



Universiteit Utrecht



## MeeMaakPodia

The road to success for audience vigour  
in Dutch theatres and Museums.

### MA THESIS

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*What if we turn the scale around and  
make these moments of intensive, involved exchange the norm?*

- Steven ten Thije: Het geëmancipeerde museum\*

*It is this unexpectedness that is the true added value of participatory processes  
and community-driven projects. It is the creativity of others  
that adds a sparkle to the things we know and know how to do ourselves.*

- Jasper Visser: The Museum of the Future

*\*Wat als we de weegschaal omdraaien en juist deze momenten van intensieve, betrokken uitwisseling tot de norm maken?*

## Summary

The cultural diversity in the Netherlands is increasing since a growing segment of the population was born or raised in a non-western country, or has parents for whom that applies. These people have a different cultural heritage which influences their thinking, feeling and acting. However, these groups within the Dutch society are underrepresented in the cultural sector. The notion of cultural diversity is part of the discussion about cultural participation within the Netherlands. This discussion revolves around the extent to which different community groups participate in the cultural sector and the presumed effects of this participation. The discussion around the effects of arts and culture is based on the conflict between the instrumental and artistic value of the arts. The Dutch Cultural Participation Fund (FCP) wants to set up a new grant application programme called MeeMaakPodia. With this new programme they want to increase audience participation through stimulating professional organisations to open-up to local initiatives from citizens and to increase the bond between the organisation and its community. In this thesis I researched the factors that determine the success and failure of audience vigour within the Dutch cultural field of theatres and museums.

I researched this issue by combining a discourse analysis with interviews. The first discourse analysis I conducted focussed on the perspective on audience vigour presented in Dutch and British policy papers within the period of 2010 to 2020. The policy papers define audience vigour as a way to broaden the audience range and therefore increase the positive influence of the arts on society. I found that collaboration with other organisations is an important success factor. In these collaborations it is important to step outside the beaten paths and change the ways in which people view the world.

My second discourse analysis focussed on the publications from the professional Dutch cultural field. I found that these publications provide a lot of different perspectives on audience vigour. The main element in the definitions that I found is the creation of significance; sharing instead of selling. The success and failure factors that I found are similar to those that can be found within any commercial business. However, there is also an important distinction between the two. The goal of these cultural organisations cannot be financial gain but has to be the creation of a sustainable relationship with their community in order for audience vigour to be successful.

The last part of my research consisted of interviews with professionals from the field. The number one failure factor according to the interviewees is a lack of funding. Investors base their decisions for what they support financially on economic effects rather than social effects. The majority of the interviewees also mentioned the significance of experimentation for successful audience vigour. I found that collaboration between the field of arts and culture and other fields is also important. According to the interviewees arts and culture are by nature associated with engagement and awareness and therefore they see no problem with collaborations.

In my conclusion I argue that the FCP should try to fill the gap between the needs of MeeMaakPodia and investors. My analysis showed that the policy makers and academics have a discussion on a different level than the people in the field. This explains the difference in success and failure factors that I found during my research and the discrepancy between the financiers and the cultural organisations. The FCP could best start with providing grants to organisations that are already working on their social responsibility. The purpose would be to increase awareness on audience vigour among other cultural organisations, society and investors. There will be a lot of knowledge gathered in the process that can be used by other cultural organisations and investors to change the entire sector. Starting from scratch with organisations that are not yet in transition might provide less useful evidence because they do not have the contacts in their community yet. The organisations that have already started their transition can provide more useful information about what works and what not. This way the FCP can use their grant application programme for a cultural experiment leading to cultural renewal.

## Acknowledgements

Dear reader,

I proudly present my Master Thesis 'MeeMaakPodia: The road to success for audience vigour in Dutch theatres and Museums'. After almost a whole year of doing research and writing and re-writing my text, I can now finally say that my work is done. I could not have finished my thesis without the help of some very inspiring and helpful individuals.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Reason

“Questions about the extent and scope of cultural participation are being asked in countries around the world. In its new policy plan (2017-2020), Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie remarks that the cultural diversity of the country is not reflected enough in the established cultural infrastructure. They state that inevitably change is in the air” (Russell & Gribling, 2016, p. 1).

The cultural diversity mentioned by the Cultural Participation Fund (Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie) is part of the social discussion about cultural participation. This discussion revolves around the extent to which different community groups participate in the cultural sector and the presumed effects of this participation. The notion of culture in this case refers to culture in a sociological or anthropological way as summarized by cultural scholar Hofstede: all socially transmitted forms of human thinking, feeling and acting (2016, p. 14). Part of the discussion is based on the conflict between the instrumental and artistic value of the arts. The instrumental value of the arts is based on the effects of the arts on other fields, such as education, the labour market and the economy (Chong, 2009, p. 33). The use of arts and culture to solve social problems is also often mentioned in relation to the instrumental value (Belfiore, 2002). The artistic value of the arts is based on the quality of the end product, the presented art work. There is a lot of discussion about the exact meaning of artistic value among scholars. The majority refers to the excellence of the artist, his creativity and his authenticity (DiMaggio, 1987).

The cultural diversity in the Netherlands is increasing since a growing segment of the population was born or raised in a non-western country, or has parents for whom that applies. These people have a different cultural heritage, than the rest of the Dutch population, which influences their thinking, feeling and acting (2002). However, these groups are underrepresented in the Dutch cultural sector (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2014). The issue is even more relevant, since researchers expect that the percentage of people with a non-western immigration background in Dutch society will increase up to 30% in 2060, compared to 20% in 2010 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2012). The Dutch government states that organisations perform better if they work with people with different ethnical and cultural backgrounds. The advantages differ from an increased turnover to a better overall performance due to a better connection with clients (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2018).

In 2007 Netwerk CS researched cultural diversity in the main cultural organisations in the Netherlands, the so-called BIS (Basisinfrastructuur) organisations. The aim of their research was not to make all cultural organisations more culturally diverse, but to make them aware of these trends and to urge them to formulate a point of view towards cultural diversity. In their research they referred to cultural diversity as the inclusion of non-western immigrants and their cultures in the major cultural organisations. More specifically, they refer to the influence on the identity, programmes and activities of these organisations by non-western immigrants among their visitors, audience, partners, staff and management. The researchers concluded that people with a culturally diverse background are no priority target group for these cultural organisations. There is a lack of a “sense of urgency”. A few small organisations are in the lead but the great majority is falling behind (Hodes, et al., 2007).

The Cultural Participation Fund (FCP) wants to change the established cultural infrastructure through their grant application programmes. The FCP believes in the power of culture. Culture enables people to showcase themselves and their beliefs. By creating culture, people give shape and meaning to a changing society and their role in it. The FCP contributes to an open society in which everyone can develop their creative skills, by connecting people, organisations and governments through their funding programmes. The aim is to increase the active cultural participation of all people in society, regardless of their age, gender, religion or background (Knol, 2016, p. 8).

In 2015, the FCP organised two inspirational trips, a theatre and a museum trip, to the United Kingdom. In the UK issues revolving around the effects of the arts are more commonly addressed by cultural organisations than in the Netherlands. The FCP was joined by both museum- and theatre directors from the Dutch cultural field as well as representatives from the Mondriaan Fund and the Fund for Performing Arts. The theatre trip focussed on visits to theatres and theatre companies in England that are actively engaged with their community, such as Theatre Royal Stratford East (Russell & Gribbling, 2016). The museum trip was focussed on the 'Our Museum' programme from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, which supports galleries and museums through a programme of organisational change.

The Our Museum programme was about changing organisations through community engagement and participation. The programme was based on four expected outcomes: rooted in local needs, community agency, capability building and reflection. In addition to practical work with the organisations, the programme also functioned as an action-research programme to investigate what worked, what did not and what was useful for other museums and galleries. "The defining characteristic of Our Museum was that it was not about short-term project funding, but about facilitating organisational change, so that participatory work became core, embedded, sustainable and less at risk of being marginalised when specific funding streams ran out" (Bienkowski, p. 5).

Both trips inspired the FCP to set up a new grant application programme called MeeMaakPodia. With this new programme they want to increase audience participation through stimulating professional organisations to open-up to local initiatives from citizens and to increase the bond between the organisation and its community. To prepare for this new grant application programme the FCP wants to research the Dutch field of theatre venues and museums.



## 1.2 Research question

In 2016, Laurens Kleijntjens wrote a research paper for the FCP about audience participation in the Dutch museum sector. The aim of his research was to map the general failure- and success factors of audience participation in the Dutch museum sector. Based on eight case studies Kleijntjens concluded that museums experiment increasingly with different kinds of audience participation. According to Kleijntjens, when these organisations take the failure and success factors that he formulated into consideration, audience participation could be the solution to legitimacy problems and contribute to creating support, audience development, social cohesion and community building (2016). As a follow-up of Kleijntjens research, my research examines the failure and success factors of audience participation in Dutch theatres and museums. Where Kleijntjens only used case studies, my research compares the policy discourse, publications from the field and interviews.

The MeeMaakPodia programme the FCP wants to put in place is an example of an initiative aiming at audience participation. In Dutch the notion of 'publieksparticipatie', is associated with participating within a professional theatre performance. For example when a comedian asks some audience members to participate on stage during the show or when audience members find some object under their seat that they can use to participate in the show. This kind of participation is not what the FCP strives for. Using the term audience participation within my research might lead to a misunderstanding of the goals of the MeeMaakPodia grant. In Belgium there is another word for audience participation. They use the notion of 'publiekswerking'. There is no direct translation for this word in English. Cultural management scholar Mayke Klomp describes 'publiekswerking' as all initiatives that a cultural organisation undertakes to increase the involvement of several target groups on the operation of the organisation (2010, p. 32). In my opinion 'publiekswerking' could loosely translated be referred to as audience vigour: the power of the audience over an organisation or how a cultural organisation can flourish through collaboration with its audience. 'Publiekswerking' is the kind of participation the FCP is aiming for with their new grant application programme.

In my research a take on audience vigour is needed that really includes the cooperation between a community and a cultural organisation. The different definitions of audience participation I found while constructing my theoretical framework do not completely fit these requirements. Therefore I constructed my own definition of audience vigour for this research.

**The active and ongoing involvement of - and collaboration with - the members of the local community in the decision making and programming of the cultural organisation for the mutual beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources to form sustainable partnerships and create a sense of ownership among the public.**

Based on this definition my main research question is:

**What are the main success and failure factors in the implementation of audience vigour in the Dutch cultural sector?**

The main research question will be answered through three sub-questions. I have selected these sub-questions to provide a broad view. Looking at the question from several perspectives will provide different solutions. Since the FCP is a government-funded organisation, government policy is highly relevant for their work. Therefore I have selected policy papers from the Dutch government as a perspective on the issue of audience vigour. I also selected policy papers from the British government because the FCP was inspired by the British 'Our Museum Programme' to create a new grant application programme. Organisations from the field can apply for the new grant application programme by presenting their vision on becoming or sustaining themselves as a MeeMaakPodium. Therefore publications from the field and interviews with actors in the field will also be a part of my research.

The first and second sub-question, which I have formulated below, will be answered based on a discourse analysis. The third sub-question, also formulated below, will be answered through field work.

- With which success and failure factors is audience vigour associated in Dutch and British cultural policy papers about the period of 2010 to 2020?
- Which views on successful or unsuccessful audience vigour can be found in publications from the professional Dutch cultural field?
- What is successful or unsuccessful audience vigour according to professionals in the Dutch cultural field?

The main target organisations of the new grant application programme of the FCP are theatres and museums. Therefore my research will be limited to these organisations and their perspective on the failure or success of audience vigour. The perspective of the community members is not part of the scope of my research, since they are not involved in the application process.

### 1.3 Relevance

By researching the potential of audience vigour within the Dutch cultural sector my research contributes to the academic discussion about participation in the arts. By opening up to local initiatives and co-creation, cultural organisations create a platform for the problems and ideas of locals, which might improve the social legitimacy of such organisations. There is a growing tendency of cultural organisations to cooperate with other fields, which was also noticed by the Dutch minister of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), Jet Bussemaker.<sup>1</sup> Bussemaker stated that “the cultural sector develops initiatives to contribute to social issues and other sectors appeal to the cultural sector for its specific qualities, methods and experiences” (2014, p. 1). Apart from the academic relevance, my research also has practical value. My research will contribute to the formation of a new grant application programme of the FCP. More generally my research can also provide guidelines for theatres and museums that want to increase audience vigour within their organisation.

Finally, my research partly contributes to the policymaking processes in the Netherlands. According to policy expert Peter van der Knaap and sociologist Rudi Turksema the evaluation of policies is important to improve them and formulate new policies. They state that an evaluation should focus on the positive effects of a particular policy to stimulate the learning abilities of the organisation that has formulated it. If we know what works and what does not, we can give recommendations to improve the policies. In that way the implementation of policy will become more effective, leading to better results and increased consideration of the needs of the target groups (2016).

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<sup>1</sup> During the writing of this thesis Jet Bussemaker was still the minister of the department of Education, Culture and Science.

## 2. Theoretical framework

*The MeeMaakPodia grant of the FCP is the main source of inspiration for this research. To be able to analyse the success and failure factors of the implementation of audience vigour in the Dutch cultural sector I also searched for guidance in the academic discourse around cultural participation and the effects and evaluation of this participation. In this chapter I will walk you through my thought-process and I will introduce you to the authors that inspired me during my research. Each paragraph discusses a central topic within the discussion about the role of arts and culture in society, while addressing both its supporters and critics.*

### 2.1 The Social Turn

Audience vigour could be used as a way to increase the social legitimacy of cultural organisations. Some artists and organisations seek this legitimacy through connecting with people in their local community. Art historian Claire Bishop frames this as the 'social turn' in her 2006 essay, *The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents*. She defines it as, "the recent surge of artistic interest in collectivity, collaboration, and direct engagement with 'real' people (i.e., those who are not the artist's friends or other artists)" (p. 178). In her 2011 book *Artificial Hells* Claire Bishop further discusses the notion of the social turn (pp. 11-40). She refers to the social turn as a movement within the arts in which the focus shifted to utilizing arts to solve social problems within society. Instead of art being passively consumed, social art is an art of action. It tries to actually change something within society. This movement is reacting against the commercialization of society through forming real social bonds and connections.

According to Bishop this kind of engaged art goes by a variety of names, among which the notion of community art. Sociologist Seana Lowe gives a definition of community art in her ethnographic research on community development:

"community art is a form of public art that is characterized by its experiential and inclusive nature. With community art, artists work with nonartists in grassroots settings, creating art in the public interest. ... Community art is distinct in its collaborative nature, involving individuals in a collective, creative process" (2002, p. 364).

Researchers Eugene van Erven, Margreet Bouwman and Margreet Zwart describe community art as, projects in which specific target groups, such as residents or schoolchildren, work with a professional artist on an artistic or cultural presentation. These target groups are not normally actively involved in arts and culture (2011). In my perspective, the projects that the FCP wants to stimulate in the MeeMaakPodia organisations are an example of community art, in the sense that professional cultural organisations are encouraged to work together with 'real' people from the community, such as schoolchildren, elderly people or people from a specific cultural background. However, it is not necessary that these groups are not currently active in the field of arts and culture. They can have a very active cultural life that does not take place in the cultural organisations but in their own homes. The aim of the MeeMaakPodia would be to make everyone feel welcome in the theatre or museum and to stimulate them to express their view on arts and culture. Within my research the interest of Dutch theatres and museums in collaboration and direct engagement with their community is central.

The commercialization that Bishop refers to is part of the rise of neo-liberalism in modern society. In his 2013 essay, theatre scholar Adam Alston points out connections between audience participation in general and neo-liberalism. He defines neo-liberalism as a “theory of political economy that champions entrepreneurialism, individual freedoms and the loosening of state control over the so-called free market” (p. 132). Within this free market companies create products for the masses, who consume these products as they are expected to. This premises is also applicable to the cultural industry, since the choices of the customers do not define the plays that are being programmed, but the potential profit of the cultural organisations does. Generating income and being enterprising are the main goals of many organisations. Especially with the decrease in Dutch government funding for arts and culture, cultural organisations have to find new ways to financially support their organisation (Heuven & Berg, 2016). In that way money becomes an important factor in the decision making process. Audience vigour does not necessarily lead to direct financial growth. Therefore it might be classified as less important. The aim of the MeeMaakPodia grant is to bring back the voice of the community within the decision making process, instead of the cultural organisations deciding for the community what they have to consume. This should lead to increased social approval of these organisations and therefore to the decreased importance of financial factors.

## 2.2 The Evaluation of Social Art

Bishop argues that there is a problem with the evaluation of social art. She is afraid that social art is only reviewed based on its social achievements and not on its aesthetic value. This would lead to a situation in which all social art is perceived as equally ‘good’, purely based on its good intentions. Bishop states that:

“even if a work of art is not directly participatory, references to community, collectivity (be this lost or actualised) and revolution are sufficient to indicate a critical distance towards the neoliberal new world order. Individualism, by contrast, is viewed with suspicion, not least because the commercial art system and museum programming continue to revolve around lucrative single figures” (2011, p. 12).

She therefore argues that it is also important to look at the artistic quality of social art to make sure that it remains art. Bishop furthermore states that in the discourse aesthetics have gotten a negative image and are linked to inequality and capitalism. Art philosopher Erik Hagoort disagrees with Bishop when he states that critics should keep an eye open for the intentions of the artists. When they do so, the evaluation of the arts will be enriched with the assessment of good intentions whereas the urge to judge will be diminished (2005).

According to Bishop aesthetics should be incorporated in the notion of aesthesis. Aesthesis is about the experience that an artwork generates that cannot be explained by logic, reason or moral. Within the experience of social art there should still be room for an aesthetic judgement. In contemporary criticism on community art the aesthetic judgement is replaced by an ethical judgement. Art critics base their ethical judgement on the level of cooperation between the artist and the community. A project in which the artist is the supreme leader and the community only gets to participate would be valued less than a project in which the community gets a say in the artistic process. For the FCP the social and artistic quality of MeeMaakPodia projects are equally important. However, different forms of art require a different perspective on artistic quality. What one community group regards as high quality could be perceived as rubbish by other groups. Letting go of our own pre-determined views on quality is part of what audience vigour stands for; we should open up to others and their opinions.

According to Bishop the problem that remains within the field of social art, is the prejudice that lies at its start. When arguing that collaborative art “is particularly suited to the task of social inclusion risks not only assuming that participants are already in a position of impotence, it even reinforces this arrangement” (2011, p. 38). According to this bias the participants or co-creators of the art projects are less than the artist himself and this reinforces the social structures the artists wants to change. Bishop therefore argues that each form of social art should be valued based on its specific elements, such as participation, ethics and aesthetics, as well as its historical and political timeframe. This is in line with the criteria the FCP will use to assess the MeeMaakPodia grant applications. Each organisation will have a different goal and another community to work with. Since no community or organisation is the same, the criteria have to be flexible and applicable to different settings. Audience vigour is equally diverse as society.

In Bishop’s opinion art should be able to disrupt society and show hidden power structures. According to her “a democratic society is one in which relations of conflict are sustained, not erased. Without antagonism there is only the imposed consensus of authoritarian order – a total suppression of debate and discussion, which is inimical to democracy” (2004, p. 66). In relation to community art, Bishop believes that artists should focus more on changing and or disrupting society instead of focusing on restoring the social bond and striving towards social unity. According to Bishop community arts projects are often funded by governments or governmental organisations which leads to questions about the extent to which artists can afford to be disruptive.

This close link between arts and politics is also discussed by playwright Hen Havens. Havens researched whether or not the traditional theatre system has legitimacy in the contemporary field. He defines the traditional theatre system as an interplay between established theatre institutions, companies, venues, trainings and policy. However, this system is losing its dominant and guiding status as the main cultural domain because the world of performing arts is becoming more hybrid and less focussed on the traditional canon (Hogeschool Zuyd, 2011) (Havens, 2015). Havens concluded that compared to other institutional agents in the theatre sector the Dutch Government is falling behind when it comes to changing perspectives and formalizing new forms of cohesion between theatre, society and government.

## 2.3 The Social Effects

In 1997 cultural researcher François Matarasso published *Use or Ornament?*, in which he described the potential positive social effects of the arts, such as increased self-esteem, social inclusion and social cohesion. According to Matarasso the projects he researched were only credited for their economic value, whilst the social impact remained invisible. Matarasso believed that the social impact of these projects is extremely important. He concluded that “the arts have a serious contribution to addressing contemporary social challenges. Rather than the cherry on the policy cake to which they are so often compared, they should be seen as the yeast without which it fails to rise to expectations” (p. 10). In other words, the social impacts of the arts are not an extra bonus, but at the core of participating in art itself. This is also at the heart of the MeeMaakPodia grant the FCP wants to create. The FCP believes that arts and culture are vital to every person’s life and therefore arts and culture should be accessible to everyone.

Matarasso’s optimistic conclusions, which he later distanced himself from, have been criticized by other scholars such as sociologist Paola Merli. Merli claims that the social effects of the arts are short-term and do not offer real solutions to social problems because the situation itself remains unchanged (2002). Bishop has similar doubts about the positive social effects of the arts: “The government's key term here is ‘social inclusion’: the arts compensate for social exclusion through socially inclusive strategies. (Meanwhile, the structural inequalities of society remain uninterrogated)” (2006, p. 180). The cultural organisations that want to work with audience vigour also need to be aware of this criticism, since their projects could be accused of the same naivety. Therefore these organisations will have to find a way to become a sustainable partner for their community. The FCP needs to include this issue in the criteria for the MeeMaakPodia applications.

Matarasso responded to Merli’s critique on his work in his 2002 essay ‘smoke and mirrors’, turning his earlier emphasis on social effects into an argument in favour of cultural democracy:

I have consistently argued above all for the importance of art in its own right. It is this intrinsic importance that makes the conditions of access to it so critical, particularly in a democracy based on the principle of equal citizenship. ... I am sceptical of arguments about instrumentality in the arts, which tend to be deployed only when people feel that policy is not being directed in keeping with their own views. ... However, artists are not pure beings, uninfluenced by the desires of patrons or publics, and all artistic policy is, consciously or not, partly instrumental. ... The intention is never the pure, neo-Romantic ideal that many people seem still to believe in today (2002, p. 343).

Cultural researchers Eleonora Belfiore and Oliver Bennett have made a similar change in their view on the social effects of the arts. Belfiore earlier argued that the arts will lose its funding if the social impact cannot be proven by claiming that “if the arts cannot prove to be a cost-effective means of delivering social benefits, they are destined to lose the struggle for funding against other areas of public spending” (2002, p. 104). In a more recent book, however, Belfiore and Bennett continue to warn against the presumed social impact of the arts, but that nevertheless engagement in the arts transforms individuals and society, is deeply complex and has a complex intellectual history that teaches us about current dilemma’s. Instead of re-thinking the arts, scholars have to reconnect with the history of the debate about the arts, to find answers to today’s problems. In the end this would lead to a more vibrant and lively relationship between arts and society (2008).

In their 2010 essay *Beyond the Toolkit Approach* Belfiore and Bennett elaborate on the discussion about researching the effects of the arts (2010). They claim that current policies are based on “instrumental rationality”. Policymakers hear about research and remember fragments of research. They base their policy making on these fragments and then state that their decision is research-based. According to Belfiore and Bennett, researchers have to use a humanities approach towards the social effects of art. This approach aims at understanding how individuals respond to arts and aesthetic experiences through a combination of theoretical and methodological research. This research would “enlighten both public opinion and decision-making around the role of the arts in contemporary society and their place in government policy” (p. 139). For this reason, the FCP needs to be aware of – and avoid - instrumental rationality and find ways to really research the response of the communities towards the MeeMaakPodia organisations during the grant period.

Merli, Bishop, Belfiore and Bennett all agree that the social impacts of the arts are being used by the government to compensate for real problems, without structurally solving those problems. This issue is also relevant in the case of audience vigour. During a project people could be less isolated because of the social interaction that takes place. However, when the project ends, the people could fall back into their isolation. The FCP needs to assess the projects based on their long-term ambitions and sustainability to make sure the projects have a lasting impact. Matarasso also addresses the problems that are associated with participating in the arts. He stated that:

“participatory arts projects can fail or underachieve for a variety of reasons, including inexperience and under-resourcing. Since they are part of a continuum of experience, positive outcomes can turn sour if the work is not built on. It must also be recognized that people can experience personal costs, (e.g. in relationships) especially where their lives do change and growth puts existing situations under pressure” (1997, p. VIII).

For audience vigour the duality between the short-term impact and long term effects is also relevant. On the one hand, the community might profit from the collaboration with theatres and museums. On the other hand, there is also a personal risk as mentioned by both Matarasso and Merli. The community has to invest time and effort into the projects they want to execute with the cultural organisations. However, when the cultural organisation decides to end the project or cuts the funding, they stand empty handed. It’s the responsibility of the cultural organisations to consider these long-term effects on the communities they work with. The FCP needs to take this into consideration in the grant application process.

## 2.4 Participation and Audience development

Audience vigour is a way of increasing participation in the arts. The Oxford English Dictionary defines participation as “the action of taking part in something”. This is a quite neutral definition of the term, which can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Social Anthropologist Jason Hart gives two definitions of participation. His first definition reads, “participation is seen as the means by which the young come to learn the skills and attitudes that enable them to function as citizens in a democratic state”. Hart also refers to participation as “the means by which the young are empowered to transform the structures, practices and attitudes that exclude them socially, culturally, politically and economically” (2007, pp. 2-3). The last definition is more useful in the MeeMaakPodium case, since the FCP is also striving to transform the current situation. However, these definitions are only referring to young people, while the FCP want to stimulate cultural organisations to get everyone to participate.

Participation can also be defined in relation to cultural activities. The Dutch Raad voor Cultuur describes active cultural participation as all artistic or heritage activities that are carried out by amateurs or volunteers in their leisure time, from writing to archaeology and from music lessons to community arts (2014). This definition is applicable to audience vigour in the sense that it refers to cultural activities that community members could carry out in their leisure time. However, in the MeeMaakPodia case the community should develop such activities in collaboration with cultural organisations instead of participating in activities that are organised by these cultural organisations.

A term that is often mentioned in relation to participation is audience development. The Arts Council defines this as:

“activity which is undertaken specifically to meet the needs of existing and potential audiences, visitors and participants and to help arts organisations to develop ongoing relationships with audiences. It can include aspects of marketing, commissioning, programming, involvement in decision making, education, customer care and distribution” (2016a, p. 3).

The Network of European Museum Organisations also provides a definition of audience development. They describe it as “strategic development in order to attract new audiences to cultural institutions. Approaches from cultural marketing, cultural PR, art outreach, etc. are employed in order to develop, communicate and disseminate cultural initiatives for different target groups” (Chandler & Metcalf, 2016, p. 18). These definitions are also applicable to audience vigour, because the collaboration between cultural organisations and their communities can be on these levels as well. However, the FCP is not aiming to target audiences through smart marketing tricks, but to really involve the community in the decision making process instead of communication for commercial purposes only.

Another term that is related to participation is engagement. Engagement can be defined as “developing and sustaining a working relationship between one or more public body and one or more community group, to help them both to understand and act on the needs or issues that the community experiences” according to the Scottish community development centre (2017). Translated to the case of audience vigour the public body is the cultural organisation and the community group is the community surrounding the organisation. This definition is applicable to the MeeMaakPodia programme because the FCP wants cultural organisations to identify the needs and issues of their community and collaborate with them on implementing these needs in the programming of the theatre.



Economist Nobuko Kawashima provides insights into communities that are not easily reached. She divides audience development in four categories: cultural inclusion, extended marketing, taste cultivation and audience education. Her definition of cultural inclusion is useful as a definition of audience vigour. She defines it as follows.

“Audience development for cultural inclusion targets the group of people who for apparently social reasons are the least likely to attend the arts. ... Outreach projects, which take the arts into the community, have been undertaken to target such groups, even though they are not expected to add significant monetary value to box office intake in the immediate future. Similarly, in ‘inreach’ projects, building-based institutions of culture may go out and try to bring people to their own buildings” (2000, pp. 8-9).

In a more recent paper Kawashima discusses the differences between audience development and social inclusion in relation to access (2006). She changed the notion of social inclusion into outreach, due to overlap with the complex concept of social inclusion. She now refers to outreach as “various projects to take the arts from their usual venues to places where those with little or no access to the arts live” (2006, p. 57). An important part of the increased cultural participation that the FCP wants to achieve is the active participation of the local community members. Developing skills, capabilities and creativity are good examples of what they are striving for. Placing these activities at the heart of the organisation is also important for the FCP since their grant is only meant as stimulation and not as long-term funding. Co-authorship is also an important part of the MeeMaakPodia programme. Within their grant application programme the FCP will have to prevent theatres that are merely looking for more visitors from applying for the grants. In the first definition Kawashima makes a distinction between inreach and outreach projects. MeeMaakPodia projects would ideally be a combination of both notions: projects in the local community and projects within the theatre venue that are appealing to the community. Labelling the community as ‘those with little or no access to the arts’, is not necessarily applicable to the MeeMaakPodia situation. Their communities might already have access to the arts, but just do not feel welcome to join.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Discourse analysis

To gain insights into the effectiveness of a MeeMaakPodium in the Dutch cultural sector I will conduct a discourse analysis. According to social scientist Harry Van den Berg a discourse analysis researches the way in which a social reality is constructed through language (2004, p. 27). In my research I focus on the ways in which Dutch and British policy papers and publications from the Dutch cultural field assess the success and failure factors of audience vigour. The discourse analysis will be used to answer the first and second sub-question:

- With which success and failure factors is audience vigour associated in Dutch and British cultural policy papers about the period of 2010 to 2020?
- Which views on successful or unsuccessful audience vigour can be found in publications from the professional Dutch cultural field?

Van den Berg refers to the Membership Categorization Analysis of sociologist Harvey Sacks for a discourse analysis. Sacks' theory is based on the premise that in a conversation or argument obvious categorizations can be identified. Sacks divides these categorizations into two subcategories. The first subcategory is termed Membership Categorization Device (MCD), which stands for collections of similar categories combined with instructions that clarify when a specific category should be used. For example the difference between generations, old and young, that also includes associations with what is right or wrong or high and low. The second subcategory is termed Category Bound Activities (CBA). These are activities that are associated with a specific category. For example, 'crying is for babies', which implicates that there is an obvious connection between crying and new born babies (Sacks, 1979, 1992) (Silverman & Sacks, 1998). Applied to the MeeMaakPodia case an obvious connection could be that elderly people don't like modern dance or that young people don't understand theatre. If the cultural organisations manage to form a real social bond with these people they might find that reality is different than expected.

The discourse analysis that will be conducted will be based on analysis questions, that are mentioned below. The analysis questions regarding the definition of audience vigour are based on the MCD method. It will provide insights into what policy makers and professionals from the field categorize as audience vigour and when this term could be applied. The analysis questions regarding the success and failure of audience vigour are based on the CBA method. These questions will provide insights into what the policy makers and professional from the field associate with audience vigour in both a positive or negative way.

For the discourse analysis I will use the following analysis questions:

1. What is audience vigour according to:
  - a. the Dutch and British cultural policy papers?
  - b. the professional Dutch cultural field?

Based on the theoretical framework I have created a definition of audience vigour. To answer this analysis question I will look for potential definitions in Dutch cultural policy papers and in the publications from the Dutch cultural field.

2. With which success and failure factors is audience vigour associated in:
  - a. the policy discourse?
  - b. the field?

Besides the definition of audience vigour I will also scan the texts on potential success and failure factors that might be mentioned.

## 3.2 Corpus

### 3.2.1 Policy discourse

*With which success and failure factors is audience vigour associated in Dutch and British cultural policy papers about the period 2010 till 2020?*

*In the Netherlands, the governmental department of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) is responsible for the cultural policy within the country. This department was formed in 1994 after culture had been separated from education for a longer period and instead had been placed in the same department as welfare and public health (Hoeven, 2005, pp. 18-19). The final report of the Our Museum Programme is an important source of inspiration for the FCP. Since this programme took place in Great Britain, the long-term vision documents on arts and culture of the British Government will also be part of this research. In Great Britain, the cultural policy is determined by two agencies: the Department for Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) and the Arts Council England (ACE). The execution of the cultural policy is outsourced to ACE, which receives its formal assignment from the Minister in the shape of the Management Agreement (Vaizey, 2012). ACE funds the arts, dance, education, literature, music, research, theatre, tours and visual arts, as well as multidisciplinary initiatives.*

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To be able to answer the first sub-question the policy papers of the Dutch government from 2010-2020 will be analysed. Since 2010 reaching, developing and activating more diverse audiences and entrepreneurship have become key indicators in the cultural sector due to changes implemented by the former Secretary of State for culture, Halbe Zijlstra. The Minister responsible for culture during my research period was Jet Bussemaker (2017).<sup>2</sup> I will analyse *Cultuur beweegt* (2013) and *Cultuur verbindt* (2014) which describe Bussemakers general vision on arts and culture. Bussemakers *Ruimte voor Cultuur* provides an overview of the Dutch cultural policy for the period 2017-2020 (Bussemaker, 2015). From Zijlstra I will only analyse the cultural policy paper entitled *Meer dan kwaliteit* (2011, p. 11). These documents have been selected based on a pre-reading of policy documents from both Bussemaker and Zijlstra regarding this period. The documents were scanned for references towards participation in the arts and the role of arts and culture in society.

The policy documents from ACE that will be discussed in this research are *Achieving Great Art for Everyone. A strategic Framework for the Arts* (2010), *Achieving Great Art and Culture for Everyone. Much Done Many Challenges Remain* (2015a) and the *Corporate Plan 2015-2018* (2015b). From DCMS the *2010 to 2015 Government Policy: Arts and Culture* (2010) and the *Single Departmental Plan 2015-2020* (2015) will be analysed. These documents have been selected based on a pre-reading of policy documents regarding this period from both organisations. The documents were scanned for references towards participation in the arts and the role of arts and culture in society.

In 2017, the European Commission published a report about audience development and how cultural organisations can more actively involve citizens. Hence, the EU report will also be part of this research, because it examined audience development practices through-out the European Union, including the Netherlands. The EU report will also be an important basis for the grant application programme of the FCP; it places their aims in a broader, more international setting.

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<sup>2</sup> During the writing of this thesis Jet Bussemaker was still the minister of the department of Education, Culture and Science.

### 3.2.2 Publications from the field

*Which views on audience vigour can be found in the professional Dutch cultural field?*

*The second sub-question analyses the publications from the professional Dutch cultural field in relation to audience vigour. Besides publications from the Dutch field I have also researched a few international publications due to their relevance to the subject. The final report of the Our Museum Programme is the source of inspiration for the new grant application programme of the FCP and is therefore relevant for my research. The essay from Nina Simon and the report of the Network of European Museum Associations were mentioned in some of the Dutch publications and there I added them to my corpus.*

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The first source for this research is the final report of the Our Museum Programme in Great Britain, *No longer us and them* (Bienkowski, 2016). The research paper by Kleijntjens, *De kunst van publieksparticipatie*, provides a similar overview for the Dutch museum sector. As mentioned in the introduction of my thesis, the Flemish term ‘publiekswerking’ forms an important source for my research. Besides Klomp, who described the term in her 2010 essay *Publiekswerking schakel tussen programmering en publieksbereik*, cultural producer Janneke Defesche also researched ‘publiekswerking’. Defesche examined the applicability of ‘publiekswerking’ on the Dutch theatre field in her 2016 essay *Op weg naar een groter publieksbereik?*. Cultural researcher Anke Asselman researched the effects of audience participation on the professionals in the art world in her 2010 essay *Publieksparticipatie: ja/nee\**.

Cultural scientist Sandra Trienekens and sociologist Jan Willem Duyvendak evaluated the grant application programme ‘Nieuwe ontmoetingsplekken’ by Stichting Doen. They researched the successes and pitfalls of the executed projects (2013). The ‘Nieuwe ontmoetingsplekken’ programme is an example of what audience vigour activities could be. *Vind de Mens* from the Deventer Schouwburg is an overview of their experience with audience participation (Vorderman, 2015). *Expanding Theatre* provides a similar overview of the audience participation programme in the Stadschouwburg of Amsterdam (Daamen & Meijler, 2012). Kunsten ‘92 is the overall organization for arts, culture and heritage in the Netherlands. With *Cultuur werkt voor Nederland* Kunsten ‘92 draws the attention of the politicians to the role of arts and culture in the society of the future (Zoet, 2016).

The museum field also provides useful sources in relation to audience vigour. *Het Disruptieve museum* contains the conclusions of a research project in the Dutch museum field about audience participation (Odding, 2011). In *Het geëmancipeerde museum* art historian Steven ten Thije describes a new future for museums as an open space full of quality in which visitors are challenged to make their own decisions (2006). The blog *The Museum of the Future* by cultural innovator Jasper Visser provides insights into the role of the Dutch museum field in the twenty-first century (2017). In *The Participatory Museum* Nina Simon provides rules and guidelines for museum that want to increase their level of audience participation (2010). The Network of European Museum Organisations described the relation between museums and cultural diversity in their report *Museums, migration and cultural diversity* (Chandler & Metcalf, 2016).

### 3.3 Field work

To gain insight into the experiences with audience vigour in the field interviews will be conducted. The organisations were selected based on a stocktaking as described below.

The first part of the stocktaking consisted of a preliminary research of the current situation in the Dutch field. The professional organisations that were researched in this phase were selected via three selection rounds. The first selection was based on the trips of the FCP to London in December 2015. The FCP invited directors of both theatres and museums to join them on these inspirational trips to see the MeeMaakPodia in and around the British capital city. The professional organisations that were represented during these trips were selected for my preliminary research. After this first round of stocktaking the scope was expanded based on the personal network and expertise of the programme advisors of the FCP. Finally the last organisations were selected from the websites of branch organisations such as the Vereniging van Schouwburg- en Concertgebouw Directies (VSCD, the Dutch association of municipal theatres and concert halls) and the Dutch Museum Association based on their location. The websites of all the organisations within the scope were checked for activities that are related to the MeeMaakPodia grant, special arrangements and the general description of the organisation. The FCP database AIMS was also checked for funding applications that are related to the MeeMaakPodia grant and audience vigour.

The organisations were divided into several categories based on a scale that I designed during my internship at the FCP. The FCP defines a MeeMaakPodium as an organisation that works demand-driven, is connecting and communicating with its local community and is open to initiatives from this community. Based on this definition I have distinguished three categories.

A. MeeMaakPodium by example (8 or more points)

The organisation is a real MeeMaakPodium in the core of its being and can be an example for other organisations.

B. MeeMaakPodium light (5-7 points)

The organisation undertakes several activities that make them a MeeMaakPodium, but there is room for more.

C. MeeMaakPodium in progress (1-4 points)

The organisation is working on becoming a MeeMaakPodium, but is not quite there yet.

The organisations were placed in a category based on the amount of points they score with their activities. Each activity was connected to a code worth 1, 2 or 3 points based on their affiliation with audience vigour. The codes were based on themes that came up during the analysis of the data (Baarda, 2013). Different codes were used for the group of theatres and the group of museums, because their activities are similar but not the same. The stocktaking and the scale can be found in appendix 9.1.

Some of the organisations from the stocktaking will be visited to find out why they invest in audience vigour and what helps or sustains it. Each visit will consist of a ninety-minute interview with the director or programmer of the organisation. The interviews will be semi-structured; the questions and topics are decided beforehand, but the order in which they will be discussed and the answers are open. The order will be determined during the interview based on the information that is provided by the interviewee (Baarda, Hulst, & Goede, 2012). The interviews will be conducted by FCP's senior advisor Willemijn in 't Veld. All the answers will be written down during the interview and typed out afterwards by me. The interviews will not be recorded in order to ensure a safe, open and informal setting for the conversations. A recorder device could prevent the interviewees from speaking freely.

For these interviews I will draw on five questions that I selected in consultation with Willemijn in 't Veld.

1. Why does your organisation invest in interaction with and participation of your audience?
2. What are the three main activities or initiatives that you conduct in this field?
3. How did you embed this method in your organisation?
4. What chances for audience vigour do you see if you look to the future?
5. What thresholds do you see for the future of audience vigour?

Besides the interviews with the organisations that were selected through the stocktaking I will also conduct an interview with François Matarasso. As an expert on the social effects of audience participation his view on audience vigour is very useful to my research and the formation of the grant application programme. My interview with Matarasso will also be semi-structured. The interview questions can be found in appendix 9.6.1.

## 4. Policy discourse

### *With which failure and success factors is audience vigour associated in Dutch and British cultural policy papers about the years 2010 to 2020?*

As mentioned in chapter 3.2 several policy documents were studied to answer the first sub-question. Below all documents will be discussed based on the analysis questions.

1. What is audience vigour according to the Dutch cultural policy papers?
2. With which success and failure factors is audience vigour associated in the policy discourse?

### 4.1 Audience vigour

Based on my analysis I conclude that Halbe Zijlstra does not really refer to audience vigour in his policy paper *Meer dan kwaliteit*. He does focus on the audience range of cultural organisations. He considers it to be important that theatres reach a broad audience; broad in the sense of background, interest, age and level of education (2011, p. 11). In relation to participation Zijlstra mainly refers to children in elementary- or high school. In order to reach these groups, cultural organisations need to cooperate with the schools. Where Zijlstra only focuses on the participation of schoolchildren, Bussemaker also refers to the participation of adults, elderly people and new audiences (2015, p. 12). Bussemaker sees audience participation as a way in which arts and culture can contribute to the viability of communities and to the confidence and self-reliance of community members (2014, p. 9). To achieve this, theatres and museums have to cooperate with other organisations within and outside of the cultural sector. Bussemaker also stated that it is important to bring culture to the people, if the people cannot come to the organisations. Physical or social barriers should not keep people from participating. Increasing the audience range is also an important part of audience vigour. The FCP wants more people to participate in culture and believes that the MeeMaakPodia grant will help to do so. The vision of Bussemaker is closely related to the ideas of the FCP about MeeMaakPodia. The cooperation mentioned by Bussemaker is also essential for audience vigour.

In the documents from DCMS no clear definition of audience vigour can be found. DCMS does state that “culture, media and sport enriches our lives and helps make Britain unique. Wherever you live in the country and whatever your background, we want you to be able to enjoy and participate in our sectors” (2015, p. 1). According to DCMS this is important because of the social- and health effects of participation in arts and culture. They also refer to the economic benefits of increased participation. ACE does provide a definition of audience vigour. when They do so in reference to excellence:

“Everyone will have their own sense of what excellence is, but for us it is simply the bravest, most original, most innovative, most perfectly realised work of which people are capable – whether in the creation of art, its performance, its communication or its impact on audiences. To be relevant in the twenty-first century, any definition of excellence has to find room for participation in art, as well as the classical notion of creation” (2010, pp. 2-3).

ACE also paints a picture of the future in which the “arts are at the heart of civil society, valued by local communities across the country. They are the bedrock of the creative economy, contributing to the nation’s prosperity and its international reputation” (2010, p. 25). Both DCMS and ACE name benefits of participation in the arts for society. Where DCMS focuses on the extrinsic value of the arts, ACE also emphasizes the artistic excellence of audience participation projects. This relates to the debate about the intrinsic and extrinsic value of the arts within academia. Matarasso refers to this when he stated that “It is this intrinsic importance that makes the conditions of access to it so critical, particularly in a democracy based on the principle of equal citizenship” (2002, p. 343).

In the EU report that I studied audience participation is defined as “an inclusive concept that embraces cultural practices that may involve consumption as well as activities that are undertaken within the community, reflecting quality of life, traditions and beliefs” (Bollo, et al., 2017, p. 10). By doing so cultural organisations can stimulate community members to participate in culture and help them to get a sense of ownership and belonging. In the report they also state that audience participation is a long-term process that affects the whole organisation; “the empowerment of the staff and the development of their skills, competences and leadership are a key factor of different experiences, recognizing the need for change inside the organisation to pursue some kind of change in audience behaviour” (2017, p. 16). The report further focuses on the social benefits of culture. These benefits are also relevant in the case of audience vigour. Building stronger communities and stimulating creativity are important factors for audience vigour. Reflection might be relevant for some communities who have specific needs in that field. However, it is not necessarily part of all audience vigour programmes.

## 4.2 Success and failure

Bussemaker refers to the relevance of arts and culture for current social issues as an important success factor of audience participation. Cultural organisations, such as theatres, need to address these issues to highlight their social relevance (2013, p. 1). As a part of this highlighted social relevance, theatres should profile themselves as part of their direct urban environment. A joint vision on culture, long-term ambitions and a wide commitment are key to a successful urban cultural network. This emphasis on cooperation is also relevant for the government: in the light of the importance of culture as a common good, municipalities, provinces and the national government need to work together (2015, pp. 8-9). The urgency of cooperation and long-term visions is also part of the MeeMaakPodia grant. The FCP needs to assess the applicants on these and other criteria before providing a subsidy.

Besides the potential success factor of audience vigour, Bussemaker also refers to potential pitfalls. She states that when community members get more responsibility, the organisations need to have a clear picture of their wishes and needs and should be able to adjust to them. If theatres are not able to adjust to these needs, increased community responsibility will backfire (2014, p. 9). Bussemaker also sees the demographic changes in the population as a potential pitfall. Theatres need to take on the challenge of dealing with these changes in order to remain relevant for all members of the current population. According to Bussemaker cultural organisations are currently not able to completely tackle these issues due to a lack of knowledge and experience (2015, p. 16). The FCP will try to increase the knowledge and experience of cultural organisations with regard to their communities through the research part of the new grant.

From the studied documents, it became clear that ACE bases the success of audience participation on the level of excellence. They ask the following questions: “how original, innovative and artistically ambitious is the work, project or event? Does it, in some way, have the ability or potential to change how the audience or the participants view the world? [Is the event] both artistically excellent and inspiring to audiences?” (2010, p. 16). ACE also emphasizes the importance of “long-term collaborations between local communities, arts and cultural organisations, local authorities and the private sector to encourage inspirational culture programmes, particularly in places where engagement is low” (2015b, p. 20). DCMS does not mention any success or failure factors within the researched policy papers. The questions that ACE uses are also applicable to the audience vigour. For successful audience vigour it is very important to address these questions and to make sure the projects are sustainable.



In the EU report three success factors that are relevant for audience vigour are mentioned. First of all the researches refer to the importance of long-lasting processes and projects. To enable these processes cultural organisations require a “medium-long-term perspective, devotion, continuity, sedimentation of internal competences, risk taking and financial coverage” (2017, p. 10). For this sedimentation, the organisations need to be able to work in several forms at the same time, another way of working for each audience. According to the report a complete change of the organisation is not required but becoming a flexible and multi-layered organisation is needed. The same sedimentation is required in the case of audience vigour. Each cultural organisation will have to address several target groups that require a different approach. The organisations need to prepare their staff for this new way of working.

The second success factor mentioned in the EU report involves “a listening attitude and a trial and error approach” (2017, p. 46). These notions are necessary requirements for an organisation that wants to have a positive social impact. Theatres need to dare to step outside the usual setting to reach new audiences and to have an impact on daily social life. The third success factor is concerned with the way in which the audience is involved. According to the report it is important to make sure audience participation is used in an interactive, purposeful and meaningful way. The community should be fully integrated in the life of the organisation (2017, p. 34). The EU report also refers to audience development at a local level. Organisations that want to work with their local environment have to “emerge in the fertile space between practice and policy, commercial need and ambition to make a positive social impact” (2017, p. 18). This combination of practice and policy is similar to the collaboration the FCP wants to create between the grant applicants and themselves.

### 4.3 Conclusion

When comparing the definitions related to audience vigour from the Dutch, British and European policy papers it becomes clear that they are quite similar. In all policy documents the positive influence of the arts on people’s lives is mentioned and seen as a legitimisation of the arts in contemporary society. There are also some differences between the different definitions. Within the Netherlands Bussemaker focuses on broadening the audience range, whereas in Great Britain both DCMS and ACE highlight the fact that culture enriches our lives. In the EU report the focus lies on inclusion and reflection.

All definitions are in line with the perspective of Matarasso, who listed the social effects of participation in the arts, such as increased self-esteem and confidence, but also the fundamental right of everyone to have access to the arts. The notion of engagement provided by the Scottish Community Development Centre is comparable to the focus on collaboration with other organisations that was mentioned by Bussemaker. The definition of excellence that was provided by ACE combines the vision of both Bishop and Hagoort on how to evaluate art. ACE combines perfection in the realisation of the art work with the impact it has on the audiences.

The success- and failure factors that I found during my analysis are also quite similar for each policy paper. Bussemaker states the importance of community cooperation for cultural organisations. ACE also refers to long-term collaborations as an important success factor that I connected to audience vigour. The importance of stepping outside the beaten paths is mentioned by both the EU and ACE, which states that audience participation projects should lead to changing the world view of the community members. The perspective on changing the way people view the world is also shared by Bishop, who states that art should be used to disrupt society. The EU report highlights internal tuning as the most important factor of successful audience participation projects. This view is not shared by the other policy makers.

## 5. The Field

*Which views on successful or unsuccessful audience vigour can be found in publications from the professional Dutch cultural field?*

To answer the second sub-question the publications from the Dutch theatre field that were mentioned in chapter 3.2 will be analysed based on the following questions.

1. What is audience vigour according to the professional Dutch cultural field?
2. With which success and failure factors is audience vigour associated in the field?

### 5.1 Audience vigour

In the publications from the professional field the ideas about how to define a cultural organisation that wants to stimulate audience vigour differ. Based on the sources that were used five major categories can be distinguished: significance, arts and society, public support, organisational support and the role of the public.

The first group of ideas can be categorised under the notion of significance. These reports refer to cultural organisations as networks, places that are about significance instead of truth and about the present instead of the past. Sharing significance, values and personal stories with communities will yield more to cultural organisations than broadcasting their vision of the truth. Jasper Visser refers to value as a notion with many faces, “financial, social, political, emotional, educational, creative ... Realising these values form a closed system and can be transformed from one into the other with some creativity helps us to be meaningful, pay our bills and add to society” (2017, p. 10). I argue that MeeMaakPodia are also network organisations that create a link between several groups in their local community through using arts and culture. These links can indeed take shape in different forms, such as financial, social or creative support.

The second group of ideas about audience vigour can be seen as concerning the relationship between cultural organisations and society. According to the reports, cultural organisations can help citizens find their place in society and increase social cohesion. Through stories people discover where they are from, to whom they are related and where they want to go. Connecting people to art in a contemporary way is an important step in that process. Cultural organisations can be an intermediary between the arts and citizens, by listening carefully to what the public wants. This means cultural organisations exist on the verge of cultural and social work, a dynamic collective of people and ideas. Arnoud Odding refers to the vision of Charles Esche, the director of the Van Abbe Museum. Esche states that he “would like to see it as a dispersed museum, a scattered museum. That the museum is no longer perceived as a building but as a way of thinking, a way to approach the relationship between arts and society” (2011, p. 32). Stepping outside the building and breaking down the walls is also an important element of audience vigour.

Connected to the vision about cultural organisations and society are ideas about a change in the public support for the cultural sector. Jasper Visser sees the cultural organisation of the future as a social organisation. “In 2020 a museum will be the beating heart of a living culture, easily accessible to all people and of true value to society” (2017, p. 51). Visser also refers to design expert Enzo Manzini. Manzini refers to these processes as a form of social innovation, “a creative recombination of existing assets (from social capital to historical heritage, from traditional craftsmanship to accessible advanced technology), which aim to achieve socially recognized goals in a new way” (2015, p. 11). This ‘social innovation’ is a good way to explain what audience vigour is; to change the existing situation and create a new socially supported kind of arts and culture.

The fourth group of ideas found in the publications from the professional arts and culture field relates to the support within the organisation. Bienkowski frames audience participation as a process of organisational change and emphasizes the importance of organisational support. Audience vigour should not be based on short-term projects but it should be about placing a new mind-set at the heart of the organisations. This mind-set is based on building sustainable partnerships with communities and involving them in decision-making processes. Part of this new mentality is embedding reflective practice into staff's daily work, which would consist of communicating in an open and safe environment to stimulate change. Through audience vigour cultural organisations can play an effective role in "developing community skills, capabilities and creativity" (2016, p. 13). This organisational change is also a key element of the MeeMaakPodia grant. Cultural organisations need support from their staff to make sure the relationship with the community becomes sustainable.

The last group of ideas can be classified as ideas about the role of the public. The researched texts all provide a different view on how this new role of the public should take shape.

Trienekens and Duyvendak define audience participation as the implementation of a powerful and appealing way to utilise the latent willingness of individuals to commit to the benefit of their local community. Working on 'institutional cohesion' is an important part of their view on audience participation. They define 'institutional cohesion' as the expanding and strengthening of the network between governments, institutions and agencies on the one hand and communities on the other (2013, p. 3). The cooperation between institutions and communities is at the heart of audience vigour. The aim of the MeeMaakPodia grant of the FCP is to form new networks between cultural organisations, communities and other local organisations.

Laurens Kleijntjens refers to audience participation as the active participation of the audience within the museum and giving them a voice. By doing so the cultural organisation yields some of their authority towards the community. According to Kleijntjens, audience participation goes beyond the conservative idea of adding interactive elements to an exhibition. It invites the audience to think about and contribute to the exhibition and the museum (2016, p. 6). A cultural organisation truly invested in audience vigour stands in the middle of society and can address current issues that live within their community. They should not just program another exhibition or play, but really work together with their local community.

Mayke Klomp describes 'publiekswerking' as all initiatives that a cultural organisation undertakes to increase the involvement of several target groups on the operation of the organisation (2010, p. 32). In a broader sense, audience vigour could be defined as a way for cultural organisations to involve a larger audience with the organisation. This could be based on artistic, social-cultural or educational projects. Defesche also refers to the bridge between a cultural organisation and its community as the core of 'publiekswerking'. She defines it as the development and implementation of visions, concepts and processes that lead to participation, both active participation in and confrontation with the arts, with attention for social and cultural diversity (2016, p. 12). The same applies for organisations investing in audience vigour as they need to find ways to involve the local community in their organisation on different levels that are appealing to the community member and fulfil their needs.

Anke Asselman uses the notion of 'organisation participation' instead of audience vigour. She defines it as a form of participation that shortens the lines between public and organisation, where supply and demand are no longer separated (2010, p. 6). This kind of participation should be based on a vision of openness, open source knowledge and a more horizontal relationship with the community. However, Asselman states that cultural organisations should not open up to everyone, but instead they should focus on specific groups within the community and keep it small. They should shield their projects until they are ready for the large majority. The restriction on openness mentioned by Asselman is partly contradictory to what audience vigour stands for. The FCP wants theatres to open up to stimulate cultural participation. Only addressing small groups might not have the effect the FCP is aiming for.

## 5.2 Success and failure

In the publications from the professional field several success factors and pitfalls were found. Based on the sources that were analysed four major categories can be distinguished: the relationship with the community, the relationship with local partners, organisational change and critique, innovation and evaluation.

### **The relationship with the community**

In the documents from the professional field engaging with the community is often mentioned as a success factor of audience vigour. The report from the Network of European Museum Organisations summarises this as follows:

“The trend is moving towards participative museums that encourage involvement from all social groups and that understand integration as a two-way process. A change of perspective will allow people to see the museum in a new light, and the museum to see the world in a new light. Active involvement from visitors will ideally facilitate a new understanding of the past and the present, culture and the environment, and much more besides” (Chandler & Metcalf, 2016, p. 4).

The public is an important stakeholder that cultural organisations should embrace. Therefore organisations interested in audience vigour should also focus on activities that increase public involvement in their organisation. These activities should be social initiatives that are executed in collaboration with the community and attract a new public. Cultural organisations should facilitate public initiatives that strive towards unique programs. Instead of focusing on economic value, these moments of intensive involvement and exchange should become the standard for awarding value to cultural organisations.

According to the analysed texts, to connect to the public, cultural organisations need to address them as a community that they want to collaborate with; connecting people and the wonders of the world. However, contemporary cultural organisations should be careful not to provide just one experience for everyone, but provide differentiated opportunities for co-creation. The arts often claim that they want to be a mirror for society, but that means that they should reflect all layers of society in all its nuances. Relating to cultural diversity and other developments in society is important for successful audience vigour. The aim would be that cultural organisations are no longer seen as brick buildings but as living and evolving organisms that contain a way of life and a way of thinking.

Theatres should keep themselves informed of community needs, priorities and wishes. However, they also need to be aware of differences within the group rather than considering communities as homogenous. Within a group there will always be smaller groups of individuals that have other wishes and needs. Based on this premises, cultural organisations need to be aware of the differentiated needs of their community and that they will have to use different styles of communication to meet these needs. By doing so the community might start to see the organisations as something of their own, indeed as ‘their museum’ or ‘their theatre’. Kleijntjens warns cultural organisation to not tar with the same brush but to treat their community as individuals (2016, p. 32).

Jasper Visser also mentions this potential pitfall. He states that cultural organisations should:

“always approach people as individuals, share control, be radically inclusive (do not assume that representatives of a group represent everyone in a group), to be humble and work together on an equal basis with all involved, and to be flexible enough to adapt to unforeseen situations. Most importantly of all, however, is to stay human in these processes and not become an institutional robot” (2017, p. 47).

Managing expectations is also an important aspect of the relationship between the cultural organisations and their communities. If the organisations would expect too much of their audience in terms of participation, they might scare people away. The organisation should also be able to live up to the expectations of the community. If they promise more than they can deliver, the community will be disappointed and there will be a lack of trust instead of increased trust. Failing to sustain the relationship after the project is also a potential pitfall. Kawashima frames this as the “ failure to continuously build up the relationship between an arts organisation and audiences beyond a particular project” (2000, p. 2).

### **The relationship with local partners**

Similar to the connection with the community is the influence of local partnerships on success. Cultural organisations should look beyond their own walls for other organisations in- and outside of the sector that might have similar interests or can help to reach certain community members. Not just relying on usual suspects but thinking outside the box. For example, not just focussing on other theatres or museums, but collaborating with community centres or retirement homes. When working together the workload can also be divided. Investing in good relationships with the community and staying connected in the long run is a time consuming process. Being able to share this investment with one or more other organisations might increase the sustainability of the project. More people will feel responsible and the pressure is spread over multiple people. The danger of working together could be that no one feels completely responsible or is in control. The cultural organisations should be in the lead to ensure the continuity of such projects. Mayke Klomp refers to this issue when she states that cultural organisations should look into cooperating with other organisations such as social organisations, umbrella organizations and schools. This way the community is easier to access, but it will also lead to increased visibility of the projects. Through working together the burden can be shared, allowing all team members to work more efficiently and effectively (2010, p. 126).

### **Organisational change**

The process of organisational change is also an important factor of successful audience vigour. The vision of the museum staff towards society is mentioned within the reports. Arnoud Odding, for example, states that “curators with vision know how the museum can be a working part of society” (2011, p. 189). Others claim that collective theatrical experiences are the way to compete with other leisure activities. Thus, Melle Daamen, the director of Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam, states that, “the position of the theatre as a form of leisure activities has been under pressure from increasing individuality and alternative leisure activities. However to my belief there continues to be a need for collective experiences, whether or not in a theatrical setting” (2012, p. 15). In other reports the focus lies on the critical abilities of cultural organisations. Steven ten Thije notes that “the museum has changed from a place for splendour and beauty towards a critical laboratory for artistic and social renewal” (2006, p. 39). For cultural organisations to increase audience vigour they will have to create a long-term vision that speaks to both the staff and the community. The organisations need to become an active player in society, to maintain their legitimacy.

For a theatre or museum to create a successful audience vigour programme they have to incorporate participatory aspects into everyone’s job, from top to bottom. Everyone has a role to play in transforming the entire organisation. In order for this process to succeed everyone in the organisation needs to be on board. Operating from one single department with a few enthusiasts will not provide long-term sustainable change. Defining the new roles of the staff in relation to the communities needs and issues is an important part of this new kind of leadership. This success factor is clearly described by Bienkowski: “for community engagement to be truly embedded and sustained, all staff need to understand its relevance to their own work and to the museum overall, how they can contribute, and how to work with different communities” (2016, p. 24).

Not all staff members might be enthusiastic about this new way of working from the beginning. Good leadership should also focus on training the staff to understand and accept this new priority. They have

to learn how to work with communities. The discussion about this new way of working should be ongoing and open to everyone. This will ensure that all staff members feel part of the new path and will help them to see the relevance for their own job. Kleijntjens emphasizes the importance of training when he states that cultural organisations should take the time to properly train their staff and give them space to show initiative and develop themselves (2016, p. 30). The FCP needs to be aware of this success factor during the assessment of the applications since it might turn into a pitfall if not all staff members are on board with the new way of working.

Good leadership also means letting go of control. Both the staff members, volunteers and the community should have a say in audience vigour programmes. However, the management should have a long-term goal and a thorough plan for what they want to achieve, otherwise they might end up with an incoherent collection of ad-hoc projects. The long-term goal should be part of the mission and vision of the organisations. It should become integrated in the heart of the organisation and all staff members. According to Defesche successful 'publiekswerking' depends for a large part on the synchronisation of the artistic team of the organisation with the 'publiekswerking' projects. Audience vigour should form an integral part of the organisation in order to be effective. The dialogue with the community should influence the total programme and appearance of the organisation if it is serious about involving the entire community over a longer period of time (2016, p. 19). The long-term vision is one of the criteria that the FCP needs to use to assess the grant applications. If the cultural organisations lack this vision, the grant will only be used for one project and not be sustained when the subsidy ends. The same goes for the support of the staff. When not everyone is on board, the projects might be cancelled, once the enthusiasts are no longer in control or when the funding stops.

This does not mean that when everyone is on board, success is automatically guaranteed. As mentioned by Bienkowski in the Our Museum Report, "In this way, the work remains peripheral and never influences the way the whole organisation works" (2016, p. 8). However, staff resistance is not necessarily conscious. When the staff is not informed about the new course and not trained for their new role within the organisation, they could form a hidden pitfall. The cultural organisations have to make sure that successful audience vigour is not just the dream of a small group but a dream that is shared by the entire organisation.

Audience vigour needs to be based on internal motivation and not on its potential financial profit. Cultural organisations should be aware that audience vigour is not an instrument that leads to increased visitor numbers, but that it is a way to build sustainable relationships with local communities. Eventually those relationships could lead to increased visitor numbers, but that should not be the main goal. As Asselman frames it, "cultural organisations should relate their performance measurement to their artistic goals and values. The focus should not primarily be on finance and visitor numbers" (2010, p.15.). The FCP needs to be aware of this perspective on the grant, since some applicants might see it as an easy way to get funding for a project. When the FCP assesses the applications on sustainability and long-term vision, this risk can be limited.

The long-term vision is very important for the audience vigour. The cultural organisations need to be clear on what they want to achieve with their audience vigour projects. Unrealistic projects, unclear objectives or too ambitious planning can lead to failed audience vigour. Trienekens and Duyvendak also referred to this issue when they stated that the *Nieuwe Ontmoetingsplekken programme* did not fill in the notions of 'social cohesion', 'viability' and 'involvement'. Therefore the goals that were formulated on a project level varied greatly. The outcome of the entire programme therefore became unruly (2013, p. 1).

## **Critique**

Another important factor is room for critical dialogue. To make organisational change possible, cultural organisations need to be open to constructive criticism from all stakeholders, by allowing people from the outside to come in and give their honest opinion on the organisation and its way of working. Difficult issues might have to be addressed but that should lead to sustainable change. Within the Our Museum Programme each organisation had a critical friend:

“A critical friend is a trusted person outside the museum who takes the time to fully understand the context of the work and the outcomes that the organisation wants to achieve, asks provocative questions, provides additional data, evidence or lessons from elsewhere that give a fresh perspective, and offers a critique of work” (Bienkowski, 2016, p. 38).

The critical dialogue should focus on positive change and not on negative feedback. The cultural organisations need to be tolerant of mistakes but they also have to be prepared to ask and answer difficult questions.

## **Innovation**

The second-last group of success factors can be framed under the notion of innovation. Cultural organisations should share their good practices and pitfalls with other organisations to learn from each other and develop their way of working. However, for these new ideas to develop, cultural organisations have to be willing to take risks and perform experiments. They might find themselves in a mare's nest, but the road to progress is only found through adventures. Asselman refers to these kinds of organisations as ‘Wild childs’, institutions that dare to step off the beaten track and are willing to have a critical and experimental attitude towards the world. They choose to be pathfinders and to experiment with models that might change society and produce alternative public spheres (2010, pp. 16-17).

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation also forms an important part of successful audience vigour. Cultural organisations should be careful about self-evaluation or evaluation by peers. This type of evaluation might not be as critical or open-minded as needed. If no one is prepared to ask the difficult questions, no progress can be achieved. Without proper evaluation and sharing knowledge there will be no improvement. In the Our Museum Report this is described as follows:

“Many evaluations are undertaken internally by museums and galleries themselves, and there is a temptation to ‘spin’ the information for funding, advocacy and PR purposes. The advantages of independent evaluators are that they bring an external perspective, raise concerns, ask questions, ensure every voice is heard, and give constructive critique” (Bienkowski, 2016, p. 33).

### 5.3 Conclusion

From the studied documents from the professional field of art, it can be concluded that audience vigour is seen as a process of creating significance; sharing with the community instead of selling to the community. Since society yields less authority to cultural organisations than it used to, building a relationship with the community is important to gather public support. This lack of authority is also mentioned by Havens(2015). Based on my research, I can conclude the sector itself is aware of the importance of working closely with their communities. The definition of audience vigour by Trienkens and Duyvendak is also related to the definition of the traditional theatre system by Havens.. He defined it as an interplay of established theatre institutions, companies, venues, trainings and policies. According to Havens the traditional system is losing authority. On the other hand Trienkens and Duyvendak claim that strengthening these relations is key to audience participation. The main difference between the two definitions is that Havens did not include the audience or community in his system. For the MeeMaakPodia applicant strengthening the relationship with their community is crucial. The views of both Havens and Trienkens and Duyvendak supports this importance.

Internal support also turned out to be an important factor that defines audience vigour. Audience vigour is defined as a process of organisational change that is supported by all staff members. The management has to make sure that everyone within the organisation is aware of the potential of audience vigour and the positive influence it can have on their own work and the organisation as a whole. However, when audience vigour remains the dream of only a few individuals within the organisation, failure becomes a real possibility . The management has to make clear to everyone that audience vigour will not lead to immediate financial growth or an increase in visitor numbers. However, in the long run, audience vigour could be the only way to secure the future of the entire organisation and its relevance in modern society. Cultural organisations have to keep in mind that internal support is only a part of successful audience vigour. When the community does not feel welcomed or appreciated they will not participate, regardless of the internal support for this idea among the personnel.

Many of the sources that I studied refer to connecting with local communities as the core of successful audience participation; building bridges between culture and communities. This is similar to the definition of the social turn that Bishop mentioned in *Artificial Hells*. She defined the social turn as reacting against the commercialization of society through forming real social bonds and connections (2011). In order to do so, cultural organisations have to understand their role within their local environment. Based on the needs and values of their local communities, theatres and museums should determine which role they want to play. Dialogues and collaborations between cultural organisations and their community are key to this vision on successful audience vigour.

Including people with a culturally diverse background or people who do not normally participate in culture, in the world of theatres and museums might lead to a conflict in perspectives and values. The same goes for the representation of the community in the audience vigour programmes that a cultural organisation could start. If the local community does not recognise itself in the projects and does not get to co-decide on the projects, they might not want to participate. In short, when a cultural organisation approaches community members after proper preparations they will have a better chance at successful audience vigour.



Another conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis is that many success factors could easily become pitfalls if not managed properly. The example that stands out the most is the importance of critical evaluation. If theatres critically evaluate their organisation in general and their audience vigour more specifically this could lead to increased knowledge and progress. However, when this evaluation is only done for marketing purposes and the difficult questions are not being asked, no real change will occur. The critical friends that were used in the Our Museum Programme are a good example of an effective evaluation process that leads to genuine progress (Bienkowski, 2016).

When looking at these conclusions it stands out that they may seem to appear similar to what can be found within any commercial business. However, there is also an important distinction between commercial businesses and the cultural organisations in my research. The goal of these theatres and museums cannot be financial gain, but has to be the creation of sustainable relationships between themselves and their community. According to the analysis, audience vigour will not lead to direct increased visitor numbers or financial gain. In a commercial business everything is about making money. This link between audience vigour and commercial profit is also mentioned by Alston who compared audience participation to neo-liberal values (2013). Cultural organisations have to be aware of the risk of being perceived as only interested in increasing audience numbers and thereby profit, instead of strengthening the quality of their relationship with communities.

## 6. Fieldwork

### *What is successful or unsuccessful audience vigour according to professionals in the Dutch cultural field?*

As mentioned in chapter 3.3 several interviews were conducted to answer the third sub-question. Below all interviews will be discussed based on the analysis questions.

1. Why does your organisation invest in interaction with and participation of your audience?
2. What are the three main activities or initiatives that you conduct in this field?
3. How did you embed this method in your organisation?
4. What chances for audience vigour do you see if you look to the future?
5. What thresholds do you see for the future of audience vigour?

### 6.1 Preliminary research

In total I researched forty-one theatres and thirty-six museums. The majority of both the theatres (27x) and museums (21x) fell into category C, which means they are at the very beginning of integrating audience vigour into their organisation. Six theatres and eleven museums fell into category B, leaving only eight theatres and four museums in category A. The activities of all the researched theatres and museums will be discussed below based on the codes that I used to analyse them.

What stood out in the analysis of the theatres is the focus on productions with local talents who show their own work to an audience. Theatres organising the entire show (both production and creation) or just providing the space (production) and leaving the organisation (creation) to the participants, happens an equal amount of times. These shows are stimulating local talent to not only participate in the organizing of such a show but also to develop their own creative skills. Successful audience vigour programmes would stimulate local talent to organise their own shows, instead of participating in a show organised by the theatre. Inviting the audience to judge the programming is also a popular activity to stimulate audience participation. However this is a limited form of participation and therefore not enough for a true MeeMaakPodium based on the vision of the FCP. Another limited form of participation that is common amongst theatres is framing the theatre as a stage of the city. Only providing a space for local theatre associations is not the same as actively working together with these associations.

Specific programmes for talent development, local dialogues and health and welfare were less common amongst the researched theatres. Another code that was not frequently realised was the influence of the audience on the programming. The majority of these activities is based on the initiative of the theatres instead of self-organised demand from the local community. The best examples of audience vigour activities are local dialogues and co-programming. Seeing that these activities are still very infrequent among the theatres indicated that there is indeed a need for a grant application programme that stimulates this kind of activities in the cultural field.

The creation of art works and exhibiting them in the museum is the most common activity among the museums in this research. This category also refers to curating one's own exhibition with existing art works (for instance from the depot of a museum). The code inclusiveness was also applicable to a lot of the researched activities, since many of the researched museums are stimulating a diverse audience to participate in arts and culture. This is for example done by organising special tours for audience members with a disability. It depends on the extent to which these groups are involved in the decision making if these activities can be classified as real MeeMaakPodium activities based on the view of the FCP.

There are also a lot of museums which present themselves as the museum of the city through crowdfunding campaigns or pop-up locations. This kind of activity is mainly focussed on sending a message towards a potential new audience, but the museum is not stimulating the local community to come up with their own initiatives. Museums do also invest in talent development through master classes or special exhibitions. The majority of these projects is based on the initiative of the museums and not on a collaboration with local artists.

The criteria judging the museum, artists in residence, hostesses and innovation are less common among the organisations that I researched. The artist in residence and innovation programmes are the best example of audience vigour activities, because they really focus on a collaboration between the community and artists or the organisation. Investing in innovation is more common than appointing an artist in residence. However both categories could benefit from a grant application programme that stimulates MeeMaakPodia.

When comparing the museums and the theatres, it is especially remarkable that both fields tend to profile themselves as the stage of the city. Apparently this kind of vocabulary has become common in the cultural sector. However, the practical implementation of that slogan seems to require more attention. The majority of the activities that I found during my research is based on low level participation. I did not find any Projects based on the initiative of the local community, but this could be because the cultural organisations describe the projects as something of their own on their website, even though the original idea might have come from the community. On the other hand the list of theatres and museums trying to change their approach and stimulate more people to get culturally active is quite long. This indicates that the will to change is present. A grant application programme could help these organisations to take the next step in their development towards real MeeMaakPodia.

The different activities that I found during the preliminary research can also be placed within the academic context. The definition of participation that was provided by Hart (2007, pp. 2-3)<sup>3</sup>, proved to be useful, since a lot of theatres and museum focus on health, welfare and inclusion. They are aiming to help the local community to develop skills that will help them in their lives. This is also related to the discussion about the instrumental and artistic value of art. When theatres and museums stimulate community development, this can be seen as a way of instrumentalising arts and culture. The FCP is aiming for stimulating the field of amateur arts through this grant application programme. If the community development leads to more cultural participation among these community members, they will perceive the programme as a success. Just developing the community is not the aim of the FCP.

The definition of audience development provided by the Arts Council can also be applied to the activities within this research (2016a, p. 3). The co-programming within the theatres and the hostesses in the museums are initiatives that aim to attract a more diverse audience to these cultural organisations. Through specific programming or by a special tour for first time visitors, these organisations try to make their audiences feel welcomed and at home. Based on the provided definition it appears that such activities are only focussed on the wishes and needs of the audience and turns the organisation in a mere supplier. A true audience vigour collaboration would serve the wishes and needs of both the cultural organisations and their audience. Two-way traffic instead of a one way demand.

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<sup>3</sup> “participation is seen as the means by which the young come to learn the skills and attitudes that enable them to function as citizens in a democratic state”. Hart also refers to participation as “the means by which the young are empowered to transform the structures, practices and attitudes that exclude them socially, culturally, politically and economically” (2007, pp. 2-3).

The notion of engagement provided by the Scottish Community Development Center is applicable to the activities based on local dialogues and innovation. With these activities the cultural organisations try to create a sustainable relationship with their communities based on equality. Together they search for a new relationship between cultural organisations and their audiences and the relevance of cultural organisations in modern society. These activities are at the heart of successful audience vigour.

The artist in residence projects can be defined as community participation as mentioned by The Our Museum Programme (Bienkowski, 2016, p. 6). The artists go into the communities and work together with locals on creative projects. Since the artists involved are professionals, these projects can also be defined as community arts (Erven, Bouwman, & Zwart, 2011, p. 113). The activities that I scored as talent programmes and creating art projects can also be classified as community arts projects. The professional cultural organisations stimulate talent from their communities to further develop their skills under their guidance. It depends on the influence of the locals on the decision making process to which extent these projects are true audience vigour initiatives.

## 6.2. Interviews organisations

Four interviews were conducted during the course of this research. The organisations were chosen based on their score in the stocktaking. For the entire list of scored organisations, see appendix 9.1.2 and 9.1.4. Besides the scores the visits are also based on the available time and geographic limitations. The organisations that were visited are:

- Museum Rotterdam – Rotterdam (category A)
- Theater de Vaillant – The Hague (category A)
- Theater aan het Spui – The Hague (category C)
- De Domijnen – Sittard (category A)

### 6.2.1 Museum Rotterdam

*The interview with Paul van de Laar, the director of Museum Rotterdam, took place on April 10<sup>th</sup> 2017 in the museum. Due to privacy reasons the entire transcript of the interview will not be made public.*

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The aim of Van de Laar is to increase the bond between professional organisations and the field of cultural participation. By doing so, both sides can keep each other on their toes. Professional organisations should focus more on involvement and participation, but that is not commercially attractive for investors. Even though, in its essence, culture is meant to provide awareness and emancipation, investors claim that a museum is no place for social work. At the Museum Rotterdam participation and interaction are part of the mission and vision of the organisation, but it's a continuous battle with funding. For the FCP this is important since they want to use the mission and vision as criteria for the grant application programme. However, just naming them in the mission and vision is not enough to ensure the long-term sustainability of MeeMaakPodium projects. The FCP has to be aware of this pitfall while assessing the applications.

According to Van de Laar it is difficult to find partners within the museum world that want to invest in social projects. He is looking into establishing a separate foundation for these projects. The foundation could look for partners outside the museum that also care for the future of the city and the wellbeing of the communities. These partners could invest in new developments and map the outcomes, so that evidence can be collected that supports the effects of arts and culture. Partnerships with other organisations are also important for successful audience vigour. Through other organisations theatres and museums might be able to reach the community and to make the first contact.

Van de Laar is worried that the Museum Association seems to be unaware or dismissive of these developments. There has been no attention for projects or developments within the sector that could serve as an example for other organisations. The Dutch Raad voor Cultuur<sup>4</sup> does pay attention to the new developments and applauds it. It is important to find a new form for the museum, since the current supply-driven way of making exhibitions is old-fashioned and no longer attracts new audiences. According to Van de Laar this urge does not come from the sector itself, but he believes that it should be. The FCP wants to collaborate with the MeeMaakPodia applicants on the creation of a knowledge base. Organisations that first start working on audience vigour could learn from others that have done it before. Organisations that are more in the lead could inspire others to take the next step.

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<sup>4</sup> The Dutch Raad voor Cultuur is the legal advisory body of the Dutch government in the field of arts, culture and media. The council is independent and advises, both solicited and unsolicited, on current policy issues and subsidy applications (Raad voor Cultuur, 2018).

To find this new form, Van de Laar has developed a triangle model based on form, range and community. These three notions are interconnected, so a cultural organisation should work on all three to become successful. They need to know who the community is, how they can be reached and in which form the subject could be presented to them. The problem lies in the form, because usually the community does not know exactly what they want either, because the museum is not something they are familiar with. The challenge lies in finding the right form for the right audience. He urges for rethinking the concept of what a museum is and how it can contribute to society. This cultural innovation is also relevant for audience vigour. The FCP aims for a society in which more people can actively participate in art and culture. To achieve that goal, cultural organisations have to change and pay more attention to their communities.

For the application of his model, Van de Laar proposes a roadmap of interaction. Museums should start with going into the neighbourhoods, followed by giving the people a say in the decision making process. The next step would be to develop a project together with the community, in an equal cooperation between the museum and the community. Finally in the experimental phase the museum needs to find ways to sustain the project and keep the community involved. The actual exhibition within the museum should be part of that entire process and not the end product. This roadmap could also be used for audience vigour. It is a good example of the knowledge that could be shared between the organisations. In the assessment of the applications the FCP needs to look into all the phases that Van de Laar describes.

The focus on awareness and emancipation provided by Van de Laar is similar to the definition of participation mentioned by Jason Hart (2007, pp. 2-3). Cultural participation is about more than just creating art, it stimulates a lot of other virtues. The bottom-up processes he mentioned are similar to the definition of audience development as described by the Arts Council (2016a, p. 3). The critique on community arts by Belfiore and Bennet, was also mentioned in the interview (2002, 2010), when Van de Laar stated that working on awareness and emancipation is not attractive in an economic way and is therefore perceived as useless. Finding investors for audience vigour is therefore really hard.

### 6.2.2 Theater de Vaillant

*The interview with Harrie van de Louw took place on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in Theater de Vaillant. Due to privacy reasons the entire transcript of the interview will not be made public.*

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Van de Louw defines cultural innovation as the stimulation of rigorous change. Giving space to new ideas and continuous improvements is essential in a time of change. Therefore they set up Studio S, a testing ground for young urban talents. They believe that a communal theatre should not be hidden in an ill maintained building but that it should be an inviting environment with good facilities. These facilities will bring out the best in the people that use it. To bring people to the theatre it is important to have an ongoing conversation with the community. The question should be, what do they want and how low should the thresholds be? Theatre de Vaillant wants to be a do-it-yourself theatre where everyone can share their view on arts and culture with others. By incorporating local youngsters in the company they learn how to cooperate with other people and they feel appreciated. Projects need to be build bottom-up, it has to be an organic process.

The FCP also wants to stimulate new ideas and improvements among cultural organisations. In line with the Vaillant they believe that community arts should not be hidden but something that needs to be shared among the entire community. With the new grant the FCP stimulates cultural organisations to start a dialogue with their community. This is not really a bottom-up process. However, when the cultural organisations are really opening up to the community, community members might feel free to contact these organisations about new projects. This could lead to bottom-up projects in the long run.

A pitfall for the Vaillant theatre is a lack of funding. For now they can survive based on project funding, but it takes a lot of time and energy to apply for these funds. On the one hand Van de Louw and his team gave a lot of freedom, but on the other hand they have to search continuously for new sources of funding. It takes a lot of courage to target difficult audience groups instead of the easy to reach groups. Large theatres have more funding than the Vaillant but they do not focus on these difficult groups as much as Van de Louw and his team. According to Van de Louw the majority of the cultural funds within the municipality of The Hague goes to the traditional theatres that attract traditional audiences. The communal theatres receive only 4% of the budget, even though 52% of the inhabitants of The Hague has a cultural diverse background and feels less or not at all involved in the traditional theatres. Van de Louw suggests that cultural organisations can buy off their diversity shortage through a sort of 'cultural emission' compensation tax. That way, theatres that address cultural diverse groups will receive more funding to keep doing their difficult work.

The FCP can provide a small amount of funding for these kinds of projects. However, the FCP cannot fund these cultural organisations in the long run. During the grant period, the organisations have to search for other means of funding to make sure the projects won't finish when the grant runs out. To interest other parties for the funding of these organisations, the FCP wants to build a knowledge base. During the grant period the organisations can share their knowledge and results with each other. Together they will have to search for ways to 'prove' the effects of audience vigour.

### 6.2.3 Theater aan het Spui

*The interview with Cees Debets, the director of Theater aan het Spui took place on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in the theatre. Due to privacy reasons the entire transcript of the interview will not be made public.*

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Theater aan het Spui has recently merged with two other cultural organisations in The Hague, de Koninklijke Schouwburg and het Nationale Toneel. They merged in order to create new dynamics which lead to new opportunities. The new organisation invests in talent development, education and audience expansion. The latter is the main goal of the merge according to Debets. As an organisation they strive to respond to questions from society. While developing new productions they ask themselves for whom is it meant and what does it contribute to society as a whole. These questions need to go beyond the vision of the director of the production, there needs to be an active way to create a bond with the audience. Bonding with the audience is also important for audience vigour. However, Theater Aan het Spui still creates the productions on their own, instead of incorporating the audience in the decision making process.

According to Debets the organisation is also investing in community projects alongside the productions. Everyone considers it logical to have swimming lessons in the swimming pool, but the same does not apply for drama classes in the theatre. Therefore, Theater aan het Spui has broken the boundaries and did take the drama classes to the theatre. We collect stories from the community and then we edit them into a theatrical performance. According to Debets this is a sort of 'etnomarketing'. The problem with these projects is that after the projects have ended all the gathered experience and knowledge is lost. The knowledge that was build during one project is not applicable for the next project. Therefore the conclusion cannot be tested or proved, which means it is not possible to apply for structural funding. Debets calls it capital destruction, because there is a lot of time and effort invested in product development, but the gathered knowledge will be thrown away after the project.

Funding appears to be a structural pitfall among cultural organisations working on audience vigour. The capital destruction mentioned by Debets might be decreased by the knowledge that will be gathered by the FCP. In cooperation with the LKCA, the Dutch knowledge institute for cultural education and amateur arts, the FCP will publish the gathered knowledge. Based on this 'evidence', it might become easier for cultural organisations to apply for funding for audience vigour. It would be interesting to evaluate the effects of the FCP grant for the cultural sector.

Even though Debets emphasizes the problems with funding, he is not in favour of redirecting money from the production budget to social projects. The artistic quality is also of high importance to him. He uses the notion of 'impact-production' to summarize his vision. He believes in finding the right kind of communication for each production or project. He wants to search for ways to fund the continuity of discontinuous projects. This could be done by, for example, opening up space for an impact producer who can apply the gathered knowledge on multiple projects and in that way build further upon this knowledge.

The role of an impact producer is also relevant to audience vigour. For example, cultural organisations could hire an impact producer to oversee the full picture of all aspects of the organisation. This would prevent the audience vigour activities from being a loose part of the organisation that is not connected to other aspects. The continuity of this role within the organisation should be guaranteed through internal funding instead of external project grants. The knowledge base the FCP wants to create could stimulate external funders to invest in audience vigour.



#### 6.2.4 De Domijnen

*The interview with Tom de Rooij, the director of de Domijnen took place on April 21<sup>st</sup> 2017 in the theatre. Due to privacy reasons the entire transcript of the interview will not be made public.*

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De Domijnen is a cultural organisation that has to provide cultural activities for five different municipalities within the region. According to De Rooij they try to stimulate participation in each of those municipalities. There are invisible borders between the municipalities that he tries to breach. The people tend to stay in their own municipality instead of participating in activities in any of the other municipalities. De Rooij sees it as his responsibility to challenge people to look beyond their borders. Breaking through walls is also a goal of audience vigour. Cultural organisations need to look beyond their borders into their local communities. These walls can be different for each cultural organisation, as can be seen in the example from De Domijnen.

De Rooij always tries to find common ground between the organisation and the communities. In the municipality of Beek, the municipality wanted to close the local library. Both the De Domijnen and the community were angry about this development, so they collaborated to keep the library. De Rooij searches for collaborations in which each partner can do what they are best at. Therefore the role of De Domijnen can be different in each collaboration. They could just facilitate or have a more active role in the organisation of a project. This diversity is also important within audience vigour. Each community has different wishes and needs that the cultural organisations need to respond to. Therefore the cultural organisations need to be flexible and ready to think outside the box.

According to De Rooij, professional artists tend to hide their history in amateur arts. However, according to De Rooij this connection between amateurs and professional is of great importance. Success stories can be inspirational for people who are also dreaming of becoming a professional artist. Within sports this connection is always made and perceived as logical. The same normality should apply for arts and culture, he believes. Making the arts accessible is very important for the FCP as well. People might think that, for example, theatre is not meant for them, because it is only for people who are 'good' at it. However, each professional started off just the same as they did. This change in perspective could change the perception of arts and culture. One of the goals of the FCP is to make people feel welcome in cultural organisations. The connection between professionals and amateurs could be a way to reach that goal and increase audience vigour among cultural organisations.

### 6.3 Interview Matarasso

*During the International Community Arts Festival in Rotterdam I conducted an interview with François Matarasso. As an expert on the social effects of audience participation in the arts his view on audience vigour is very useful to my research. Due to privacy reasons the entire transcript of the interview will not be made public.*

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According to Matarasso changing the system and increasing social inclusion cannot be achieved by working with the government. He no longer believes that the government (in general) is an honest sparring partner, that wants to work on common goals. Therefore he is not interested in engaging with government policies. This is interesting for the FCP because they received their assignment from the Dutch government. However, Matarasso also stated that working with the government depends on whether or not the government can be trusted. In the Netherlands there is no real corruption or actions that violate human rights. Matarasso therefore said that the FCP could try to work with the government but that it should trust its own ability to create change.

The same goes for the relationship between the FCP and its other stakeholders in terms of evaluation and control. The first step in this process is based on a philosophical question. Matarasso stated that “The first thing, there is a basic philosophical question that they may not be able to answer, but I think it is essential to be aware that it exists. Which is: are you being asked to justify things that other people are not being asked to justify?”. Continuing on the philosophical path, he then states that we need to accept that we cannot know everything, except if we have unlimited funding. However, every penny that is spend on evaluation cannot be spend on the actual projects. It all comes down to trust in yourself, your methods and the people behind the projects.

*“If you have a system that tests the concept and there is evidence that the concept is well founded. There is plenty of evidence that shows if you do dance and movement work with old people, there will be general health and wellbeing benefits. Fewer falls and fewer costs. The results may vary from one dance movement project with old people to another, but across the country and across time, if you invest in this it is a reasonable assumption that there will be positive benefits. Then what you need to do is test the competence of the people delivering it and how they propose they do it. That is all in the grant application process, it is not even in the evaluation. If you get that right and your analysis is right in that stage. You can grant with real confidence; you can be fairly sure that there will be good outcomes. Not in specifics, but in broad terms you know they will be good”.*

The FCP needs to find a way to apply this way of reasoning on the MeeMaakPodia grant. They have to make sure that the grant attracts competent organisations that are really willing to work on their relationship with their community and do so in a way that appeals to common sense. This is also relevant for audience vigour in general since cultural organisations can use this reason to justify their audience vigour programme.

Matarasso also referred to the discussion about the autonomy of artists and the art world. He wondered why an artist was more entitled to autonomy than anyone else. Both a lawyer and an artist are working “for clients for specific reasons and specific purposes”. Quality and autonomy are not the same and should not be confused with one another. The quality of any work should be good, no matter if it was created in a social project or for artistic purposes only. According to Matarasso artists that require more autonomy than the people they are working with are stuck in a power relation that is out of balance. Power relations are also relevant for the MeeMaakPodium situation. The cultural organisations need to address their communities as equals and not as if they are missionaries coming over to share their truth. Of course in the beginning the organisations will have more knowledge, but they need to be willing to share their knowledge with their community in order for everyone to grow. However, in my opinion the organisations also have something they need to learn from the community, so the power relation is not completely unbalanced.

Besides unhealthy power relations Matarasso also mentioned another pitfall during the interview:

*“You may be on the threshold of falling into the trap of knowing how this is done. I think in Britain we have long ago fallen into that trap. When you think you know how to do this work, I think you are indifferent because you stop asking yourself questions. I think at that point you are in danger of losing real integrity. You stop living the experience, you start delivering. One of my least liked words in community arts is delivery. We don’t deliver a product, we work with people. We work together in real life. If we lose sight of that, we might as well stop”.*

This pitfall is mainly relevant for organisations that are already working on audience vigour. They need to continuously be willing to learn more and to be open to change. Once they think they already have all the answers, they might find out the opposite is true. The intervision meetings that the FCP will organise together with the LKCA are a good example of keeping an eye on lifelong learning, also for cultural organisations and not just participants. During the meetings the organisations can learn from each other and knowledge can be gathered. Based on this knowledge the cultural organisations don’t have to reinvent the wheel over and over.

## 6.4 Conclusion

A lack of funding was often mentioned by the interviewees. The suggested solution to this obstacle differed per interview. The Rotterdam Museum mainly focuses on external funding. They are searching for investors from the field of social work or commercial donors who care deeply about the city. Working bottom up, from the people in society to the museum exhibition, would be ideal according to the director of the museum. Arts and culture are primarily aimed at stimulating awareness, emancipation and social engagement. Investors who claim that arts and culture have nothing to do with social work, are just wrong, according to him. It should not be about economic value but about social impact. There should be room for creativity and experimenting.

The Vaillant theatre has another solution to increase its funding possibilities. They are suggesting to divide the money available over the theatres in a city based on the diversity of their public. The director referred to the Code Cultural Diversity as a possible tool for this redistribution. When a theatre does not meet its goals for cultural diversity they can buy it off at a theatre that does reach a very diverse audience. Like the Rotterdam Museum they also emphasize the importance of experiments. Investors should not restrict cultural organisations too much but give them space to figure things out on their own. We should work towards a new vision on society and the role of arts and culture within that society.

Since working on awareness and emancipation is not attractive in an economic way it is therefore perceived as useless. According to the Spui theatre this problem is also linked to the lack of evidence that would support the cause. After every project all the knowledge that was gained goes to waste, since the people have to start working on a new project. By stimulating the continuity of these projects, more evidence can be build, leading to a more attractive cause for investors. There should be more room for research and development within the cultural sector. That way it would be even more fruitful to invest in participatory projects. However, the Spui theatre believes that the budget for audience vigour shouldn't influence the budget for the other productions. In that sense they do see a difference between audience vigour projects and the regular activities of the theatre. This is a bit different from the other interviewees, who believe that connecting with the community should be at the core of the organisation.

De Domijnen also has problems with funding participatory projects. The relation between arts and social work is not always clear to everyone. They also struggle with the borders between different communities. Stimulating people to break their boundaries is very challenging. However, arts and culture are a great way of achieving that. Another issue that was mentioned by the director of the Domijnen was the connection between amateurs and professionals. Making connections between amateur musicians and the performance of professionals in the theatre seems obvious, but it's not always that easy. Professional artists sometimes seem to distance themselves from the amateur field, even though that is where they once started out as well.

When comparing the interviews it stands out that there is no real difference between the theatres and the museums. They both face similar problems in relation to audience vigour and achieving their ambitions, which are mentioned below.

If I compare the different interviews the answers can be placed within a few categories. . The number one issue in implementing audience vigour is money, or a lack thereof. All organisations struggle with finding investors for their participatory projects. All the interviewees see the potential of the knowledge base build by the FCP for attracting more investors. Since this knowledge base can be used as a form of proof of the effects of audience vigour.

Another commonly mentioned category is experimentation. The majority of the interviewees from the Dutch field as well as Matarasso mentioned the significance of experiments for successful audience vigour. They are also aiming for fewer regulations, less bureaucracy and more space for trial and error. The connection between the fields of culture and social work was also mentioned by the majority of the interviewees. This last connection is also related to the academic context in which there is a discussion about the instrumentalisation of arts and culture. Some scholars argue that arts and culture should not be used as a means to achieve other goals. According to the interviewees arts and culture are by nature associated with engagement and awareness and therefore they see no problem with the overlap between arts and social issues.

Compared to the interviews with the professionals from the field, the interview with François Matarasso was on a broader level. Where the professionals mentioned day-to-day situations, Matarasso looks into general developments that are taking place within the sector. However, there was also some overlap between Matarasso and the professionals from the field. Matarasso mentioned the extent to which the government can be trusted. Van de Laar also touched upon this issue when he stated that cultural organisations are being used as a tool for city marketing and branding instead of providing arts and culture for everyone. The knowledge base that could be created through collaboration between cultural organisations interested in audience vigour was also mentioned by both Matarasso and the other interviewees.

In conclusion many theatres and museums are already working on becoming more social organisations and are investing in audience vigour. However, the majority of the organisations is not in transition yet. Cultural organisations that are working with audience vigour invest in their relationship with their community and search for ways to help them out. They believe that culture and social work are strongly connected and should go hand in hand. These organisations struggle with a lack of funding for their social initiatives. These projects are not attractive in an economic way and are therefore hard to fund.

## 7. Conclusion & Discussion

### 7.1 Conclusion

What are the main success and failure factors in the implementation of audience vigour in the Dutch cultural sector?

To provide an answer to the main research question I have analysed several policy documents, publications from the field and interviews with professionals from the field. Based on the analysis I can distinguish several similarities and differences between the definitions of audience vigour and the success and failure factors of the implementation of audience vigour.

The definition of audience vigour that I constructed based on the theoretical framework was:

*the active and ongoing involvement of - and collaboration with - the members of the community in the decision making and programming of the cultural organisation for the mutual beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources to form sustainable partnerships and create a sense of ownership among the public.*

The definitions of audience vigour that I found within the policy discourse do not really reflect my definition. The policy makers focus on the positive effect of the arts on peoples' lives and how culture enriches life. Even though that is also at the core of my perspective on audience vigour, I did not include it in the definition itself. The broadening of the audience range that was mentioned by Bussemaker is included in my definition, in the sense that the involvement of the members of the community needs to be stimulated.

The definitions that I found in the publications from the field are more similar to my definition. The creation of significance that was mentioned in the publications is related to my sense of ownership. The aim of audience vigour is to increase the social legitimisation of cultural organisations. The role of internal support is not specifically mentioned in my definition but it is evident that giving the community a say in the decision making process requires organisational change, which means staff support is crucial. However, the staff is not the main actor that needs to be supportive of the audience vigour programmes. The main target group is the community itself, without them audience vigour cannot exist.

Regarding the success and failure factors, my analysis showed a lot of different factors. There were some similarities between the different discourses I analysed. Both the policy discourse and the interviewed professionals from the cultural field stressed the importance of collaboration between cultural organisations and organisations in other fields. These collaborations could be seen as a form of instrumentalising arts. However, I agree with the professionals from the field that arts and culture are by nature associated with engagement and awareness and therefore there is no problem with these collaborations. The FCP aims for increasing the participation in the arts, collaborations between the world of arts and culture and other sectors is one of the ways to achieve this goal.

Besides the collaboration with other organisations, I found that the connection with the community is also an important success factor of audience vigour. The community is evidently an important actor to make a success of any audience vigour programme. If the community is not on board, the chances of success are minimal. One of the failure factors that influences the relation with the community is the representation of the community within the projects. The cultural organisations need to get to know their community and the different individuals within the community. If the community members do not feel like they are represented in the projects and they do not feel a sense of ownership, they most likely do not want to participate. The FCP will have to monitor the grant applicants during the grant period to see how this affects the projects and which ways of connecting with the community work better than others.

The rest of the success and failure factors differed a lot between the different levels of analysis. The policy papers mentioned the use of audience vigour to change peoples' view on the world. This is a broad perspective on what arts and culture can do for society. This broad perspective is linked to the academic discussion about the instrumental and intrinsic value of the arts. The publications from the field and the interviews with the professionals provided more micro-level success and failure factors, such as a lack of funding and the distribution of government funding within municipalities. However, the interview with François Matarasso was also on a more macro-level. In conclusion I would say that the policymakers and academics have a discussion on a different level than the people in the field. This would also explain the differences in success and failure factors and the discrepancy between the financiers and the cultural organisations. With the knowledge base the FCP could try to fill this gap between the needs of MeeMaakPodia and investors, to bring both parties closer together. In my opinion this would lead to a better spread of funding based on a combination of economical and social effects instead of only one of the two.

The FCP could best start with providing grants to organisations that are already working on audience vigour. The purpose would be to increase awareness among other cultural organisations, society and investors. There will be a lot of knowledge gathered in the process that can be used by other cultural organisations and investors to change the entire sector. Starting from scratch with organisations that are not yet in transition might provide less useful evidence because they do not have the contacts in their community yet. The organisations that have already started their transition can provide more useful information about what works and what not. This way the FCP can use their grant application programme for a cultural experiment leading to cultural renewal. By doing so the cultural diversity of the country will be better reflected in the established cultural infrastructure. Inevitably leading to change.

Experimenting and stimulating renewal among cultural disciplines is in the core assignment of the National Cultural Funds of the Netherlands. So the FCP can execute its assignment in a new and innovative way, while at the same time addressing their main target group, amateurs and beginners in the field of arts and culture. When professional cultural organisations open up towards their community, there will be more possibilities for these people to develop their artistic skills. Enabling people to showcase themselves and their beliefs through arts and culture is at the heart of what the FCP strives for.

## 7.2 Discussion

The scope of this research was limited to theatres and museums in the Dutch cultural field. Therefore the findings of my research might not be applicable to the entire field of arts and culture within the Netherlands. However, considering the similarities between the fields of theatres and museums that I found in my research, it could well be that the findings are applicable to other cultural fields. Since my research was also not representative for theatres and museums, the results might not be applicable to museums and theatres in general either. For a follow-up research, it could be interesting to increase the scope and have a more representative group of respondents. The majority of my research consisted of desk research. A more in-depth field research could also provide more useful insights into the discourse around and implementation of audience vigour.

An important group of respondents that is missing from my research, is the community itself. Doing interviews or other kinds of field research with specific communities will provide more insights into their side of the story. When cultural organisations only base their actions on their own views the communities might not feel invited to the cultural organisations. Since one of the aims of the new grant application programme is to empower amateurs in the field of arts and culture, communicating with them is essential.

In my research only cultural organisations that are interested in this transition were interviewed. It might also be very informing to research why other cultural organisations are not interested in interaction with their communities. The insights gathered through such research might stimulate more organisations to invest in audience vigour or it could help organisations in transition to see the difficulties they could encounter along the way.

One of the key success factors that I found during my research was about the representation of the community within the audience vigour projects. It would be interesting to further research the issue of representation in relation to audience vigour to advise cultural organisation on their communication with their community. The failure factor mentioned by Asselman focussed on a restriction on openness for audience vigour projects. Asselman believes that cultural organisations should not open up to everyone, but that they should focus on specific groups within the community and keep it small. They should shield their projects until they are ready for the large majority. This restriction is partly contradictory to what audience vigour is about. Only addressing small groups might not have the effect the cultural organisations are aiming for. However, it could also be that the shielding strategy works better in the field than opening up to everyone. It could be interesting to further research that issue. For example, it might be useful for organisations to start with a 'shielded' try-out phase and afterwards open up to a broader audience.



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## 9. Appendix

### 9.1 List of theatres and museums

Based on the organisations within the scope I have created a scale to measure the extent to which the cultural organisations can be defined as MeeMaakPodia. The activities that the organisations undertake are compared to the definition of MeeMaakPodia that is used by the FCP. They define a MeeMaakPodium as an organisation that works demand-driven, is connecting and communicating with its local community and is open to initiatives from this community. Based on this definition I have distinguished three categories.

- A. MeeMaakPodium by example (8 or more points)  
The organisation is a real MeeMaakPodium in the core of its being and can be an example for other organisations.
- B. MeeMaakPodium light (5-7 points)  
The organisation undertakes several activities that make them a MeeMaakPodium, but there is room for more.
- C. MeeMaakPodium in progress (1-4 points)  
The organisation is working on becoming a MeeMaakPodium, but is not quite there yet.

#### 9.1.1 Codes theatres

For the analysis of the theatres the following codes were used.

- Judges / club of viewers (1 point)  
Some theatres invite their audience to judge the productions they have watched. These scores have a small influence on the programming of the theatre. Other theatres have a club of viewers. A group of audience members that visit a series of productions together discuss their experiences with each other and the theatre staff.
- City as a stage (1 point)  
A lot of theatres frame themselves as a stage of the city. They invite local art groups to present their work on the theatre stage. The theatres do not assist these groups with the creation of the production, they merely provide space.
- Local production / talent show (2 points)  
Some theatres organise talent shows where local performers can present their work to an audience. Often these talent shows provide the winner with the opportunity to further develop his or her talent. Besides talent shows, some theatres organise their own productions with local talent.
- Talent development (2 points)  
Some theatres have special programmes for talent development. Often these programmes aim at talented young people that want to develop their skills. Their individual wishes and needs are the centre of the of the programme.
- Co-programming (3 points)  
Some theatres design their programming in association with their local community. This can be a special line of programming within the broader programming or the entire programming.
- Health and welfare (1 point)

An issue that is often addressed by theatres is the health and welfare of their local communities. They provide special courses about health or have a line of programming especially targeted at minority groups.

- **Creating (2 points)**  
Some theatres provide courses in which local talent can create their own work in association with professionals from their field of choice. The theatre is mainly the supplier of the space and the connector between supply and demand.
- **Local dialogues (2 points)**  
To get in touch with their local communities, some theatres go into the surrounding neighbourhoods. During these site visits they ask input from the locals on the programming of the theatre. Sometimes they create a temporary cultural hub in these neighbourhoods to stimulate the locals to visit the theatre.

### 9.1.2 Scored theatres

Based on the scale the theatres within the scope have been divided over the different categories. In the table below the list of all theatres that were researched can be found.

Table 1: Theatres per category

	Theatre	Category
1	Theater aan het Spui – Den Haag	C
2	De Harmonie – Leeuwarden	C
3	Rabotheater – Hengelo	C
4	Corrosia – Almere	A
5	Vaillant – Den Haag	A
6	Bijlmerpark theater – Amsterdam	A
7	Zuidplein – Rotterdam	C
8	Deventer Schouwburg	B
9	Theater de Meerse – Hoofddorp	C
10	Meervaart – Amsterdam	C
11	Cool – Heerhugowaard	B
12	Chassé – Breda	C
13	Agora – Lelystad	C
14	Zaantheater – Zaandam	C
15	Cultura – Ede	C
16	Atlas – Emmen	C
17	Castellum – Alphen aan den Rijn	A
18	Domijnen – Sittard	A
19	Dok6 – Panningen	C
20	Theaterhotel Figi – Zeist	C
21	Isala – Capelle aan den IJssel	C
22	Meerpaal – Dronten	C
23	Parkstad – Kerkrade/Heerlen	B
24	Parktheater – Eindhoven	B
25	Rotterdamse Schouwburg	A
26	De Lawei – Drachten	C
27	Orpheus – Apeldoorn	B
28	Amphion – Doetinchem	C
29	Ogterop – Meppel	C
30	De Maagd – Bergen op Zoom	C
31	Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam	C
32	Slinger – Houten	C
33	Koornbeurs – Franeker	C
34	Aan de Parade – Den Bosch	C
35	De Bussel – Oosterhout	C
36	Kattendans – Bergeijk	C
37	Lievekamp – Oss	C
38	Maaspoort – Venlo	C
39	De Schalm – Veldhoven	B
40	Westland de Naald – Naaldwijk	A
41	Zwolse Theaters	A

### 9.1.3 Codes museums

For the analysis of the museums the following codes were used.

- Judging (1 point)  
Some museums invite their audiences to share their opinion on specific art works or the entire exhibition. These initiatives can be targeted at specific audiences, such as children, or be for the general public.
- City museum (1 point)  
Some museums profile themselves as the museum of the city. Owned by everyone and aimed at everyone. They museums do not work together with their local community but try to reach them.
- Creating / Exhibiting (2 points)  
In some museums the audience is invited to create their own art. Sometimes these art works are even exhibited within the museum. The assignment is decided upon by the museum but the audience is free to participate.
- Talent development (2 points)  
Some museums offer special programmes for local talent to further develop their skills. The programmes are initiated by the museums and the artists are invited to participate in the programme.
- Artist in residence (3 points)  
Some museums start a collaboration with an experienced artist. This artist works with the local community on art projects that benefit the entire community.
- Inclusion (2 points)  
Some museums have taken it upon themselves to stimulate the participation of all groups in society. Addressing minority groups or people with problems through special exhibitions or workshops.
- Hostess (1 point)  
Visiting a museum when you have no experience with art can be frightful. Some museums have special hostesses that make people feel welcome and can help them understand the exhibition. These staff members are specifically trained for this kind of work. They are often older volunteers that have a lot of knowledge about the museum.
- Innovation (3 points)  
The museum field is in need of innovation to remain relevant in the contemporary society. Some museum invest in innovative projects to find new roles for museums and new ways to attract audiences.



#### 9.1.4 Scored museums

Based on the scale the museums within the scope have been divided over the different categories. In the table below the list of all museums that were researched can be found.

Table 2: Museums per category

	<b>Museums</b>	<b>Category</b>
1	Van Abbemuseum – Eindhoven	A
2	Stadsmuseum Zoetermeer	C
3	Museum van Bommel van Dam – Venlo	C
4	Amsterdam Museum	B
5	Foam – Amsterdam	A
6	Textielmuseum – Tilburg	C
7	Naturalis – Leiden	C
8	Museum Arnhem	C
9	Nederlands Openlucht museum – Arnhem	C
10	Centraal Museum – Utrecht	B
11	Limburgs Museum – Venlo	C
12	Catharijneconvent – Utrecht	B
13	Dr888 – Drachten	C
14	Museum Rotterdam	A
15	Museumwerf Vreeswijk – Utrecht	C
16	Nationaal Museum Wereldculturen – Amsterdam	A
17	Zeeuws Museum – Middelburg	B
18	Archeon – Alphen aan den Rijn	C
19	Museum de Fundatie – Zwolle	C
20	Aviodrome – Lelystad	C
21	Museum Kranenburgh – Bergen NH	B
22	Allard Pierson museum – Amsterdam	C
23	Basis Actuele Kunst – Utrecht	B
24	Cube Design – Kerkrade	C
25	Coda – Apeldoorn	B
26	Joods Historisch Museum – Amsterdam	C
27	Gemeente Museum – Den Haag	B
28	Rijksmuseum Twenthe – Enschede	C
29	Beelden aan Zee – Scheveningen	C
30	Rembrandthuis – Amsterdam	C
31	De Appel – Amsterdam	C
32	De Casteelse Poort – Wageningen	C
33	Nationaal Glas Museum – Leerdam	C
34	Verzetmuseum – Amsterdam	B
35	De Koperen Knop – Hardinxveld Giessendam	C
36	De Oude Kerk – Amsterdam	B

## 9.6 Interview François Matarasso

### 9.6.1 Interview questions

The interview was based on the following questions.

1. In 1997 you published *Use or Ornament* which contained a list of the positive effects of community arts projects. It's been quite a while since then. What are the biggest differences or similarities between your findings now and the ones mentioned in *Use or Ornament*?
2. On the *Restless Art* website you describe your vision on cultural participation in relation to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. How does the ICAF festival relate to this vision?
3. On the *Parliament of Dreams* you wrote an article about monitoring, evaluating and researching culture. In this article you state that the value of culture cannot be proven in the same way as for example the melting point of iron. Cultural organisations such as ICAF and the Cultural Participation Fund search for ways to evaluate their programs. How would you advise them to do that?
4. In the same article you also state that organisations should use monitoring processes that are capable of both demonstrating the public value of grants and providing big data. How do you think the Cultural Participation Fund could create such a monitoring process for the grants they provide?
5. For my internship I am researching what sorts of public participations are already taking place in Dutch theaters. Do you have any specific tips or insights for participation in theatre in comparison to other art fields?
6. Your main work area is the United Kingdom but you also research the situations in other countries such as the Netherlands. What is your view on Dutch field of cultural participation?
7. Tabo Goudswaard is a Dutch researcher in the field of the impact of art. His study shows that both artists and social organisations are not aware of the impact their cooperation could have. Do you agree with this conclusion?
  - a. Do you see differences between different countries?
8. The Cultural Participation Fund is one of the six main government funding providers in the Dutch cultural field.
  - a. Do you think the government should fund arts and culture? Why?
  - b. How do you see the role of such funds in the future?

9. Some artists are afraid that they will lose their autonomy and become an instrument when they create art related to social problems. They want to focus on the artistic value rather than the social return of art. How do you think artists can keep their autonomy but also have a social impact?
10. Which opportunities do you see in the field of cultural participation that are currently not seized?
  - a. How does ICAF handle these opportunities in your opinion?
11. Which pitfalls do you see in the field of cultural participation that you want to warn organisations about?
  - a. How do you think ICAf handles these challenges?
12. What methods or techniques would you advise ICAF to use for coping with these challenges?