



D4.4. Co-creation process and opera full performance evaluation

DISSEMINATION LEVEL	PUBLIC (PU)
WORK PACKAGE	WP4 COMMUNITY-CENTRIC METHODOLOGY AND VALIDATION
DELIVERABLE NUMBER	D4.4
VERSION	V1.0
SUBMISSION DATE	22/12/2022
DUE DATE	31/12/2022





Authors

Authors in alphabetical order		
Name	Organisation	Email
Anna Matamala	UAB	Anna.matamala@uab.cat

Control sheet

Version history			
Version	Date	Modified by	Summary of changes
0.1	01/09/2022	Anna Matamala	ToC and first draft
0.2	20/11/2022	Anna Matamala	First draft by UAB
0.3	11/12/2022	Anna Matamala	Version with partners' comments for internal review
1.0	21/12/2022	Anna Matamala	Version including reviewers' comments

Peer review		
	Reviewer name	Date
Reviewer 1	Mohammed Amine Togou	13/12/2022
Reviewer 2	Pablo César	15/12/2022

Legal disclaimer

The information and views set out in this deliverable are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. The information in this document is provided "as is", and no guarantee or warranty is given that the information is fit for any specific purpose. Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein. The Traction Consortium members shall have no liability for damages of any kind including without limitation direct, special, indirect, or consequential damages that may result from the use of these materials subject to any liability which is mandatory due to applicable law. Copyright © Traction Consortium, 2022.



Table of content

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Purpose of the deliverable	1
1.2	The three Traction trials: a short overview	1
1.2.1	LICEU: community opera with people from Raval	1
1.2.2	SAMP: opera co-creation with inmates in prison	1
1.2.3	INO: Virtual Reality opera with Irish communities	1
1.3	Intended audience	2
2	Traction evaluation approach	3
2.1	Participants	3
2.2	The map of indicators	4
3	Co-creation and performance evaluation	5
3.1	Evaluation instruments	5
3.2	Methodological approach	10
3.3	Data	10
4	LICEU	12
4.1	The LICEU trial	12
4.1.1	The workshops	12
4.1.2	The performances	13
4.2	Co-creation: participants' profile and involvement	16
4.3	Evaluating the co-creation process	18
4.3.1	Questionnaires: quantitative data	18
4.3.2	Questionnaires, evaluation log and interviews: qualitative data	19
4.4	Evaluating the artistic output	29
4.4.1	Audience questionnaire	29
4.4.2	Experts' assessment	34
4.4.3	Interviews with professional and non-professional artists	37
5	SAMP	39
5.1	The SAMP trial	39
5.1.1	The workshops	39
5.1.2	The performances	39
5.2	Co-creation: participants' profile and involvement	42
5.3	Evaluating the co-creation process	44
5.4	Evaluating the artistic output	54



5.4.1	Audience questionnaires.....	54
5.4.2	Experts' assessment.....	59
5.4.3	Interviews with professional and evaluation sessions with non-professional artists.....	64
6	INO.....	68
6.1	The INO trial.....	68
6.1.1	The workshops.....	68
6.1.2	The performance.....	69
6.2	Co-creation: participants' profile and involvement.....	71
6.3	Evaluating the co-creation process.....	73
6.3.1	Questionnaires: quantitative data.....	73
6.3.2	Questionnaires, evaluation log and interviews: qualitative data.....	76
6.4	Evaluating the artistic output.....	91
6.4.1	Audience questionnaire.....	91
6.4.2	Experts' assessment.....	95
6.4.3	Interviews with professional and non-professional artists.....	97
7	Conclusions.....	100



List of tables

Table 1. Map of co-creation indicators.....	4
Table 2. Co-creation evaluation log	6
Table 3. Participants' attendance log sample.....	6
Table 4. Co-creation evaluation questionnaire.....	7
Table 5. Co-creation evaluation interview: mid-process (non-professionals).....	8
Table 6. Co-creation evaluation interview: mid-process (professionals)	8
Table 7. Audience questionnaire	9
Table 8. Expert's assessment form: artistic quality	10
Table 9. Evaluation instruments per trial and data	11
Table 10. Liceu co-creation workshops.....	12
Table 11. Participation at Liceu co-creation workshop by profile (information by session)	16
Table 12. Number of sessions attended by non-professional artists	17
Table 13. Involvement per week and profile (Liceu- choirs).....	18
Table 14. Questionnaire results: quantitative data workshop 1 (Liceu).....	19
Table 15. Audience questionnaire (Liceu Showcase).....	30
Table 16. Audience questionnaire (<i>La gata perduda</i>)	32
Table 17. SAMP co-creation workshops	39
Table 18. SAMP performances.....	39
Table 19. Participation at SAMP co-creation sessions by profile.....	42
Table 20. Number of participants per workshop: mean, minimum, maximum	42
Table 21. Number of sessions attended by non-professional artists (workshop 1, SAMP).....	43
Table 22. Number of sessions attended by non-professional artists (workshop 2, SAMP).....	43
Table 23. Audience questionnaire (initial performances, SAMP)	56
Table 24. Audience questionnaire (final performances, SAMP)	58
Table 25. INO co-creation workshops.....	68
Table 26. Unique participation at INO co-creation workshops by profile	71
Table 27. Number of participants per workshop: mean, minimum, maximum	71
Table 28. Number of sessions attended by non-professional artists	72
Table 29. Questionnaire results: quantitative data workshops (INO)	74
Table 30. Audience questionnaire (INO).....	93



Table 31. Traction evaluation in numbers	100
Table 32. Questionnaire results.....	101
Table 33. Audience evaluation of the performances I.....	104
Table 34. Audience evaluation of the performances II.....	105

List of figures

Figure 1. Choir rehearsals	13
Figure 2. <i>El Cabaret de la Gata</i> (Liceu, 2021).....	14
Figure 3. <i>La gata perduda</i> (Liceu, 2022)	16
Figure 4. Posters (<i>La gata perduda</i>).....	25
Figure 5. TV screen with QR code for audience questionnaire	29
Figure 6. SAMP initial performances in Leiria prison (2021)	40
Figure 7. SAMP initial performances at Gulbenkian (2021).....	40
Figure 8. SAMP final performances in Leiria prison (2022)	41
Figure 9. SAMP final performances at Gulbenkian Foundation (2022)	42
Figure 10. Evaluation workshop after the performances	45
Figure 11. Audience questionnaire QR code (2022)	54
Figure 12. Co-creation workshops in Ireland.....	69
Figure 13. Audience members watching the VR opera	70
Figure 14. Participant in motion-capture suit.....	90
Figure 15. VR performance	92

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
D	Deliverable
DoA	Description of the Action
E	Expert
Med	Median
S	Session
SD	Standard deviation
T	Task
VR	Virtual Reality
W	Workshops
WP	Work Package



Executive summary

This document provides an overview of the evaluation methodology and results related to the co-creation process and the performances. It starts with a short overview of the three Traction trials, namely the co-created opera with people from Raval by Liceu, the co-created opera with inmates in prison by SAMP, and the co-created Virtual Reality (VR) opera with Irish communities by INO.

Section 2 provides an overview of Traction evaluation approach, focusing on the participants and the map of indicators developed in the first stages of the project and already presented in D4.6. Section 3 focuses specifically on the evaluation instruments applied to assess the co-creation process and the performances, which are: the co-creation evaluation log, the participants' attendance log, the questionnaires and evaluation workshops with non-professionals, the interviews with professionals and non-professionals, the audience questionnaires, and the experts' assessment form.

The document then describes the results of each trial: Liceu in Section 4, SAMP in Section 5, and INO in Section 6, with a similar approach. First, a global presentation of the co-creation workshops developed in the trial that have been evaluated and the performances is offered. Then, based on the evaluation instruments applied to each specific trial, an evaluation of the co-creation process and of the artistic output is presented. Priority is given to the voice of the participants and the audiences in the construction of the analysis.

Section 7 concludes with the main findings related to the evaluation of the process and the performances. Results show that participants have benefited from the opera co-creation process. Non-professional artists report high levels of engagement, enjoyment, and motivation in the workshops, which have helped them learn about others. They are also generally appreciative of the balanced contributions and respect observed during the process and report a positive impact on their ideas, wellbeing or confidence. Qualitative feedback across the three trials point at some positive aspects the co-creation process has brought to non-professional artists such as a better understanding of others, the acquisition of improved and new skills, an increased awareness, enjoyment and interest about opera, new relationships through collaboration, and personal satisfaction. The evaluation also points at some central aspects such as the need to manage expectations, to guarantee good communication, good management and good facilitation, and to be flexible and understanding of each specific context. Results also demonstrate how the performances were very well received by audiences, with high degrees of satisfaction, and by experts, with generally positive comments on their artistic quality and social function.





1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the deliverable

This document presents a summary of the evaluation of the co-creation process and the performances in the three trials, at Irish National Opera (INO), Gran Teatre del Liceu (LICEU), and Sociedade Artística Musical dos Pousos (SAMP). It reports on the evaluation framework used and provides evidence of the positive outcomes of the trials.

1.2 The three Traction trials: a short overview

1.2.1 LICEU: community opera with people from Raval

[Liceu](#) has led the co-creation of [La gata perduda](#) (*The Lost Cat*), premiered in October 2022. The opera focuses on the Raval neighbourhood, which is beside the theatre and is characterised by social, economic, and ethnic diversity. Local people have been involved in the co-creation of the visual design, while amateur choirs and music students have performed alongside professionals. As an initial performance, the showcase *El Cabaret de la Gata* took place in March 2022. The Traction tool Co-creation Space was used for the choir workshops, and Co-creation Stage, a tool that allows for multiple real-time co-located stages, was used in the showcase.

1.2.2 SAMP: opera co-creation with inmates in prison

[SAMP](#) is an independent music school in Leiria, central Portugal, with a strong community music programme for everyone. SAMP musicians have been working in the city's youth prison since 2004, first as volunteers, and more recently with funding from Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, which supported the creation of Mozart operas in 2015 and 2017. The Traction trial builds on that experience through the development of a series of co-creation workshops that have led to an initial performance in June 2021 and to a final performance in June 2022 of the co-created opera [O Tempo \(somos Nós\)/ Time \(As We Are\)](#), written and composed by professional artists with inmates, relatives and staff members. The production used Co-Creation Stage technology to link people inside and outside the prison, in performances in Lisbon and Leiria.

1.2.3 INO: Virtual Reality opera with Irish communities

[INO](#) is committed to give everyone in Ireland the opportunity to experience opera and has contributed to that by creating a Virtual Reality opera. Different communities across Ireland—residents of the island of Inis Meáin off the West Coast, teenagers across rural Ireland and adults living in Tallaght and South Dublin—have worked together with a [professional team](#) to co-create the opera [Out of the Ordinary/As An nGnách](#). Virtual reality is the central technological component. Co-creation Space, a tool to foster and promote asynchronous communication during co-creation activities developed in Traction, has also been used in this trial. The opera was premiered at Dublin Fringe Festival in September 2022.



1.3 Intended audience

This deliverable is addressed to the consortium. It is also addressed to the interested public, such as opera organisations that might be willing to develop community operas, as it allows them to get a better understanding of how Traction evaluation activities have been carried out.

To get a complete overview of the evaluation of the trials, readers are invited to consult D4.8, a final report with the results of the technical and user experience evaluation for the different project iterations, and D4.5, a report describing the social impact of the co-creation processes and outputs.



2 Traction evaluation approach

The Traction evaluation approach builds on the four core axes in WP4: a) tools and technology, b) co-creation, c) opera performance, and d) social impact. Each of the core axes works independently under the general framework set in D4.6, but collaboration is sought to guarantee consistency across the evaluation blocks.

Traction evaluation approach has been iterative, adaptable, and flexible. D4.6. established a series of research questions linked to each of the different axes. In this document we will focus on one of those questions:

How have participants benefited from the opera co-creation process?

To answer this question, we have first defined who the participants are and how this benefit can be evaluated.

2.1 Participants

Traction has worked with the following categorisation of participants:

PROFESSIONALS

- Artistic and creative team, including
 - Primarily musicians: for instance, conductor, composers.
 - Primarily theatre-related: for instance, artistic director, playwright, librettist, stage director, set designer, costume designer, choreographer, audiovisual director, visual artists, performers, translators, Virtual Reality artists, etc.
 - Persons involved in the co-creation process: facilitators, community arts experts, partners' staff.
- Technical and production team: for instance, lighting engineer, sound engineer, video producer/editors, translators, access staff, signers etc.
- Traction-related professionals, with a professional relationship with the project, such as Consortium members, funders, and Advisory Board members.

NON-PROFESSIONALS

- Artistic and creative team: community members who actively participate in the opera project from an artistic and creative perspective, e.g. those who participate artistically in co-creation or performances.
- Technical and production team: community members who actively participate in the opera project from a technical and production perspective, e.g. people involved in backstage activities such as making costumes.

AUDIENCES

- Persons who enjoy the artistic output.

OTHERS, referring to any participant who enables the participation of non-professionals, such as psychologists, prison staff, foundations, and community associations, to name a few. Their role is to accompany the process, but they are not actively involved in the co-creation.



For the purposes of this document, we will focus on the evaluation provided by professional artists, non-professional artists, and audiences. The other participants will be addressed in the technological and the social impact evaluation.

2.2 The map of indicators

Traction evaluation of co-creation activities and performances is based on a map of indicators (Table 1). This list of indicators was gathered through a series of interviews with stakeholders and discussed with partners from all three trials (Matamala and Soler Vilageliu, 2022).¹ The map aims to identify key aspects that can guide us when evaluating the co-creation process and output. In this regard, it has been used as a reference framework when designing the questionnaires and interview guiding questions and when carrying out the analysis. The map includes outcome and output indicators, the latter with an asterisk. Output indicators help assess the work and activities generated by the project and gather factual data, whereas outcome indicators help assess the changes that take place because of the Traction co-creation.

Table 1. Map of co-creation indicators

Process	Artistic product	Process and product
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-professionals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profile* • Participation* • Engagement • Balanced contributions • Mutual understanding • Relationships • Satisfaction • Project evolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic product* • Quality • Media impact • Audience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attendance* • profile * • response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feeling represented • personal change • satisfaction • Non-professionals response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feeling represented • satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community impact • Non-professionals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal change (empowerment, relationships) • learning • Professionals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal change (relationships, attitudes) • learning • Institution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • institutional change (attitudes, programme, practice)

As for the artistic quality, the indicator is broken down into different items, following Matarasso (2019: 99)²: craft (“the technical and artistic skill demonstrated by the work”), originality (“its relationship to the unique conditions of its creation”), ambition (“its aspiration, scale and openness”), resonance (“its relevance to what people are concerned about”), and feeling (“its non-rational effect and ability to linger in the mind”).

¹ Matamala, Anna; Soler-Vilageliu, Olga (2022) "Defining and assessing artistic co-creation: the Traction proposal". *Arte, Individuo y Sociedad*, 34(3), 851-867.

² Matarasso, F. (2019). *A restless art. How participation won and why it matters*. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.



3 Co-creation and performance evaluation

Two critical moments were established for evaluation:

- a mid-process evaluation, in which an internal document was produced for the partners to assess the project development, and
- a final evaluation, which includes the evaluation of all co-creation processes and performances. This document corresponds to the final evaluation.

The following section briefly describes the instruments that have been used during the project to monitor (or keep track) of the activities and evaluate (or give value) to them in the context of Traction and of each of the trials.

3.1 Evaluation instruments

The evaluation instruments are the following:

- Co-creation evaluation log.
- Participants' attendance log.
- Questionnaires and evaluation workshops with non-professionals.
- Interviews with professionals and non-professionals.
- Audience questionnaires.
- Experts' assessment form.

The instruments, developed in participatory processes with the partners, are described next.

Co-creation evaluation log: an online form to keep track of co-creation activities. It contains different fields, which gather relevant data concerning the participant profile, their engagement, and the project evolution.



Table 2. Co-creation evaluation log

Question	Indicator it relates to
Activity code	Identification/monitoring data
Date of the co-creation activity	
Trial: INO/LICEU/SAMP	
Location of the activity: arts venue, community venue, neutral venue, online.	
Number of participants according to the profile: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of professionals: artistic and creative team. Number of professionals: technical and production team. Number of professionals: Traction-related professionals. Number of non-professionals: artistic and creative team. Number of non-professionals: technical and production team. Number of other participants (referring to any participant who enables the participation of non-professionals, such as psychologists, prison staff, foundations and community associations). 	Participants' profile
Has the aim of the activity been fulfilled? Yes/No/Partially	Project evolution
Has the activity been engaging for participants? By engaging we mean that they have participated actively in the co-creation. They have offered suggestions, expressed interests and preferences.	Engagement
Add your personal observations on this activity. Although this form only shows one line, you are expected to write as much as you like. This is a very relevant field for the evaluation, open to any type of comments. For instance, you may want to comment on the aim of the activity, on the co-creation and participation process, engagement, artistic value, impact, skills and capabilities, change, etc.	Different indicators

Participants' attendance log: an online spreadsheet to keep track of who attended each session allowing us to map participation across co-creation activities.

Table 3. Participants' attendance log sample

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
1= yes, 0= no	Profile		CO-LICE	CO-LICE	CO-LIC	CO-LICEI	CO-LICEU	CO-LICEI	CO-LICEU	CO-LICEI	CO-LICEU	CO-LICEI	CO-LICEU	CO-LICEI	CO-LICEU-1.13	CO-LICEU-1.14	CO-LICEU-1.15	CO-LICEU-
			15	26	15	0	14	13	14	13	10	15	15	16	17	17	16	21
L1	TRACTION professional	Liceu	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
L2	TRACTION professional	Liceu	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
L10	Non-professional artist	Creative by si	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
L11	Non-professional artist	Creative by si	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
L12	Non-professional artist	Student from	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
L13	Non-professional artist	Student from	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
L14	Non-professional artist	Student from	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
L15	Non-professional artist	Student from	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
L16	Non-professional artist	Student from	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
L17	Other	Sinia team	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
L18	Other	Sinia team	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
L19	Non-professional artist	Student from	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
L20	Non-professional artist	Student from	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
L21	Non-professional artist	Creative by si	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
L22	Non-professional artist	Creative by si	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
L23	Non-professional artist	Creative by si	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L24	Professional artist	Massana tear	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
L25	Other	Massana tear	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
L26	Non-professional artist	Student from	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
L27	Professional artist	Liceu	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L28	Professional artist	Liceu	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L29	Non-professional artist		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L30	Non-professional artist		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L31	Non-professional artist		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L32	Non-professional artist		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L33	Non-professional artist		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L34	Professional artist	Liceu	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
L35	Professional artist	Liceu	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1



Questionnaire to assess co-creation including the statements and questions presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Co-creation evaluation questionnaire

Statement	Indicator it relates to
I was actively involved in [the co-creation process/workshops/what is applicable in each trial].	Engagement
I was motivated by the co-creation process/workshops/what is applicable in each trial.	Engagement
I have gained a better understanding of other people's ideas.	Mutual understanding
I have learned from other people.	Mutual understanding, informal learning
I have made new friends.	Relationships
I have enjoyed it.	Satisfaction
I would like to do it again.	Satisfaction
I feel more confident about what I can achieve now.	Personal change: empowerment
I feel more interested in art now.	Personal change
Everyone involved contributed in a balanced way.	Balanced contributions
Everyone involved was respectful of each other's ideas.	Mutual understanding
Taking part has changed some of my previous ideas. If so, in what way? (open field)	Personal change
Taking part was good for my wellbeing. If so, in what way? (open field)	Personal change
Have you gained any skills? Select all that apply. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative art skills (composing music, creative writing, etc.) • Technical art skills (screen printing, photo editing, etc.) • Performing skills • Managing work skills • ICT skills (technology, computer, etc.) • Teamwork skills • Communication skills (speaking, writing etc.) Other skills (please specify)	Informal learning
What was the best thing about taking part?	General questions not directly related to a specific indicator
What was the worst thing about taking part?	
What could we do better next time?	
Is there anything else you want to tell us?	

Interviews with professional and non-professional artists to assess co-creation activities and, where relevant, initial performances. The interview schedule followed is indicated in Tables 5 and 6, differentiating between non-professional and professional artists.



Table 5. Co-creation evaluation interview: mid-process (non-professionals)

Question	Indicator it relates to
Tell us how you heard about the project and why you wanted to take part?	Ice-breaking question (any indicator)
Can you explain what you did in the workshops?	Ice-breaking question (any indicator)
What did you enjoy most – and why?	Satisfaction, engagement
What wasn't so good?	Project evolution, any indicator
How could it have been better?	
How do you feel the group got on with each other?	Mutual understanding, balanced contribution
Was everybody respectful?	Mutual understanding
Did you all have the chance to contribute?	Balanced contributions
What will you remember from this experience?	Learning
Have you gained any new skills (practical, relationship with people, etc.)?	Learning
What do you think you've learned from the experience?	Learning
Have these workshops changed some of your ideas, your interests, anything at all?	Personal change
Would you do it again?	Satisfaction.
Is there anything important that we haven't talked about? Is there anything else you want to add?	Final open question (any indicator)

Table 6. Co-creation evaluation interview: mid-process (professionals)

Question	Indicator it relates to
Please introduce yourself and tell us about your past experience -if any- of co-creation	Ice-breaking question (any indicator)
Can you explain your role in the workshops?	Ice-breaking question (any indicator)
What was most successful in the workshops? Was anything disappointing -if yes, what and why?	Project evolution, any indicator
What did you enjoy most – and why?	Satisfaction
How do you feel the group got on with each other? Was everybody respectful? Did they all have the chance to contribute?	Mutual understanding, balanced contribution
Did you see any development in the participants' skills or confidence? If yes, please explain.	Learning
And you? What do you think you've learned from the experience?	Learning
Have these workshops changed some of your ideas, your attitudes, anything at all?	Personal change
What will you remember from this experience?	Personal change
Would you do it again?	Satisfaction, project evolution
What would you change in the future?	
Is there anything important that we haven't talked about? Is there anything else you want to add?	Final open question (any indicator)



Audience questionnaire, addressed to audiences attending a performance, including the following questions (Table 7). This questionnaire was slightly adapted depending on the format of the final performance. For instance, the question about technology was deleted from the Liceu final performance questionnaire, whereas in the INO Virtual Reality opera a question was added. Please refer to the description of each trial below.

Table 7. Audience questionnaire

Question/statement	Indicator it relates to
How did you get here today? Taxi/Train/Car/Bus/Bike/Walk.	Audience profile
Roughly how long did it take you to get here? ___ minutes.	Audience profile
Do you have any connection with the performance? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, I don't. I took part in the project. I know someone who took part in the project. I know someone who works at SAMP. I have a professional connection with the project. (only for Liceu) I am related to Raval neighbourhood. 	Audience profile
How much do you agree or disagree with these statements? (6-point Likert scale):	
It was well made and performed.	Quality: craft
It was different from anything I've seen before.	Quality: originality
It was about things that really matter to me.	Quality: resonance/Feeling represented
I felt involved in the performance.	Quality: feeling
Was there anything you particularly liked or disliked? Please say what, and why.	Satisfaction
Would you recommend this performance to a friend? No/Yes/Not sure.	Satisfaction
Has the performance made you feel differently about anything? No/Yes/Not sure. If yes, please say how.	Personal change
Did you see any live theatre or music performance in 2019 (before lockdown)? No/Yes/Not sure. If yes, please say where.	Audience profile
(If applicable) Do you think technology played an important role in the performance? No/Yes/Not sure. Please say why. (if applicable) Would you watch another Virtual Reality opera? Please say why.	Technology
Finally, please add any other thoughts on your experience today.	Different indicators
Demographic information added at the end.	Audience profile

Experts' assessment form: a template to guide selected experts assessing the quality of the performance when writing a report. The suggested items are based on Matarasso's model plus technology. Again, slight adjustments were made depending on the final performance specificities. Please refer to the description of each trial below.



Table 8. Expert's assessment form: artistic quality

Indicator	Definition
Craft	It relates to the technical and artistic skill evident in the production and performance. How well was it made and executed?
Originality	It relates to the distinctiveness of the work, and the extent to which it reflects the particular context of its creation. How true does it seem to those who have created it?
Ambition	It relates to the aspiration, scale and openness of the work: is it worth doing?
Resonance	It relates to the piece's connection or relevance to the audience and its concerns. Does it speak to me?
Feeling	It relates to the non-rational effect of a piece and its ability to linger in the mind. Does it move me?
Technology	It refers to the use of Traction technology in the performance. What was the overall audio and video quality of the experience? Was it good enough for this performance? Did the technology help you feel engaged? (Only when Co-creation Stage is used) Do you think technology helped to connect people on stage with remote audiences?
Other comments	Please add any further thoughts about the performance or the project which have not been covered under the previous headings.

3.2 Methodological approach

Each trial had a person in charge of evaluation aspects who coordinated with WP4 leader (UAB). The WP4 leader, in cooperation with partners, defined the methodological instruments and processes and provided training on focus group and interview development and reporting.

The trials were in charge of translating the evaluation instruments and distributing them. In the case of the interviews, trials carried out a first-level analysis using the thematic analysis tool Atlas.ti and generated a report that was then used by the WP4 evaluation leader to produce the final report. The thematic analysis used the indicators in the map above as codes, providing a shared framework across trials. A mechanism was in place to communicate among partners when doubts arose so that a consensus could be easily reached.

3.3 Data

Table 9 reports on all data obtained. Qualitative data were processed using Atlas.ti, using the abovementioned indicators to code the information.

**Table 9. Evaluation instruments per trial and data**

Trial	Instruments and data	
INO	Co-creation evaluation log & participant attendance sheet	
	Questionnaires at the end of each workshop	Total: 71
	Interviews: a) Mid-process individual interviews with professional artists b) Mid-process group interview with non-professional artists c) Final individual interviews with professional artists d) Final group interview with non-professional artists	a) 5 interviewees b) 2, involving 9 interviewees c) 4 interviewees d) 1, involving 4 interviewees
	Audience questionnaire	183 replies
	Experts' assessment	4 reports
LICEU	Co-creation evaluation log & participant attendance sheet	
	Questionnaire at the end of workshop 1	Total: 10
	Interviews: a) Mid-process individual interviews with professional artist b) Group interview with non-professional artists c) Final individual interviews with professional artists d) Group interview with non-professional artists	a) 1 interviewee b) 2, involving 8 interviewees c) 4 interviewees d) 2, involving 7 interviewees
	Audience questionnaire:	117 replies (1 st performance) 297 replies (final opera)
	Experts' assessment after the initial performance Experts' assessment after the final performance	3 reports 3 reports
SAMP	Co-creation evaluation log & participant attendance sheet	
	Evaluation workshop with non-professionals	2, involving 14 participants after workshop 1 2 involving 23 participants after workshop 2
	Interviews with professionals: a) Mid-process individual interviews b) Mid-process group interviews c) Final individual interviews	a) 2 interviewees b) 2, involving 4 interviewees c) 4 interviewees
	Audience questionnaire after the initial performances Audience questionnaire after the final performances	31 replies 230 replies
	Experts' assessment after the initial performances Experts' assessment after the final performances	5 reports 5 reports



4 LICEU

This section reports on the LICEU trial, both in terms of co-creation process and outputs, and looks at the results gathered from the different evaluation instruments.

4.1 The LICEU trial

4.1.1 The workshops

In the first part of the project Liceu developed 1 co-creation workshop, with a total of 15 sessions (Table 10). One session had to be cancelled and is not included in the data below. The workshop aimed at developing graphic proposals (such as the poster) for the opera. Non-professional artists from Sínia occupational centre and from Massana arts school participated in the workshop, led by a professional artist. In the second part of the project, 11 choirs were involved during 43 weeks, from October 2021 until October 2022, in a process of co-creation and rehearsals that included 138 sessions.

Table 10. Liceu co-creation workshops

#	Date	Group	Art form	# sessions
1	Feb-April 2021	Sínia-Massana	Design (poster)	15 sessions
2	Oct 2021-Oct 2022	Choirs	Choir co-creation and rehearsal	138 sessions

In the first workshop, all sessions took place online, due to the restrictions imposed by the covid pandemic, except for the last one in an arts venue. Most sessions lasted two hours, but three lasted slightly longer, and all were considered engaging according to the data inputted in the evaluation log.

In the second workshop, the process developed as follows: first, starting in October 2021, each choir rehearsed at their place with their regular schedules, in sessions generally lasting less than two hours. On November 6, all the choirs took part in a community event, the Raval Festival, and performed together for the first time the Raval anthem. On December 9 all the choirs interpreted the anthem in the lighting of the Christmas Lights event in Barcelona. On 12 February 2022, the first joint session of all the choirs took place at a Collaso i Gil school, an educational centre in Raval that hosted most of the rehearsals, starting from May, since the Liceu theatre has neither the space nor the availability required. These activities were carried out in two groups and were led by the musical director and the stage direction team. When groups came together, sessions generally lasted between 2 and 4 hours. Activities continued at each choral group's usual location until May 2022, when some activities merging members of different choirs started, again lasting between 2 and 4 hours. During four weeks, people were called in for specific sessions (either in the morning or in the afternoon), so that participants got to know each other and got familiar with stage movement and presence, dance and theatre skills. To deal with the high number of participants, the 11 participating choirs were divided into three choirs, according to their experience, abilities, and ability to commit to the project. Each choir interpreted different parts of the opera and they all came together on some parts.



A week of individual rehearsals with each of the choirs followed until a series of intensive stage and musical rehearsals with the different groups began in the week of 6 June and lasting until the final performance (with a summer break). On Saturdays and Sundays, participants gathered and during the months of September and October the rehearsals intensified both during the weekends (all day long) and during weekdays (in the evening). On July 6th, the 20th anniversary of Fundació Tot Raval, a key NGO in the project, was celebrated and the choirs performed different parts of the score at the Maritime Museum in Barcelona. After the summer break, intensive sessions lasting more than 4 hours took place, mostly at Liceu, and various elements –costumes, orchestra, technical elements— were gradually incorporated. The rehearsals used the rehearsal room and the theatre stage.



Figure 1. Choir rehearsals

4.1.2 The performances

Liceu produced two performances: *El cabaret de la Gata* (The Cat's Cabaret), a showcase in March 2022 (Figure 2), and *La gata perduda* (The Lost Cat), the final performance in October 2022 (Figure 3).



Figure 2. *El Cabaret de la Gata* (Liceu, 2021)

El cabaret de la Gata was a participatory cabaret about *La gata perduda* to present how the citizens of the Raval participate in the creation of the opera. The protagonists were therefore those people who already participate in *La gata perduda*. Everything revolved around expectations and the questions “Why do you want to take part in an opera at the Liceu? What does being at the Liceu mean to you?” The cabaret was the form *par excellence* of the *Raval Canalla*, and that gives us a feeling of lightness and variety of scenic numbers or forms. The act was a combination of music, interviews, videos, etc., animated by a master of ceremonies, la Gata (the Cat). An event where the public discovered in a playful way some parts of the community creation of *La gata perduda*. The aim of the event was to make the neighbours of the Raval participate in the showcase, show them different forms of participation in the opera, amuse, surprise, revealing some of them scenic proposals, and interest the spectators in the process of creating this opera.

The main opera, *La gata perduda*, talks of the struggle of a neighbourhood which refuses to be manipulated, a united district which rebels against the powers that be and is itself a leading character in the opera, played by the joint local amateur choirs. Besides, there are several characters who want to speculate and use the Raval to promote their own interests: the Magnate, a man with a secret, surveys it from the upper part of the city and enlists the help of a healer, an architect, and a detective to resolve the tangle of problems that are opposed to his interests. The Cat undergoes a transformation during the opera: she decides to be free, refuses to tolerate abuse, and embodies hope. With music by Arnau



Tordera, guitarist, vocalist and leader of the group Obeses, and a text by Victoria Szpunberg, *La gata perduda* is something between an opera and a musical. It includes snatches of musical styles from other places of the world which are mainly found in the streets. The vital, almost chaotic nature of the Raval, makes it the perfect counterpoint to the establishment world, while the Apollonian-Dyonisian contrast between the orderly Eixample district nearby and the labyrinthine Raval could not be sharper. Despite efforts to spruce it up and rationalize it, the Raval remains an inner-city district with a strong spirit of resistance. The opera puts the spotlight on the anonymous citizens with hybrid identities who live in the Raval side by side and whose anecdotes, experiences, narratives, dreams and preoccupations provided the input to the libretto.





Figure 3. *La gata perduda* (Liceu, 2022)

4.2 Co-creation: participants' profile and involvement

29 persons participated in the first co-creation workshop: 2 Traction-related professionals, 6 professional artists, 18 non-professional artists and 3 persons with another profile (support to Sínia creatives and to Massana students) (Table 11).

Table 11. Participation at Liceu co-creation workshop by profile (information by session)

SESSION	Professional artists	Traction professionals	Non-professional artists	Other	TOTAL
1	0	0	12	3	15
2	3	2	18	3	26
3	0	0	12	3	15
4	0	0	12	2	14
5	0	0	12	1	13
6	0	0	12	2	14
7	0	0	12	1	13
8	1	0	8	1	10
9	1	0	12	2	15
10	1	0	12	2	15
11	1	0	12	3	16
12	0	2	12	2	17
13	1	2	12	2	17
14	1	0	12	3	16
15	4	2	12	3	21
Unique numbers	6	2	18	3	27

The number of participants ranged from 10 to 27, with 16 participants on average. Traction professionals attended 4 sessions. Two professional artists took part in one session only at the beginning, 3 professional artists took part in a session at the end, and one professional was involved through the process, attending a total of 7 sessions. There were also 3 participants with a different profile: on the one hand, two professionals giving support to Sínia creatives who attended 14 and 8 sessions, respectively, and, on the other hand, a teacher from Massana giving support to students who attended 13 sessions. Table 12 records the number of sessions attended by non-professional artists.



Table 12. Number of sessions attended by non-professional artists

Participants	Attended: number of sessions	Percentage
6	1	33.3%
4	14	22.2%
8	15	44.4%

Six participants (which corresponds to 33.3% of the participants) were only involved in one session, but there was a high degree of commitment from all the other 12 non-professional artists, who attended 14 or 15 sessions out of 15 that were developed.

Demographic data was gathered for all 29 participants. There were 16 females (55.2%), 10 males (34.5%), 2 persons who selected “other” (6.9%) and 1 who did not reply (3.4%). Age ranged from 21 to 71, with a mean age of 41. There were 12 participants with disabilities (41.4%), 16 participants reporting no disabilities (55.2%) and 1 who preferred not to reply (3.4%). There were 3 experts in opera (10.3%), 6 persons (20.7%) who were knowledgeable, 8 novice (27.6%) and 12 (41.4%) whose relationship with opera was unknown. Most of the professional artists worked in the field of design, but there was also one pedagogue and one audiovisual production expert. Non-professional artists included students from Massana arts school and workers from Sínia occupational centre.

When looking at the demographics of non-professional artists, one can observe that there were 9 females (50%), 6 males (33.3%), 2 who defined themselves as “other” (11.1%) and one who did not reply to this question (11.1%). Age ranged from 21 to 71, with an average of 38. One was considered knowledgeable in opera (11.1%), 5 were novice (27.8%) and no information was provided for the rest.

According to the data gathered through evaluation log, the aim of the activity was fulfilled in all the sessions except for one in which it was only fulfilled partially. The reason was the need of more time by Sínia creatives to develop the graphic proposals.

As for the choir activities, starting in October 2021 and lasting until October 2022, a total of 216 non-professional artists and 16 professional artists were involved, as well as 2 Traction professionals. The non-professional artists belonged to 11 choirs: Korraval (8 participants), Xamfrà (7), Mon Raval (11), Cor Turull (16), Cor Drassanes (35), Musicals’ Choir (38), Cor Flors de Maig (21), Cor Kudyapi (40), Trencadors (30), Dona Gospel (5), and Girasol (5). There were also 6 professionals from the choirs (Korraval, Xamfrà, Turull, Drassanes, Kudyapi, and Dona Gospel) and 1 from Escola de Música, 5 professional artists from Liceu, 4 technical and production experts from Liceu and 2 Traction professionals. Demographic data could not be gathered due to organisational reasons.

The number of participants per week ranged from 200 to 231, with an average of 214 persons involved per week. Participants were highly committed, as can be seen on the numbers shown in Table 13, and the aim of the activity was always fulfilled, with participants feeling engaged in the co-creation.



Table 13. Involvement per week and profile (Liceu- choirs)

Participants	Number of weeks involved: average	Min	Max
Non-professional artists	40	21	43
Professional artists	27	12	43
Technical and production professionals	9.7	5	12
Traction professionals	17	17	17

4.3 Evaluating the co-creation process

Data from different sources were collected to assess the co-creation process: a) questionnaire at the end of workshop 1; b) mid-process interviews in July 2022, and c) final interviews in October 2022. We present first the quantitative data from the questionnaires followed by a discussion of qualitative data from the other sources.

4.3.1 Questionnaires: quantitative data

In the first workshop, questionnaires were distributed to non-professional artists during the last session. Participants had to indicate their level of agreement to a series of statements on a 6-point Likert scale. Results are summarised in Table 14. The number of questionnaires gathered was 10, corresponding to 8 non-professional artists and 2 participants who gave support to them, categorised as “other participants”. This equals a response rate of 55.5% for non-professional artists and 66.7% for other participants. If we only consider the response rate of those who attended the last session, where the questionnaire was distributed, response rate rises to 83.3% and 66.7%, respectively.

Questionnaires were not gathered for the choir activities. The Liceu team and the researchers decided that it was not feasible to ask the choir members to complete the questionnaire for several reasons, including the already high demands being made on them by the production and the number of people concerned. Instead, it was considered more appropriate to prioritise qualitative research methods in gathering data about their views of the experience.



Table 14. Questionnaire results: quantitative data workshop 1 (Liceu)

		Workshop 1		
		Mean	Standard deviation	Median
1	I was actively involved in the workshops	5.9	0.3	6
2	I was motivated by the workshops	5.3	1.1	6
3	I have gained a better understanding of other people's ideas	5	1.2	5.5
4	I have learned from other people	5.4	1.0	6
5	I have made new friends	4.7	1.3	5
6	I have enjoyed it	5.3	0.9	5.5
7	I would like to do it again	5.4	1.1	6
8	I feel more confident about what I can achieve now	5.4	1.3	6
9	I feel more interested in art now	4.6	1.7	5
10	Everyone involved contributed in a balanced way	3.9	2	4
11	Everyone involved was respectful of each other's ideas	5.4	0.7	5.5
12	Taking part has changed some of my previous ideas	4.8	1.8	5.5
13	Taking part was good for my wellbeing	5.1	1.4	6

All values ranged high, from 3.9 for question 10 to 5.9 for question 1, on a 6-point scale. These results will be commented in the following section together with qualitative data.

4.3.2 Questionnaires, evaluation log and interviews: qualitative data

The qualitative analysis for Liceu will be based on the co-creation indicators and will draw from all the instruments used, clearly indicating the source for each statement. This includes the evaluation log, the co-creation questionnaire whose quantitative data have been presented before, and the interviews. We provide a short presentation of the profile of the interviewees and the codes that are used to refer to them below.

For the first co-creation workshop, data were gathered from a professional artist (L24), from two non-professional artists from Sínia Centre Ocupacional (L10, L11), from two students at Massana (L13, L19), from a teacher from Massana (L25), and from two educators at Sínia (L17, L18). At the end of the process, and after the performance, the views of two professional choir directors (L48, L115), one professional assistant director (L267), one production manager (L266) and 7 non-professional artists from different ages and choirs were selected: a young participant (L193), a participant in their forties (L69) and participants in their fifties and above (L57, L269, L260, L71, L87).

Non-professionals' profile

In the first workshop, non-professionals were diverse in their profile, age, and gender, with two main groups: Sínia creatives and Massana students. See demographics above. In the second workshop, there were 11 choirs involved. Despite each group's intrinsic differences, the 11 amateur choirs managed to create a single character, perhaps the most important in the final opera: the Raval Choir. These ensembles were small in terms of the number of singers but not in their importance. They included Sociedad Coral Girasol; large



groups such as Drassanes; young people's choirs such as Cor Turull and very young people's groups such as Musicals' Choir and Coro Kudyapi; groups with only female voices such as KorraVal Evolution, Dona Gospel and the Coro de Dones de Xamfrà; and choirs rooted in the neighbourhood such as Grup Mon Raval, Agrupació coral i recreativa Les Flors de Maig and TrencaCors.

Non-professionals' participation in the process

In the first workshop, apart from 6 participants who only attended 1 session, most of them attended 14 or 15 sessions, showing a high level of commitment. Drop-outs were sometimes due to situations beyond the project: “some left, for example on Erasmus”, student L13 explains.

Professional artist L24 was present during the first co-creation sessions but “when it came to the actual execution of the pieces, I was a bit more distant” and did not attend all sessions in order to allow non-professional artists to create their work: “this should be an opportunity for them [Massana students] to develop a project in a very independent way, but let's say I was there to one side to act a bit as a mirror or ping-pong”.

In the choir activities, there was a high degree of commitment, with non-professionals involved for a long period of time (average: 40 weeks). In the interviews, participants explained that some non-professional artists had to miss some rehearsals due to personal issues such as family or work and the demanding schedules of the project.

Non-professionals' engagement in the process

The questionnaire depicts high levels of engagement in the first workshop: “I was actively involved in the workshop” gets a mean value of 5.9, whereas “I was motivated by the workshop” obtains 5.3. Already in the first session, there was “very positive interaction between the creators of Sínia and Massana students”, according to the log. Professional artist L24 observed that engagement increased with the sessions: “in the beginning the first sessions had more silent moments. I had to be very active to ask and encourage the participants, but the process, as I said, seemed to flow much more from one session to another”. Despite some small hurdles, all the participants seemed really engaged (“I really couldn't tell you anyone who seemed more detached”). Professional artist L24 highlighted that Sínia creatives “had a very high level of motivation from the first minute”. In every session Sínia creatives manifested “the luxury it is to participate in something like this” (L24). This was supported by Sínia participants L10 and L11, who expressed being “very excited” when the project was presented to them.

Conversely, participants from Massana were less engaged, particularly at the beginning, and some abandoned the project due to other responsibilities: “at the beginning we also had to push them a little”, according to professional artist L24, an observation also made by non-professional artist L13: “like a lack of involvement from some students in parts of the project”. L24 explained that in one session with an invited guest “it was hard for the students to be a bit more active [...] but I also understand [...] these sessions with guests are always a [...] very hard challenge”. As the co-creation progressed, though, L24 observed that students opened, thanks in part to Sínia's high level of motivation.



As for the second workshop, the engagement of the participants was shown by the high degree of participation and by the fact that the evaluation log records all shared activities as engaging by all participants.

Non-professionals' learning

In the first workshop, results for the statement “I have learned from other people” obtained a median of 5. When explicitly asked what skills they improved, they selected: managing work (90%), teamwork (90%), ICT (80%), communication (60%), and technical art skills (40%). One added that they learned to work in an optimistic way in front of adversities. Co-creation activities gave the opportunity to discuss different approaches and increased participants’ critical thinking: “the results of the illustrations made by Sínia’s creatives in recent weeks have been presented and examined. The interventions have been grouped by theme and by technique in different tables, to determine the possible aesthetic paths” (evaluation log, session 8), “the group analyses the intervened photos, the techniques and talks about other photos of spaces in the neighbourhood” (evaluation log, session 10). Educator L17 thought that non-professional artists “progressed a lot” and teacher L25 highlighted “responsibility”, “respect”, “maturity” and “timing” as key learnings. L17 observed “a very big progression in all of them, on a technological and artistic level”, referring to Sínia creatives. The interviews with non-professionals echoed these views and diverse learnings were stressed: “collaborative work” (L13, L10), “making videocalls” (L10), “the technique of painting with acetates” (L10), “how an opera is made” (L10).

In relation to workshop 2, non-professional artists mentioned many learnings, mainly focusing on interpersonal aspects: “Learning many things, interacting with other types of people and knowing how to make groups, exchanging things” (L57). They learned more about artistic creation and, whilst L269 was willing to “collaborate in things related to that”, L193 explained that s/he now knows s/he is not suitable for showbusiness. L269 stated that “after this experience and what we lived, I’ll never again complain about a ticket being expensive”, as a source of acknowledgement of the work involved in artistic creation. A choir director put the focus on the learning process derived from sharing experiences with other directors. Non-professional artist L115 referred to new skills like singing and acting at the same time.

Non-professionals' personal change

In workshop 1, the questionnaire included 4 statements on this: “I feel more confident about what I can achieve now” (mean=5.4), “I feel more interested in art now” (mean=4.6), “Taking part has changed some of my previous ideas” (mean=4.8), “Taking part was good for my wellbeing” (mean=5.1). When asked how participation changed them, some replies from non-professional artists referred to changes in the creative process due to covid, especially working remotely. There was one comment mentioning that persons with disabilities were “able to work with the students without any physical barrier”, and a comment on openness and becoming stronger despite the covid situation. Some aspects which were good for their wellbeing included working with people outside their usual circle (“I liked working with Sínia creatives outside the university”), which was seen as “fresh air” and a learning opportunity. One non-professional participant expressed that this project



made him/her feel “useful to work seriously”, and yet another one highlighted “commitment to follow the working pace” as a central aspect. “We all give our best”, summarised one participant, which made them feel “proud of the work done”.

In the interviews, non-professionals valued the fact that they discovered “a world that was a bit hidden” (L10) and mentioned the collaboration process “did awaken an interest in me to do more in the future and [...] an interest in the Liceu and going to see operas” (L13).

In workshop 2, non-professional artists related their learning experience to personal change and “personal enrichment” (L171). Some acknowledged improving their singing (L260) thanks to the advice provided by professionals and learning about “how all the staging works” (L87), together with “discipline and tempo” (L87). L260 was shocked at “everything that goes on to create a piece”. A younger participant mentioned that the experience taught them to be “more patient” and another one increased the level of attention, whereas a third participant referred to their increased awareness of the talent in multicultural Raval.

Professionals’ learning

In the first workshop, professionals with non-artistic profiles (“others” in Traction categories) mentioned that they learnt some artistic techniques and improved their adaptability: L18 highlighted as a learning “the self-improvement and the ability to, despite the adversities that came up, push onward and do everything with energy and positivity”.

Professionals’ personal change

In the first workshop, educator L18 mentioned that the co-creation processes “awakened a bit this whole artistic side [...], my curiosity”, whereas educator L17 emphasised that “faced with adversities [...] we can achieve many things” and highlighted a higher “interest in the opera”. L18 was also aware that collaboration with other entities “is very beneficial”. Teacher L25, on the contrary, did not report any personal change but indicated that the co-creation process “strengthened our positioning”, referring to social design.

In relation to the second workshop, professional L48 expressed a personal change: “I’ll remember that as a turning point, a bit like of my own perception of my professional profile”. L48 also acknowledged learning to be less critical and “be kinder when it’s the first time doing things”, and learning that “we need more communication”.

Balanced contributions

Contributing in a balanced way was central to co-creation. When asked about their level of agreement with “Everyone involved contributed in a balanced way”, results in the first workshop got the lowest values in the questionnaire, although above 3. In the interview with non-professional artists, student L19 mentioned that “the first sessions were more introductory”, but then they started working in smaller groups: “we couldn’t participate in all the creative processes [...] that were going on, but we did all have the chance to participate together and decide all together” (L19). Non-professionals from Sínia and Massana were in close contact: the “exchange of images is coordinated” and “these backs and forth between the groups are repeated regularly” (session 13, evaluation log). Teacher L25 mentioned that “considering they’re year four students, I always had control, but yes, I gave them a lot of freedom”. The same applied to Sínia creatives, where an educator said



“we also tried to give them space, because we also work on their autonomy, right? But we were there listening, also present to accompany them”. As for non-professional artists, L10 expressed in the interview feeling “very comfortable giving ideas and they were accepted”.

In workshop 2, professional L266 mentioned that, especially in the first sessions, all participants had the opportunity to provide feedback and make contributions. This was filtered by someone who made the final decisions. Still, “as we approached opening day that was reduced because there isn’t time to change things and [...] to listen to everyone” (L266). In the interviews, non-professional L171 acknowledged the complexity of the project and thought that “what we’ve done is follow orders”. A choir director considered that the idea that all choirs are equal is a fallacy and would be more in favour of putting “all cards on the table” (L48). This highlights the importance of managing expectations and having a shared understanding of what co-creation implies in a certain context as the concept of co-creation is still not fully set and may take different forms.

Mutual understanding

A mean value of 5 to “I have gained a better understanding of other people’s ideas” showed mutual understanding in the Sínia-Massana co-creation. Respect was also important, with “everyone involved was respectful of each other’s ideas” obtaining 5.4 (mean). In session 1 the log recorded that “communication is streamlined and the needs of each creative (materials, photographs) are agreed in a more agile way”. The second session was viewed as “an incipient moment of everyone’s work but there is a desire to share perspectives, exchange ideas, points of views...”.

Professional L24 considered that students and professional artists may not had much previous contact with persons with disabilities: “due to a lack of knowledge, when we’re in contact with such specific collectives [...] at the beginning there are many uncertainties”. However, participants reached mutual understanding and Sínia artist L11 felt respected.

In the second workshop, participants generally remarked on the positive aspect of mutual understanding and the pleasant atmosphere generated throughout the project among different age groups as well as among professionals and non-professionals (or *amateurs*, as they called themselves): “this understanding that we all had is honestly one of the most positive things that come out of this piece” (L171). Participants had words of praise for Traction-related professionals and professional artists: “They pampered us” (L269). Respect was mentioned by L171: “There was such great respect between people with different ideologies, different creators, different ways of understanding, right?” L171 considered that Raval is a “melting pot” and the project reflected it. In such a huge group, though, small issues naturally arose between people involved as some of them were seen as having a “desire to be in the spotlight” (L87) and some felt that a bit more could have been done to integrate everyone. In this regard, choir director L48 also referred to “some egos”, as in all instances of life. Not surprisingly, given the numbers and diversity of those involved—L69 refers to “all types of people”—there were passing complaints of selfishness or disrespect, but these were very few in a strongly positive assessment of the experience of working together: as mentioned by non-professional artist L87, there were “good vibes”. As for professionals, L266 highlighted the positive atmosphere and camaraderie, as well as the eagerness and willingness to work, which became contagious. Still, choir director L48



felt “very alone in all this, because I didn’t have contact with other director”, although later understood that “each choir is truly very different”. To conclude, Liceu professional L266 referred to the process of “co-creation” as a “mixture of amateurs and professionals [...] that was managed well”.

Relationships

“I have made new friends” gets 4.7 (mean) in the first workshop. Despite the high values, they are lower than other, probably due to the difficulty of making new friends in a short period and online. Still, professional artist L24 observed that participants managed to bond: “the ease with which the students consolidated relationships with the creators, the naturalness”. Professional educator L17 highlighted that “they were very nice relationships [...] they were interested in each other [...] it was like a very human, very close relationship”. In this regard, a student referred to the relationships that developed when working in small groups: “once we started having meetings with one creator and two students or one student, then it was better to establish bonds between us” (L13).

In relation to workshop 2, non-professional artist L87 talked about professional artists and stressed the “good relationship we had, their openness, their kindness”, while non-professional artist L171 stated that “they hit the nail on the head when it came to finding the people who had to direct us, understanding that this was the Babel Tower”. They also highlighted the good relationships forged between people of different ages and backgrounds: “Young people, people from other places, people from the Raval district. I mean, the mixture of races we see on the Rambla but that were in contact with us” (L87). One non-professional artist explained how a relationship that emerged during the project goes beyond it: s/he cannot write in Catalan and a new friend will teach “how to write in Catalan because I never had anything to teach me to write in Catalan, right”? A young non-professional who defined life as “sad” due to routine stressed that the project “opened my eyes” to the reality of the neighbourhood and expanded their social circle. Choir director L115 expressed overwhelmingly positive sensations regarding the forging of relationships between participants and organisers, with increased trust and friendship.

Satisfaction

Satisfaction was measured through two statements in workshop 1: “I have enjoyed it” (mean= 5.3) and “I would like to do it again” (mean=5.4). Professional artist L24 thought that “people enjoyed it” and the process was “very enriching”. He was “very happy” in the end and considered himself “very lucky to have been providing this accompaniment”. He said he would do it again and especially liked the “sense of evolution” and the fact there was a real outcome in the form of opera posters (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Posters (*La gata perduda*)

Non-professional artists expressed satisfaction: they “liked painting” (L11) and doing a “project outside of the university” (L13). L19 “enjoyed it a lot” and L11 and L19 answered “a very big yes” when asked whether they would like to participate again. L10 “would like to do a future opera”. Conversely, other professionals (educators, teacher) were critical of the amount of work and the lack of material support: “every day there’s something new”. L25 also complained about being invited to the interview: “losing two hours today, when I’m on vacation, that’s a bit excessive”. They thought that “more economic and material resources should be given to the creators”. L25 said that this was “constructive” criticism: “I understand it’s the first time this type of co-creation collaboration is done, and with a monster, sorry, between a monster, the Liceu, and then two small entities”, a situation which was aggravated by the pandemic. Despite the setbacks, professionals thought at the end “all the efforts made sense” (L17) and were “very very very well, very at ease and



happy with the experience and the final result” (L25). They expressed satisfaction and willingness to participate again (“it has been a great opportunity”, L18) on three conditions (L25): better coordination, better timing, and no pandemic.

In the second workshop, this information was gathered by means of two group interviews where non-professional artists were delighted with the project and very eager to participate again. The experience was defined as “fantastic” (L269) and one was even willing to “do it again right now” (L87). A non-professional artist stated: “if at my 78 years of age someone told me that I would be singing at the Liceu, I’d say ‘you’re crazy’. But it was very positive, very good”. When speaking about their experience during the process, participants expressed mainly positive sensations regarding the opportunity it meant for them, as well as the relationships and mutual understanding forged between everyone: “the warm welcome and organisation” (L87) or “people in general saw it as a gift” (L87) were some of the comments made. Negative comments revolved around the instructions they received and the long waits that they sometimes had to endure when rehearsing. Older participants also remarked on the energy of other age groups, mainly teenagers, as a slight source of irritation for them during the project. The degree of commitment, the schedules that “kept coming up” (L69), “the intensity of the days and hours” (L69) are mentioned as sources of nervousness, together with the high temperature in the school where they rehearsed, but there was also a feeling of understanding of the complexity of coordinating so many non-professionals. In this regard, choir director L115 thought that “with a bird’s eye view, you look at it with a wider perspective, I justify and think it’s natural. Someone said they went too far, I don’t know, I don’t think so. I think it was the necessary”. A director also referred to the impact of the pandemic and an outbreak that occurred in their choir. Some decisions were made regarding masks and antigens tests which put the choir director in a difficult situation.

Some non-professional artists highlighted that it was difficult to involve some participants because “they didn’t earn anything” (L269) and considered that some details like offering printed and bounded sheet music or free water would have been welcome (L69). Although it meant “a lot of work for three performances” (L260), they generally felt “very satisfied and pleased” (L260). This satisfaction was also perceived by a production manager: “they’re all smiling and happy and delighted” (L266).

As for professionals, L266 felt very satisfied with everyone’s participation, and the general sensation was overwhelmingly positive: “Would I do it again? Yes.” The same answer was given by choir director L155. Still, L266 thought that the project’s scope would need to be revised in future operas. L266 pointed at the difficulty of rehearsing in different venues. Another professional working at Liceu expressed both satisfaction and frustration. Positive points revolved around the participants’ eagerness, whereas negative points revolved around the way the project was managed, especially in terms of communication and the multiple venues involved. The most critical voice is that of a choir director, a professional who expressed a general sense of dissatisfaction and a feeling of fighting for the inclusion of their choir in the project. L48 believes the initiative was good, with the beginning and the end as the most positive moments but would not repeat it in the same circumstances. On the other hand, another choir director expressed deep satisfaction at having participated in the project and the people involved in it. This director also stated that the



number of people was very high, so it is normal that not everyone was satisfied. In any case, L155 “would give everyone an A”, referring to both professional and non-professional artists

Project evolution

The evaluation log provided an overview of the project evolution during the first co-creation workshop: at times the work seemed to progress slower than planned (session 6), but action was taken to move forward. This was supported by comments from professional artist L24: “I have the feeling the project was very in *crescendo*” This did not come as a surprise as L24 acknowledged that “because of the students’ own dynamics, normally at the beginning [...] it’s a bit hard to start”. The artist also recognised that “at the beginning the working methodology wasn’t clearly defined” and “there were some uncertainties” due to the pandemic.

The fact that the project evolved online generated new synergies: “The disadvantage we had not being able to do it face-to-face also generated, on the flip side, maybe some extra motivation”. This did not come without some initial difficulties, as explained by educator L17: “at first it was a big mess” as many did not know how to use videoconferencing systems but “we were searching based on all the abilities”. Professionals stressed that achieving a good workflow required a great effort on their part—“there was a moment of wow, we’re losing a lot of energy and it’s not our responsibility” (L25)—, and L17 considered “it shouldn’t happen again”.

The delays suffered by the global Liceu project were beneficial to the co-creation process, according to the professional artist, as “the deadlines for the first schedules were being delayed... well, also making it compatible with their [students] academic rhythm with the other classes” (L24). The delay also generated complaints from other professionals: “the libretto also came very late” and “now we have to wait a year to see the posters” (L25).

In the last session, face-to-face at Liceu, “the participants and creatives talk about the process”, as explained in the log, and the Director of marketing at Liceu “comes to see the material and is very satisfied”. L24 suggested that it would be beneficial for all to continue to receive information on how the project evolved beyond the creation of the poster: “to not have the feeling that ‘oh you made it up here and that’s it, right? [...] so they understand that the process actually would finish on opening day”.

Apart from the artists, participants categorized as “others” (educators and teacher) had a central role in the project evolution: L18 was “multitasking”, in collaboration with L17 (“we’ve been a super team”), and L25 took care of coordination tasks, helping “the creative dynamics and establish[ing] some of the structure”.

In relation to the second workshop, non-professional artists mentioned how they did not fully understand the opera at first because they received limited information and did not see the global picture. As the project evolved and more information was shared, all the pieces began to fit together: “when we went there to rehearse with everybody it changed because you could see it was different” (L269) and “this reached a stage of communion when we stepped on the scaffolding for the first time at the Liceu” (L171). This opinion is



shared by choir director L115. They also acknowledged the high degree of involvement as rehearsals were very intense.

As for professionals, L266 referred to the nervousness at the beginning and not knowing how it would turn out, although L266 quickly saw that it would be a positive experience, with an associated learning process. Still, L266 thought the scope was not properly established from the beginning. Furthermore, time limitations caused significant pressure, which is the only negative aspect mentioned by L266. In this regard, L267 thought that clearer communication and “more people in the process would have been better”. A professional choir director also missed some aspects (such as “vocal warm-ups”) from a pedagogical point of view. L48 expressed distrust in the project at the beginning, which then evolved into a feeling of making the choir’s presence palpable.

Technology

Liceu first co-creation workshop did not use Traction technology, although there were some expectations in this regard, hence leading to some disappointment. In the second co-creation workshop, Co-creation Space was used. Please refer to deliverable 4.8.

The best, the worst, and the future

Most replies to what they liked most in the first workshop have one central theme: **working together with others**. Open comments in the questionnaire read: “the Sínia creatives”, “the connection with the Sínia creatives and the Liceu”, “being able to share this process with other collectives”, “working with external people”, “cocreating with Massana students”. But one participant also highlighted freedom and trust in the creative process, and another one indicated it “has been an honour taking part in a Liceu work”.

As negative aspects, 4 main aspects are mentioned:

- **Initial organization**, where information was missing, especially due to the pandemic.
- **Working remotely**, again due to the pandemic.
- **Lack of commitment** of some students, with a “lack of balanced work”.
- The uncertainty about the **Traction tool** (“not having it ready”).

Professional artists and other professionals involved in the project mentioned similar aspects in their interviews. These negative aspects were related to the suggested improvements, which revolved around two main issues:

- **A more agile communication.**
- Having the **Traction tool ready.**

Despite some room for improvement, participants were grateful and many of them expressed they were “very satisfied with the work and the results” and explicitly said “thank you” in their comments. As put by one participant with disability, “it would be nice to be able to take part more often in this type of real projects and network with other artistic organisations, I would like to propose projects to make functional diversity more visible”. In the second workshop, we do not have specific data for this, as questionnaires were not distributed, but the interviews also showed that there was a shared feeling of some uncertainty at the beginning that was solved as the project evolved and participants



got together. Communication was mentioned as a key aspect in the project as well, together with the fact of managing expectations.

4.4 Evaluating the artistic output

The evaluation of the artistic output is based on the audience questionnaire, the experts' assessment form and the interviews with professionals and non-professionals.

4.4.1 Audience questionnaire

Audience questionnaires were distributed at both *El cabaret de la gata* and *La gata perduda*, at Liceu opera house. In the first showcase, attendees were welcome to reply to a questionnaire as they left the auditorium. They were given paper copies or invited to use some computers that were ready. A QR code that linked to the questionnaire was also included on each of the chairs. In the final performance, questionnaires were gathered through the inclusion of a QR code on TV screens at different points in the theatre (Figure 5).



Figure 5. TV screen with QR code for audience questionnaire

The audience questionnaire collected information related to Matarasso's quality indicators but also in relation to personal change, satisfaction and technology.

4.4.1.1 "El Cabaret de la Gata" (The Cat's Cabaret)

300 people attended the Showcase and 134 replies were gathered (44.7%). Responses from minors and people who did not give consent for their comments to be reported explicitly were discarded, with a total of 117 surveys to be analysed. Respondents included 82 women (70%) and 30 men (25%), next to 2 people identified as "other" and 3 who did not reply. Only 7 (6%) were people with disabilities. Minimum age was 18 and the oldest person giving a reply was 80, with an average age of 53. There was a wide array of occupations, with many participants being retired or in the educational area. Many people were from the Raval neighbourhood next to other Barcelona areas. This explains why most people (61.5%) walked to the venue, next to those who went by bus or metro (39.4%),



taking them an average of 22 minutes to get there. Since this was an invitation event for people involved, most respondents were taking part in the project (65.5%) or knew someone who takes part in the project (31, 26.5%), with very few (7.6%) not having any relationship with it. Almost 70% respondents reported having attended a performance before lockdown. Table 15 presents the quantitative data gathered through the audience questionnaire.

Table 15. Audience questionnaire (Liceu Showcase)

	Indicator it relates to:	Mean	Standard deviation	Median
It was well made and performed	Quality: craft	5.44	0.80	6
It was different from anything I've seen before	Quality: originality	5.08	1.24	6
It was about things that really matter to me	Quality: resonance/feeling represented	5.26	1.11	6
I felt involved in the performance	Quality: feeling	5.34	0.97	6
		Yes	No	Not sure
Has the performance made you feel differently about anything? (response rate: 99%)	Personal change	50.8%	29.3%	19.9%
Would you recommend this performance? (response rate: 99%)	Satisfaction	94.8%	1.7%	3.5%
Do you think technology played an important role in the performance? (response rate: 99%)	Satisfaction/Technology	81%	8.6%	10.4%

Mean values for craft, originality, resonance, and feeling are above 5 on a 6-point scale. Regarding qualitative answers, respondents underlined positive elements such as the presenter (“the host was fantastic”), the diversity and participation of all, the emotion and energy felt (“very engaged audience”), and the last song (“The choirs singing together was very energetic and heart-warming”). Other comments with fewer answers referred to the *mise-en-scène*, the originality, the testimonials or the clothing. Three participants were impacted by the “technical quality of the event” although many (10) referred to some sound problems with the connections to the Traction opera in Portugal. Some participants mentioned the closing of the event as one aspect they did not like very much: “abrupt ending”, “lack of appreciation” or “final message to participants missing” were comments made. In any case, 10 respondents highlighted that “everything was good” and 9 did not like or dislike anything in particular. This is in line with the global satisfaction, 94.8% stating that they would recommend the performance.

The question that got lower values again refers to the personal change experienced through the performance: 50.8% respond positively and almost 20% are not sure. In the qualitative answers, the replies could be linked to four main themes: the emotion, connection, energy and enjoyment felt; a feeling of belonging to the Raval neighbourhood



(“proud of Raval”); the sense of a community project (“part of an engaging project”, “a big thing”), and the institutional change this project was bringing. The replies also included the critical voice of one respondent: “I prefer to keep a distance with institutions who just want to clean their image by using minorities”, which puts forward an interesting discussion on the role of community projects in big institutions, a topic further developed in the social impact evaluation deliverable.

Most participants thought technology plays an important role in the performance, giving mostly positive reasons but also negative ones. From a positive perspective, most replies referred to the communication and connections enabled by the technology. Reference to the many videos was made and some respondents defined it as “cool”, “interactive” and “dynamic”, allowing for a “community sense” and “reaching more people”. The “excellent coordination” was emphasised. On the negative side, respondents stressed that the sound failed, and a few mentioned “inadequate lighting”.

In the open comments, respondents included many words of praise: “amazing”, “very good”, “emotional”, “positive”, “goose-bumps”, “mystical” were some of the adjectives used, next to the wish to see the final performance (“looking forward to the premiere”). Some stated that it was “different” and they “will always remember it”, but a few voices were also critical of the video problems, the organisation, the lighting, and the ending. A participant wished to hear more languages rather than Catalan and another one wondered what the opera was about, whereas another would have liked to hear from the composer. There were a myriad of different opinions with a general positive assessment of this initial performance that gathered the different agents involved in the project.

4.4.1.2 “La Gata Perduda” (The Lost Cat)

4200 people attended the two performances at Liceu and 306 replies were gathered (7.3%). 9 are not considered for the analysis as they belong to minors or explicit consent to use the data was not given. Hence, the total number of replies that are analysed is 297. Results are presented aggregated for both performances.

The respondents included 218 women, 67 men, 2 respondents who identified as “other” and 10 who did not answer this question. Average age was 56, with a minimum of 19 and a maximum of 87. Most of them came from the Raval neighbourhood and other areas in Barcelona and had a wide array of occupations in the administration, education, health, arts, etc. There were many retired attendees. While 23% walked to the venue, many arrived using bus/metro (46.4%), car (13.4%) and other means of transportation, on a trip that took them an average of half an hour. It is important to note that 21% of the respondents had not attended a performance before lockdown. Table 16 presents the quantitative data gathered through the audience questionnaire.



Table 16. Audience questionnaire (*La gata perduda*)

	Indicator it relates to:	Mean	Standard deviation	Median
It was well made and performed	Quality: craft	5.62	0.59	6
It was different from anything I've seen before	Quality: originality	5.48	0.80	6
It was about things that really matter to me	Quality: resonance/feeling represented	5.26	0.96	6
I felt involved in the performance	Quality: feeling	5.25	0.98	6
		Yes	No	Not sure
Has the performance made you feel differently about anything? (response rate: 99%)	Personal change	44%	34%	22%
Would you recommend this performance? (response rate: 100%)	Satisfaction	94.6%	1.7%	3.7%

Average values for quality measures were above 5.2, with a median of 6. Most attendees (94.6%) would recommend the performance, which shows high levels of satisfaction. The question about the change produced by the performance got lower values, in line with the other performances. When looking at the qualitative feedback, one reads many comments stating that they “loved everything” but also specific positive features: the cat (and its feminine nature), the choirs, the architect, certain songs, the costumes, the music and the singing (both opera and musical voices), the dancing, the *mise-en-scène*, the creativity, the opera house atmosphere, the performers, the combination of musical styles, the different voices, the props, the subtitles, the plain language used, the final musical number or the social criticisms towards powerful people, among many others. A recurrent comment was found: the “connection to the neighbourhood”, “the involvement of so many people”, the “group power” and how the Raval is portrayed. Many attendees underlined the role and diversity of the choir, and how they moved on stage, whereas a Deaf respondent welcomed the presence of sign language. One of the replies summarised many of the opinions: “Simply spectacular. A historic work”.

As for aspects that some audience members disliked, various issues were mentioned: the fact that there were only two performances, the absence of some “religion and ethnicities”, the length of the play (too long), especially the first act, or some plot twists. Some attendees did not like very much the libretto or the voice of the singers being faded by the orchestra at some points. Some expressed personal and isolated opinions, such as one who did not like the costumes. One respondent complained about a graffiti associated with drugs or the character wearing the head of a camel who plays a drug dealer (note that in Catalan jargon, a “*camell*” is a drug dealer), as it reinforced the stigma of the neighbourhood. In this regard, another audience member stated that drugs are claiming many lives at Raval and should have not been treated in this frivolous way whilst complaining about explicit language related to homosexuality. There was another comment claiming for more visibility for the persons with cerebral palsy who co-created the posters.



Whereas there were many positive comments in relation to the social criticism of the play and its vindictive nature, one attendee did not like it as it makes it a “pamphlet” and another one disliked its dualist approach (good/bad, rich/poor) and the idealistic portrayal of working class. A critical voice wrote down: “Quite a mess! But this is perfect for the mayor, who is amidst an election campaign”.

Some positive comments highlighted how this opera attracted new audiences: “from the start I liked it because it’s my first time to watch this kind of opera and one of my kids was participating. I am proud to be part of this programme”. Audiences were also appreciative of how they had been treated and were grateful to Liceu coordinators: “We were treated always especially warm and friendly, thank you for that!”.

A specific question asked whether the performance had made them feel differently, a question that 44% replied positively. When asked why, the reasons given were mostly related to the emotions felt by the audiences (“it made me laugh, it made me cry”), the empowerment or the connection to the neighbourhood, “not judging it by what is said” or “its stigma”. One audience member acknowledged it is an “unexplainable feeling” whereas another one said that it made them think about the different cultures and people in the Raval, feeling more vindicated. Some respondents felt empowered and “really want it to continue”: “I love to sing opera and to sing on the stage of Liceu was a dream come true”. Many replies referred to this feeling of belonging to the Raval, of being “proud” of it and to a better understanding of its problems. One attendee especially enjoyed an opera in Catalan and many referred to social problems and how they could be addressed. One acknowledged that their view of Raval changed for the better, and many wrote down that they feel privileged to be part of it.

In the open comments, multiple respondents requested again more than two performances and taking it to other European theatres. They acknowledged the community work while including many words of praise: “One of the best shows I’ve ever seen”, “A truly unique and special production”, “It was one of the greatest experiences, even better than West End in London”, “fantastic”, “amazing”, “great”, “it was worth it”, “unique”, “impressive” or “very beautiful”, among others. One attendee believed that one could feel the enjoyment of both the audience and the performers, whilst some wished the experience to be continued and another one defined it as a “magnificent example of inclusive culture”. As put by one attendee, it was a “diverse, emotional, different experience that reflects the neighbourhood in all its aspects”. Some critical comments were also heard: one considered it a musical and not an opera and defined it as “a romantic fable that makes the audience laugh but says nothing about the real problems (except drugs)”; another one saw this as “19th-century charity” and thought that “there are better strategies to get Liceu closer to Raval”, and a third one thought that “choirs, who performed without getting paid, should have been treated with more consideration”. However, these were isolated exceptions among many words of praise (“Acting at the Liceu has been exciting. The treatment of each person at the Liceu [...] all human relationships are very important to me: of friendship, companionship, complicity”). There were also newcomers to opera: “This is my first opera. I don’t like classical opera at all, but this one, which is participatory and with normal people, has its value”.



4.4.2 Experts' assessment

Three experts filled in the experts' assessment form for the first showcase and three experts provided their input for the main performance. For the first showcase, those involved were: an expert working on an inclusive approach to theatre and dance, an expert from international cultural cooperative projects, and an artist and visual art mediator with wide experience in museum and visual arts centres. The latter was also involved in the final reports, next to a dancer, choreographer and teacher with experience in intergenerational community projects, and an expert in educational and social programs. Their responses are presented below. We use "E" to refer to "Expert".

4.4.2.1 "El Cabaret de la Gata" (The Cat's Cabaret)

Regarding **craft**, the experts provided positive assessments: "I think it was well executed both at technical and artistic level and both by the professional and non-professional artists" (E1), "I had the feeling of witnessing the presentation of an ongoing project of great magnitude, impact and relevance. Both from a production and artistic point of view, the event was outstanding" (E2), "the presentation and performances were reliable and of good quality. Everything was prepared and measured, and the performances were very professional" (E2). As expressed by E2, "despite small technical flaws (connection with European projects), I found it to be an excellently organized event, professional, with taste, criteria, tact and know-how (and with many surprises!)". Special reference was made to the presenter and to the space: "the Raval's "undergrounds" (E1), just below the main stage of the Liceu. Undoubtedly a great success at a symbolic and conceptual level". E3 thought that with "few elements, the room was transformed into a scenographic space (garlands, choirs on balconies) ready for the performance."

The role of non-professional artists was praised by E2: "The songs I heard and the images I saw in the cabaret echoed in my head for days (and I would almost say also the flavours I felt). I have the impression that a very delicate and careful job is being done with the communities".

In terms of **originality**, E1 considered that "searching for elements in the neighbourhood which are unique and relevant such as Botero's Cat or Raval's imaginary make it [the opera] a very adequate proposal". E2 was struck by the feeling of joy and motivation that was breathed, beyond the story itself: "it is the most transgressive and original act that one can experience as an audience. A deep, committed, and meaningful joy". E3 referred to the "cabaret format" as a success in integrating diverse voices.

Regarding **ambition**, experts referred to the global project. E1 thought "it is an ambitious but well-dimensioned proposal" and E2 wrote that the "videos that were shown during the Cabaret made it very clear to understand the magnitude of the project". E3 added that "projects like these should be increasingly encouraged by cultural institutions, in line with the principles of cultural democracy". Diversity was mentioned by E2 and E3: "People seemed very involved, excited, and proud to be part of something bigger. All people were important. I think that gives it a lot of strength and has transformative value."

As far as **resonance** is concerned, E1 underlined that "the proposal refers to Raval's imaginary, often with rooted prejudices, but it also shows the cultural and associative



richness of the neighbourhood. Therefore, it will not leave anyone indifferent”, an opinion echoed also by E3 who defined the proposal as “timely and necessary”. E3 highlighted the “agile interactions between the presenter and the audience” and the universality of the topics addressed. It is worth mentioning how the performance resonated on E3: “Something curious happened to me: I am not from the Raval but I wanted to be”. E3 also emphasised the visibility of an artist on a wheelchair on stage.

Concerning **feeling**, positive comments were made: it “gave us goose-bumps” (E1), it “moved me deeply” (E3), “it was very moving to feel the neighbourhood talk about itself through self-representation” (E3), raising high expectations for the future opera. E3 wrote: “As a regular person at Liceu, it is very valuable to see the space taken over by the neighbours as cohesive creators of a context. What I saw made me feel hope and confidence in community work and the potential of culture for social transformation.”

In relation to **technology**, the experts referred to a technical failure in one of the connections, but considered that “generally speaking, the technological part was correct and gave a wider dimension to the proposal” (E1). E2 “was surprised by the good coordination between the live performances and the screens in the room, the good quality of the singing live by [Co-Creation Stage], how well everything was orchestrated and how well the digital ones dialogued with the face-to-face ones (it is something that I have seen very rarely)” A similar opinion was voiced by E3, who thought that “the technology was a good resource and the video screen seemed like another character from the cabaret. Thanks to the videos that were alternated, we saw people involved in the project”.

In the open comments, words of praise were found. E1 was “convinced that these community projects with city facilities are very necessary”, whereas E2 and E3 congratulated the participants and look forward to the main opera. “I think it is a benchmark and inspiring to open lines of work and think about cultural spaces from participation”, wrote E3.

4.4.2.2 “La Gata Perduda” (The Lost Cat)

Regarding **craft** in the final opera, E1 thought that it “was executed in a very professional way, with high technical and performative quality”. E1 observed “a lot of work, involvement and commitment on the part of the participating people who defend the proposal with great fluency”. E2 also perceived the opera as a “quality opera”, with high-quality professional and non-professional artists, and added: “the staging worked perfectly, dynamic, with layers of depth and in accordance with the story being told. The music was clearly well-worked and took the musical diversity of the Raval neighbourhood itself, adding dynamism”. A similar opinion was expressed by E3, who stressed the role of the professionals: it “was a ‘*pièce bien faite*’ [well-made play]”: all the elements were technically approached with a high standard of performance and executed skilfully. The artistic leadership was run by a professional artistic team and a cast of professional actors and dancers, and they performed along with non-professionals, so the production was ‘safe’”.



In terms of **originality**, E1 acknowledged the diversity of the Raval and how the project gave them visibility: “it is a pleasure to see parts of a neighbourhood that apparently seem distant coexist on stage”. For E2 the originality was found in the participants from the Raval, far from the classical performances at Liceu: “it is precisely this originality that brings quality and warmth to the Liceu project”. The expert was aware of the “great difficulty involved in working with groups that are not the usual ones in a large cultural facility” and saw new decision-making processes as an “opportunity to be a more flexible, open, creative and empathetic professional”. On the contrary, E3 found this “was the weakest aspect of the production: it was a very conservative artistic approach, a revisitation of a musical tradition of American musical and soundtracks (John Williams mostly), with no originality whatsoever, nor a contemporary aesthetic approach”. E3 criticized the “globalised aesthetics” and complained that a public institution “could invite other kinds of artistic perspectives, more critical, experimental, innovative and questioning”, exploring the richness of Raval in terms of music. E3 found this even more striking in an opera whose script “talked about diversity, and difference, and some sort of popular revolt against the tyranny of global capitalism”.

Regarding **ambition**, E1 considered that “the scale of the project is spectacular” and thought that “undoubtedly *The Lost Cat* is a community work from beginning to end” with “much coherence in its approach and ambition”. E1 considered that “not only is the stigma of the neighbourhood changing, the idea of the Liceu is also being transformed” and expressed a desire for continuation. E2 believed such projects are “absolutely worth it” as they are “steps forward, to develop new processes, new protocols, new approaches and new ways of working, on a personal, internal level, in relation to the community”. E3 agreed: “It was certainly a very ambitious project in all senses: as a community artistic project, as an artistic production and as a statement from an Institution (Liceu) that has always been giving back to its neighbourhood, and has been classist in its core.” Still, E3 raised a critical voice: “I still feel that the message is a little fake. Let the ‘others’ come in, they are still, and will remain ‘the others’. I believe that this point is a heavy political issue. And one wonders if maybe what this project intends is precisely to maintain things as they are. In this political aspect, I think it lacks ambition, but maybe it is just a divergence between what the project announces that it is doing and what it can really do.”

As far as **resonance** is concerned, E1 considered the opera “touches your heart” and “makes you look at the neighbourhood in a different way and you want to be part of it”. E1 referred to feelings of empathy, feeling represented and gratitude. E2 is moved by the “the energy of the Liceu that night, quite different from any other. A day full of life and diversity, people were able to enjoy a space seen as elitist and they were able to make it their own. I wish it could always be like this.” In this regard, E2 also raised the question of how this venture would be continued and how internal dynamics may have changed. E3 was again a critical voice: “I found that the message was a kind of populist ‘all together now’, that intended to touch my sensibility by using all the tricks we can find in conventional dramaturgy”, but “frankly expect more complexity”. E3 found this especially relevant in community art: “I felt that it is condescending towards participants and the audience to make a community artistic work with such a populist artistic point of view.”



Concerning **feeling**, E1 said that the opera “has moved me and it stays with me” whereas E2 was amazed by the energy felt at the Liceu, especially due to the large number of people of all ages on stage. E3 expressed a more distant feeling: “it moves me as it can move me any well-made Hollywood piece or entertainment piece: as anaesthesia”.

Experts were not asked about technology because it was not used in the performance. However, there was a specific question on the **co-creation**. E1 considered that “each element that constitutes the opera is cared for and provided by people from the neighbourhood”. E3 wrote: “Perhaps this is the point that I value most in this project: the capacity and perspective of the production team to involve in this work people, associations, neighbours of Raval”. E3 congratulated the facilitation of a community expert but also expressed doubts as if this was truly co-creation. We reproduce the long excerpt literally as it provides a specific view of co-creation, whereas in Traction we have advocated for a wider spectrum with different levels of professional control: “I don’t believe that was a project of co-creation. The participants were given “secondary” roles in this production. They were not given an artistic decision-making role. The structure of the project was: there is an artistic team with professionals that make decisions and perform main roles, and there are the participants that perform the role that is given to them. From that role they can suggest, or even bring ideas, but they are not co-creating. To co-create is to be in equality of conditions, in a dialog between pairs. I believe that was not the case, and I’m not questioning the structure of work that was developed in this case, I’m questioning if that structure could be called co-creation.”

Finally, in the open comments field, E1 highlighted the “communication of the project and the involvement of neighbourhood agents” and the “high artistic quality of all generated content”. E1 missed a higher recognition of “the person responsible or the mediation team”. To conclude, E3 wrote: “With all its contradictions, I think what is interesting is all the questions that such a project can open to such an institution as Liceu”. *The Lost Cat* can “bring very interesting reflection about the city's cultural politics, and the role public cultural institutions take in it”, an aspect further developed in D4.5.

4.4.3 Interviews with professional and non-professional artists

Results from the interviews concerning the performance are summarised below, differentiating between professional and non-professional artists.

Non-professional artists

Non-professional artists saw the final performance as a “success” (L171) and felt that “we’ve all been enriched by this piece” (L171). L260 referred to family members attending the opera and being “astonished”, whilst L87 also mentioned family members making the effort of coming from far away and showing a high level of satisfaction. On the other hand, L260 pointed at an increased confidence and to the encouragement of professional artists when non-professionals went on stage.

Non-professional artists also underlined the impact not only on them but also on the district in terms of “knowing more and integrating ourselves more through music into topics concerning our neighbourhood” (L57). L269 thought this could be expanded to other districts and said that “such a big institution as the Liceu could give work to lots of people



who are doing things right here". L269 believed the project showed the potential of many people who "can't develop or do these things because they don't have the chance to reach this". L69 said that some of the proceeds could be spent on the district, although s/he also admitted that maybe this was already done and they did not know.

Professionals

L266 mentioned the impact of the performance as very positive on the participants and shows satisfaction with the performance: "I'll remember having worked with 300 people on Liceu's stage [...] I'll have a fond memory of it". And L266 added: "I think we did a great job and I will remember it with pride". L67 mentioned the positive impact of the project personally and on the institution, as it "opened a new window" of artistic possibilities, and wondered: "how do you continue"? In this regard, L267 thought "this project should be useful for... simply to set a precedent [...] to break mental frameworks". Another positive aspect put forward by L267 is the reflection on the position of Liceu: "in the end it's a cultural centre and a cultural centre does things for people. How does it want to do those things? For which people does it want to do it? And how do you want to act depending on that? I think that in this sense it has been [...] a good first step". And L267 stressed that Liceu is a symbolic place and many people who had never attended a performance in Liceu now could thanks to *The Lost Cat*.

Choir director L48, a critical voice in the interviews, said that "the final spectacular performance" will always be remembered, especially the soloist, and choir director L115 thought that being able to sing at Liceu is "priceless" and refers to the "complicity looks of both professionals and non-professionals", underlining the "human aspect" in an endeavour that entailed a certain "risk" due to its magnitude and to the diversity of the people involved. In this regard, L115 added "everyday people don't easily step foot in the Liceu. So imagine that this piece represents opening it to the Raval district. [...] The Liceu celebrates 175 years of opera and it's always been a peak meant for oligarchies and Catalan bourgeoisie, with its back turned to the reality of the district, and so it's like it's turned around, it looks at the Raval and says: 'come, the doors are open so you can participate, associative and choir network', and that's honestly very nice".



5 SAMP

This section reports on the SAMP trial, both in terms of co-creation process and performances, and looks at the results collected through diverse evaluation instruments.

5.1 The SAMP trial

5.1.1 The workshops

From the beginning of the project until July 2021 SAMP developed one co-creation workshop with inmates that produced 4 initial performances, in June 2021. As of 14 July 2021, a second workshop started, which led to the 4 final performances in June 2022. Table 17 includes the number of sessions per workshops.

Table 17. SAMP co-creation workshops

#	Date (co-creation)	# sessions
1	July 20-July 21	66
2	July 21-June 22	101
		Total: 167

In the first workshop, 70 sessions had to be cancelled due to the pandemic and 3 sessions due to the lack of guards. They are not included in the calculations above nor in the analysis. In the second workshop, 26 sessions had to be cancelled, mostly due to the lack of guards but also to some members of the professional team having covid. Evaluation sessions and sessions in which only professional artists worked together are not included in the calculations. Data from two sessions were not saved. Most sessions in the first workshop were developed face-to-face in Leiria prison, generally lasting from 2 to 4 hours (50 sessions), sometimes a bit less (16 sessions). There were also 3 co-creation sessions that took place in Queluz and one session in an arts venue. In the second workshop, most sessions lasted between 2 and 4 hours (62), with some lasting less than 2 hours (33) and a few (2) lasting more than 4 hours. All of them took place in the prison except for a rehearsal in the arts venue.

5.1.2 The performances

Two co-created operas were created (Table 18), with a total of 8 performances.

Table 18. SAMP performances

Opera	Place	# sessions
Opera 1 (<i>Nós, Vocês, Toda a Gente</i>)	Lisbon (Gulbenkian Foundation)	2 (2 and 3/06/21)
	Leiria (Prison)	2 (18 and 19/07/21)
Opera 2 (<i>O Tempo Somos Nós</i>)	Leiria (Prison)	2 (3 and 4/06/22)
	Lisbon (Gulbenkian Foundation)	2 (16 and 17/07/22)
		Total: 8



The first opera (June 2021) was created from two scenes created in the improvisations in workshop 1: a mother who is going to visit her imprisoned son to bring him a cake, and some street musicians who sing in the patio of a café. They were performed in the prison (Figure 6) and at Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon (Figure 7).



Figure 6. SAMP initial performances in Leiria prison (2021)



Figure 7. SAMP initial performances at Gulbenkian (2021)



The second one, performed in June 2022, dealt with two concepts that arose from the words written by the inmate participants in the workshop: “door” and “journey”. Archetypal characters were created: Ulysses (the search) and Penelope (the wait). While one travels and the other waits, they find characters who challenge all their values and principles, trying to break up their feelings. Again, they were performed in the prison (Figure 8) and at Gulbenkian Foundation (Figure 9).



Figure 8. SAMP final performances in Leiria prison (2022)



Figure 9. SAMP final performances at Gulbenkian Foundation (2022)

5.2 Co-creation: participants' profile and involvement

A total of 82 participants were involved in the first co-creation workshop: 1 Traction-related professional, 8 professional artists, 69 non-professional artists, and 4 participants with other profiles (Table 19). In the second workshop, 114 participants took part, including 1 Traction-related professional, 20 professional artists, 86 non-professional artists and 7 participants with another profile (e.g., psychologists/prison staff).

Table 19. Participation at SAMP co-creation sessions by profile

WORKSHOP	Professional artists	Traction professionals	Non-professional artists	Other	TOTAL
1	8	1	69	4	82
2	20	1	86	7	114

Participation in the sessions ranged from 4 to 41, with an average of 12 persons. In the second workshop, participation ranged from 3 to 64, with an average of 16 per session.

Table 20. Number of participants per workshop: mean, minimum, maximum

WORKSHOP	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
1	12	3	41
2	16	3	63

A Traction-related professional attended 3 sessions in the first workshop and one in the second workshop. The participation from professional artists varied depending on their role, ranging from 1 to 54 sessions in the first workshop and from 2 to 90 in the second workshop. There were other participants taking part in the activities, such as guards,



psychologists and the prison director. For non-professionals, participation in workshop 1 ranged from 1 session to 25, with an average of 7 sessions. In workshop 2, participation ranged from 1 to 44 sessions, with an average of 13 sessions.

Table 21 presents how many non-professional artists (column 1) attended a certain number of sessions in workshop 1 (column 2) and the equivalence in terms of percentage. For instance, 25 participants (which equals 36.2% of the non-professionals) attended 5 to 10 sessions. Table 22 presents the same data for workshop 2.

Table 21. Number of sessions attended by non-professional artists (workshop 1, SAMP)

Participants	Attended: number of sessions	Percentage
6	1	8.7%
20	2 to 4	29%
25	5 to 10	36.2%
17	11 to 20	24.6%
1	+20	1.5%

Table 22. Number of sessions attended by non-professional artists (workshop 2, SAMP)

Participants	Attended: number of sessions	Percentage
10	1	11.6%
26	2 to 4	30.2%
14	5 to 10	16.3%
7	11 to 20	8.1%
29	+20	33.7%

Demographic data were gathered for 81 out of 82 participants (98.8%) in the first workshop. There were 74 males (91.4%), 6 females (7.4%) –who were either relatives or prison staff– and 1 participant (1.2%) who preferred not to reply. Average age was 24. Most participants reported not having a disability, except for 4 participants (5%) who preferred not to provide this information and 2 (2.5%) who replied positively. 4 were experts in opera (5%), 11 were knowledgeable (13.6%), but the vast majority were novice (81.4%). In the second workshop, data were gathered for 107 out of 114 participants (93.8%). There were 84 male (78.5%), 22 women (22.6%) and 1 who preferred not to answer this question. Age average was 25. Most participants reported not having a disability, except for 3 (2.8%) who preferred not to provide this information and 2 (1.8%) who replies positively. 9 were experts in opera (8.4%), 10 were knowledgeable (9.3%), one did not provide this information, but the vast majority (87) were novice (81%).

Regarding professional artists, they defined themselves as: teacher, musician, artist, writer/librettist, and composer. Participants under the category “other” included psychologists, reeducation technique professionals, guards, and public officials. As for non-professional artists, some of the jobs included students, electrician, construction worker, baker, driver, childhood monitor, restoration, cook, artist, businessman, player, waiter, teacher, carpenter, boxer, but many did not reply.

Focusing on non-professional artists, there were 67 males (98.5%) and 1 participant who did not provide this information in the first workshop, with an average age of 20. Most participants reported not having a disability, except for 4 (58.8%) who did not to provide this information and 2 (29.4%) who replied positively. Most were considered novice in



relation to opera (62=91.2%), although 6 were defined as knowledgeable (8.8%) due to previous experiences. In the second workshop, data from 84 out of 86 was gathered: 73 males (87%) and 11 females (13%), mainly relatives involved in the performances. Average age was 21. Only 2 participants reported a disability and 3 preferred not to answer. All were novice in opera except for two who were considered experts and one for whom information was not available.

According to the log, the aim of the activity was achieved in most sessions. A partial achievement was observed in 4 sessions in the first workshop and 4 sessions in the second one, and only one session was reported as not fulfilling its aim because it was attended only by three participants who arrived at different times, making it impossible to co-create. The reasons for considering the aim partially fulfilled varied: one session had to stop due to the lack of guards and another one had to stop due to the emotional involvement in one of the scenes representing mother visiting her imprisoned son. Another session in which joy and sadness were mixed is when the announcement of who goes to perform in Lisbon and who stays in Leiria is made. Still, in most sessions (95%), it is reported that participants were fully engaged.

5.3 Evaluating the co-creation process

Data from different sources were collected to assess the co-creation process, namely the evaluation log filled in by the facilitator, interviews with professionals and evaluation sessions with inmates. The professionals interviewed in the first workshop were a teacher specialised in artistic education, a musical education teacher in an art school, two theatre artists, a writer, and an opera singer. For the second workshop, professionals included an opera singer, a costume designer, and two music teachers.

About the evaluation sessions with inmates

The co-creation questionnaire and the interviews schedules followed in the other trials were not considered suitable tools to gather input from inmates, who do not always have good literacy skills and can react negatively to written forms which they associate to prison administrative procedures. Therefore, *ad hoc* evaluation sessions were organised with a more dynamic nature both after the first workshop and at the end of the project. SAMP adapted the evaluation methodology to the needs of the participants.

At the end of the workshop 1, 14 inmates gathered with 3 professionals for a group evaluation which developed during two sessions. They had all taken part in workshop 1 and in the performances both in Lisbon and Leiria in June 2021. At the beginning of the session, participants sang the “Hello” song, as usually done in the co-creation sessions. Then, the facilitator asked questions and the inmates responded using a post-it on a wall on a symbolic 5-point Likert scale. While they were sticking post-its, music was played, which contributed to the inmates’ relaxation and concentration. As for the qualitative questions, inmates sat in a circle and responded to them aloud, one at a time. An environment of trust was created as the questions were asked by the artists who had been accompanying them more closely. The questions were narrowed down to 4: 1) state the level of agreement or disagreement to the sentence “I liked it very much”; 2) explain the



most positive thing about their participation; 3) explain the least positive thing about their participation, and 4) explain what can be improved in the future.

In the evaluation of the second workshop and the final performance (Figure 10), 23 non-professional artists were involved in two evaluation sessions, one with 9 participants and one with 14. Together with SAMP professionals, SAMP psychologists, prison psychologists and prison guards, they sat in a circle and had the opportunity to share what their experience in the project had been with five guiding questions: a) What did you like the most, and why?, b) What wasn't so good?, c) What impacted you the most?, d) What would you change in the future?, e) What has changed about you participating in this project? There were two sessions with two groups of prisoners.



Figure 10. Evaluation workshop after the performances

The evaluation sessions were an opportunity to start expressing their views in an artistic way and inmates joined in small groups of 4-5 people to co-create a rap song about key aspects of the experience. Its analysis is beyond the scope of this document, but the rap song brings its reflections on the concepts of change, learning, commitment, and satisfaction.

A summary of the results of all the evaluation instruments regarding the co-creation process is presented next.

Non-professionals' profile

Non-professional artists were young male inmates, with a broadly homogenous profile, as described above. Some family members also took part in the performances, such as the mother of an inmate, with a deep emotional impact on them and on the audience.

Non-professionals' participation in the process

Participation in sessions in workshop 1 ranged from 3 to 41 participants, whereas in the second one participation ranged from 3 to 64. Non-professional artists attended between 1 and 25 sessions in workshop 1 and between 1 and 44 in the second one. The participation



of non-professionals was influenced by the activities in the prison. Due to visits to the lawyer or to the doctor or to alcohol and drug tests some could not finish some sessions or joined them later with a different attitude. Lack of guards, punishments, quarantines, internal situations and even the weather—when trying to rehearse with family members in Queluz in the first performances—affected participation but SAMP adapted to the situation. The personal situation of each participant could also have an impact on the development of the co-creation. For instance, in session 17, one of the participants refused to take part in an activity in which he had to play the role of a mother. In session 22, while representing a mother taking a bus trip to visit her imprisoned son and bringing him a cake, two said they would not be able to represent that scene for emotional reasons. In this regard, during workshop 2, the log records that “it is very difficult to have all the planned participants per session”, which required great adaptation skills. In the interviews, professional artists mentioned the need to create strategies to involve a greater representation of other non-professional artists beyond inmates and to work with them in other arts beyond music. They also expressed that the pandemic hindered the participation of some family members and guards in the sessions.

The pandemic also influenced workshop 2. For instance, the illness of the director made it difficult to divide the work in two separated spaces. An innovative solution was proposed: recreating the two spaces just 50 meters away, which allowed testing the tool and at the same time feeling the “theatrical energy”, as recorded by the log.

Non-professionals’ engagement in the process

The open field in the log often records the engagement and motivation of the participants: “there was great concentration and interest” (session 1), “all showed interest in learning Yoruba song” (sessions 2 and 3), “the whole group participated with interest” (session 5), “the participants loved this exercise” (session 20). Even after a 4-month break due to the pandemic, when facilitators were “expectant with the interest and behaviour of the participants after so long”, “it was very gratifying that they were eager and interested in knowing how we could continue with the work progress”.

When families joined the rehearsals in Lisbon in 2021, they showed “interest and joy, as well as curiosity to sing repertoire that is not natural or everyday for them”, as written in the log. Professionals being interviewed expressed satisfaction with the inclusion of family members: “but the moment when they see each other and participate, for them was clearly emotional and had a huge impact” (S4). S117 said that “it’s always good to have families there. The inmates seem brighter, more focused, their attention redoubled”.

The arrival of soloists and musicians was also seen by the professional artists as a turning point in the engagement of non-professionals in the first workshop: “[I] feel the change in their attitude in rehearsal and when the musicians are present” (S119). This thought was shared by S117: “I noticed that there is always a difference in energy when [...] the singers arrive, which can be seen in terms of availability, interest, willingness to do things and a kind of loss of inhibition and resistance”. Non-professional artist S79 also mentioned this during the interviews: the soloists “arrived here with an open heart [...], they helped us without any kind of prejudice”.



As the performance approached, there was a “good group energy”, as put in the log, and participants were willing to cooperate: before the general rehearsal “six participants stayed with us putting lights on the ceiling”, an aspect which showed engagement with the process and the performance. During the general rehearsal, according to the log records, there was “very good general atmosphere”, but participants were “very anxious”. Rehearsals were seen as liberating and special for the inmates, according to professionals.

The evaluation also demonstrates how engagement grew during the process: “For me, in the beginning it was just being able to get out of the cell and be able to spend more time out of the cell. But as the rehearsals went on until I got this point, I started to feel more interest”, a sentence which was expressed almost literally by another inmate in the evaluation sessions. A similar view was mentioned by professional S6 and by non-professional artists in the interviews: “At the beginning I didn’t want to come to this project. S63 encouraged me to come. Then I came the first time, at first I didn’t like it, but later on I started to like it. [...] and I really enjoyed the project we’ve done so far” (S14). It was often the “encouragement of colleagues” (S14) that made them engage in the project.

At the beginning of the second workshop, it was a “small group but very motivated and with great critical sense” (S153). Participants were “very active” (S156) but it was difficult to have a stable group. Some Christmas co-creation activities were welcomed by the participants, and they also felt very engaged with the new libretto. Later in the process, during some scenic work with a camera and video projector shots, the participants were “very animated with this scenic game of real image versus projected image”, the log records. As the performances approached, similarly to the first workshop, some sessions were difficult because “the participants are very excited” and it was “necessary to make a pause and talk a little to gain concentration again”, as recorded in the log. In the final rehearsals, there was “very good atmosphere between the musicians of the orchestra and the non-professional participants. The sensation of body vibration with the orchestra instruments has left many of these participants excited”.

Regarding professional artists being interviewed in the first workshop, they mentioned the interest of the inmates: “having them asking us ‘when do you call us? You haven’t called us for a long time’, I think it shows motivation” (S4). “Giving them a goal” was fundamental, something that helped “them to mobilize and focus” (S4), a view shared by other professionals (S119). After workshop 2, professional artists also underlined the engagement of non-professionals and the level of “trust” (S119). S118 saw that as time passed by the co-creation became more of a process of responsibilities with inmates assuming their commitment. The level of involvement got more evident as they got closer to the performances: “I feel like they’re very dedicated and very focused [...] I think there’s been a brutal evolution” (S118). Overall, there was a high level of engagement. In the words of non-professional artist S76, “I was surprised by everyone’s commitment, it wasn’t just mine or yours, it was all in general”.

Balanced contributions



In workshop 1, professional artists S3 and S4 stressed the possibility of exchanging ideas between everyone and the great contributions from inmates. However, given the duration of the creative process, S3 acknowledged that “we can’t expect the same percentage of contribution for those who are still an apprentice. In the first month of work, 100% of the work weight cannot be given to a participant, inmate, or guard”.

Professional artists S111 and S119 considered that they did not participate in co-creation moments, but S119 added: “I had a very large contribution that made me really glad”. They saw themselves as a complement of the work being developed. In this regard, S119 tried to ensure that those who stayed in Leiria and those who went to Lisbon “feel that they were equally important”. The group dynamics worked very well and some inmates who function as leaders helped the professionals where needed: “I know that if I told him I’m not controlling the group, he would say ‘Guys, how is it? The conductor needs us’” (S119).

As for the writing process in workshop 1, S6 worked “always considering what we heard in the prison”. Drama professionals tested ideas inside the prison and gave feedback. Participants report contributions coming from everyone but they “don’t even remember what the origin is. And I think it reveals a little bit the spirit in which things were created. Everyone collaborates, everyone adds, and everyone identifies in the narrative”.

In workshop 2, participants felt engaged with the new opera and, early in the process, gave “some very interesting stage movement and screen ideas”, the log records. There were also “very interesting discussions about what heritage is and what it means for each one of us” and everyone “helps by giving ideas”. Towards the end of the process the log emphasised the “very good environment”. Although not all of them could go to Lisbon, a non-professional inmate stated that the co-creation process “was the part in which everyone participated equally” (S42). This was also stressed by professional S119, who thought that the process involved different hierarchies (prison, inmates, family, externals) but there was good communication between all of them, leading the project to maintain a good balance between the participants. S93 confirmed this view: “they all had the opportunity to contribute”. Professional artist S118 thought that the co-creation process was an “inter-help process” in which he helped inmates on their path of creation together. Even if everyone involved in the performance had different life stories, S118 thought that “there are times when everyone shares the same mission”.

Mutual understanding

During the co-creation there were many group activities and an interest in understanding the others. One aspect that was discussed at the beginning of the first workshop was language. Whereas one group “didn’t like it very much that it was in Portuguese” and “questioned whether they would also have to sing in Italian or English”, another group “loved that it was in Portuguese”. A discussion on language sparked, starting a collaborative process of mutual understanding.

Non-professional artists indicated that “working with you [referring to the inmates]” and “meeting you [the artists]” or, as put by another, “working with everyone” was “a new experience” and something they really enjoyed. In the evaluation session from the first workshop, one of the participants expressed gratitude: “It is an honour to be able to learn from you, who valued us”, a verb with a lot of significance. Another participant said: “One



of the most memorable moments was the affection and complicity of all of you [the artists]. We can share our knowledge.” In fact, when discussing the best about the performance, one inmate stated that “on the day of the show, it was fear after fear, but everything was done with dedication and care. The trust you [artists] gave us made us stronger”. Similar views were found in the interviews with non-professionals in workshop 1, which can be summarised in the words of S63: “I thank you once again for all this. And I think that [what I liked most] is friendship and our thanks, and mutual respect”.

Similar thoughts were also echoed by professionals, who said that “there are changes in them in relation to us and that is extraordinary” (S4). The relationship was defined as calm and proceeded as in any other group. Professional artists S119 thought “we were in a good atmosphere” and “we had built brutal communication with them”, “in general a super normal group dynamic, with mutual respect”. In this regard, S6 considered that there were ideas that were equal for all, there were “things that put us all on the same level. They are human, generic feelings to everyone”. Despite so many different people being involved, S93 never felt a difference in hierarchies and there was always good communication among professionals and non-professionals. This was also stressed by the professional artist who collaborated with costume design.

Project evolution

Professional artists S3 and S4, both involved in the workshop 1, explained that they started with 5 or 6 groups –a time-consuming process- but, since some inmates were transferred or ended their sentences, there was a reduction, which was positive. The pandemic and other prison-related aspects also had a direct impact on the project evolution. As for professional writer S6, the main challenge in the project development was the fact that in the beginning it was difficult to reconcile so many ideas.

In workshop 2, the project was even more successful and run smoother. There was a higher level of connection and trust with the guards which led to greater participation and involvement. One professional artist expressed that the guards “were very attentive to the boys. They never interfered with anything, they always left us to resolve the conflicts that were going on, I think that was successful”. S119 stressed a positive project evolution with inmates feeling more familiar with the process. Also, the possibility of performing at Gulbenkian Foundation with the orchestra was seen as a big leap in the project: “starting from the first rehearsal so far, this is really building” (professional S118).

Non-professional's learning

The log for workshop 1 records that the “group shows good analytical skills” (session 2) and “ease in memorizing both the lyrics and the melody” (3). Some of the work done enhanced the acquisition of new skills: critical thinking, critical analysis, vocal notation, creative writing, improvisation. At the same time, non-professionals were encouraged to show their existing skills: session 19 was devoted partly to the artistic universe of the participants (playing guitar, beat-box), and these skills were used to create an artistic activity. Learning was seen as one of the most positive things: “we learn more”, “the indications they gave us to improve our voice”, “know a little more about music” were expressions found in the evaluation session.



Professional singer S117 valued that “it is interesting to show them [...] that we struggle with things that are difficult to solve. And that is how they are resolved: repeat, repeat”. Some inmates see that they are “investing more in something that I like and that I see can be something for my future other than jail”. This was supported by professional artists, who saw different types of learnings:

- Personal and relational learnings, which can be related to personal change (next section): “they react differently, not so impulsive” (S3), “there was a gain in personal skills: listening, knowing how to be inside the prison [...]. Relational skills [...] I would even say self-valuing skills” (S4). S111 mentioned self-discipline, cooperation, and mutual respect: “it was a great competence that was developed of them accepting and accepting even when it comes from a person of the opposite sex” (S111).
- Improvement in the attention capacity (S177).
- Personal growth, increased involvement, and trust (S6).
- Technical skills (S119).

Professionals considered the inmates as main agents of change: “they got a tool, we didn’t change anything” (S3). It was interesting to notice that, according to professionals, the performance allowed inmates to better understand the project and the usefulness of art.

The interviews with non-professionals from workshop 1 showed similar views: “I’ve gained many skills [...] learned more about the voice [...]” (S63), “I learned to warm up my voice, I learned to breath with my belly, we learn things constantly” (S76). And what is more: they projected these learnings into the future: “Piano I haven’t learned to play yet but I intend to do that later on. It is an asset for us to learn many other things” (S63). S76 thought they had worked most “the group dynamics, [...] respect, knowing how to wait our turn [...] and then each one developed the competence they liked the most”. Apart from group dynamics, S63 highlighted “responsibility” as a crucial learning, and S76 also referred to “knowledge about certain instruments and certain information about the project, about music, about opera, about theatre”.

Their views about opera also changed in workshop 1. S79 said: “Before I thought that the opera was just noise, that it was just people there screaming like that. Today I know how to appreciate it, to read that there is a story behind”. This view was shared by S26, who had learned “to value things, to like opera more”.

The evaluation log for workshop 2 records the interest of participants for learning: for instance, in a session in which the most basic things to understand the musical score were explained, “it is very interesting to see how the participants try to understand the ‘score world’”. There was even one inmate who did not read Portuguese but understood very well the score. The co-creation process was seen as a learning opportunity in the final evaluations with inmates: “We learned new things, that’s the most important thing” (S167). Being part of the experience, socialising with people who arrived from outside and getting out of their comfort zone brought them new learnings: “Opera helped me socialise more, to open more with other people. I learned to talk more, to live together, to learn to listen” (S160), “it helped me to know how to grasp opportunities” (S170), “learn new things” (S172), or “changed my notion of theatre” (S154).

Non-professionals’ personal change



Although at the beginning “we were just here to get out of the cell”, as one non-professional artist put it, their views changed and many of them got an appreciation of the work done, which was seen as something that can have an impact on their future. They were grateful for the artists’ “commitment, your effort for being here with us”. Another non-professional artist stated in the evaluation session for workshop 1 that “our soul improves, our self-esteem goes up [...]. It’s important for all of us to show talents and resilience and it helps us a lot”. In this regard, professional artist S111 observed that some inmates said, “maybe when I leave here, I can do something related to music”. S117 also mentioned that some inmates started “organising further”. In fact, during the interviews with non-professionals from workshop 1, S76 mentioned that the project gave him the opportunity “to be reborn”, because he started “using music again”.

In relation to workshop 2, personal changes were also mentioned: “What changed in me was my way of thinking, my behaviours, my attitudes and knowing that I can always do more than what I do” (S48). S160 expresses that the opera “opened many doors that I will definitely grab out there”. The opera also changes their minds about their own image: “I didn’t identify myself with opera before, but after I’ve done that, I think I started identifying more, because before I thought I was just like people dressing well and the instruments, screaming that I didn’t understand anything. But now I see the opera in a different way” (S167). S60 added: “my way of thinking and my way of acting, thinking differently, thinking calmer” were new learnings. And there was also a strong feeling of empowerment: “I learned that I can do whatever I wanted to do if I have the will” (S14). Professional S93 saw a group transformation during the process, whereas S192 believed that “[inmates] are much more confident”, highlighting their “empowerment”.

Professionals’ learning

In the interviews from workshop 1, professionals explained that thanks to the co-creation they developed the ability to prioritize group’s interests, when in conflict with the final output, and to understand the difficulties in a prison. Exchanging ideas between professionals was also referred to as “enhancing learning”. Other learnings included developing professional and leadership skills in unusual contexts (S111, S119), “appreciating and learning as things progress” (S117) and active listening and empathy (S6). After workshop 2, the difficulties were seen as new learning opportunities by S93. Professional artist S118 explained that “he often thinks he is teaching, but he is the one who is learning”. The experience made professionals better artists but also provided “small sharing and learning, that matters a lot too” (S118).

Professionals’ personal change

Professional artists in workshop 1 (S3, S4) explained that the experience changed their beliefs regarding the circumstances that led someone to commit a crime and how we judge others. “I’m not that different from these people”, said S111, who defined it as a “nice bath of reality”. Artists observed changes in the perspectives of prison professionals. S111 and S119 added: “When I’m at the opera and when I’m in prison, there’s always a big change in me. This empathy, this look at life in a different way, and this social stigma... is a little bit the transformation I bring to those around me” (S119). They identified social (“We look at things differently”), professional (“it transforms me as a teacher”) and artistic changes



(from a “too self-centred” conception of art to a more “human and altruistic” approach, S111). S6’s work in the prison brought reflections on the human capacity to change behaviour. During the interview, S6 recalled an “extremely impactful” moment in which an inmate introduced himself with his number (“Hello, I’m 35”), “taking away his identity”.

Similar comments were found in the interviews with professionals after workshop 2: “the project has made me think more about these kids and believe they deserve another chance” (S119), “it makes us realise that [...] most of the society is very judgemental”. S93 thought “I became a better person after being involved in this [...] I’m more tolerant, more grateful”. Similarly, S192 felt “much admiration” for the inmates and thought that “being so much more inside at this level changes the way I see everything”. Although the personal changes could not be quantified, this experience was defined as one S192 will never forget. Similarly, S192 also referred to some reflections on the “notions of social justice” and professional artist S118 commented on the “duality between what is right and what is wrong”. The impact on a personal level was acknowledged by S118: “you can eventually become a different person”, with stronger empathy and an ever-lasting effect: “there are things that we talked about just now that I think I’m still processing”.

Relationships

The feeling of bonding was expressed by non-professional artists from workshop 1 as one of the best things: they enjoyed “talking to friends and listening to colleagues rapping”. Despite some initial reluctance (“When I came in here, I said I couldn’t do this, much less there, at the theatre”), participants enjoyed “the interaction with colleagues”. This process did not come without conflicts: “even though I got in conflict with one of you [artists] [...] we must be grateful for your patience and demand”, said an inmate. In the interviews from workshop 1, non-professional artist S76 said “we all work together, we all already have a connection” and S63 thought that “relationship is more fluid, because before there was no relationship”.

Professional artists in workshop 1 saw the project as a facilitator of relationships between the inmates and observed an improvement in the environment, especially in Lisbon, outside their usual context: “that was the culmination of a greater knowledge of the boys and of them about us” (S4). Professional artists S119 and 111 considered their relationship with the inmates successful: “you feel like going for a beer with them afterwards” (S119). Others, like S117, felt a more maternal role. Writer S6 noticed a good relationship: “people are here with the same spirit”, and he referred to an episode in which he was being patted on the shoulder by one of the inmates as a significant moment.

In the final evaluation with inmates, it was evident that project increased the socialisation of the inmates among them and with people from outside: “I really enjoyed the coexistence with people, conductors, orchestra, singers, composer, I really enjoyed meeting everyone” (S160). S76 acknowledged that he “had to learn to deal with people who didn’t tell me anything and that if it wasn’t for being in the opera I didn’t want to deal with them”. Professional S119 thought that the relational growth among all project participants was remarkable and was specially satisfied about the relationship with inmates: “what I liked most was knowing their story”. There was one specific exercise, in which they all closed their eyes and just listened to each other’s breath, that worked very



well to make the group more cohesive. This professional concluded that “without love this project is not done”, showing great emotional involvement. On a similar vein, S93 repeatedly referred to the friendships made and consolidated. These relationships were also built among professionals: for instance, S150 and S193 felt “very supportive of each other”. Professional artist S118 also interacted a lot with them and feels felt the shared co-creation experience strengthens ties and builds new relationships of trust.

Satisfaction

There were recurrent expressions of satisfaction in the log (“they loved and really enjoyed doing it”, session 20). In the last session in workshop 1, they watched the second initial performance in Lisbon and, although “at least half [...] did not make this performance (they did the day before), they loved to see their colleagues and relatives”. This was confirmed by the data from the evaluation sessions in workshop 1, where all participants strongly agreed with the statement “I liked it very much” and had words of praise. Some participants thought “it was going to suck, but we managed to do the show after all”.

However, some decisions in workshop 2 had an impact on the satisfaction. For instance, in session 221, the evaluation log records: “New division of groups, taking into account those who will perform in the box and those who will perform online. Clearly, there were some who were not satisfied with these changes”. Later, when it was time to explain to participants who met the conditions to perform in Lisbon, the log records: “This session is always difficult because it mixes the joy of those who go to the theatre and those who do not”. In fact, a conflict came up later in the process, in a session in which “two participants had a discussion about the right to go to do the performances in Lisbon”, as recorded. The situation was managed well, and the co-creation activity continued.

In the evaluation sessions at the end, participants thought it had been a positive experience with good environment, good involvement and good result. Non-professional artist S29 stated: “I liked that they made life easier for us”. They are also very grateful for the possibility to be with their families: “What I liked the most was on the part of SAMP, all the effort they made for us to be a little with our family” (S76).

Professional artists in workshop 1 express satisfaction: the project “is very important in there [prison]. For everyone: for me, for the boys, for the staff, for the Board, for the guards, the families, and the community in general” (S3). S111 and S119 are satisfied by the way inmates accept them and with the interaction with family members. S117 is “happy to be able to participate in this journey”. Similar views are found after workshop 2: “I really enjoyed being part of it”, states S119, who highlights the commitment of all. “I think we really did it [...] I am really glad we made it” (S93).

The best, the worst, and the future

The aspects mentioned by non-professional artists as the best were:

- **Working together** with inmates and artists, talking to friends, feeling valued, doing something that “bore fruit” (S14). Non-professionals mentioned in the interviews that they “realised that you were here to listen to us, to help us with whatever was necessary, not only in the process of opera itself” (S63). S26 highlighted the **support**



and “the **trust**” as what they liked most, and S79 referred to “resilience and belief” in them.

- Doing something that can have a **positive impact on their future**: “It’s the experience. It’s always adding more and more, so that in the future it can be something more”.
- Feeling a **sense of achievement** of something they were not quite sure they could do or they would like.

5.4 Evaluating the artistic output

Initial performances took place on 2 and 3 June 2021 in Lisbon and on 18 and 19 June 2021 in the prison in Leiria. Considering the aspects in the map of indicators, we gather data from different instruments: audience questionnaires, expert’s assessment, and interviews with professionals and evaluation sessions with non-professionals.

5.4.1 Audience questionnaires

For the initial performances, 33 questionnaires were collected in total. One could not be used as the age entered was 12 and consent from the parents was not obtained and one was a duplicate. The analysis is based on 31 questionnaires from persons attending the sessions on 02/06 (11), 03/06 (13), 18/06 (3) and 19/06 (4).

For the final performances, 246 questionnaires were gathered in total but 16 could not be used because respondents did not give consent, or they were minors. The analysis is based on 230 questionnaires from participants attending the sessions on 3 June (7), 4 June (12), 3 and 4 June (4), 4 and 16 June (2), 16 June (122), 17 June (82) and 16 and 17 June (1). The questionnaires were gathered through a QR code that linked to an online form (Figure 11).

Most of the questionnaires are from Lisbon due to the difficulty of gathering data in the prison. The analysis differentiates between initial and final performances but not within specific sessions.

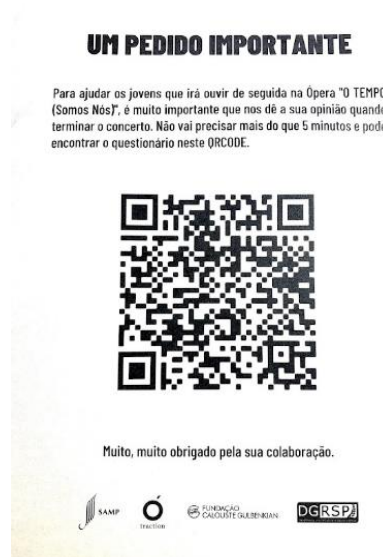


Figure 11. Audience questionnaire QR code (2022)



5.4.1.1 Initial performances SAMP

A total of 240 persons attended the initial performances in Lisbon and around 80 in Leiria. Demographics could be obtained from 30 participants: 20 females, 9 males and 1 person who does not provide this information. None of them reported having any disabilities. Age ranges from 20 to 62 (mean=41). Those who reported on their occupation mention: unemployed (1), sociologist (1), receptionist (1), public servant (2), human resources manager (1), lawyer (2), economist (1), student (5), teacher (2), actor (1), editor (1), secretary (2), manager (1), public/international relationships expert (2), writer (1). How participants got to the venue and how long it took them may be an interesting indicator: data showed that 2 participants went to the venue on foot, as they only lived 3 and 5 minutes from there; one took a taxi (15-minute trip), and two took a bus (15 min/2 h). 5 travelled by train, with distances ranging from 10 minutes to 60 minutes, but most of them (20) went by car and it took them between 2 minutes and 2h30 minutes. The average journey was 33 minutes long but the most usual one was around 15 minutes.

When asked about their connection with the performance, respondents did not generally have one (14= 46.7%). One reported having taken part in the project, 4 (13.3%) knew someone in the project, 5 (16.7%) knew someone at SAMP and 6 (20%) had a professional relationship with the project. Most respondents had attended a performance before lockdown (22= 73.3%). 5 participants did not and 3 were not sure.

Table 23 summarises the replies from the initial performances. The values are calculated considering all those participants who give a reply.



Table 23. Audience questionnaire (initial performances, SAMP)

Performance 1			Performance 2			Performance 3			Performance 4			ALL		
Mean	SD	Med	Mean	SD	Med	Mean	SD	Med	Mean	SD	Med	Mean	SD	Med
It was well made and performed														
5.3	0.6	5	5.5	0.7	6	5.7	0.6	6	6	0	6	5.5	0.6	6
It was different from anything I've seen before														
4.7	1.6	6	5.1	1.5	6	4.3	1.2	5	6	0	6	5	1.4	6
It was about things that really matter to me														
5.6	0.7	6	5.6	0.7	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	5.7	0.6	6
I felt involved in the performance														
5.4	1.3	6	5.3	1.1	6	5.7	0.6	6	5.75	0.5	6	5.4	1.1	6

On a 6-point Likert-scale

Performance 1			Performance 2			Performance 3			Performance 4			ALL		
Yes	No	?	Yes	No	?	Yes	No	?	Yes	No	?	Yes	No	?
Would you recommend this performance to a friend? (response rate: 100%)														
100	0	0	85	0	15	100	0	0	100	0	0	93.3	0	6.7
Has the performance made you feel differently about anything? (100%)														
82	18	0	70	7	23	100	0	0	10	0	0	76.7	10	10
Do you think technology played an important role in the performance (100%)														
100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0	0	75	25	0	96.7	3.3	0

In %

The audience questionnaire gathered information related to Matarasso's key quality indicators but also in relation to personal change, satisfaction, and technology.

In terms of craft, values for the initial performances were around 5.5. on a 6-point Likert scale. In terms of originality, the average was 5 and, as for representation, the values were also very high, with an average of 5.7. In terms of feeling and involvement, all performances scored very high, with an average of 5.4 for the initial ones. Most would recommend the performances to friend, with average percentages above 90%, showing high satisfaction.

Respondents from the first performances felt satisfied with the integration of professional and non-professional artists, and many mentioned the moment in which an inmate read a letter to his mother, "a liberating situation for you and the audience", "a cathartic exercise for all". One respondent "loved it all" and another one liked "the message passed and the mix of different music styles", whereas a third one from Leiria liked "the project and its humanity". A respondent underlined "the pride that there are inclusion projects for those who are incarcerated" but also complained about "the non-inclusion of prison guards in the show, absent, distant" and suggested involving them.

When asked whether the performance has made the audience feel differently about anything, 76.7% reply positively. When asked why, most respondents linked their replies to an increased awareness of inequalities and other realities ("asking if I am a person who is aware of inequalities and what I can do differently", "social awareness"). Some referred to freedom, to "giving second chances", to "motherhood and the concept of happiness", to "the way you look at the other", and to "reflecting on my role in life". One participant mentioned "believe more strongly in humanity" and another feels "greater respect for prisoners".

Audiences were explicitly asked about technology and a vast majority (96.7%) responded positively, adding qualitative comments. Most of the responses in the initial performances referred to the simultaneous online connections with those who were not in the venue, to



the interactions of people in different places, feeling “closer with those who are further away”. The presence of the chorus through video link was selected as one of the best things by one participant. Still, one participant mentioned that deferred sound was “a little out of phase” but “found it very cute”. One respondent was aware of “the challenges of remote synchronisation”, which “imply innovative solutions”. Another one considered that technology allowed for “co-creation”.

In the final open field for the initial performances, audience members included mainly words of praise (“unforgettable”, “big idea”, “thank you SAMP for not forgetting the forgotten”) for an initiative involving young people with a social impact on people, especially in the context of a pandemic. One person who attends opera performances regularly writes:

“Opera has been transporting me to faraway places for some years now. The difference between the opera I'm used to and this one is that the traditional Opera transports me to ancient times, stories or ways of thinking, while this one made me reflect on the present and how we see others, regardless of its "background". I won't compare the two experiences because I think it would be unfair but I believe that, in a way, both arouse a feeling of compassion between people and for the story these experiences will always remain”

5.4.1.2 Final performances SAMP

In the final performances, a total of 300 persons attended the two first performances in the prison and 2,400 in Lisbon. In the questionnaire respondents there were 158 females (68.6%), 62 males (27%), 3 people who did not identify as male or female (1.4%) and 7 attendees who did not reply to this question (3%). Only 6 people reported having a disability (2.6%). Age range was between 18 and 84, with an average age of 45. There was a wide range of occupations in the field of administration and finances, education (both students and teachers), tourism, arts, medicine, law, among many others. Most participants (73%) had seen a live performance before lockdown. When asked about their relationship with the project, most of them (70%) reported not having any, with some knowing someone who worked at SAMP (24%). Most of them reported going to the performances by car (60%). It took the attendees between 5 and 240 minutes to get to the performance, with an average time of approximately 30 minutes.

Table 24 summarises the results of the audience questionnaire for SAMP final performances. In terms of craft, values for final performances were around 5.5 on a 6-point Likert scale: 5.36 for originality, 5.2. for feeling, and 5.45 for feeling of representation, which is a highly relevant result given the variety of audience members involved in the final performances. Most would recommend the performances to friend, with average percentages above 90%, showing high satisfaction.

In the final performances, when asked what they particularly like or dislike, various positive comments referred to the beatbox rap moment at the end because “it was unexpected but yet it matched the opera” and to the letter from an inmate to his mother (“[it] touched my heart”). There were also positive replies referring to the involvement of the inmates and their families and the presence of the Gulbenkian orchestra at the same level of the audience in the prison performances, which led to a feeling of communion. Other positive



aspects mentioned the “reality portrayed”, the “theme and interpretation”, the “set design”, the variety of registers, the “message”, the “group spirit” and “energy”, the “voice of some participants”, “the dynamics of the show”, “the relevance of the theme for those involved”, “the inclusion factor”, “the timeless message they pass”, “the involvement of family members” or “the text”. Many comments simply stated “I liked everything” and one added enthusiastically: “Best opera of the season” whereas another one concluded “A punch in the stomach. A good punch. And beautiful”.

Table 24. Audience questionnaires (final performances, SAMP)

Performance 1			Performance 2			Performance 3			Performance 4			ALL		
Mean	SD	Med	Mean	SD	Med	Mean	SD	Med	Mean	SD	Med	Mean	SD	Med
It was well made and performed														
5.45	0.82	6	5.72	0.57	6	5.57	0.75	6	5.34	0.91	6	5.49	0.81	6
It was different from anything I've seen before														
5.55	0.52	6	5.56	1.15	6	5.38	1.15	6	5.29	0.98	6	5.37	1.07	6
It was about things that really matter to me														
5.64	0.67	6	5.72	0.67	6	5.44	0.81	6	5.40	1	6	5.46	0.87	6
I felt involved in the performance														
5.27	0.90	6	5.67	0.59	6	5.20	1.13	6	5.12	1.14	6	5.21	1.09	6

On a 6-point Likert-scale

Performance 1			Performance 2			Performance 3			Performance 4			ALL		
Yes	No	?	Yes	No	?	Yes	No	?	Yes	No	?	Yes	No	?
Would you recommend this performance to a friend? (response rate: 100%)														
90	10	0	100	0	0	89.5	3.2	7.3	92.8	1.2	6	91.3	2.6	6.1
Has the performance made you feel differently about anything? (100%)														
90	0	10	94	6	0	62.6	13.8	23.6	67.9	14.8	17.3	67.3	13.2	19.5
Do you think technology played an important role in the performance (100%)														
90	0	10	100	0	0	89.52	4.0	5.6	92.8	3.6	3.6	92.1	3.5	4.4

In %

Participants referred to some aspects that could be improved: many participants reported that the acoustics were not very good in the prison and the sound of the orchestra overlapped with the voices, a situation which the audience understood as “it’s not a concert hall”. The layout of the chairs did not give good visibility of the stage to all participants in the prison performances, and the “discomfort” –one does not know whether physical or emotional—was reported as one element of dislike by a respondent. One participant who would not recommend the opera found the piece too long, weak and repetitive. Repeatability was also mentioned by another attendee and one comment referred to the “lack of synchronicity between the sound and one of the screens”. Some dislikes can be attributed to personal taste, as one attendant who wrote: “Dislike: music (not the type I enjoy)”. And there were also some aspects that could be improved: “I did not like some dramaturgic moments”, “I encourage the introduction of humour (could be more)”, “I liked to see the participation of the prisoners, but I thought they should have had a greater role”. There was an interesting comment by one member who expressed some disappointment because “the theme chosen for the shows always talks about their reality. When do we get people to be and participate in projects without connecting to their condition?”.

When asked whether the performance had made the audience feel differently about anything, 67.3% replied positively, compared to 76.7% who reply positively in the first performances. An explanation could be maybe found in the different number of responses



obtained (considerably higher in the final performances) and in the more symbolic nature of the final performances.

When asked why the opera had made them feel differently, a member of the audience wrote: "I'm Penelope too and I wasn't aware of it". Other responses highlighted how the performance gave them a "different perception" or made them reflect on their life and the opportunities given by life. One attendee underlined that "everybody is important in society" and another one is "happy because of a sense of community". "Waking up to the reality of being in prison" was mentioned by many attendees, who "value the basics that are so important: love, peace, freedom, time, family". Reflections on "human behaviour", "time", "freedom", "change", "choices" were a direct consequence of the performance in some attendees. Some highlighted the importance of art as an intervention tool with young people.

Audiences were explicitly asked about technology and a vast majority (92.1%) responded positively, adding qualitative comments. Technology was seen as an element that made a "difference", which allowed them "to connect". The fact that the technology brought "inmates closer to the public" was underlined by many attendees, who saw the potential of "two spaces of action, connected by video", "expanding the scenic space". "A barrier has been broken that it would not be possible to break without technology", added another one. Technology contributed to the opera dynamism, to the storytelling, to its "innovation" and "modernity" and to the participation of those who cannot be in the hall. Surtitling was also seen as "very important to the general public" together with the lighting. A few participants did not like it, and one complained that "one of the screens was delayed".

In the final open field for the final performances, positive opinions were found, with impactful replies such as "catharsis", "there are no impossible things", "freedom" or "we are all the same", showing the emotional impact of the work. One person who acknowledged not having any relationship with the project or SAMP wrote down: "It was everything and more than I expected. It made me laugh, cry and think a lot about what was addressed. I'm going to take this experience with me." This emotional aspect was echoed in many comments. Very few comments were found with a less positive approach: there was one attendee who compared this opera to previous ones by SAMP and had higher expectations and another one who expected a higher presence of the non-professional artists. In any case, most replies were very positive, urging projects like this to be continued and adding words of praise.

5.4.2 Experts' assessment

There were five experts who evaluated both the initial and the final SAMP operas: 1) a choreographer and dancer, with experience in website works and long practice in creative and contemporary dance projects; 2) a university professor with experience in new education systems who has worked for more than 30 years in projects involving people in vulnerable situations; 3) a musicologist and stage director who is also a university professor with experience in the sociology of music and contemporary opera; 4) a musicologist and singer, conservatory teacher, with long experience in coral and orchestral projects such as



El Sistema in Venezuela, and 5) a musicologist and director of a music service of a reference cultural foundation, with long experience in music criticism.

5.4.2.1 Initial performances (2021)

Experts' reports provided multiple nuances. We present the main ideas below, reproducing whenever possible their words. In terms of **craft**, i.e. the technical and artistic skills evident in the production and the performance, the experts provide comments on different aspects, aware of the specificities of this production. E4 said: "When a production is guided by values that seek to associate dimensions and social purposes to an aesthetic device with the complexity and ambition of an operatic performance, it is difficult to place the foreground of our attention on technical and artistic skills. Not that these are not of the greatest relevance, but because the project clearly transposes them through the much deeper and broader purpose of establishing networks of reflection, empathy and solidarity between the various agents involved".

The initial performance showed room for improvement such as "the props and the costumes" (E1) and the connection between the various languages (E1). Still, E3 considered that "both technically and artistically, the show reached an excellent level. The combination of professional and non-professional artists was fully achieved, with the technique of the different musical styles worked on, making excellent use of the specific skills of its participants." E4 thought that "the eclectic content of the composition, which aims to be aggregating and inclusive, using different musical styles and languages, is rich and flexible". E5 believed "taking into account the difficult physical circumstances of the presentation space at EP-Prisão/School, the production managed an adaptation/transformation of the space that served the dramaturgical needs and managed to obtain the necessary means to create a cohesive scenic environment". The presence of two choirs (relatives and collaborators / inmates) was stressed by E5 as an element that "reinforced the treatment of themes through the creation of a permanent dialogue". In this regard, "the 'rap moment' [...] revealed a very consistent technical-artistic level, eventually one of the highlights of the whole presentation" (E2). Other positive aspects mentioned were "the quality of the score and the performance of the choirs" (E5) and the libretto (E4) whereas the "dramatic art, developed along the musical-theatrical path proposed to us, can perhaps be cut in a more defined and sustained way" (E4).

This initial performance still met with some of the restrictions of the pandemic, and this had an impact: "communicability is harmed by the use of the mask" (E1) and some difficulties were identified in understanding the sung word, hence suggesting a need for simultaneous subtitling. One element picked up by most experts as in need of improvement was staging: "on the part of the non-professional artist it seemed evident some discomfort or unease in the performance, some hesitation and/or nervousness" (E1), suggesting "a particular dedication to issues related to stage presence" (E1), which was found in an "exploratory phase" (E4).

As for **originality**, E1 referred to the new doors open by the project and considered the "originality is in the discursive authenticity the performance induced", whereas E5 stressed the "great involvement of young prisoners". E2 considered that "artistic creation in a context of deprivation of freedom is, in itself, a factor of originality". E3 focused on the



veracity of the material, putting as an example the text of the rap (as also mentioned by E5) or the participation of an inmate's mother. E4 underscored four aspects: "firstly, the voluntary and expressive content, achieved, to highlight the dimension of social inclusion encompassing, as active elements, young inmates of the Leiria Prison Establishment; secondly, cohabitation and creative cooperation between professional musicians (singers, instrumentalists, composers) not only with young prisoners, but also with elements of their community; thirdly, the fact of having opted for the production of a new work, composed specifically for/and with the collaboration of the group that encompasses and finally, fourthly, the use of digital sound and image technologies in the service of a show community opera and this one of diversity and inclusion."

In terms of **ambition**, E4 considered that "this is an extremely ambitious project" at many levels. As it uses a "music-theatrical genre historically and culturally associated with elitist circles to serve the social insertion and rehabilitation". E1 believed that "participatory art is, by nature, valued and transformative", a view shared by E2: "The artistic experience in itself, for the individual who practices it, has a transforming dimension". E3 considered the performance was "worth it" and "the coexistence of different artistic expressions and means [...] creates a broader space of inclusion", defining the project as clearly aligned with European values. E5 acknowledged that it is still a work under construction but it "promises to become an important reflection on rights and freedom, treated not only from the point of view of guilt/punishment, but in a much more comprehensive way".

With regards to **resonance**, E1 emphasised the repercussion and relevance on the relatives and decision-makers, whereas E2 was of the opinion that "what immediately stands out in this presentation is not, for now, its content (the story, the narrative) but the context in which this same content originates". E3 on the "right to have opportunity and place, time and space, to be better", but also provided some observations written a few days later which highlighted the "dominance of black people among the young prisoners, and the almost omnipresence of whites among those outside, among singers and musicians" and how racism, although not mentioned, will "be latent, here and for many of these people". E4 stressed that the audience "was in broad harmony with the show", whilst E5 thought that the environment, "the way it unfolded, and the content of its libretto, caused emotion and reflection", defining the work as "transformative".

Finally, in terms of **feeling**, E1 and E2 referred to an emotional moment in which an inmate read a letter to his mother and E1 put the focus on the lyrics of the rap. E3 and E4 saw that the theme raises empathy in the audience. On the other hand, E2 found that "the joint musical performance of a group of singers on stage and another group from a distance, visualized on a large screen" was disconcerting, showing the performance was "in general, unconsolidated, with many ups and downs".

Experts were also asked about the **technology**, which was found "very interesting" (E1), but needing more development in terms of integration in the performance. E2 wrote: "the digital technology used did not give a differentiating expression in the performance [...]. This is also because the way in which this expedient was used has not always been, dramaturgically and aesthetically, the most convincing", a view shared by E5, who thought that "the use of technology was scarce" and "below expectations". This is probably why E4



encouraged “the deepening of this investigation”, which was taken on board in the second phase of the project.

In the final open field, words of praise and gratitude were included (“congratulations to SAMP and all the protagonists!”) as well as suggestions for improvement related to the artistic consistency (E2) and to the layout of the performance room in the prison, adding stands for the public (E5). All this feedback impacted on the development of the second co-creation workshop and the final performances, which received more positive feedback from the experts, as described next.

5.4.2.2 Final performances (2022)

The evaluation of the final performances showed a positive evolution in the project, with many aspects being praised. Regarding **craft**, E4 considered that given “the immense demand for a project of this nature [...] the artistic quality obtained is remarkable”. E4 wrote: “In the fragmentary content of the play, there is a dramatist and sound background that allows for an effective organization of the narrative, and a good communication with the audience. Orchestral language is simultaneously congruent and bold, trading textures, timbres and dynamics with dramatic events, and safe and effective vocal writing”. Staging was also valued. Still, E1 thought that from “the point of view of the dramaturgic technique (costumes, scenography, props), the minimalist option fulfils the design of the performance, but especially in interpreters with more central roles, the use of some props and/ or costumes with differentiating elements could help improve the communicability of the work.”

Experts made comments related to the use of technology, which was seen as “technical element brilliantly accentuated the deconstruction of the variables time and space, underlining the political message of the work” (E1). E4 also stresses the “high competence achieved in aspects of articulation between performance on stage with augmented Virtual Reality” and E5 highlights the “total cohesion” in the “very interesting idea of ‘Greek chorus’”. E2, on the contrary, found the transition from the live dimension to the video dimension “dramaturgically confusing”.

The “solid balance between the work of professional and non-professional participants” is mentioned by E2, E4 and E3, the latter praising the “quality achieved” and the beatbox moment, “absolutely pertinent and with a level of virtuosity insurmountable, superlative, putting the performer at the level of the best singer or instrumentalist on stage.”

Due to the absence of subtitling in the use of Creole, E2 commented that “the audience experiences, for a brief moment, the pulse of exclusion, something common to the daily experience of most of the prisoners participating in the project”.

Regarding **originality**, E1 insisted on the “political dimension and institutional subversion that this work, and necessarily the interpretation that embodies it, achieve intelligently and courageously”. E2 gave the same opinion as in the first performances and E3 considered the work a “trip”, “a classic and therefore timeless” proposal. Finally, E4 thought the opera “demonstrates a high level of originality, clearly presenting the aspects and problems specific to its production context, actors involved, and intentions”, considering that “the production of an operatic piece is an extremely ambitious act”. The



“main factor of originality”, in the words of E3, was the “articulated and continued work among” all the agents involved. A similar opinion was held by E5: “The originality of this work is guaranteed by the fact that the libretto of the opera was constructed with the thoughts, ways of feeling and opinions expressed by the prisoners”.

In terms of **ambition**, E1 considered that the “creation surpassed the area of experimentalism and aspired to be a spectacle with high communication impact”. Ambition was also felt in the “contamination of musical languages” (E1). E2 underlined the “high level of involvement and commitment of the participants, without exception” and E2 qualified it as “overwhelming”, which is probably why E5 believed the opera, defined as a “work of excellence”, “deserves to be seen by as many people as possible”.

With regards to **resonance**, R2 believed that the “the creation and interpretation were so authentic that even some of the people in the public who were present for institutional duty or solidarity, and with an active expectation still marked by some commiseration, were caught up in the emotion that the work achieved”. E2 saw a substantial positive change in relation to initial performances: “more than mirroring a look at the condition of incarceration in a condescending and pious way, the show is now giving voice to those whose voice is not usually heard”. E3 agreed that in this opera is moving towards “a universality that goes beyond times and places”, an opinion shared by E5. E4, who attended the performance in Lisbon, referred to the enthusiasm of a full auditorium, which was “quite revealing of how effective the production of the piece was”. E4 considered that this production “achieves a very relevant level of communication with the public, by resonating on central ideas and reviewing and reiterating them throughout the work and its representation.”

Finally, in terms of **feeling**, E1 observed that the “work arouses feelings in people who, like me, participate in projects with the prison population”. This expert was aware of the impact of artistic processes on young people and convinced that the theme can have a transformative impact. E2 agreed that “participatory creation, at various levels, is a learning path for plural citizenship, for a more qualified democracy.” E3 referred to personal feelings felt throughout the performance: “the sensation sometimes of punching in the stomach (and the stomach as primordial brain), the feeling of sweetness, nostalgia, despair, bitter tenderness, revolt, passion”. E4 also viewed the work as “engaging”, with a high “affective potential”, and felt moved by the “simple truth with which all the interpreters exposed themselves”.

Experts were also asked about the **technology** and a clear evolution of the technology during the project was recognised by E1: “video technology has developed immensely compared with the previous creation. The diversity of plans, interpreters, voices, times, spaces reinforced the communicative and dramatic quality of the work”. On a similar vein, E2 thought that “the audio/video quality served perfectly what was intended for the performance”, stressing the intensification of audience involvement when a prisoner reads a letter to his mother. E2 valued the “opportunity to open a place of restriction” offered by the technology, but still believed that “the use of technology as a possibility of approaching distant places loses, at a given moment and dramaturgically, its focus: the mixture of “live streaming” images with pre-recorded moments disturbed the perception and dramaturgic potential of the technology used”. E3 described technology as a door that



gives access to a forbidden place and “allows us to bring inmates virtually to the center of the action”. E4 was also aware of the “possibilities offered” and how technology brought “individuals and their artistic performances closer together”. Despite all these advantages, in the performance attended by E5 “the quality of the video was not always the best” but, on a positive note, E5 praised the use of surtitles.

In the final open field, words of praise and gratitude (“Congratulations to SAMP and all the interpreters and creators”) were included. It is especially relevant that E2, who was critical of the initial performances, acknowledged the “great maturity” of this work compared to previous ones. E3 wrote down: “continuity, continuity, continuity... Proceed, proceed, proceed... endure...” It was obvious that a big change had taken place from the initial to the final performances. E5 expressed it in the following words: “Compared to the first *work in progress show* I could see in prison school, this show (also by location and stage conditions, certainly) surpassed all my expectations. I saw a highly professional work, of extreme quality and of great impact.”

5.4.3 Interviews with professional and evaluation sessions with non-professional artists

Qualitative information was gathered through the evaluation sessions and the interviews which complement the data presented above.

Audience attendance and profile in the performance

In one of the interviews, professional artists mention that the Portugal Minister of Culture was present in one of the rehearsals of the initial performances. In the final performances, both the Minister of Culture and the Minister of Justice were present together with a former Minister of Justice. Non-professional artist S168 stated: “It surprised me the audience, that call that we had at the end of the Minister of Justice. I never thought they would call us to congratulate us about the opera that we made”.

Audience response: feeling represented, personal change, satisfaction

As put by professional artist S6 in relation to the initial performances, “they weren’t only applauding that mother. They were applauding the idea of a mother, of their own mother. And that was beautiful”. S117, a professional singer, said “that scene of the letter I will never forget. No mother can ever forget that”.

When discussing the final performances, an inmate was satisfied by “the reaction of the audience, who did not expect it to be so good”. It was possible to hear the audience laughing, feeling that they were communicating what they were feeling. Inmates were surprised by their impact on the audience. They were also surprised at the audience attendance: “I never thought there’d be so many people watching” (S48). In this regard, professional artist S118 considered that the numbers were due to the fact “we’ve done a good job all of us”. This professional thought that the opera is transformative: the audience engages in the plot and is left to reflect on the message.

In this regard, the change was not only on the audience. Professional artist S192 indicated that “this show has changed the way I’m thinking the rest of my career” as “positive and empathically revolutionary” changes were felt.



Non-professionals response to the performance: feeling represented, satisfaction

Non-professional artists felt represented in the initial performances. One inmate, whose mother could not attend, said: “I felt like I was the one reading it [the letter] to my mother”. Another inmate, whose mother was there, explained how emotional he was (“the second day was the most exciting because my mother was there”). The presence of the family was capital, with 5 non-professional artists indicating it is one of the best things. One inmate “felt they were proud of me for doing something that is not illegal”.

Professionals S3 and S4 recalled the satisfaction of the inmates because they could show their families what they are capable of, whereas S111 and S119 observed the satisfaction of inmates after a lot of nervousness (“such as state of nerves that I never thought I would watch”, S119). S117 mentioned that inmates were given the opportunities to ask their questions to the public: “it was their thing, nobody made them say that”.

Non-professional artist S14 said that what he remembers “most is the minutes before the show”. Another inmate recalled that one of the best things is when he sang “We all have a right to be happy”. And he added: “I think it must had an impact on the audience”. In one of the interviews, S14, a non-professional artist, considered that “in the past show, conveying the message that we are all equal, we gave examples of various types of prejudices. This is giving our voice to society”.

When talking about the final works, satisfaction was evident: “I like being here to do that too, I would repeat it again too. I wasn’t expecting me to do what I did, and it went well” (S172), “I liked being there, I liked the adrenaline on stage” (S61). Professional artist 192 stresses that, despite all the differences, “there’s a moment there when we’re all on the same page and on the same wave”. Professional artists involved in the final performance also realise the involvement and change not only in the artists going to Gulbenkian but also those staying in Leiria, who “can be more relaxed in front of the cameras”.

Quality

For the final opera, professional artist S118 thought that the fact that an original work was created from scratch, through shared ideas and music written for the work, brought quality to the project, increased the challenge. That also brought some more tense moments of work with tighter deadlines but, in the end, the quality-originality result was successful. Looking at more specific features, professional artist S192 was satisfied with the artistic quality of the work and found the performance “very moving”, especially the moment a letter was read to a mother: “it is a super strong scene for anyone and highly emotional for anyone”. Professional S93 also considered the message to be “strong”.

Professional artist S119 thought that many aspects were addressed in the final opera, which led to a more successful opera: from technological integration to the participation of a director who takes care of the whole scenic part, stage presence, etc: “I think we’re very successful in the last show”.

Technology

Concerning the initial performances, “some technical problems that make the sound arrive very late” were found during the rehearsals, according to the evaluation log, but they were solved in the performance.



In the interviews, professionals mentioned that technology was focused more on the interaction between family members and inmates and wished to extend its use. It was important for them to see the potential of the Co-creation Stage: “seeing and proving that it even served to bring music from a distant space to a theatre and shorten the delay, that worked well” (S3). Other professionals found the interaction with screens challenging: “how do you manage to feel involved with a screen and try to assume for ourselves that it was like if we were singing or playing music right next to them? Altogether, it’s a bit difficult to get into this concept of union and interaction” (S111). Although S6 initially considered the presence of technology less positive (“it would bring more noise, headaches, and complications than solutions”), in the end S6 saw it as a positive aspect which adds an important symbology to the performance, connecting two distant physical spaces.

It is also interesting to notice the awareness and connection between technology and personal learning: non-professional artist S63 said “we were also aware that if the technical part failed, we would fail, and if we failed the technical part would also fail”.

In the final performances, professional S93 was pleased to see that the technological work was more valued. S119 highlighted that “the whole project was very well achieved, that is, in relation to the last show, there was a concern of the composers to change the way it interacted between Mozart pavilion and main stage”, one of the aspects criticised in the initial works. However, S119 still thought technology had a lot of potential to be more effective. Non-professional artists especially valued:

Going to Lisbon, out of the prison, and performing. As observed also by professional artists, this opened the doors to places that are normally forbidden. S76 thought “they gave me the opportunity to play with an orchestra, it was excellent”. S79 selected the day of the show as the best, as a “spectacular day”. He valued “the results after the show”.

Presence of the family. Referring to the last performances, one inmate (S76) said: “What I liked most was on the part of SAMP all the effort they made for us to be a little with our family.” Another (S29) referred to the many relatives who attended the show in Lisbon.

Enjoying a **new experience** which was “already part of my memory”, as put by one inmate.

Feeling like a group and interacting (“there were no distinctions between Leiria and Lisbon”), thanks to technology (“being here and being at the same time at the Gulbenkian”). The “interaction with colleagues” was one of the best aspects (S14). S42 said: “what changed for me was the way we interact with people and meet new people. I like doing this already.” This view was supported by professional artist S118, who also observed that bonds of friendship and trust become more solid.

Reaction of the audience, “who did not expect it to be so good”, was mentioned by many inmates: “it was the final part of the performance, when I saw the whole people standing, applauding” (S60).

As for the less positive aspects, most comments are related to the initial performances, but there was also one comment on the process in workshop 1:

Tensions: there were comments related to some nervousness before the show, some mistakes done during the show and the “heat, the nerves, the fatigue of the journey”. This is also found in the final performances. A participant who created a strong discussion on



the Mozart Pavilion stage was punished and could not perform in one of the shows, even if family came on purpose to see him.

Lack of communication (guards/chiefs): in the interviews with non-professionals the “lack of communication between the guards and the chiefs” was mentioned by more than one non-professionals, with a negative impact on attendance.

Going to Lisbon: those who could not go say that staying in Leiria was the worst part. “Everyone who stayed here wanted to go to Lisbon, but it was not possible. There will certainly be another opportunity”, one inmate said.

Finally, most suggestions for improvement in the initial performances are related to the willingness to “participate more” and “equally”, i.e. giving “everyone the opportunity to go to Lisbon” and singing “the choir part all together”. These complaints were not found in the final evaluations, so one can deduce that the technological solution was successful.



6 INO

This section reports on the INO trial, both in terms of co-creation process and final output, and looks at the results gathered from the different evaluation instruments.

6.1 The INO trial

6.1.1 The workshops

INO developed 14 workshops, with a total of 57 sessions (Table 25). The workshops took place in three different communities: residents of Inis Meáin (an Irish speaking island community off the West Coast of Ireland), teenagers across rural Ireland and adults living in Tallaght (a diverse urban community situated just south of Dublin City Centre). The last two came together in workshops 10, 11 and 13. The workshops were led by different professional artists, focusing on writing, art, composition, and motion capture. Additionally, four online discussions took place in October and November 2021 to keep the participants abreast of the opera development and 23 choir rehearsal sessions took place from January until May 2022 (19 in Tallaght and 4 in Inis Meáin). These activities are not considered co-creation activities in the context of this trial and are not included in the following analysis.

Table 25. INO co-creation workshops

#	Date	Group	Art form	# sessions
1	Feb-March 21	Inis Meáin	Writing	4
2	Feb-March 21	Secondary school students (rural areas)	Writing	4
3	Feb-March 21	Tallaght	Art	4
4	March 21	Inis Meáin	Art	4
5	March-April 21	Tallaght	Writing	4
6	March-April 21	Secondary school students (rural areas)	Art	4
7	April-May 21	Inis Meáin	Composition	5
8	April-June 21	Secondary school students (rural areas)	Composition	10
9	April-June 21	Tallaght	Composition	10
10	August 2021	Tallaght & Secondary school students (rural areas)	Art/Writing Composition	2
11	Sept. 2021	Tallaght & Secondary school students (rural areas)	Writing Composition/ Writing	2
12	Sept 2021	Inis Meáin	Writing	1
13	Nov 2021	Tallaght & Secondary school students (rural areas)	Motion capture	1
14	March 2022	Inis Meáin	Motion capture	2
			TOTAL	57



Until workshop 9 the sessions developed online, due to the pandemic, and lasted less than 2 hours. The last workshops could take place face-to-face and lasted longer: the two sessions in workshop 10 and the two sessions in workshops 11 lasted more than four hours and took place in an arts venue. The sessions in workshops 12, 13 and 14 lasted between two and four hours and took place in a community venue (workshop 12 and 14) and in an arts venue (workshop 13). Figure 12 reproduces two images of the workshops.



Figure 12. Co-creation workshops in Ireland

6.1.2 The performance

The output of the co-creation process is *Out of the Ordinary/As an nGnách*, a new Virtual Reality community opera. This VR opera tells the tale of a community forced to flee their barren homeland, which, due to their own actions, can no longer sustain them. The audience takes on the role of Nalva, the main character, who has built a boat to take her people on an epic journey to find a new home.

Out of the Ordinary/As an nGnách premiered at the Kilkenny Arts Festival on 9 August 2022, in a partial version prior to completion. The final version premiered at the Dublin Fringe Festival on 12 September 2022. Since then, it has been shown to audiences in Barcelona and at the Yarn Storytelling Festival in Wicklow in November 2022. *Out of the Ordinary/As an nGnách* is due to tour to all counties in Ireland in 2023. Figure 13 reproduces images of audience members enjoying the VR opera in their headsets.



Figure 13. Audience members watching the VR opera



6.2 Co-creation: participants' profile and involvement

A total of 87 participants were involved in the different co-creation workshops: 4 Traction-related professionals (INO staff), 8 professional artists, and 75 non-professional artists. If we consider each workshop separately (not each session), the number of unique participants—that is, of participants involved in at least one session in the corresponding workshop—are presented in Table 26 and ranged from 7 to 25.

Table 26. Unique participation at INO co-creation workshops by profile

WORKSHOP	Traction-related	Professional artists	Non-professional artists	TOTAL
1	2	4	12	18
2	2	2	21	25
3	2	2	10	14
4	2	2	7	11
5	1	1	10	12
6	1	1	14	16
7	2	2	6	10
8	1	1	8	10
9	2	1	14	17
10	4	3	9	16
11	2	3	6	11
12	4	3	5	12
13	2	2	3	7
14	1	2	9	12
TOTAL	4	8	75	87

Participation in the sessions ranged from 5 to 25, with means from 6 to 21, distributed per workshops as indicated in Table 27.

Table 27. Number of participants per workshop: mean, minimum, maximum

WORKSHOP	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
1	14.5	13	17
2	21.2	18	25
3	8.0	5	14
4	8.7	8	11
5	10.0	9	12
6	14.5	12	16
7	6.8	6	7
8	7.4	4	11
9	10.5	7	16
10	15.5	15	16
11	10.0	8	11
12	12.0	12	12
13	7.0	7	7
14	10.5	9	12



As for the number of sessions participants attended, out of 57 sessions, the 4 Traction-related professionals involved in the co-creation attended 4, 8, 16 and 48 sessions, respectively. There was always one Traction-related professional in each session, sometimes even two or three.

Professionals took part in different sessions: three attended four sessions, two attended eight sessions; one attended 11, another one attended 15 and a last professional attended 28 co-creation sessions. In each workshop there was always one professional, sometimes even two or three. As regards non-professionals, they attended 6 sessions on average, ranging from 1 to 21. The distribution is presented in Table 28. For instance, the first row reads: 11 non-professional artists attended only one session. 11 non-professionals correspond to 14.7% of the non-professional artists.

Table 28. Number of sessions attended by non-professional artists

Participants	Number of sessions attended	Percentage of participants
11	1	14.7%
34	2 to 5	45.3%
18	6 to 10	24%
8	11 to 15	10.7%
4	16 or more	5.3%

Demographic data were gathered for 58 participants (65.5%), 3 Traction-related professionals involved in the workshops, 5 professional artists and 50 non-professional artists. Participants who provided demographic information include 12 males (20.7%), 45 females (77.6%) and 1 participant who preferred not to reply to this question (1.7%). Mean age was 35, ranging from 14 to 71. 2 persons reported having disabilities and one preferred not to reply to this question. There were 4 experts in opera, 6 persons who were knowledgeable, 30 novice and 18 whose relationship with opera was unknown.

Professionals indicated the following jobs: producer, digital communications manager, arts administrator, director and programmer, creative director, curator/musician, musician, and writer/performer. Non-professional artists included many students as well as teachers, but also other profiles: manager, musician, horticulturalist, retired scientist and artist, art psychotherapist, assistant, nurse, bank official, accountant, social workers, administrator, and some retired participants, among others.

When looking at the demographics of non-professional artists only, one can observe that there were 40 females (80%), 9 males (18%) and 1 participant (2%) who preferred not to reply to this question, aged between 14 and 71 (mean age= 34). Only one was expert in opera and 2 were knowledgeable. Most of them were novice (29) or have an unknown relationship with opera (18).

According to the data gathered through the **evaluation log**, the aim of the activity was fulfilled except for the first session of the third workshop, where technical problems with the online format were reported and problems with the structuring of the session arose.

The sessions were considered engaging for all, except again for the same session where technical problems were found and three sessions in workshop 7 where some participants had to leave the workshop earlier.



6.3 Evaluating the co-creation process

Data from different sources were collected to assess the co-creation process: a) questionnaires at the end of each co-creation workshop; b) mid-process interviews, in June/July 2021, and c) final interviews in August/September 2022. We present first the quantitative data from the questionnaires followed by a discussion of qualitative data from the different sources.

6.3.1 Questionnaires: quantitative data

Questionnaires were distributed to non-professional artists during the last session of each workshop, to gather input on different co-creation indicators, as a first step before holding group interviews both during the mid-process evaluation and in the final evaluation. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements on a 6-point Likert scale. Results of the questionnaires are summarized in Table 29, where the mean and median scores for each statement for each of the workshops is included.

The number of questionnaires gathered is indicated below. We also indicate: a) the percentage of questionnaires received considering the total number of non-professional artists involved at some point in the workshop, and b) considering the number of non-professional artists involved in the last session of the workshop, where the questionnaire was shared. For instance, in workshop 1, 8 questionnaires were gathered. This figure corresponds to 66.7% of all the non-professional artists involved in the workshop and to 80% of the professional artists involved in the last session. To gather more input, some questionnaires were distributed online to workshop participants who were not present in the last session. This explains why the percentage of questionnaires in workshop 3 is above 100%.

- Workshop 1: 8 questionnaires, 66.7% of the total [80% of the last session];
- Workshop 2: 3 questionnaires, 14.3% [18.8%];
- Workshop 3: 4 questionnaires, 40% [133.3%];
- Workshop 4: 4 questionnaires, 57.1% [100%];
- Workshop 5: 7 questionnaires, 70% [100%];
- Workshop 6: 10 questionnaires, 71.4% [100%];
- Workshop 9: 4 questionnaires, 28.6% [100%];
- Workshop 10: 7 questionnaires, 70% [77.8%];
- Workshop 11: 6 questionnaires, 85.7% [85.7%];
- Workshop 12: 4 questionnaires, 66.7% [66.7%].
- Workshop 13: 4 questionnaires, 57.1% [57.1%].
- Workshop 14: 10 questionnaires, 83.3% [111.1%].

The total number of questionnaires is 71. Except for workshop 2 and 9, the percentage of questionnaires gathered in relation to the total number of non-professional participants is above 40%, with high values above 60% in most of the cases. No questionnaires were gathered for workshops 7 and 8.



Table 29. Questionnaire results: quantitative data workshops (INO) (M= Mean; SD= standard deviation, Med= Median)

Nr		W1			W2			W3			W4			W5		W6			
		M	SD	Med	M	SD	Med	M	SD	Med	M	SD	Med	M	SD	M	M	SD	Med
1	I was actively involved in the workshops	5.1	1	5.5	5.3	0.6	5	4.8	1.3	5	5.5	1	6	5.7	0.8	6	5.3	0.9	5.5
2	I was motivated by the workshops	5.1	1	5.5	5.7	0.6	6	5.3	1	5.5	5.5	0.6	5.5	5.7	0.8	6	5.8	0.4	6
3	I have gained a better understanding of other people's ideas	5.3	0.9	5.5	5.7	0.6	6	5.5	1	6	5.8	0.5	6	5.7	0.5	6	5.5	0.7	6
4	I have learned from other people	5.1	1	5.5	6	0	6	4.3	1.3	4	6	0	6	5.4	0.8	6	5.5	0.5	5.5
5	I have made new friends	3.8	1.2	4	5.7	0.6	6	4.0	1.4	3.5	4.3	1.5	4	3.3	1.4	4	2.4	1.3	2.5
6	I have enjoyed it	5.3	0.9	5.5	5.7	0.6	6	5.3	1.0	5.5	5.5	0.6	5.5	5.6	1.1	6	5.7	0.5	6
7	I would like to do it again	5	1.4	5.5	5	1	5	4.3	2.4	5	5.8	0.5	6	5.9	0.4	6	5.8	0.4	6
8	I feel more confident about what I can achieve now.	4.8	1.4	5.0	5.3	1.2	6	4.5	1.3	4.5	5.5	0.6	5.5	5.3	1.3	6	5.4	0.7	5.5
9	I feel more interested in art now	4.6	1.5	5.0	5.7	0.6	6	5	1.2	5	6	0	6	5	0.8	5	5.3	0.7	5
10	Everyone involved contributed in a balanced way	3.8	1.4	4	5.3	0.6	6	4.5	1	4	5.8	0.5	6	5	1.5	5.5	5.6	0.7	6
11	Everyone involved was respectful of each other's ideas	5.4	0.7	5.5	6	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	5.7	0.5	6	5.9	0.3	6
12	Taking part has changed some of my previous ideas.	5	1.1	5	3.7	2.5	4	5.3	1.0	5.5	5.5	0.6	5.5	4.1	0.9	4	5.3	1	6
13	Taking part was good for my wellbeing	4	1.2	4	4.3	1.5	4	5	0.8	5	4	1.4	3.5	5.3	1.5	6	5.3	0.7	5



Nr		W9			W10			W11			W12			W14			W15			ALL		
		M	SD	Med	M	SD	Med	M	SD	Med	M	SD	Med	M	SD	Med	M	SD	Med	M	SD	Med
1	I was actively involved in the workshops	5.5	0.6	5.5	5.7	0.5	6	5.7	0.8	6	5.5	1	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	5.5	0.8	6
2	I was motivated by the workshops	5.5	1	6	5.7	0.5	6	6	0	6	5.5	0.6	5.5	5.8	0.5	6	5.4	0.5	5	5.6	0.6	6
3	I have gained a better understanding of other people's ideas	6	0	6	5.9	0.4	6	6	0	6	5.5	0.6	5.5	5.5	0.6	5.5	5.1	0.6	5	5.6	0.8	6
4	I have learned from other people	6	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	5.5	0.6	5.5	5.8	0.5	6	5	7	5	5.5	0.8	6
5	I have made new friends	5.3	1.5	6	6	0	6	5.8	0.4	6	5.5	1	6	5.5	0.6	5.5	2.9	1	3	4.1	1.6	4
6	I have enjoyed it	6	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	5.5	0.5	5.5	5.7	0.6	6
7	I would like to do it again	6	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	5.3	0.7	5	5.6	0.9	1
8	I feel more confident about what I can achieve now.	5.5	1	6	5.7	0.5	6	5.7	0.8	6	5.3	0.5	5	6	0	6	4.7	0.8	4.5	5.3	1	6
9	I feel more interested in art now.	5.5	1	6	5.7	0.4	6	5.7	0.8	6	5.3	1	5	5.3	1	5.5	4.8	0.9	4.5	5.2	0.9	6
10	Everyone involved contributed in a balanced way.	5.5	1	6	5.9	0	6	5.7	0.4	6	4.8	0.8	4.5	6	0	6	5.5	0.5	5.5	5.3	1	6
11	Everyone involved was respectful of each other's ideas	6	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	6	5.8	0.4	6	5.9	0.4	6
12	Taking part has changed some of my previous ideas.	5.3	1	5.5	5.3	0.8	5	5.5	0.8	6	5.3	1	5.5	5.5	1	6	5.3	0.7	5	5.1	1	5
13	Taking part was good for my wellbeing	6	0	6	6	0	6	5.7	0.8	6	5.5	0.6	5.5	6	0	6	5.4	0.5	5	5.2	1.1	6



6.3.2 Questionnaires, evaluation log and interviews: qualitative data

The qualitative analysis for INO is based on the co-creation indicators and draws from all the instruments used, clearly indicating the source for each statement. This includes the qualitative data in: a) the evaluation log, b) the 71 questionnaires presented before, and b) the interviews with professional and non-professional artists. We provide a short presentation of the profile of the interviewees together with the codes that will be used to refer to them. We do not use quotation marks when re-using content from the evaluation reports, but we do use them when we quote literally some participants.

Interviewees' profile and analysis' development

I13, I14, I111, I120 and I121 are professional artists who were interviewed during the mid-process evaluation. They include the director, a writer, a musician, a composer, and a self-taught visual artist. I6, I111, I130, I162 are professional artists who were interviewed at the end of the process. They include a composer, the librettist, an opera singer, and a theatre director.

I109, I103, I57, I23, I108 are a group of secondary school aged teenagers. They are based predominantly in the rural midlands of Ireland, with one from Cork. I93, I72, I112 and I113 are a group of adults based in Tallaght and the surrounding areas. They are two men and two women, ranging from late 20s to 60s. They were interviewed during the mid-process evaluation. For the final interviews, a group of adults based in Tallaght (I71, I72, I112) and a participant from Inis Meáin (I126) took part.

We have organized the analysis by themes related to the co-creation indicators. When we report on comments related to a specific workshop, we use the code "W" followed by the workshop number. If we want to refer to a specific session, we use for instance "W1.2" (workshop 1, session 2). When we refer to the interviews and reproduce literal statements, we indicate the code of the participant. When using questionnaires, we keep the codes anonymous. The analysis considers the co-creation process as a whole and does not provide a detailed analysis for each of the workshops or sessions. It should also be mentioned that some statements can be linked to different indicators and that very often the boundaries between indicators are not clear-cut.

Non-professionals' profile

Demographics show a diversity of participants, with a wide age range, different professional backgrounds and mostly novices in opera creation. The evaluation log reflects that "a lot of the participants were intrigued by the idea that they could be musical even if they had no musical experience" (W7.1). The process was adapted depending on the profile and age of the participants: in W1.2, "focus was on individual work as opposed to group work due to age and profile of the participants".

A facilitator from a workshop in Inis Meáin mentioned "it was a real mix in terms of demographics and in terms of people's confidence in terms of coming to the creative process". In this regard, language was considered a central aspect: "it was important that it was done in Irish with the group because the group was chosen specifically because it was an Irish speaking community [...]. You could completely ignore the language because



it wasn't an issue, and you could focus on creativity". This aspect was repeatedly mentioned in the interview.

The varied demographics had an impact on group dynamics and on the pieces produced. As acknowledged by professional artist I111, who worked with different groups, teenagers "were super excited and wanting to change subject every 5 minutes or less", whereas older participants were encouraged to "find something they like" in the piece, "even if they didn't like the piece itself". Some non-professional artists saw this variety as a very positive aspect: "it was just a group of people who were all at different levels and who were willing to help each other and learn from each other and that made a huge difference" (I113).

Non-professionals' participation

Overall, 87 participants took part in the workshops, including 75 non-professional artists. Attendance varied during the sessions. The evaluation log provides some explanation for the variable numbers, when they decreased ("smaller group this week- midterm break might have been a factor", in W1.3, or "Easter break" in 6.4) but also when they increased ("this session was moved to 9.30 am and it seemed that it suited more people", W4.2). The attendance sometimes dropped because of other commitments and changes: "Initially there were only going to be 4 workshops, but the facilitator has decided to extend these to 10 workshops which run into June and the exam season for the schools" (W8.6). Special dynamics were noted by professional artist I111 on the island, where "they were saying like, as soon as the weather gets good on Inis Meáin after like being on the island all winter, people are just outside". This lack of continuity was difficult for this professional: "I just was finding it harder to make a plan because it was so random who'd show up from one week to the next". I111 suggested that the fact that the sessions were conducted in English rather than in Irish and the fact that I111 had no ties to the island unlike other facilitators may also have had an impact. The issue of continuity in participation was also highlighted in the final interview with non-professionals: "there were people who sometimes couldn't make it, some people dropped out, some people came back" (I71). Still, those who came half-way feel part of it: "We kind of came in half-way [...] but we still got a good few months and whoever was there, we were part of it" (I126). This also resonated in the comments of a professional being interviewed at the end: "it's a really long process and people have lives and paid work and can't continue to be involved" (I111). This lack of continuity was also mentioned by professional artist I130, who referred not only to non-professionals ("shorter bursts of engagement with each group of people") but also to the fact that some professionals involved in the initial workshops did not continue later in the project.

The effects of the pandemic were also mentioned in this regard by the professionals: "the pandemic didn't help because of all the communities they were least invested in lots of Zoom workshops" (I111).

As for the reasons behind their participation, non-professional artists gave various reasons: "I was curious as well. Opera wasn't something that I had naturally been drawn to so I was keen to see what way it would work" (I112) or "I think it sounded cool in a way, a new experience" (I72).

Non-professionals' engagement



Most participants replying to the questionnaire reported being actively involved in the workshops (mean: 5.56) and being motivated by them (mean: 5.6). This is in line with the data from the log, where all sessions but five were assessed as engaging for all. This view was supported by many comments from the INO evaluation log that can be related to engagement, such as the following: “very positive and enthusiastic engagement from all participants” (W1.1), “they showed incredible imagination and were really engaged both in the exercise and listening to each other’s stories” (W2.1.), “the participants again were thoroughly engaged with the tasks and created some really lovely artwork” (W4.4), “the participants were really engaged and understanding throughout the reading of each person’s piece” (W5.2), “the participants again were really engaged” (W6.2) or “high level of engagement from every participant in the final sessions” (W6.4).

Due to technological issues, participants were sometimes “a little less engaged as normal” (W8.4). The facilitator observed that “some of the participants had their cameras off for the entire time” so s/he “was unable to observe them” (W2.1), but this can be seen as a recurrent problem among young students during the pandemic or a consequence of other factors (“it was a rush to be home in time from work and I didn’t have time to get out of my work gear, so I couldn’t turn my camera on”).

An interaction between engagement, satisfaction and participation was observed by professional artist I121: those whose engagement and subsequent satisfaction was high continued to return to the sessions. Contrastingly, those who struggled with the software and became frustrated did not participate to the same degree: “I think the engagement was there, the interest was there because they wanted to come back” (I121). One participant (I72) who attended three workshops (VR design, writing and composition) stated: “I did find those workshops quite challenging because I didn’t really understand the technology, but I also found it very stimulating to look at what is possible. But following all the different moves, I found that challenging. Then we did a writing workshop which I really loved [...] And then we did the sound and music [...] and I really liked that”.

Professional artist I121 considered that the online nature facilitated a demonstration rather than a workshop and struggled to engage with participants in the way I121 wanted. On the contrary, I120 felt a willingness to participate regardless of the non-professional artists’ skills: “it was that kind of openness like ‘ok, I don’t know what’s going to happen but I’m here so I’m just going to give it a go”. In fact, I120 saw different levels of engagement with contemporary art but “they responded well to that” as she facilitated an environment of complete creative freedom. I14 considered that children participating engaged well with the many abstract concepts presented: “they’re all there because for them it’s about self-expression, freedom, all of that sort of stuff”.

Professional artist I13 also noticed high levels of engagement, which he attributed to the facilitation in Irish: “They were very enthusiastic”, “it didn’t feel like it was somebody from the outside coming in to do a creative workshop with them, it was somebody not quite from the locality, but it didn’t feel like there was somebody coming in”. In fact, I13 acknowledged that “what I was most happy with was the level of engagement from the group”.



In the final interview with non-professionals, high levels of participation and engagement were reported: “we got in online and the whole project really was very exciting” (non-professional artist I126). This engagement increased when the workshops move to in-person: “obviously you bound off people’s energy when you’re all in one space” (I72), although participants acknowledge feeling “creative on Zoom as well” (I72). Professional artist I130 also reported high levels of engagement in the different communities involved.

Non-professional’s learning

Most participants considered they had learned from other people (mean= 5.5). The sessions allowed skills from non-professional artists to emerge, as noted in the log: “They showed remarkable skill in following the simple guidelines and creating brilliant short stories within 10 minutes” (W2.1), “some incredible talent already beginning to show” (W2.2). But the sessions also allowed participants to gain skills. All respondents but one indicated they had acquired significant transferable skills such as creative skills (62.8%), communication skills (57.1%), teamwork skills (40%), ICT skills (38.5%) and technical skills (28.5%), managing work skills (25.7%), performing skills (38.6%), and others such as: “arts and crafts skills” (which could be related to creative skills), “new websites (which could be related to technical skills), “dealing with other people” (which could be related to teamwork skills), and “VR technology, composing music without being able to read music, an appreciation of how art can be creative if your mind is open” (which can be related to many of the previous ones). The evaluation log also noted that non-professional artists were “a skilled group who really want to grow their writing skills” (W3.2) and “they seem to really love the new abilities they are learning each week” (W3.3). The workshops were generally viewed as an opportunity to learn and, as one non-professional artist in W3 put it, “learning is always a positive experience for me”.

Professional artist I14 considered that “what the kids got out of it was learning to work together, they became more confident about their work”. I14 acknowledged that a learning process also took place with the adults: “[new skills] would have been more obvious with the adults because we did concentrate very much on technical skills”. Referring to a writing workshop, I13 thought that “their awareness of the concepts of story was developing”. This learning process was happening thanks to the contributions of all: “I felt it was a place I could contribute without that [being musical] and I think people listened and I learned then from those who were more experienced” (I72).

Non-professionals’ personal change

The questionnaire includes statements aimed at assessing personal change, which are broken down in different aspects: increase of confidence or empowerment, more interest in art, change of ideas, increase in wellbeing. The statement “I feel more confident about what I can achieve now” gets a mean value of 5.3. To the statement “I feel more interested in art now”, values are in the same range, with an average of 5.3. For “Taking part has changed some of my previous ideas”, the values are again high: a mean of 5.2.

When asked specifically how the co-creation process changed some of their ideas, non-professional artists mentioned a wide array of topics, found in some of the interviews:



Understanding and acceptance of others, openness: “I got an insight into other people’s ideas, which motivated me to develop my own ideas”, “more understanding of diversity”, “opening up to the way in which other people work”, “everyone has a different angle, nothing is incorrect in art”.

Increased awareness, enjoyment, interest and knowledge about arts and opera: “[it] has made me more informed on poetry, song writing and opera overall”, “I wasn’t really interested in abstract art before and now I’d like to look deeper into it”, “changed my perception of opera” or “I had no idea opera could be like that! I thought it was just boring people singing all the time, but this was really cool!” (I23) were some of the comments made in the questionnaires. In fact, the motion capture workshops had a deep impact on some participants: “I really didn’t think that opera would involve things like this. It was such a surprise to see all this technology” (I32) or “I thought opera was old men singing but it’s not! You can be a jellyfish or a fish and it’s opera” (I127). In the interviews, non-professional artists I112 mentioned “it definitely changed my perception of opera” and I113 said “I kind of changed my whole opinion [in relation to newer music]”, whereas I23 felt “more open to different types of art and music now”. This view was supported in the interviews with professionals: I111 explained that Tallaght participants appreciated the opening of their minds “in ways we never thought possible”. In the final interviews, this aspect appeared again: “I gained an appreciation of opera during the experience” (I72) or “part of why I did the project was that I had a preconceived notion of opera being a stuffy artform for people with too much money who looked down on the rest of us. Now I’ve come through it, I’ve realised that, well I probably knew beforehand, but we all have our own quirks. But opera is an artform for everybody”, said an adult artist from Tallaght.

Improved technological and creative skills: “see the greater potential of animation and creative presentation of my work”, “changed my writing style”, “manipulation of music with technology”, “I am less scared of technology now!”.

New way of looking at oneself and the world around: “I saw another way to present yourself”, “I look at things differently now like the world around me”. This empowered them to continue with new creative projects, with higher self-confidence, as expressed in the interviews with non-professionals (“I found a personal improvement”, I93; “having the confidence to use your voice”, I72) and non-professionals (“people’s creative confidence developed over the course of the sessions [...] I got them thinking beyond the project itself”, I13). This was also observed at the end of the process by I130, who perceived “a definite kind of progression of bravery, of a willingness to contribute and a sense that them voicing their opinion was valid”.

One of the statements in the questionnaire read “Taking part was good for my wellbeing”, with a mean of 5.2. We highlight some positive aspects:

Interacting and sharing, especially since Covid: “it was nice discussing art/writing with other people, something I don’t get to do often in my own case”, “it was great listening to other people share their stories”, “it was good to be able to connect with new people even in lockdown”, “it was good fun and it kept me busy every Wednesday”, “got me off the sofa! Instead of just watching telly!”, “I had something to do”, “So much music has stopped



since Covid so this is what I really needed". This is also stressed by professional I16, who highlighted the value of the online workshops during the pandemic.

Learning: "learning is always a positive experience for me".

Finding ways to relax: "I'm more laid-back!", "music and art help me escape", "the work was relaxing".

Recovering old passions: "brought back my passion for writing".

Increasing creativity and thinking: "made me think", "enabled my creativity".

Fun: "I had a great laugh and it was a lovely way to spend the day", "I had fun with my friends and tried something I haven't done before".

Two participants, who acknowledged struggling with mental health, wrote that the "workshop was very helpful in winding me down after a stressful day" and "made me feel better". The comments in the face-to-face session were especially enlightening, as "it had been a long time since I have sung with other people or created with others because of Covid". Student I109 reported adopting painting as a coping mechanism for stress: "It's very calming so it'll be good when I'm stressed out."

Despite the personal changes mentioned above, professional artist I120 is adamant that her workshops are not in fact co-creation spaces and, as a result, no personal change could be attributed to this: "No, because I didn't see it as co-creation", "I have created work before and this wasn't creating work with people, that's very clear for me". This links well with the discussion around the concept of co-creation and with the spectrum of co-creation Matarasso has developed in Traction (see 4.5) and also obviates that personal change can happen irrespective of what the professional intends.

Balanced contributions

The average value for this item is 5.3. There were lower values in W1, but the value increased in W4, with the same artists. Clarification needed to be given in W1 "on the creative process for the overall project, and each participant's role in this process". In a co-creation process it is important to know what the role of each participant is as the spectrum of co-creation is wide and many may not be familiar with them. For instance, in this case, non-professional artists were explained that their "work would be added to the melting pot of ideas from which no one knows yet what might emerge" (W1.3).

It is worth stressing the role of the facilitator and the skills needed to promote a balanced and active participation online. In one workshop, the first presentation was reported as "unfocused" and "fractured", due to the lack of familiarity of the facilitator with the videoconferencing system, a situation that was addressed later. In another one "some were a little bit reticent to show their photos at the beginning as some of them would not consider themselves 'artistic'", but the facilitator "was really great at making them feel comfortable in sharing their work and really engaging with the workshop materials".

Workshops were a respectful sharing place: "it was lovely to see them actively encouraging and complimenting each other's photography and giving each other the respectful space in which to talk about their work" (W6.1) or "there were really respectful interactions between people of all different ages and backgrounds" (W10.1). This reference to respect



is found in the comments from non-professionals: “everyone respected other people’s opinions” (I109), “everyone’s opinions would be taken into consideration fairly” (I108). In fact, non-professional artists thought that they “all had space to offer up our contributions” (I112) and “everybody was quite constructive” (I93). This view was supported by professional artist I120, who thought that “it was quite equal” and considered that “Zoom nearly allows for that because it’s too obvious if somebody is taking up too much”. Still, I120 said that it was not possible to give some one-on-one support: “[in a physical format] you have the option to physically walking up to them while the more confident ones are working away and giving them a little bit more support and drawing them out. You can’t do that on Zoom”.

I13, working in Inis Meáin, mentioned that “they were really open to other people’s impressions” but “some people would want to talk more” so time management was challenging, especially online. Professional artist I111 found this group “trickier to navigate, probably just because every week was a different group or sometimes we’d only get a couple of people”. I111 found balanced contributions in the Tallaght group but not so much in the rural school children, due to Internet connection problems and group dynamics, with some participants being more outspoken. This view was not shared by I14, who thought that young participants worked well together: “with young people you run up against shyness, so we were a little worried about that [...] but when I went in [breaking rooms] [...] they were just working away”. I121, working in Tallaght, is a bit more critical and states that “the level of knowledge on the computer was so drastically different that we couldn’t even make the groups”. Still, it became “a very closed form of shared learning” and “they all submitted something and the effort was put in, so that was positive”.

In the final interview, once the co-creation process was concluded, non-professionals felt strongly that there were balanced contributions across both Zoom and in-person workshops: “Everybody has a chance to add a little bit to the production. Every workshop, everybody said something” (I71), “It was a collaborative process. I don’t feel there was one voice that was dominating” (I112) or “it was equal and fair for everybody” (I126) illustrate the views of the participants, who showed a positive attitude towards the host institution and facilitators. Professional artists supported this view, describing high levels of interaction: “everybody was actually really really interactive” (I111).

Mutual understanding

Non-professional artists generally gained a better understanding of other people’s ideas (mean =5.6) and everyone involved was respectful of each other’s ideas (mean=5.9). In the interviews, non-professionals mentioned that the professional artist and the INO representative “were really approachable and really sharing their expertise and made everyone really comfortable” (I113). The role of the facilitator was central: in W7.1 and W8.1 the facilitator set them a short task to compose a piece using their bodies but some “of the participants felt a little uncomfortable performing in front of others”, so she “offered to perform it for them”. On the contrary, the adults “were more comfortable performing in front of everyone else”.

From the perspective of professionals, I121 thought that “everybody was cool and patient”, but kept “wondering whether I’m doing the right thing”. I120 felt part of a “lovely



community” and “was linking to their personal experience of the pandemic”, which was “meaningful”. The artist also considered the group was very respectful and this encouraged those who felt their art skills were not as strong. I14, who dealt with writing, expressed that it would be difficult to achieve mutual understanding between themselves and the participants, as current literature is “stuck solidly into a contemporary marketing” but “they responded well”. I14 also mentioned that “with adults you expect a couple of them not to like each other or not like you [...] but it didn’t turn out like that”. The artist also acknowledged good mutual understanding with INO around his facilitation.

As for I13, “it was important to meld the group together and create a very safe space, that everyone’s idea is as valid as anybody else’s”. I111 mentioned that “it’s weird in one sense that it was all on Zoom, because I do feel that kind of connection with them and I feel like I know them really well”. As for I112, “everyone was really encouraging of everybody else’s work”, although connection with some of the school children was more difficult: “There were moments when I got a bit tense, because I felt almost... they didn’t intend to be disrespectful but there were times when I was like ‘I’m actually the expert here’”. A similar comment was found in the log for W5.4., where “some participants were a little bit put off by the facilitators bluntness in their feedback to their work, but it was understood that it was for the good of their work and not to take it personally”.

At the end of the project, the non-professionals being interviewed had only words of praise towards the facilitators and INO: “the people in INO were super” (I112), “along the way, I really felt appreciated for what we were doing” (I72), “I thought it was really good, and I thought that as well was down to the respect that everybody showed but I also think that the facilitators had that themselves” (I72). I112 highlighted that “there was a sense of community”. Similarly, professionals referred to high levels of respect (“everyone respected each other so much”, I111) and mutual understanding (“it almost didn’t feel like we were working with two separate communities”, I111). I130 perceived a “really solid understanding of a shared process and a shared collaboration, and everybody learning from everybody”. However, professional artist I6 acknowledged a lack of mutual understanding between some community members and the professional team.

Relationships

“I have made new friends” is a statement that gets lower—but still high—values, with a mean of 4.2 and considerable variation. This may be because some of the participants were already friends and because it was probably a short timeframe to make new friends, especially online. In the workshops in which different communities merged, such as W10 to W13, these values increased considerably. Despite the challenges of online communication, the evaluation log mentions that at the end of the sessions “a bond had formed” (W1.4.) and “they seem to have really gelled as a group” (W2.4).

Professional artist I121 noticed that the different levels of expertise and the lack of physical proximity made it difficult to bond: “It think they tried to do that initially, what we tried was to try and build teams where they would work together on stuff but as soon as we started, the level of knowledge on the computer was so drastically different that we couldn’t even make the groups”. I120 expressed fondness for participants very often: “words that come to mind are warmth from the group, enjoyment”. I14 thinks that the



group of school children built friendships and trust but also missed being physically together. As for Inis Meáin, I13 stated that “the group got on really well”. I111, who was involved with different groups in longer workshops, felt a connection: “I kind of felt by the end, especially with the latter two, that I know them really well”.

The interview with non-professional artists showed how their “relationship all grew so that near the end we were all really comfortable with each other” (I113), an aspect enhanced by the Co-creation Space, one of the Traction tools: “We’d chatted on the co-creation space and left comments on each other’s pieces and then we came back in and were talking about them” (I113). Still, in other workshops, some acknowledged that “we would have gotten to know each other better if we were in person”.

At the end, non-professionals being interviewed highlighted that “it was just beautiful to meet new people” (I72) and “in-person workshops were really great and it was a great way to connect” (I112). In fact, “when we met in person, when the group came to Inis Meáin, it was just brilliant to put all the ideas together, to meet everyone face-to-face” (I126). This resonated in the comments by professionals: “you do really feel like you get to know people” (I111). I111 indicated that these relationships were crucial to the creative process and expressed great appreciation for the professional collaborations born through the project: “the professional team has just been wonderful. I really think I’ve made friends for life and collaborators for life”. On a similar note, I130 also considered that “people built relationships and a sense of community and camaraderie very quickly” and professional artist I6 found “quite special to meet people that you’d only seen on Zoom”.

Satisfaction

The statements “I have enjoyed it” (mean= 5.7) and “I would like to do it again” (mean= 5.6) got high values. Some technical and structural challenges emerged in the replies of one workshop, with slightly lower values. Satisfaction was expressed in the log as follows: “I really enjoyed the sessions, they are a great group, committed, conscientious” (W1.4), “the participants really enjoyed this exercise” (W2.1), “[they] were really engaged and seemed to enjoy this task” (W6.3), “the participants really loved this and enjoyed the idea of unusual things creating sound and becoming musical” (W9.2.) or “[they] had a lot of fun in creating movement for the characters in the opera [in reference to the motion capture]” (W14.2). Overall, “the participants were really pleased that they were able to create themselves the basis of the plot of the VR Opera” (W11.1). This satisfaction was echoed in the final interviews with non-professionals, who expressed satisfaction because of the relationships built and for the interaction and inspiration from the group: “if you are in a group, a simple comment can spark a thread of creativity. I enjoyed that aspect of it” (I112), “there was no negative elements” (I93), “seeing everybody’s different creations and creating my own with all the different resources and stuff, and pictures and everything” (I103).

Regarding professional artists, satisfaction with the process of the workshop and the outcome was low with I121, suggesting the online format hindered the artistic output and with repeated use of the word “frustration” in the interview. I121 felt personal responsibility, which decreased the satisfaction: “trying to run a class of people with no experience doesn’t work”, “I suppose I felt I was letting them down in some senses”. On



the contrary, professional artist I120 expressed high satisfaction level, both with the process and the output: “I felt it went really well”, “I enjoyed seeing good work being produced”. The same happens with another professional artist, I14 in this case: “I really like working with kids from the countryside”. As for I111, this professional artist expressed satisfaction, despite some initial reluctance: “the work we still produced after that was really great and in one sense more co-created because it meant that they were the ones making the composition decisions instead of me writing for them [...] So yeah, being really proud of the final product [...] as well as the project”. I111 also thought non-professional artists were “all really happy with the final piece they wrote all together”.

In the final interviews with non-professionals, they also demonstrated high levels of satisfaction with the project. Of note were contributions regarding the quality of the facilitators and the social component of the project. Non-professionals were grateful that they were included by an institution such as INO and saw the importance of cultural outreach programmes and the continued need for such initiatives: “it was great for them to reach out into the community, and parts of the community that wouldn’t necessarily have had an interest in opera before” (I112).

As for professionals, I111 ultimately felt satisfied by the whole co-creation process, placing value on the relationships developed with community members: “it’s been challenging, but also memorable and rewarding for everybody”. I111 outlined the satisfaction felt when seeing the “pride and excitement” of the non-professional artists after hearing the final output. Still, the same professional showed some dissatisfaction with three aspects: the failure to meet deadlines from the VR production company in the final stages; tensions in the relationship with some of the community members on Inis Meáin over the contents of the libretto, where some members felt that they had been excluded from the co-creation process, even if those people “had never shown up to the workshop themselves”, and the stress caused by what they saw as “unrealistic deadlines”. Professional artist I162, who was involved in the final work but not so much in the process, also expressed frustration regarding some working practices, mainly due to miscommunication, an aspect mentioned by I6. I62 also questioned whether the depth of engagement with the various communities was truly aligned with the subsequent marketing claims, but the evidence reported above suggests that non-professionals did indeed feel engaged in the process of co-creation and a sense of genuine involvement in the final work. I6 also expressed a strong sense of frustration as a professional artist, also in relation to the VR production and the deadlines but also in relation to her compensation and contract. This highlighted the difficulties that may come from planning and contracting artists to work in innovative practice whose terms are not as well established as more conventional commissions. Despite these grievances, I162 found working in a motion capture suit thrilling and enjoyed the collaboration with the other professional artists and I6 found the opportunity to introduce participants to the VR technology and offering them the opportunity to be part of developing a narrative for the work “very satisfying”.

Professionals’ learning

The workshops were an opportunity for professionals to enhance their skills in running online workshops. In the first session one experienced facilitator “was worried about the natural silence that comes with hosting things on Zoom” but was set on finding a solution.



In the next session, the facilitator asked each participant to “name a few of their favourite songs in the Zoom chat and whilst they were working on their collage, she played these songs, which got rid of the silence problem”. This was confirmed by I121, who learnt about online facilitation because of these sessions. As for I3, exposure to group dynamics contributed to learning: “Every time you do this, you’re learning something”.

Professionals’ personal change

I14 changed their attitude towards the capacity of middle-aged adults: “I was a bit more sceptical about the adult group [...] But the second group, I was surprised, I thought it actually went pretty well”. I14 also perceived an increase in confidence, interpersonal skills, and online etiquette: “It definitely made me more confident, being able to point out where people are going wrong and to do that in a kind of candid way”. I111 felt some changes because of the process: “realizing that even through the internet [...] we can co-create these final pieces together”. I111 also mentioned increased confidence in conveying expertise in an inclusive way. At the end of the project, I111 outlined several distinct learnings: the development of a creative practice in a new format (opera) and medium (VR) with an inclusive approach; a different perception of community art (“I didn’t know much about it”), and a new understanding and appreciation of the value of art in helping to both bring people together and empower them. I130 also reported learning a lot in terms of facilitation skills, with growing confidence. I162 found a renewed appreciation of the importance of clear communication and of the complexities that can arise when communicating with communities: “I’ve learned communication is really everything”. Working with the understanding that the recording was going to be placed within a VR production as opposed to a theatre production also gives rise to learnings.

Project evolution

During the mid-process evaluation, professional artists express concerns about the place of the workshops in the broader project: “I think I could have been stronger had I worked with somebody from the Opera in a particular department first” (I120), “it’s such a vast massive project involving so many different types of people, I have no idea how you’re going to filter what we’ve handed up into a final production and I think that’s quite exciting” (I14). In the interview, professional artist I13 mentioned that “nobody quite knew what would come as a result of it but that’s ok because that’s the process” and added that “it became very clear to me that the impression the Inis Meáin had and the impression the INO had were completely different projects”. However, I13 “was keen to make sure [...] that the expectations would be clear to the participants at the beginning”. In this regard, professional artist I111, who was involved with all the groups for longer periods, did not express the same lack of clarity around the direction of the project and resulting work, which shows that the initial uncertainty felt in relation to the project was properly addressed with a clearer path as the project evolved.

A topic that was put forward during the mid-process evaluation by professional artist I13 was that of intellectual property rights and appropriate accreditation of materials: “their creativity isn’t exploited by a production where some people are getting paid but others aren’t getting paid. It’s that uncomfortable marriage between the community and the professional and how does that fit together”. Still, I13 thought INO managed this



adequately: “Fair play to INO, they were very open to that and took it on board and we had a very open conversation with the group at the beginning”. I13 expressed that “whatever comes of that material, it’s important that that’s credited properly, and I think it’s also important that it’s communicated [...] There should be a mechanism to acknowledge that openly and to give fair credit to that as opposed to saying these are all the participants of the workshops in the different locations and this is the work that came out of it”.

From the mid-process interview with I121 one could notice how the project evolved: from being a series of workshop where the focus was put on the technical components of VR design to a more general co-creation workshop: “I know it was more about creating ideas”. The same happened in other workshops, where non-professionals acknowledged that they started working on “solo bits and pieces for the first couple of weeks and it picked up pace over the last couple of weeks, where we were all just literally firing ideas around and that formed the basis of the final piece” (non-professional artist I112). The online nature of the sessions also had an impact on the evolution and required flexibility from professionals: “I had kind of got excited and said that that’s what we would do and then it all had to change” (professional artist I111).

In the final evaluation, a professional artist highlighted some issues with timeframes: the ambiguous nature of the early phases of the project ultimately led to an intense and stressful period for the professionals. The evolution of the project was also inhibited by an issue with some of the community group on Inis Meáin, who felt their perspective was not adequately represented within the libretto. The libretto was reworked although many community members “had no issues with it”, according to one professional. This problem may have resulted from the lack of participation of certain community members in the online workshops further compounded with insufficient discussion of people’s expectations, an aspect mentioned by two professionals. I130 also referred to the language barrier for the creative team and to the fact that the Irish dialect of the libretto was different from that of a native Inis Meáin speaker, a difference which “is quite politicised, and people feel very strongly about it”. This theme was also mentioned by professional I162, who thought that the Irish was “kind of an afterthought”, and by I6, who believed that unaligned expectations regarding the Irish language resulted in some conflict. Still, it appeared that community members did support the outcome after this point as it was shared with them. Professional artist I130 valued the openness of the project but felt some clarity would have provided a better foundation for its trajectory. This artist clearly outlined a desire for a longer process and for better communication with the institution. Still, I130 valued very positively that, despite some setbacks, the problems were overcome “through conversation, through co-creation”. Similarly, professional artist I162 thought that earlier engagement of the singers and their incorporation into the earlier phase would have benefited the project.

Technology

Although the focus of this report is not on technology, there were relevant comments which are summarised here, concerning both Traction and external technology. Working online with Zoom during the pandemic was challenging: “people struggled with the format” and some of them dropped the workshop (W3.1). This was also observed by



professional I121: “some people were sitting with it and going fine but no, some people I could visibly see the frustration”. On the contrary, in past experiences in a physical space, “the class worked because we were able to float around in the class and I was able to sit down and help them and point them to the right tools”. Additionally, in certain sessions where VR software had to run alongside Zoom, participants had to use multiple devices and this hindered the process. I111 said that going online slowed down the progression and many activities could not be performed through Zoom “because it cuts out all the sound so we literally couldn’t hear each other”, a view supported by a non-professional artist from rural Ireland, where audio delays interrupted the flow of conversation (I108). Some non-professional artists said that going online “was the only bad thing” (I93) but clarified that “it’s not a criticism of the course itself, it’s just that doing things through the medium of Zoom can be challenging” (I112). Still, they would do it again (I113).

A positive remark was made by non-professional artist I72, who said that the online nature of the workshops contributed to build relationships (“if you were in a physical space you might tend towards people you know”) and rendered the sessions “very accessible”. Professional artist I120 also thought that “while I couldn’t engage with people in a more one to one way, it’s quite cool to be able to offer a workshop online”. In this regard, the final interview with non-professionals showed that although “sometimes the online is a bit awkward” (I126), “it was very productive” (I126) and “Zoom is great, particularly [...] if you have difficulty attending events because of your schedule” (I112).

Moving beyond Zoom, different technologies were used such as VR, Audacity or Cleanfeed. In W3.4, they “were quite enraptured and curious about the whole thing as they had no experience with VR” and “were eager to find out more about VR”. In W8.9, “after some initial connection troubles and WiFi issues, they managed to use the software successfully and record some music together”. In W7.4., the “participants seemed interesting in using the software [Audacity], especially the younger participants”. Age seemed a relevant factor: “the participants seemed interested in using the software, especially the younger participants who all had some experience of software like this before. Some of the older participants were a little unsure” (W7.4). During the motion capture workshops, participants were fascinated: “I really liked the technology, it was great to be involved in something so different” (I123) or “I have never seen or been part of something like this in my life! I had no idea that this kind of thing existed” (I123). A similar comment was made by professional I111: “the technology is remarkable”.

As for Traction tools, Co-creation Space was used in W8. The log records the learning process: “the participants were a little less engaged than normal with this session because of the difficulties around the tech and their unfamiliarity with the software used. However, towards the end of the session they seemed to learn how it works quickly” (W8.4). Professional I111 mentioned that they “were making lots of pieces between the sessions or recording lots of sounds and the Co-creation Space that has been built just for this project, especially with [...] the Tallaght group, there was stuff going up multiple times a week”. However, poor internet connections make it more challenging for rural school teenagers. In the group interview with non-professionals, I112 commented that “it was great to see all of the stuff people had done, particularly in the Co-creation Space. You could see the germination of ideas and were able to bring that into the group sessions”.



At the end, in the interviews with non-professionals, it was clear that whilst participants felt that some of the technology used in the workshops was enjoyable and inspiring, other programmes were too difficult for them to grasp. By contrast, the use of the VR technology was well-received by participants, who had little, if any, prior experience: “I learnt how to play a jellyfish in a motion-capture suit! That was definitely something new for me!” (I112) or “it was like a tick off the bucket list. It was brilliant” (I71).

The best, the worst and the future

The co-creation questionnaire included some open questions about what was the best and the worst of taking part, and what could be done better in the future. The positive aspects that were mentioned correspond to many of the items identified before:

Active engagement and collaboration in a respectful environment: “listening to other people’s ideas and getting feedback on my own”, “that everyone had to participate and work” (W1), “making art with my friend”, “active work” (W4), “listening to other people’s ideas” (W5), “my ideas were appreciated and valued”, “everyone was so open and accepting of each other” (W6), “group sharing” and “interaction between participants of shared creative ideas” (W9), “the positivity shown by everyone” (W10).

Relationships: “the support and friendship from the other participants” (W1), “to be part of a team” (W2), “interacting with others that have similar interests” (W6), “meeting other people and making art” (W9), “making friends and having fun” (W10), “meeting new people” (W11), and “talking to people that don’t live on the island” (W12).

Role of the facilitator: “the facilitators were amazing and the team were great” (W9), “the teacher was ‘brilliant’. I learned so much from him” (W3), “motivational” (W5). These statements highlighted the role of facilitators and showed how some participants view the facilitator as a teacher who allowed them to learn. This emerged in other comments where some non-professional artists referred to themselves as students (W1) and where some professionals saw themselves as a “teacher-facilitator hybrid” rather than a “co-creator”: “I’d say a cross between a facilitator and a teacher” (I13). I111, who was working with two groups for longer periods, had a different view: “the final pieces we worked on were very much co-created and I was just leading things”.

Learning: “I also loved hearing and learning about the background to how operas are staged and managed” (W3), “I love learning” (W3), “trying to learn new skills” (W5), “learning” (W6, W11), “getting to see things in Virtual Reality for the first time!” (W12).

Motion capture: there were many comments in relation to the motion capture session, which allowed participants to “experience something new!” (W13) and “have fun and be creative in a different way” (W14). A participant mentioned that the best part of it was “just being in the suit and seeing all the really cool technology. It felt like I was in the future” (W14) and only regrets not having “done something like this years ago” (W13).



Figure 14. Participant in motion-capture suit

Negative comments were almost non-existent and were related to practical aspects.

Technical aspects and IT skills: some participants found it difficult to follow the artist's screen in W3. One attendee mentioned "the learning curve in order to use some of the apps" as one of the worst things. Another one indicates that the worst was "my IT skills". Some frustration was felt in these comments from the first workshops, with some non-professional artists putting the blame on their own skills, an aspect that was solved in later workshops, where the facilitator adapts to the participants' needs.

Length, and format: a recurrent comment was that it "was not long enough" and many of them explicitly said they "would have preferred in real life". Conversely, some participants moving to the face-to-face workshops at the end thought that travelling was the worst. Others thought that the worst was "that it's over (for now)" and "it had to end".

Suggestions for the future included:

Language: improving the Irish of the facilitator (W1).

Better understanding of the co-creation workshops: a deeper briefing before the session and a better understanding of non-professional artists needs to avoid complexity (W2), and a better understanding of the complexity of running co-creation workshops online and of the technology needed (W2),

Technical aspects: improving technical communications and acoustics (W9, W10).

Social aspects: some social networking suggestions, such as a night out or some tea/coffee facilities (WG11).

Length, time and format: allotting more time to the workshops, with more sessions (W1, W5, W6, W10), an aspect mentioned by some professionals such as I14 ("4 weeks probably isn't enough [...], 6 would be a good number"), and finding a suitable time for those working or going to school, which would increase participation (W1, W4, W12), as well as



offering more workshops in real life (W10). The motion capture workshops were really engaging and some participants “didn’t want it to stop” (W14) and one participant expressed the wish to “spend more time and develop more characters in the opera” (W13). A suggestion in many comments was “more sessions like this” (W13) and “get more people involved” (W14). A participant from the island wrote “Come back to Inis Meáin!” and another one adds “Bring more suits so we can try more things!” (W14).

6.4 Evaluating the artistic output

The map of indicators provides us with guidance on how to assess the co-creation output and includes as key elements the actual production of an artistic output and its quality and media impact. Quality is assessed by means of an expert’s assessment (see 4.4.2), whereas the media impact will be visible in D5.7. Other aspects which are central are the audience attendance, profile, and response, in terms of feeling represented, personal change, and satisfaction (4.4.1). Finally, the response from non-professionals in terms of feeling represented and satisfaction is also a key aspect from our analysis, which is complemented with the views from professionals gathered through interviews (4.4.3)

6.4.1 Audience questionnaire

Audience questionnaires were distributed at two locations: The Civic (Tallaght), on 7 August 2022, and at Kilkenny Arts Festival, between 9-14 August 2022. A total of 6 screenings a day took place in both locations, with a total of 36 screenings under evaluation. Although not considered for evaluation, screenings also took place between 12 and 25 September at Dublin Fringe Festival (6 screening a day) and at Bray’s Town Hall on 12 November (4 screenings), with a total of 124 screenings across 21 days.

The first showing of the VR Opera took place in the Civic Theatre in Tallaght to an invited group of individuals including the professional and non-professional artists who were involved in creating the piece and some Traction consortium members. The opera then officially premiered at the Kilkenny Festival in a nightclub underneath the Ormonde Hotel. Tickets were available to purchase from the festival to the general public. Some journalists and key stakeholders were invited to view the piece as well.

In both venues the audience were told they were going to experience a work-in-progress version of the opera as it wasn’t, at that stage, fully completed. They were also told, before putting on the headset (see Figure 15), that the piece had some “bugs” and had a tendency to “crash” at points. The facilitators gave the audience a full description of what to do if this happened during their experience in the VR headset.



Figure 15. VR performance

In terms of audience numbers, 33 individuals experienced the opera in the premiere in the Civic Theatre on the 7 August and a total of 193 people attended the run in the Kilkenny Arts Festival between 9-14 August. 185 replies were gathered (81.8%), but 183 will be considered for the analysis as two correspond to minors. The respondents included 88 women (48.1%), 58 men (31.7%), two persons (1.1%) who did not identify with male or female and 35 (19.1%) who did not want to reply to this question. Three (1.6%) of the respondents were persons with disabilities and 44 (24%) did not want to reply to this question. As far as age is concerned, 141 replies (77%) were gathered, with a mean age of 49.5 and ages ranging between 18 and 78. 88 of those who provided their origin (59%) come from different Irish cities or counties: Carlow (4), Cavan (1), Clare (2), Cork (8), Derry (1), Dublin (20), Kerry (2), Kildare (3), Kilkenny (31), Laois (2), Limerick (1), Meath (3), Tipperary (1), Waterford (4), Wexford (1), Wicklow (4). 45 (30.3%) indicated they came from Ireland, without specifying where in Ireland, and 16 (10.7%) were from abroad (Australia, France, Spain, The Netherlands, Switzerland, UK, and the United States). There was a wide range of occupations mentioned, many of them related to the arts (art teacher, artist, arts manager, creative director, composer, musician, novelist), probably because the premiere was at an arts festival, but also to very varied fields (administration, marketing, teaching, pharmacist, public servant, restaurant manager, nurse, etc.). Only one reported being unemployed, one being a housewife and 23 were retired. 175 reported how many minutes it had taken them to get to the location, with an average of 43 minutes, ranging from 1 minute to 175 minutes. Most of the people went by car (101, 55%) and a considerable number walked to the venue (58, 31.7%). Most of the attendees (124, 67.7%) did not have any relationship with the project, whereas 19 (10.4%) knew someone who took part in the project, 16 (8.7%) took part in the project, 13 (7.1%) have a professional connection with the project and 13 (7.1%) know someone who worked at INO/VRI. A significant number (120, 78.4%) reported having attended a live performance (theatre or musical) before the lockdown.



The audience questionnaire gathers information related to Matarasso’s key quality indicators but also in relation to personal change, satisfaction and technology. On a 6-point Likert scale (Table 30), participants give values above 5.5 to both the craft and originality. The involvement is rated above 5, whereas the resonance (or feeling represented) scored slightly below 5. This may be due to the fact that most of the attendees did not have any relationship with the project.

Table 30. Audience questionnaire (INO)

	Indicator it relates to:	Mean	Standard deviation	Median
It was well made and performed (percentage of replies for this statement: 97.2%)	Quality: craft	5.53	0.74	6
It was different from anything I’ve seen before (100%)	Quality: originality	5.70	0.65	6
It was about things that really matter to me (99.4%)	Quality: resonance/feeling represented	4.74	1.16	5
I felt involved in the performance (99.4%)	Quality: feeling	5.09	1.12	5
		Yes	No	Not sure
Has the performance made you feel differently about anything? (97.8%)	Personal change	50%	23%	27%
Would you recommend this performance? (92.9%)	Satisfaction	95%	1.1%	3.9%
Would you watch another Virtual Reality opera? (81.9%)	Satisfaction/Technology	92.7%	2.7%	4.6%

Most attendees would recommend the performance, showing a very high level of satisfaction (95%) and a very high percentage (92.7%) would be willing to watch another Virtual Reality opera, which shows the success of this innovative experience and the potential audience for future Virtual Reality operas.

The aspect attendees liked most was the immersion felt (“loved the part of the boat! Gives a real feeling of being in a sea storm”, “I felt really peaceful too, really engaged in the story and not thinking of anything else”). Another one wrote: “I loved the sense of scale – the height of the waves and the sense of being at the centre of the story”. For some it was their first VR experience and they were amazed at the possibilities of VR. Other positive aspects mentioned recurrently by audience members were: the story, the visuals (colours), the music, the singing, feeling part of the community and it being involved, the bilingual libretto and lyrics, the concept and the worlds created, the art direction, the illustration, together with very specific “small details”. They seemed attracted by the “newness” of the VR experience and how new technology was used to reach an audience.

On the other hand, what they did not like were “some small bugs” (“subtitles get behind the floor”, “there’s a brief audio freeze”; subtitles are not yet available in Irish (at Kilkenny); “blurry in parts”). One audience member found it “very glitch and uncomfortable” and another one felt “wobbly wearing the headset”. In fact, some participants reported trouble



with the headsets: “found the headsets a little tricky with glasses”, “had to hold up the VR set to get it to focus”, “disliked the physical disorientation”. Some of them felt a slight sea sickness, especially those who report being prone to vertigo, a feeling sometimes associated with VR. As one of participants put it: “Never worn a VR headset before and it took a while to get used to. Disorienting at first, but ultimately marvellous experience”.

There were also divergent opinions regarding some specific aspects: whereas some liked the colours, another one did “not immediately like the colour palette”. Whereas one did “not really like the graphics of the other people on the ship”, another one thought “graphics were fantastic”. This disagreement was found in other aspects (for instance, the images representing the people) and is part of any artistic experience.

Some participants appreciated the instructions and “very gentle welcoming” given before the VR opera. The initial scene was mentioned repeatedly by some members: “I found the beginning ocean scene unnerving but was soon at ease underwater - what a beautiful world that was created”, “I liked the drop experience but found it a little intense”, the “going underwater moment gave me a strong physical reaction”. Participants also made suggestions, showing their engagement: “it would have been interesting to see some sort of transitions between the different landscapes, but the blackout was a good way to mark that transition and to keep track of the plot” or “I could have done with louder/more immersive/binaural sound”. As one participant stated, it was a “really strong piece, extremely different!”. Another one would have liked “to be able to interact more”. They liked seeing their own hands but one “would like to be able to see my feet”. Finally, some participants expressed a wish for a longer experience. Overall, opinions by audience members were very positive and, as one expressed it, they “really liked both the immersive aspect and the opera itself. Super combination”. It was an “amazing experience!”: “we need more shows like this to promote opera”.

Going back to the quantitative data, the aspect where the values were slightly slower refers to personal change, with 50% stating that the performance had made them feel differently about something and 27% not being sure. This should be interpreted in the context of an innovative experience which may take time to process. When asked why, the replies referred to four main aspects: a) themes to reflect on such as climate change, environmental issues and sustainability, forced migration or the vision of afterlife; b) VR technology in the arts (“possibilities of VR artworks”, “I thought VR was a bit gimmicky – I was very wrong—so effective!!”); c) new views about opera (“opera as something modern, even futuristic”, “a greater appreciation for opera and the fact that it can be done with a community participation slant”, “normally I wouldn’t go to an opera quickly, but the VR experience made it more accessible for me and I really enjoyed it”), and d) use of Gaelic seen as “thought provoking”, as “more performances should/could have this”.

Most would like to watch another VR opera. When asked why, novelty and enjoyment were the main reasons: it was a “unique experience” which was totally “different from a conventional opera”. It was “well made” and “fun” and they liked “the immersive experience”, which was defined as “powerful”. Some were willing to repeat the experience: being their first time with a VR experience, they reported feeling slightly nervous and they believe that they “would know what to expect the next time and relax and enjoy it a bit more”. The few who reported not willing to repeat the experience or



those who are not sure indicate a lack of appeal for the music, that they would like it to be “longer” or “to see a more realistic play or opera done where it’s less cartoon or animation-like”.

In the final open field in the questionnaire, audience members were invited to add any additional comment and most of the statements repeated the elements already mentioned. Most comments were positive in nature: “congratulations”, “a great experience”, “I really enjoyed the experience and look forward to seeing more”. Many participants were wishing to see “part 2” (only the first part of the opera was available for the Kilkenny Arts Festival). The only negative aspects referred to the wish to “interact with our hands” but one participant found the opera “very disappointing”. Some suggestions were made for future performances such as warning participants that if they feel dizzy, they may want to take a seat, improving the pronunciation of the Irish title, or improving the subtitles.

6.4.2 Experts’ assessment

Four experts filled in the expert assessment form, which included questions about craft, originality, ambition, resonance, feeling, and technology. They all went to the Dublin performances and, additionally, two of them went to the performance in the Civic as well. The experts were a freelance opera composer, an opera singer, a dramaturg, and a Virtual Reality producer.

In terms of **craft**, i.e. the technical and artistic skills evident in the production and the performance, the experts provided comments related to various aspects. Concerning the overall artistic and technical skills, E1 wrote that the opera “demonstrates exceptional craft in many areas of the production – especially the music” and E2 stated that the “technical and artistic skill of the singers involved was (from my perspective as a singer), excellent”. Concerning the composition, E1 thought that the “composer shows both high levels of craft and originality in how they facilitated different levels of musical ability [...] within a distinctive musical and dramatic style. The often-challenging contemporary musical idiom was very successfully integrated with the traditional Irish music interests of the community musicians”. Still, the same expert observed that “sometimes the sound quality didn’t quite match the music’s quality”, which was attributed to “not enough time being allocated to successfully mix the sound in the VR”. E2 said “compositionally there was interesting material, but this became repetitive throughout the piece (very much a matter of taste however)”, whereas E3 thought that the “music was textured and varied”. E4, who is not a regular opera goer, found “music and vocals to be stunning”. Words of praise were addressed to the libretto by E1 (“the setting of the libretto was well judged and executed”) and E3 (“the libretto was skilfully wrought”), although the latter found the structure of the narrative “clear but repetitive”. In this regard, E4 wrote: “Narratively, the concept was clear, in part due to the intro from the facilitator, though I would have preferred to have heard, or read it, as an intro while in the headset.”

E1 considered that “the direction was also impressive, and, when at its best, succeeded by allowing the music to carry the weight of the narrative”, whilst E2 mentioned that the “experience from start to finish was polished and well put together.” Reference to visuals and design was made by three experts with contrasting views: “The relative abstraction of



the visuals (although there were human figures, they weren't sketched realistically/figuratively) was an excellent decision, as it allowed for the experience to be enjoyed in a more sensory-lead way" (E1), "The design, though imaginative, felt partly achieved as more physical detail in the figures and the setting would have allowed more emotional investment in the story" (E2), "The characters were interestingly portrayed" (E4). E4 added in this regard: "visually, the lands I was brought through were intriguing, and sometimes overwhelming. There were some beautiful moments".

Comments on the quality of the subtitles were made by E1, who noticed that "sometimes the subtitles were out of sync, yet in these instances the high clarity of the text setting guaranteed comprehension without subtitles". Regarding VR, E1 had seen the opera at different stages of completion and believed that "although the crafting of the VR itself was oftentimes exciting, not enough time was given to realising the later sections of the opera as fully as the earlier ones". E3 found the use of VR "impressive and engaging and would have even more of an impact if it was more closely integrated with the elements of music and narrative." E4 "found the start of the experience on the stormy ocean waves hard to adjust to, and also spent the first while looking around, so found myself not very focussed on the music and maybe missing some of it."

In terms of **originality**, i.e. the distinctiveness of the work, and the extent to which it reflects the particular context of its creation, the experts agree unanimously. E1 wrote down that "The originality of Out of the Ordinary / As an nGnách was its defining quality" and put the emphasis on "how the composition married the distinct music making of the community members with the composer's own contemporary voice" E1 thought that "the narrative of the libretto was relatively conventional" but "it was well judged to facilitate a more experimental and abstract style of design and direction, both of which frequently felt fresh, creative, and highly innovative." Additionally, "the relative newness of VR as a medium, the work, as a whole, offered audiences a strikingly unique experience". E2 considered the work "very distinctive" and did not "know anyone else who has experienced a similar mode of performance", an opinion shared by E3, who considered that "the use of VR offers a unique entry point into the world of Opera and its particular mode of storytelling", and added: "Drawing on different communities and individuals as source material for the piece is an inspired choice, and perhaps there could have been little ways to highlight this in the chosen form?" E4 concluded: "This work stands out as one of a kind. Combining opera and VR, via community engagement is not an obvious arts format! I don't think it has ever been done before. It's ambitious and brave."

As far as the **ambition** is concerned, meaning the aspiration, scale and openness of the work, the replies to the question "is it worth doing?" were positive while identifying room for improvement. E1 defined it as "the world's first community VR opera" and although "there are aspects of the work that were less successful than others (particularly with the technological realisation), it felt uniquely experimental; in being so, it succeeded in opening up some radically new creative avenues and experiences for both the makers and audiences involved." This view was shared by E3, who thought the "ambition is clear – to integrate seemingly disparate technologies and artistic forms – though it isn't achieved in its entirety". E2 considered that "VR is a brilliant medium in which to explore these other (now theoretically endless) worlds" and saw the opera as a "first step with a huge amount



of potential". E4 congratulated the team "on the achievement of bringing this format to audiences, some of which might not be regular consumers of either opera or VR, and providing a memorable experience. It is absolutely worth doing".

When asked about **resonance**, i.e. the piece's connection or relevance to the audience and its concerns, E1 thought that "it certainly resonates with audiences, as has been clear from the work's reception" and E2 considered that the "subject matter of the piece is relevant and important to humanity and present". E3 wrote that the "ecological parable at the heart of the story resonated with me", an opinion shared by E4.

Finally, **feeling** relates to the non-rational effect of the piece and its ability to linger in the mind. E1 wrote that it "certainly lingered in the mind well after the experience of it, although, for me, for the reason it was powerfully dramatic and aesthetically/formally thought-provoking more-so than it was emotionally moving." E1 also acknowledged that "not all great art needs to be immediately emotive, and oftentimes, as in the case of *Out of the Ordinary / As an nGnách*, its emotive power is realised through reflection post-show. I would describe it as leaving a powerful and lasting dramatic impression." E2 mentioned that what lingered in their mind was "the novelty of the delivery", and E3 "found it very moving, even despite some of the formal drawbacks". E4 referred to the evolution of the work: "Having seen a work-in-progress at the Civic a month ago which didn't linger, I can say that this longer version certainly did" and referred to some of their reflections when walking back through the city after watching the opera.

Finally, a question referred to the audio and video quality and how the **technology** helped the audience feel engaged. E1 considered that the "technology was certainly engaging, and, at times, strikingly so; however, it was not consistent". E2 defined the technology as "really sophisticated", allowing "for a really immersive experience", with some room for improvement for the audio quality—an aspect also mentioned by E4—and the visual world—an aspect mentioned by E3 and E4, who added: "the technology helped me feel engaged to a point. The visuals were stunning, I felt immersed in the world". E4 proposed having subtitles all through the experience and concluded that the "use of VR technology combined with operatic storytelling is a fantastic concept."

In the open field, one expert stressed that this "was a fascinating project and it was exciting to see this level of experimentation with an art form I wouldn't be immediately familiar with. The use of technology in this way offers a compelling gateway for people who may not have had relationship with opera before."

6.4.3 Interviews with professional and non-professional artists

The analysis from the experts is complemented by the opinions provided by professional and non-professional artists in the final interviews, when asked about the final output. In this regard, there was a strong contrast between the non-professionals, who showed high levels of satisfactions—in line with the audience questionnaire and the expert's rubric—and the professional artists, who expressed a certain degree of frustration.

Non-professionals response: feeling represented and satisfaction



With regards to the performance, most participants reported feeling represented in the work, with some interviewees suggesting that they could see and hear some of their ideas: “think I could see a lot of the elements that we’d touched on in the workshops and the Zoom calls present in the actual production [...]. I felt there was a lot of care taken to include what had gone before” (non-professional artist I112). Reference to the Irish language and culture resonates in some comments by a non-professional artist from the island: “The music has lovely Irish and we were part of the choir. They came from Dublin to ask us what was the real accent for those words from the island” (I26). For others, however, the representation was obscured: “From my point of view, no, I’m afraid I don’t but I know there must have been some element of what we contributed” (non-professional artist from Tallaght I71). Whilst the participant from Inis Meáin had not seen the performance, I126 noted that they had expected there to be more Irish, given its significance.

Regarding the visuals, participants enjoyed how the landscapes were represented. They did not agree about the depiction of the human forms within the opera. Some non-professional participants felt that the semi-abstractions did not resonate with the human experience being presented through the narrative: “One thing that I didn’t like about the performance was all the people. They were a bit creepy looking” (I72). Others, however, felt that the abstractions were perfectly appropriate: “I actually liked the representation because I thought it was in the context of the other-worldliness of the experience” (I112). Finally, one participant reported having trouble taking in the whole experience due to its bilingual nature: “I think because it was in Irish, I was having to read the subtitles and I was losing the surroundings” (I71). Generally speaking, non-professionals were satisfied with the result: “I could hear myself play it. So that was great. It did make me feel happy” (I112).

The view from the professionals

The generally positive comments by the audience, the experts and the non-professional artists were in contrast with the opinions expressed by professional artists. Professional artist I130 thought they had not achieved what they had set out to do: “we haven’t brought it to where we said we’d bring it”. In viewing the VR experience, I130 believed that “the individual potentials of the different artistic elements [were] not working together” and thought that the creative team had underutilised the technology, not yet capitalising on its potential. A new awareness of the necessity for a less fractured creative process with the technology at its centre was a significant learning outcome for this professional. This need for a more synchronised approach to the development of the final work in terms of the animation process and the recording process would have ensured, according to another professional, a better outcome for the spatial audio component of the experience. Professional artist I162 also expressed some disappointment: “I had really high hopes of the project as a whole. And so I think I was quite disappointed in the outcome of it”. Despite I162 hopes that “it could have been hugely better”, this professional would partake in the project again: “It’s nice to be at the beginning of something”. This professional found the story “weak” but enjoyed the 360-degree view afforded by the VR headset and the spatial audio, despite being “poorly executed”: “I would say the music is what’s most successful in it”. This professional also highlighted, as many non-professionals, the “moment of going down”, which was found “very clever”, and the changing of perspective.



The visual presentation of the work was a point of dissent for professional artist I162, who suggests that rather than attempting realism, a visual abstraction would have been more aesthetically compelling. In the end, the scale of the project was perceived as a barrier by this participant.

Finally, another professional complained about different aspects (“timings are out”, “sound wise, there’s bits that just don’t sound good”) but also expressed appreciation for the music, the libretto and the VR experience: “Despite [...] the fact that we’re still not there yet, it is still like beautiful to kind of put this headset on and be in this 360 [degree] world where you look up, you look down, all around you, there’s different details. It’s stunning to look at”. This professional considered of great importance the positive feedback from the communities while acknowledging that maybe the scale of the project was perhaps too large: “Three communities plus VR? I think it’s just slightly too much. I applaud INO for trying it, they really tried to do the impossible.”

A general sense of disappointment was felt by professionals, which is not in line with the views of non-professional artists involved in the process and of external experts viewing the VR opera. Still, as professional artist I111 put it: “I still think what they were trying to do is amazing and ultimately I think we’ve done something really really incredible”.



7 Conclusions

Evaluation has run in parallel to the co-creation process and performances keeping track of the activities but, most importantly, trying to understand their value. Coordination has been central to guarantee a shared approach, and special care has been taken to adapt to the specificities of each trial and to overcome the inherent tension between artists and a formal evaluation, making sure the evaluation was smoothly integrated in the process and did not disrupt artistic creation and trust. The map of indicators has been a guide in the evaluation design and analysis, and the various evaluation instruments have allowed us to gather different perspectives on both the process and the artistic outputs. Quantitative and qualitative information have been combined to draw a picture of the extraordinary work developed during three years in the Traction project, a work which has received words of praise but also some criticisms—from people involved in the project, audiences and external experts—which have allowed it to improve.

Table 31 presents some key numbers of the co-creation activities that have been evaluated and main outputs, showing the scale of the project. Please notice that these numbers refer to the activities under evaluation but global numbers are higher. For instance, there were more activities at Liceu beyond the visual identity and then choir co-creation—hence, more people—but these activities and non-professional artists are not considered in this deliverable. Likewise, although we report 36 screenings of the VR opera being evaluated, with a total number of 226 attendees, the global number of screenings during the life of the project was 124, with an overall number of 596 attendees.

Table 31. Traction evaluation in numbers

Number of...	Liceu	SAMP	INO
Workshops	2	2	14
Sessions	15 + 138 = 153	66 + 101 = 167	57
Non-professional artists involved in these sessions	18 + 216 = 234	69 + 86	75
Professional artists involved in these sessions	6 + 16 = 22	8 + 20	8
Artistic outputs	2	2	1
Performances/ screenings in VR being evaluated	3	8	36
Attendees in the sessions being evaluated	4500	2492	226

The three trials have been diverse in their nature: the context where the co-creation has taken place, the people involved, their development and outputs are all different. The Raval neighbourhood in Barcelona, a Portuguese prison, and the different communities in Ireland have little in common, and the output they have produced reflects their concerns.



The profile of the non-professionals involved is also diverse, as described before, but most of them are novice to opera: Liceu involved young students and older persons with disabilities in the co-creation of the opera posters, assisted by teachers and educators. Liceu also involved choirs with very diverse profiles in terms of origin, sex and age in the choir co-creation, with the choir directors as key elements. INO involved teenagers across Ireland but also older participants, with a majority of women. SAMP involved mainly young black male inmates.

Despite their diversity, the three trials have shared one fundamental aspect, which is the co-creation of an operatic output by both professionals and non-professional artists. As further developed in D3.2, co-creation in Traction goes beyond more established participatory or community practices and, while considering the participation of both professionals and non-professionals a necessary condition, the concept has been applied in a flexible manner in each of the trials, with a spectrum of varying degrees of professional control and always respecting the idiosyncrasies, pace and needs of each group.

The key research question related to the co-creation that we asked ourselves at the beginning of the project was: **How have participants benefited from the opera co-creation process?** As the evidence presented in this report demonstrate, people have benefited in a wide range of ways from their participation and often with significant positive results. Table 32 summarises the replies from the questionnaires, on a 6-point Likert scale. SAMP is not included in the table as a different methodology was used.

Table 32. Questionnaire results

	INO ALL (71 questionnaires)			Liceu W1 (10 questionnaires)		
	Mean	Standard deviation	Median	Mean	Standard deviation	Median
I was actively involved in the workshops	5.5	0.8	6	5.9	0.3	6
I was motivated by the workshops	5.6	0.6	6	5.3	1.1	6
I have gained a better understanding of other people's ideas	5.6	0.6	6	5	1.2	5.5
I have learned from other people	5.5	0.8	6	5.4	1.0	6
I have made new friends	4.2	1.6	4	4.7	1.3	5
I have enjoyed it	5.7	0.6	6	5.3	0.9	5.5
I would like to do it again	5.6	0.9	6	5.4	1.1	6
I feel more confident about what I can achieve now	5.3	1	6	5.4	1.3	6
I feel more interested in art now	5.2	0.9	6	4.6	1.7	5
Everyone involved contributed in a balanced way	5.3	1	6	3.9	2	4
Everyone involved was respectful of each other's ideas	5.9	0.4	6	5.4	0.7	5.5



Taking part has changed some of my previous ideas	5.1	1	5	4.8	1.8	5.5
Taking part was good for my wellbeing	5.2	1.1	6	5.1	1.4	6

Non-professional artists report high levels of engagement, enjoyment and motivation in the workshops, which have helped them learn about themselves and. They are also generally appreciative of the balanced contributions and respect observed during the process and report a positive impact on their ideas, wellbeing or confidence. Reinforcing this numerical data, qualitative data across the three trials point at some positive aspects the co-creation process has brought to non-professional artists.

a) **Understanding of others.** The co-creation processes have put in touch groups who had probably not otherwise met, either because of age, educational profile, interest, social or personal situation, ideology, or location. Even in some shared locations such as Raval, the project has put in touch groups which share the same space but do not meet. This contact is reported as beneficial, with students learning about persons with disabilities in the Liceu trial, inmates interacting with people from outside the prison in the SAMP trial and young students collaborating with adults from different areas in Ireland at the INO trial. Participants generally report looking at things differently after the experience.

b) **Improved and new skills,** both related to artistic skills and transferrable skills such as managing work, teamwork or communication. The percentage of participants who report this benefit is high: 90% of participants in Liceu's first workshop report having improved their managing and teamwork skills and 40% have improved their artistic skills. INO non-professional artists acknowledge having acquired creative skills (62.8%), communication skills (57.1%) and teamwork skills (40%), to mention a few. Skills related to teamwork (self-discipline, cooperation, attention capacity) are also mentioned in relation to SAMP participants.

c) **Increased awareness, enjoyment, and interest about opera.** Opera is new to most participants in all trials and, whereas some of them approach the project with interest, others are involved to socialise or simply get out of a cell, as put by one inmate. However, in most cases, the process brings new learnings and greater appreciation not only of opera but also of all the elements involved in the creation of an artistic work. These learnings enrich participants personally.

d) **New relationships through collaboration.** Although some participants already knew each other and have not necessarily made new friends, relationships are consolidated across different groups and bonds are established. This interaction, collaboration and sharing is especially valued in times of a pandemic which forced people to isolate.

e) **Personal satisfaction.** Participating in an opera makes non-professional artists satisfied and proud of themselves. There is a strong sense of achievement across trials, of an increased confidence and self-esteem.

All these outcomes are linked to the quality of the co-creation process in the three trials and to the care, skills and knowledge of the artists who conceived and led each project.



But the benefits of the co-creation are not limited to non-professionals. Professional artists also report some benefits, such as an improvement in their facilitation and adaptation skills—a key element in times of covid—or an increased awareness about situations they were not familiar with (for instance, the prison). Beyond professional artists, there are also other participants who facilitate or give support to the process with a key role: the teachers accompanying students, the educators giving support to persons with disabilities or the choir directors establishing a link between the opera house and the singers, to name a few. It is sometimes in these people, who are often professionals but not necessarily in the opera field, where some critical comments are found. This is generally due to the workload assigned to them as a necessary link between the institution and the non-professionals, but also to the uncertainty of a new project and concept—that of co-creation—they may not be familiar with. In this regard, a lesson learned in Traction is that it is important to ensure these participants understand the project and feel supported in their role.

Finally, a project like this could not have gone forward without professionals from Liceu, INO and SAMP who organise and facilitate the different activities. In this regard, words of praise are unanimous across trials to these professionals.

The evaluation has also shown some shared aspects related to the evolution of the co-creation processes: there seems to be a shared uncertainty at the beginning, a process of long development—with its necessary ups and downs but a strong commitment of the participants—, and a successful conclusion at the end. This process provides useful learnings for those interested in starting a co-creation which are summarised next and developed further in the guidance on Opera Co-creation reported in D5.9 Final consolidation activities and resilient strategies.

Managing expectations

Managing expectations is central. Some of the few criticisms made in the trials, especially from those who were new to co-creation processes, relate to the uncertainty of what the project aimed to achieve, and therefore their own role and tasks within it. Managing expectations not only at the beginning of the project but also during all its development is central to avoid frustration, as discussed in D3.3. Community Dialogue. In this regard, there seems to be a need to clarify how co-creation is understood in each context as the concept is flexible and may be applied differently. The requirements in terms of time and commitment, economic compensation and acknowledgement, visibility and decision-making processes need to be clearly defined to facilitate a smooth development of the project. The role of the professionals and of the non-professionals and the sense of ownership of the resulting artistic work need to also be discussed, especially when newcomers to community processes are involved.

Care with communication

Good communication, good management and good facilitation are also central to a successful project. Institutions and professional artists have a central role in facilitating the co-creation dynamics. In this regard, listening to the people involved, communicating with them, and assessing the project regularly as it progresses are critical steps. In this sense, the Traction mid-process evaluation proved useful, and the trials showed an important and very positive development from the first workshops to the last ones. Similarly, the inclusion



of some intermediate smaller-scale performances allowed Traction to better assess the project evolution and guarantee a successful conclusion. The example of SAMP is a paradigmatic one. Despite their long experience in co-creation, the initial performance in 2021 was received positively (though less enthusiastically than had been hoped) and also revealed weaknesses in the concept of the work. A period of reflection followed, and the final performance was reoriented, with a clear final success.

Attention to specificities of context

Understanding and adapting to each specific context is also important. A co-creation process in the prison needs to consider the prison dynamics. A co-creation process in the island of Inis Meáin needs to be sensitive to community dynamics. In this regard, flexibility and adaptability are critical skills, which professionals in our trials report having improved. For instance, the initial libretto in the INO opera was changed by the opinions of non-professional artists in the island, and the SAMP performances and workshops adapted to the availability of inmates, which sometimes changed with extremely short notice due prison-related issues such as punishments. One shared aspect that forced all trials to adapt was the covid pandemic. The evaluation has shown how the different trials modified their projects to overcome this challenge and how this also brought some benefits, ranging from a socialising outlet in times of isolation for certain non-professionals to a learning opportunity for some professionals who enhanced their online facilitation skills.

The artistic output

Beyond the process of co-creation, all trials concluded the process with at least one artistic output, an opera, a key indicator of success. The performances had an impact not only on the professional and non-professional artists involved but also on audience members. The audience questionnaire gathered 117 replies in Liceu’s Showcase, 297 in Liceu’s main opera, 183 in INO’s virtual opera, 31 in SAMP’s initial performance, and 230 in SAMP’s final opera, with a total of **858 respondents**. The operas were very well received by audiences (Table 33), who showed high degrees of satisfaction (Table 34).

Table 33. Audience evaluation of the performances I

INO VR			LICEU 1			LICEU 2			SAMP 2			SAMP 2		
Mean	SD	Med	Mean	SD	Med	Mean	SD	Med	Mean	SD	Med	Mean	SD	Med
It was well made and performed														
5.53	0.74	6	5.44	0.80	6	5.62	0.59	6	5.5	0.6	6	4.59	0.81	6
It was different from anything I’ve seen before														
5.70	0.65	6	5.08	1.24	6	5.48	0.80	6	5	1.4	6	5.37	1.07	6
It was about things that really matter to me														
4.74	1.16	5	5.26	1.11	6	5.26	0.96	6	5.7	0.6	6	5.46	0.87	6
I felt involved in the performance														
5.09	1.12	5	5.34	0.97	6	5.25	0.98	6	5.4	1.1	6	5.21	1.09	6



Table 34. Audience evaluation of the performances II

INO			LICEU 1			LICEU 2			SAMP 1			SAMP 2		
Yes	No	?	Yes	No	?	Yes	No	?	Yes	Np	?	Yes	No	?
Has the performance made you feel differently about anything? (in %)														
50	23	27	50.8	29.3	19.9	44	34	22	76.7	10	10	67.3	13.2	19.5
Would you recommend this performance? (in %)														
95	1.1	3.9	94.8	1.7	3.5	94.6	1.7	3.7	93.3	0	6.67	91.3	2.6	6.1
Would you watch another VR opera? (in %)														
92.7	2.7	4.6	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Do you think technology played an important role in the performance? (in %)														
--	--	--	81	8.6	10.4	--	--	--	96.7	3.3	0	92.1	3.5	4.4

Audiences are satisfied with all the performances, with positive replies in more than 91% of the replies in all cases. While some allowance should be made in this level of satisfaction for the sense of connection that some audience members had with the non-professional artists involved, this percentage underlines that through co-creation opera can produce new work that touches people more closely. A significant number also report a change after the performance in terms of asking themselves new questions, being it about the Raval neighbourhood, about climate change or about social justice, with a strong emotional component. Qualitative feedback shows a deep sense of feeling represented and pride and, especially at INO, an amazement at the possibilities of the VR technology. Data also show how the co-created performances attract new audiences to the opera. Still, there are also voices from the audience who provide critical comments either to the general concept or to specific elements in the opera, which should be interpreted as a sign of normality because any artistic production generates words of praise and criticism. Similarly, experts also show satisfaction with most outcomes, highlighting their artistic quality beyond their social function, although there are also some critical comments to specific artistic elements as described before. As for the artists involved, professional artists are sometimes more critical than non-professional artists, maybe because of their expectations and of the specificities of a project where there is less professional control.

To conclude, the data gathered has painted an overall picture of how the co-creation, including both the process and the output, benefited the different participants, especially the non-professional artists. The data is so rich, though, that many themes could be the object of specific analysis: the impact of the pandemic on co-creation process, the role of technology or the concept of co-creation itself. This is outside the scope of this deliverable, which has provided a summary of the main qualitative and quantitative feedback gathered.