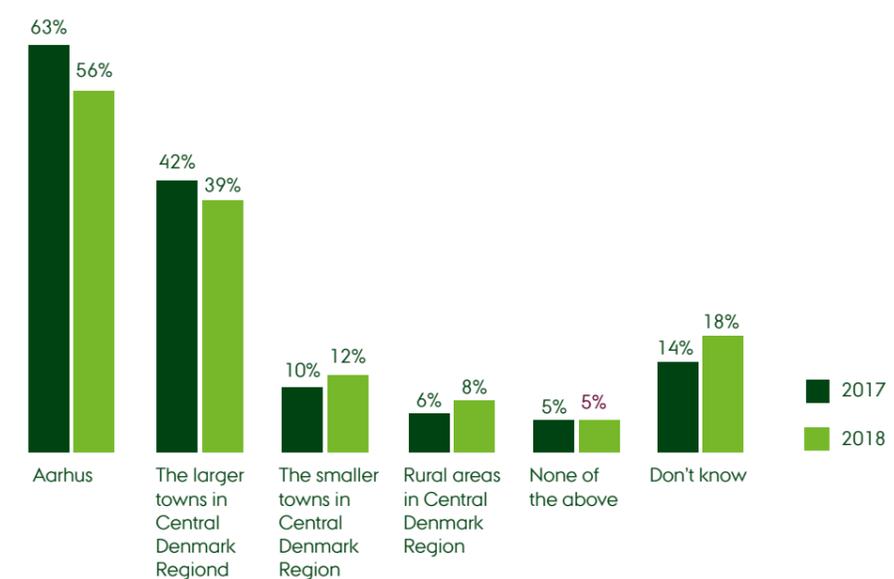
consciously entering into an equal partnership and ensuring that the project was spread across the region. The regional steering committee and the political representatives on the board also contributed significantly to ensuring the project's regional scope.

EFFECTS ON DENMARK AND EUROPE

The effects of the European Capital of Culture project at the national level are limited and centred

The effects of Aarhus 2017, were primarily felt at the local and to some extent regional levels, while the effects of the project on Denmark and Europe are very limited.

FIGURE 6.9 CITIZENS' PERCEPTION OF AARHUS 2017 'S BENEFITS BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA



Source: rethinkIMPACTS 2017 's questionnaire surveys among citizens in the Central Denmark Region (2017 and 2018). "In your opinion, which areas in Central Denmark Region are getting something out of the European Capital of Culture project Aarhus 2017?". More than one response can be selected. Sample size: 2017: 1,300 survey responses, 2018: 1,121 responses.

on a number of concrete cross-country cultural collaborations. We do not find cultural life at the national level to have been noticeably strengthened. Aarhus 2017 did not become a national project, among other reasons because the central government did not become actively involved in the project – unlike in a number of other European Capital of Culture projects. The high visibility Aarhus had may have had a positive effect on general international media coverage of Denmark, and may thus have had a positive effect on the country as a whole, in the form of international branding.

The effects of Aarhus 2017 on Europe were primarily limited to the international collaborations involved in the development of the programme. But we see no grounds to expect that Aarhus 2017 will have significant effects internationally with regard to politics, culture or European citizens. However, Aarhus 2017 has helped inspire EU's new cultural

strategy, which will "give culture a greater role in the future development of Europe".⁶⁷ Moreover, that the effect of Aarhus 2017 on Europe is not greater is not unusual for European Capital of Culture projects, and this reflects who finances the project.

6.7 CULTURE IN A FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

As a consequence of Aarhus 2017, politicians and government officials in the region have gained an increased awareness of culture. Culture has garnered greater awareness and a more visible role in planning and development – including outside the culture sector. This is an important and

⁶⁷ "Ny EU-agenda satser på de samme områder som Aarhus 2017 og Europæisk Kulturregion" (New EU agenda prioritises the same areas as Aarhus 2017 and the European Region of Culture), kulturregion.dk (European Region of Culture website), 8 August 2018.

enduring effect of Aarhus 2017, measured a year after the end of the European Capital of Culture year.

In general, recognition of the value of culture and its expanded role has not resulted in a higher economic priority for culture among the region's municipalities. For this reason, maintaining the awareness of the importance of culture that has been created is important, as well as that politicians and government officials remain conscious of incorporating a focus on culture across the different sectors and their challenges and developments.

Some of the directors of the cultural institutions believe that Aarhus 2017 will continue to contribute to increased visibility for their institutions. This would be one of the important longer-term effects of the project. At the same time, it is important that the 'permanent players' (cultural institutions, municipalities and the region) continue to work in a targeted, focused manner to exploit and sustain this visibility.

Geographically, the effects of the European Capital of Culture project are especially concentrated in Aarhus, and to a lesser extent in the other municipalities in the region, depending on the extent to which the individual municipality's prioritised participation. The national effect is very minimal – the international effect somewhat greater. Here there is potential for binding, locally based international collaborations going forward.

In order to identify the longer-term effects of Aarhus 2017, it will be necessary to perform supplementary follow-up surveys, for example after three, five or ten years. At the same time, it would be useful to continue the work of methodological development in the field so as to be able to perform even more accurate measurements of the total effects of major cultural initiatives, including Aarhus 2017.





7
RETHOUGHT

The overall theme of the European Capital of Culture project was 'rethink'. The framework for rethinking was formulated in the application's six strategic goals. With reference to these, Aarhus 2017 has had effects on a variety of areas.

While the Capital of Culture year is over, there is a clear expectation that the effects and the value of the project will continue to develop in the years to come. In some areas, this value may only become apparent in the long term.

But all medals have two sides, and this is also the case here. In the concluding chapter of this report, we summarise both short-term and long-term effects, as well as potential that remains unrealised. We also reflect on our own role as evaluators, evaluating the evaluation and whether the approach to evaluation has been rethought.

7.1 SHORT AND LONG TERM EFFECTS

COLLABORATION

The cross-cutting collaborations are some of the major positive effects. This applies not least to the cross-municipal collaboration between the 19 municipalities and the region, as well as to the strengthened collaboration between culture and business, just as many of the cultural institutions and the other content providers – across traditional boundaries – now have new collaborative relationships. Aarhus 2017 made its mark as a strong catalyst for the development of collaborations.

This has meant that many cultural institutions now have the courage to raise their ambitions and think in terms of new kinds of collaboration. This has also meant that culture has gained a new expanded role at cross-municipal and regional level, which (to our knowledge) it does not have elsewhere in the country.

The cross-municipal cultural collaboration has been prolonged in the form of the European Region of Culture, which will present a new regional cultural festival in the summer of 2019. To begin with, for two years only, and on a significantly smaller scale than the European Capital of Culture project. We assume that the regional collaboration will continue to exist – given one prerequisite: that the region continues to exist. Without the region as a cohesive force that supplies



extra resources, it is doubtful that the municipalities can and will continue the regional collaboration in relation to culture.

In any case, the dimension of collaboration is something we predict will have a long-term effect. So many new relationships were created in and around the European Capital of Culture project that some of them will doubtless still exist in ten years. New connections have been created between culture and business and industry. Entirely new cultural outputs that will provide inspiration have seen the light of day as a result of cross-cutting collaboration. Personal relationships have been created, and cross-institutional collaborations have been successfully tested. Even if the concrete collaborations do not continue, they will in any case serve as inspiration and precedent for the formation of new ones.

QUALITY AND AUDIENCE SATISFACTION

Aarhus 2017 consisted of a generally high-quality cultural programme with a mix of locally produced events, local-international co-productions and import of international names. Overall this contributed to enabling the European Capital of Culture to promote and strengthen the long-term development and significance of culture. In relation to audiences, the Aarhus 2017 Foundation met its targets in relation to attendance figures. The vast majority of the audience members had local/regional affiliations, but the programme did succeed to some extent in attracting a national audience as well. International tourists only constituted a small proportion of the audiences at Aarhus 2017 events.

Aarhus 2017's funds were not spent on construction and permanent physical infrastructure, as has been the case in a number of other European Capital of Culture projects. The programme budget was spent on projects that

were either audience-oriented and/or were aimed at developing capacity and competencies among the region's artists, cultural institutions and creative operators. According to our assessment, this was a good choice, even though one consequence is that the visible traces of the European Capital of Culture project may quickly fade and be forgotten. The depth and quality of the intangible traces and impact will have the greatest possible effect if the permanent players actively work to sustain and further develop these effects.

THE STRENGTH OF CULTURE

Politically speaking, culture has gained a new and more significant role as an agenda-setting and co-creating driver of development in political processes, also outside the cultural sector. Not least in Aarhus, culture has served as a catalyst of collaborations across sectors and municipal departments. Aarhus 2017 has shifted our perception of culture as a peripheral and isolated policy area. The various connections between culture and eldercare or urban development, for example, will most likely continue to develop. The results achieved in regard to strategic and interdisciplinary collaboration have created new traditions for collaboration that we assume will continue to maintain the culture and the cultural infrastructure at a higher level in relation to planning and development in the years to come.

The cultural sector has been strengthened in the form of the competencies developed during the European Capital of Culture project. In ten years, there will be cultural institutions that will be able to look back on Aarhus 2017 as decisive for their strategic development. And artists who will be able to look back on Aarhus 2017 in ten years as a decisive career boost. Many employees have gained experience on a scale they would otherwise

not have. This applies not least to some of the Aarhus 2017 Foundation's employees, whether on loan on or staff. Some of these employees have already moved on to jobs that must be characterised as career leaps, as a direct consequence of their involvement in Aarhus 2017.

THE AARHUS 2017 STORY

The start-up phase with its broad process of inclusion created a widespread and strong sense of ownership among citizens, cultural operators, business and industry and other stakeholder groups. The Aarhus 2017 Foundation took over when the title was awarded, and generally speaking, it has functioned reliably. Making it through a European Capital of Culture project with balanced accounts, without significant managerial or planning failures and with broad political support is definitely not a given. We know from other European Capital of Culture projects and from a number of large Danish cultural events that budget overruns, managerial challenges and a lack of political support are often the rule rather than the exception.

At the European level, it is likely that Aarhus 2017 will stand as the story of a successful, stable and well-run European Capital of Culture project, the hallmark of which was in particular the regional and cross-municipal perspective, and thus a statement that such projects do not only benefit the principal city. In addition, experience with working internationally has been gained by a large proportion of the region's cultural operators. Internationalisation must be supported and prioritised, but if that happens, the traces will most likely still be visible in ten years.

Aarhus and Central Denmark Region as travel destinations are now on the map, locally, nationally and internationally. While most likely very few

foreigners will be able to name Aarhus as European Capital of Culture in 2017 in ten years, Aarhus as a brand has received a lot of positive coverage internationally, and the many visitors before, during and after Aarhus 2017 mean that even more will know the city and remember it for something positive.

THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

The volunteers ended up playing a pivotal role. The volunteer programme became an important part of Aarhus 2017's success, both before and especially during the European Capital of Culture year. A good framework for volunteer efforts was created early on, including a good milieu that citizens wanted to participate in. The value of the volunteer programme and not least the new initiative with volunteer cruise ship hosts has had a clear effect, both internally in Aarhus and outwardly in relation to tourism. In the years to come, the volunteer programme and effort will be continued under the aegis of VisitAarhus.

SPONSOR AGREEMENTS

Business and industry got involved through the Aarhus 2017 Foundation's partnership programme. This allowed the Aarhus 2017 Foundation to reach out to a variety of different companies that got involved in the European Capital of Culture project for philanthropic and network-oriented reasons – not for financial gain. Going forward, there is potential in continuing the network-related aspect, either under the aegis of the European Region of Culture or – even better – through the business clubs of the local cultural institutions.

7.2 UNFULFILLED POTENTIAL

‘Rethink’ is an ambitious theme for a project as large and prestigious as Aarhus 2017. Although the theme generally functioned well as a challenge to the cultural sphere and others, there are naturally also areas that were not rethought, or where the potential that lay in the European Capital of Culture title was not realised.

UP-AND-COMING TALENTS, THE SMALL AND THE NEW

The large players were favoured, not least the large cultural institutions in Aarhus, both financially and with regard to opportunities to supply content for the programme. There were very few points of entry for participating, producing and influencing the programme during the last years leading up to the European Capital of Culture year itself. As a consequence, it was difficult for up-and-coming talents, new operators and citizen-driven initiatives to find opportunities to contribute. At the same time, the long time horizon was also an advantage for large and permanent operators.

Part of the explanation for the long time horizon lies in EU’s demand that a large part of the programme must be decided on during the application phase. In addition, there were personnel changes among central managers. This created considerable confusion, which in turn meant that some of the smaller, more loosely organised operators got decoupled from the project.

In addition, there could have been a better connection between the international content, which was primarily the programme director’s responsibility, and the locally produced content. That this did not occur to a greater extent was, in our opinion, due to the programme director’s



late arrival and lack of prior familiarity with the regional cultural scene, as well as her significantly more internationally oriented than Danish oriented network. The Danish and regional art scene could have derived greater benefit from more exchange, and the diversity of European culture could have been strengthened considerably more.

AUDIENCE COMPOSITION

The programme only succeeded in reaching non-habitual cultural consumers to a limited extent. The events were primarily attended by typical cultural consumers. The challenge in developing new audiences is a classic problem, and it is difficult to achieve really significant results. If this is to succeed, it takes awareness of the target audience, a long-term effort and close engagement with the intended target audience.

That Aarhus 2017 did not achieve greater success in developing audiences is also due to the fact that the programme was based around the conventional genres of culture to a large extent. When attempting to reach new audiences, it is an advantage to take a more target audience-oriented approach and to work in genres that appeal more directly to these groups.

Although Aarhus 2017 has not had an effect on total cultural consumption among the region's citizens, the experience among cultural institutions is that a number of these have attracted more and new visitors. The institutions see additional potential in the years to come. Further work should be done on this, both by the individual institution and in a regional perspective, which should go beyond the limited activities associated with the European Region of Culture.

In addition, Aarhus 2017 had challenges in presenting the programme to citizens in a

clearly organised way, particularly in relation to the programme. A more centrally coordinated communication effort would have been advantageous. At the same time, it is to be desired that Aarhus 2017 had 'rethought' and solved a

general challenge for major cultural projects by communicating an extensive programme in a way that citizens and audiences found easy to understand. A 'rethought' solution to this challenge could have been a significant contribution to other large cultural events.

THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

No strategic efforts were made to use Aarhus 2017 as a catalyst for the development and creation of growth in the creative industries. More Creative Events worked fine as an isolated project, but the initiative was not linked to long-term business



development potential. Viewed in the light of Central Denmark Region's own analyses and development projects, which show that the region is home to a very large and growing creative industry, it is regrettable that this opportunity was not exploited. The foundation's own anticipated effects included a focus on the creative industries, with quite high ambitions. But the initiative lacked strategic heft.

THE MUNICIPAL CULTURE BUDGETS

Despite the fact that Aarhus 2017 was a major cultural policy initiative, generally speaking,

it has not led to increased municipal culture-related expenditure (per inhabitant). However in some municipalities, including the City of Aarhus, additional financial resources were transferred to culture in the years around the European Capital of Culture project.

If the goal of the major public strategic commitment to Aarhus 2017 was a significant, lasting boost to the priority assigned to culture, the extent to which it is necessary to reflect this commitment in the municipal economic prioritisations must also be considered.

WORKING STRATEGICALLY WITH THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS

The Aarhus 2017 Foundation produced a legacy strategy⁶⁸ that was presented at a conference in March 2017. The strategy outlined the expected effects, but did not have a forward-looking, action-oriented perspective. The foundation did not consider itself responsible for following up on the strategy, which has subsequently not achieved much visibility or impact.

In different ways, the permanent players

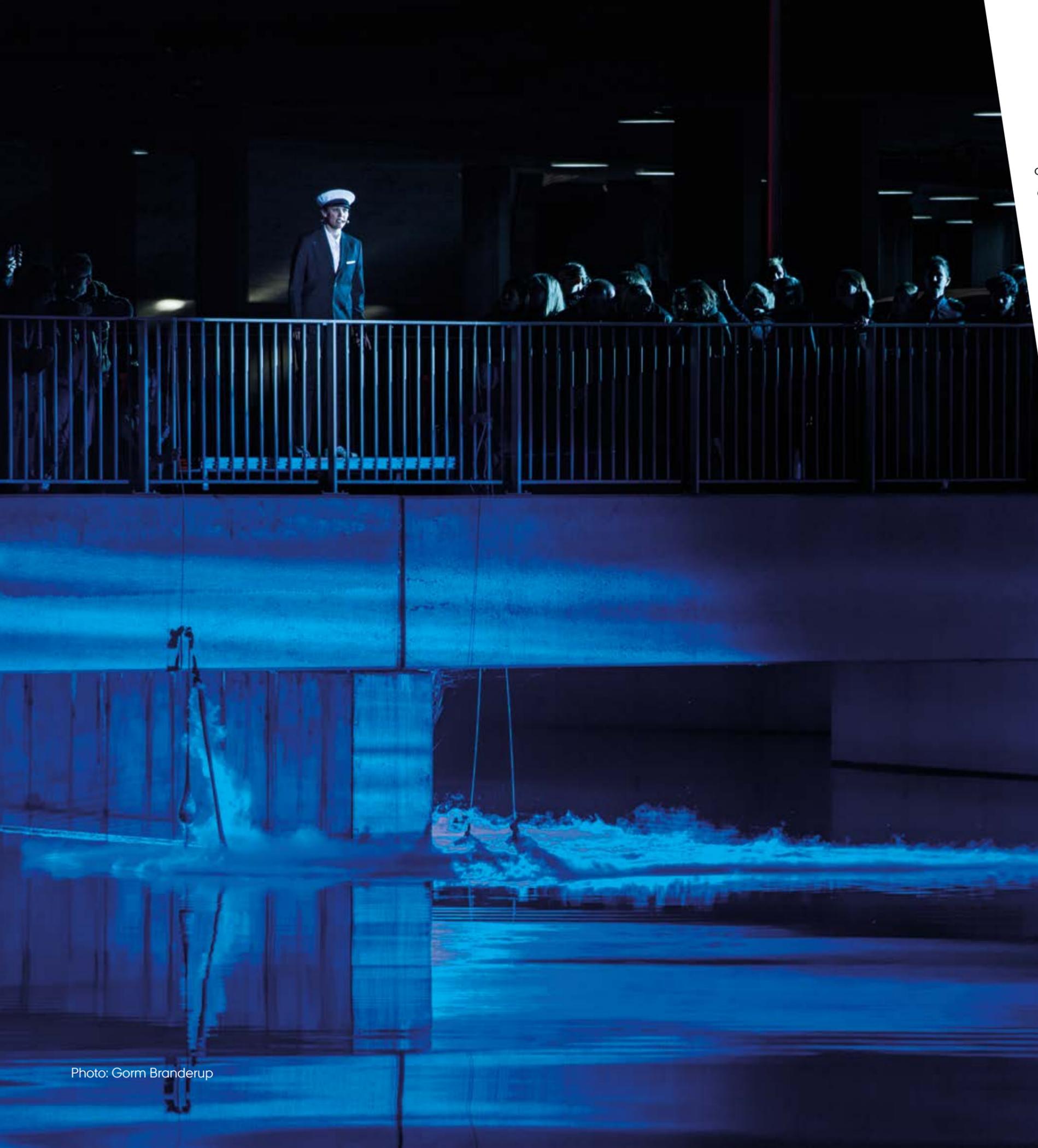
(the region, the municipalities and the cultural institutions) have taken responsibility for working with the long-term effects strategically. But no common regional process that reaches beyond the municipal administrations and also includes cultural institutions, business and industry and perhaps even citizens has been established. The permanent players should take responsibility for a coherent development process.

So far, it appears that most of the efforts to

⁶⁸ "Vores varige spor: En ny begyndelse" (Our lasting traces: A new beginning), the Aarhus 2017 Foundation (March 2017)."



Photo: Montgomery



create long-term effects take the form of a continuation of individual projects and initiatives. For example, a number of cultural institutions and other operators are continuing projects and collaborations that were initiated and carried out in connection with Aarhus 2017.

The European Region of Culture is a step in the right direction, although there is little funding available for transferring knowledge, and the initiative will initially only last for a two-year period. An extension depends on whether the parties behind the project achieve visible results, and that the European Region of Culture as a joint regional project finds its place in relation to the regional cultural agreements.

73. SELF-EVALUATION

Finally, we would like to reflect on the evaluation process itself. RethinkIMPACTS 2017 was the expression of an ambitious idea conceived in the application phase and realised in the period 2013-2018. This is the first time in Denmark that a university has taken on such a large evaluation project in the cultural sphere. This alone has meant that the project has led to increased competencies and created networks linking the city, the region, the cultural scene and the university that, through knowledge development and exchange, put all parties involved in a stronger position than before the evaluation of the European Capital of Culture project began.

INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

Since the beginning, there has been a strong emphasis on interdisciplinarity and on the development of method. Both aspects have shown themselves to be a challenge. Taking an interdisciplinary approach in particular has been challenged by the fact that the university is a large organisation divided into separate fields with researchers whose work is characterised by a high degree of autonomy and freedom of research. In some fields, it can thus be difficult to get researchers to involve themselves in projects in which the parameters of the study are more or less-predefined (on account of the evaluation criteria) in a situation offering very limited opportunities for workload reduction/co-financed research time. These factors have created difficult conditions for research collaboration across the university's faculties.

However, a certain degree of interdisciplinarity has been achieved – particularly in relation to the Master's degree students, but also to some degree among research staff, as the European Capital of Culture year drew closer and became increasingly perceived as a relevant research topic. Nevertheless, there were clear defects: such as the economic and method development perspective, in relation to which we would have like to collaborate with more researchers than it turned out to be possible to engage in reality. This applies not least to the development of new and sorely needed indicators and more accurate models for the market and welfare economy effects. We see a current need for and great potential in continuing to develop methods which are based on a broader understanding of cultural value and effect.

RETHOUGHT METHODS AND APPROACHES?

The evaluation is primarily based on data collected through traditional, well-tested methods, such as interviews and questionnaire surveys, so in this regard very little rethinking has taken place. Along the way, numerous ideas for the development of new methods arose which could not be realised for various reasons. For example, we wanted to collaborate with the foundation to use the European Capital of Culture programme app to collect data about attendance figures, experiences, etc. Other innovative and rethought methods of data collection were also conceived.

But in line with our conclusions regarding the foundation's operational stability versus the courage to experiment, in relation to the evaluation, we must also acknowledge that methodological experiments are risky. Because we were under an obligation to

produce an evaluation that accurately reflected the effects of the European Capital of Culture year based on solid data, we had to prioritise operational stability in rethinkIMPACTS 2017's choice of method.

On the other hand, we have developed and tested a new approach to evaluation that involves operators to a much higher degree, which has not only resulted in better-quality data, but which also provided the participating operators with an opportunity for learning and reflection. We find that in addition to establishing a solid basis for evaluation, this also provided operators and stakeholders with a deeper understanding of what was at stake in different aspects of the European Capital of Culture project.

We have also produced a basis for evaluation that includes many different perspectives which can be worked with for many years to come. Some possible topics of analysis (in addition to the need for new economic methods of measurement and calculation models) include analyses and research on cultural journalism and media coverage of culture, the development of new audiences, the optimisation of interdisciplinary collaboration based on culture as well as comparative studies of selected themes in relation to other European Capital of Culture projects.

THE DUAL ROLE OF EVALUATION

The evaluation brief had two components: a formative learning objective during the process, with a focus on development, communication and competency upgrade, and a concluding summative evaluation that analyses the effects of Aarhus 2017.⁶⁹ There are at least two challenges connected with this.

In the first place, the dual focus itself was not unproblematic. A challenge in formative evaluation

that is well-described in the literature is that it presumes that the evaluated party is open to the evaluator, even in regard to his or her weaknesses, as this is where the greatest potential for learning lies. But in a situation like this, this can be difficult for the evaluated part, well knowing that the evaluator's role will shift from coaching and dialogue in connection with the formative evaluation, to summarising the effects of the evaluated party's efforts in the final phase, and in that connection also pointing out precisely the weaknesses. On the other hand, this process provides the evaluator with unique insight into the project's development and thus a deep understanding of the process, the different operators' perspectives and the changes that take place along the way.

Secondly, it was a challenge in a decentrally organised project such as Aarhus 2017 to facilitate a learning process involving a large and diverse group of individual, local and quite autonomous projects. In retrospect, it is possible that we ought to have focussed more on the local projects, for example in the form of special in-depth case studies. The learning perspective was valued, for example when we invited project managers to final workshops in 2017 and 2018. But particularly in relation to the foundation, it has been a challenge to generate learning in a project that was subject to a strong pressure to deliver followed up a wind-up phase. People learn best when there is a forward-looking perspective, and so we hope that the learning process is not yet over, but that this evaluation will contribute to continued learning on the part of the permanent partners (for example government officials and directors of cultural institutions), both

⁶⁹ rethinkIMPACTS 2017 's approach to evaluation is largely inspired by Peter Dahler-Larsen's research on evaluation. See for example "Evaluering af projekter – og andre ting, som ikke er ting" (The evaluation of projects – and other things that are not things), Peter Dahler-Larsen, Syddansk Universitetsforlag (2013).



Photo: Lars Kruse

in relation to sustaining and creating the effects of Aarhus 2017 and in relation to other major cultural events.

In a European perspective, the scope and approach of the evaluation have been ambitious. This has been noted by several of the coming European Capital of Culture projects, which have shown particular interest in our focus on involving operators as well as the partnership model between the university and the supplier (the foundation). From the EU's side, the framework for the evaluation

is very broad, and this permits a wide variety of different evaluation practices in the individual European Capital of Culture projects, in relation to autonomy, and in relation to who performs the task. It is our hope – and expectation – that the work of rethinkIMPACTS 2017 will contribute to setting a standard for the organisation, planning, implementation and communication of European Capital of Culture projects – and of culture in general.

