

Report Working Conference Long Live Arts, London, October 2014

On 16 and 17 October 2014, The Baring Foundation in London hosted the working conference 'LONG LIVE ARTS - Cultural Participation by Older People'. A total of 75 European participants attended: policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders from the sectors of arts and culture, welfare and health care. The conference was organised by the Long Live Arts team (The Netherlands), the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media (Flanders, Belgium) and The Baring Foundation (United Kingdom). Each country presented a theme: research, practice and policy. Keynote speeches and workshops intended to broaden the view on these themes and to initiate a discussion about the necessary aspects of each theme when linked to cultural participation by older people.

Day #1: Research and Practice

The conference took place at the ING headquarters in London, where The Baring Foundation is based. Gerard Walked (ING Chief Executive Officer) welcomed the audience on behalf of ING. Hedy d'Ancona (former member of the European parliament and former Minister of Welfare, Public Health and Culture in the Netherlands) acted as chair on Thursday, October the 16th.



Session Research:

Erik Scherder (Professor of Clinical Neuropsychology at VU University Amsterdam) gave a keynote speech on the neurologic effects of cultural participation on healthy ageing and on brain functions. Dominique Verté (Professor of Social Gerontology at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium) and Anna Goulding (Research Associate at The International Centre for Culture and Heritage Studies of Newcastle University, United Kingdom) were asked to reflect on this speech. Afterwards the participants had the opportunity to attend workshops. The workshops were hosted by Dutch presenters: Machgiel Bakker (owner of De Zaak Bakker); Rudi Westendorp (Executive Director of Leyden Academy on Vitality) and Peggy Olislaegers (Director Dutch Dance Festival); Iris Hendriks (Junior Researcher VU University Amsterdam) and Stefanie Metsemakers (Project Leader "Onvergetelijk Stedelijk", Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam).

Outcome morning session Research:

- Open the domain (clinical neuropsychology) that is normally closed for the general public;
- Use social innovation and involve NGO's and local networks, in order to obtain a place on the political agenda;
- Think global, act local;
- Few research has been done on how to engage older men in cultural participation;
- Explore other research models to measure the specific added value of cultural participation compared to other public domains, such as sports.



Session Practice:

Dominique Willaert (Artistic coordinator at Victoria Deluxe, Belgium) gave a presentation on the importance of older people themselves being actors and co-creators. Alice Thwaite (Director Development Equal Arts, United Kingdom) and Peggy Ollislaegers reflected on his keynote speech. The keynote was once again followed by three active workshops, this time hosted by Belgian presenters: Hanne Deneire (House of Music), Piet Vanhecke (M HKA) and Chris Rogier (Director residential care, Centre De Hazelaar); Rik Debonne (Artist) and Gregory Caers (Director); Bie Hinnekint (OCMW Ghent) and Rudy Blauwbloeme (FEDOS vzw).

Outcome afternoon session Practice:

- Older people as Living Cultural Heritage: make use of their intelligence, experience, etc.;
- Show and share best practices;
- Present your projects on main venues, festivals, public space, the internet;
- “Older people in institutions need cultural workers as much as they do hairdressers”;
- New Dynamics of ageing: it is important that older people are involved with contemporary issues and that their opinions are appreciated. Create an intellectually stimulating environment for older people.



Day #2: Policy

Bob Collins (Chair Arts Council, Northern Ireland) acted as chair on Friday October the 17th and started the day with a keynote about the existential values of arts and culture and how policymakers should be challenged to translate those into policies. Bie Hinnekint (Public Centre for Social Wellbeing Ghent, Department Older People Care, Belgium) and Jan Jaap Knol (Director of The Cultural Participation Fund, The Netherlands) reflected on the speech, from their national policy's point of view.

Afterwards three English presenters hosted a workshop: Jayne Howard (Director of Arts for Health Cornwall); Helen Featherstone (Arts Council England); and David Cutler (The Baring Foundation).

Outcome morning session Policy:

- Create joined energy: it starts with co-creation, but the next step could be designing services together;
- Public-private partnerships can be successful in addressing the subject on a European level;
- Involve existing European platforms;
- Evaluate existing structures and procedures and adjust them to the needs of this day and age;
- Public policy will not change by itself: share images and new stories about older people because the current picture painted by politicians is far from positive;
- There are obvious connections between different public domains;
- Increase the number of age-friendly cities across Europe with cultural participation as one of the central goals (WHO) and initiate cooperation between them on a EU-level.



Peer Review Groups

In the afternoon, three peer review groups worked on the conference themes, focusing on the following questions:

- Which themes are relevant to further elaborate upon at the The Hague conference in May 2015?;
- What possible joint action could be initiated from the perspective of research / practice/ policy to further enhance / inspire cultural participation by older people in the near future?

The groups came up with several interesting themes, which have been directly expressed in the Call for Presentations and Workshops for the The Hague conference. The call opens on November 19th 2014. Closing date for proposals is January 7th 2015. For more information please visit: www.longlivearts.eu.