FESTIVALS AS ECOSYSTEMS OF CARE

Meaning, Relationships and Sustainable Festival Practice

A reader
for festival professionals
and stakeholders
by Mahir Namur

PART II

REFLECTING ON FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH CARE

EUROPEAN FESTIVALS ASSOCIATION

Interreg Europe

Co-funded by the European Union

EUFEAST

How to Use This Reader

This Reader invites you to explore your festival through care: to understand its relationships, consider what your choices make possible and examine the conditions under which people work together. It combines conceptual reading with reflection on experience. You can use it individually or as a starting point for learning with colleagues.

The two parts support different stages of this process. **Part I develops a way of looking. Part II supports a fuller reflection on your own experience.**

Begin with Part I and follow the chapters in sequence. Each chapter builds on what came before, gradually developing the concepts through which the festival can be understood as an ecosystem of care. Reading in order will help you follow these connections. You can pause whenever you need to and return to particular topics later.

The explanations and anonymous examples introduce the ideas and show how they may appear in practice. Short questions within the text invite you to connect a particular idea with something you have experienced. The questions at the end of each chapter focus on that chapter's subjects. You can explore them using what you have read so far.

You do not need to write an answer to every question. Choose those that help you notice something, reconsider an assumption or name a difficulty. A few notes may be enough to preserve a thought you want to revisit. Questions that feel difficult or unfamiliar can remain open.

Continue to Part II after reading Part I. Part II introduces reflection as a practice and offers an extended account of the Sinopale–International Sinop Biennial, in which one of its founders revisits the festival's history through twelve reflective territories. It closes with a reflective framework through which you can explore your own experience in the same way.

Use the online format at your own pace. Expand additional examples and supporting material when you want to explore further. Follow connections back to earlier concepts when they help, then return to the main reading sequence. The Care Insights offer brief observations to consider alongside your own experience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to everyone who contributed in different ways to preparing this Reader for publication: Erkan Akliman, Ana Benavides Otero, Zeynep Burçoğlu, Kathrin Deventer, T. Melih Görgün, Yiğit Bahadır Kaya, Cansu Kırcan, Elif Kuli, Simon Mundy, Çağatay Şimşek, Yeşim Uzunöz, Yusuf Emre Yalçın and Rarița Zbranca.

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INTRODUCTION: FROM READING TO REFLECTION

Part I developed a way of seeing festivals through care. It began with the question of why festivals are made and moved through the relational ecosystem, the conditions of human existence, relationships, care and community, towards power, participation, democracy and sustainability, before returning to meaning. Along the way, short questions invited you to connect particular ideas with your own experience.

Part II turns this way of seeing back towards experience. Its central question is not whether a festival is caring enough, but what becomes visible when a festival experience is looked at through care: how cultural purpose became possible through relationships, and how those relationships distributed agency, responsibility, cost, power and the capacity to continue.

Reflection as a Practice

Reflection, as it is understood here, is neither an assessment nor a search for the correct answer. It does not measure a festival against a set of standards or produce a checklist of good practice. As Part I argued, care cannot be reduced to compliance with predetermined criteria; it requires attention to particular people, relationships, conditions, histories, limits and consequences. Reflection brings the same kind of attention to an experience that has already taken place.

Reflection draws on a capacity described in Chapter 3: self-distancing. Looking back creates enough distance to see a situation; one's own position within it and the relationships that shaped it as parts of a larger field. What was once lived from inside can now be examined: what was perceived, how it was interpreted, what was decided, who carried its costs and what followed.

Looking back also changes the view. The concepts developed in Part I make it possible to name dynamics that may not have been recognised when decisions were made. Reflection does not rewrite the past as though these concepts had always been available. The difference between what was perceived then and what can be perceived now is itself part of what reflection reveals. It allows a person to acknowledge the limits of what they could reasonably have known and done at the time, while still learning from what has since become visible.

Reflection is also shaped by the mental map through which it takes place. As Chapter 5 argued, we can reflect on ourselves inwardly, but we can know ourselves only by testing that understanding in relationship with others and with the reality of the outer world. An account of shared experience is therefore always situated. Colleagues, artists, volunteers, residents and partners may remember the same events differently, and their accounts may reveal what one's own has missed. Reflection remains

open to these other perspectives rather than claiming to be the agreed history.

Reflection may lead to a practical change, a conversation with others, a decision to seek further evidence or a clearer understanding of a tension that must continue to be held. Some questions will remain open. An unresolved question is not a failed reflection; it may be the most accurate description of where understanding currently stands.

How Part II Is Organised

The first section, “Sinopale”, offers an extended account of Sinopale–International Sinop Biennial. One of its founders revisits the festival’s history through the twelve reflective territories that follow the movement of Part I. The account shows how reflection can develop across a complex history before you turn to your own.

The second section, “A Reflective Framework”, turns to your own experience. Its questions return to the subjects of Part I with the benefit of having read the whole Reader and allow you to explore connections between purpose, relationships, contributions, power, belonging, limits and sustainability. Each territory keeps its own focus while opening a wider view of the experience.

Reading the Sinopale Account

The Sinopale account is not presented as a model of a caring festival or as an example of best practice. Its experience is used as material for inquiry. Looking across its history makes it possible to ask what was understood at the time and what was not seen, which relationships developed or became strained, where responsibility and power were located, what different people contributed and carried, what became possible, what was depleted and what remains unresolved.

The account is written in the first person because it presents one person’s testimony and retrospective reflection. Notice how the author distinguishes intentions from what happened, revisits events from different perspectives and leaves some questions unresolved.

Where the experience suggests a broader learning, a Care Insight draws attention to it. Care Insights are brief observations to consider alongside your own experience. They may support, complicate or question the propositions of Part I. They are not universal prescriptions, and the case is not offered as proof of the theory.

PART II

Sinopale

Reading a festival through care

Introducing Sinopale

I write this case as one of Sinopale's founders, drawing on my involvement, memories and retrospective interpretation through the Reader's conceptual lens. My responsibilities, professional background and priorities shape what I notice. Other founders, team members, volunteers, curators, collaborators, artists, partners and local participants may remember the same events differently, attach different significance to them or question my interpretations. Their perspectives may reveal contributions and costs I cannot see from my position. I use "we" for shared activities without claiming shared judgements, and keep my account open to dialogue, correction and further development.

In writing this account, I also make choices about whose work becomes visible. Those choices are part of the care questions I am examining. I name people where this acknowledges a specific contribution, such as an artwork, a project or an initiative. Where I reflect on tensions, decisions and difficult periods, I refer to people by their roles rather than their names, so that attention remains on dynamics and conditions rather than on individuals. The people mentioned here do not constitute a complete account of those who made Sinopale possible, and frequency of mention is not a measure of contribution. When I reflect on tensions or decisions, I distinguish what I observed from how I interpreted it. I cannot speak for another person's intentions or experience. My colleagues, and others involved, such as curators, artists and partners, may understand these situations differently.

I begin by introducing how we work in Sinopale and how our relationships and responsibilities developed. I then reflect through the same twelve territories, in the same order, as the reflective framework that follows. When I return to an event, I ask a different question about it.

I cannot yet answer every territory equally. I keep the full framework visible while allowing my account to remain incomplete.

The biennial and its ways of working

We began Sinopale in 2006 in Sinop, a small port town on Türkiye's Black Sea coast, at the country's northernmost point. I describe it as an independent civil society initiative carried almost entirely by volunteers, with no employees of its own. Most members of its team work full-time in other professions, as lawyers, designers, academics, engineers or in tourism, and contribute to Sinopale alongside their

own work. Unlike many festivals, it is not organised by professionals recruited for the purpose. In the early years, we coordinated it formally through the Istanbul-based European Cultural Association (Avrupa Kültür Derneği). Coordination later moved to the Sinop Sustainable Development Association (Sinop Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Derneği).

We invite artists to encounter residents, historic sites and everyday life. Over the years, we have worked in a former prison, an abandoned icehouse, a disused vegetable market, a public library, a Seljuk-era madrasa, museums and private historic houses opened for the occasion, as well as shops, streets and natural settings, among other places. Many were not designed as contemporary art venues. We have explored different artistic directions and themes across successive editions. As I write, the tenth edition is under way.

Artists develop work in relation to the city, often with residents and the local team. Exhibitions make these encounters publicly accessible, while forums create occasions to discuss the city's circumstances and possible futures. Participation can enter the artistic process itself as well as the conversations around it. These modes have become central to how I understand the biennial, although their place and purpose emerged over time.

The city in 2006

When we began, Sinop's economy was weak. In the 1970s and 1980s, a large state-owned glass factory, an American radar base operating during the Cold War and a large semi-open prison had supported a service economy around them. Fishing continued, and for a few months each summer the town received modest tourism, mostly holidaymakers from the surrounding region coming to swim in the sea. The factory and the base later closed, and the economic opportunities of the city contracted considerably.

Across its long history, Sinop has been both a port and, as a peninsula with a single land route in and out, a place of exile and imprisonment. It has repeatedly received people from elsewhere. In the 1970s and 1980s, Americans from the base and prisoners in the semi-open prison, some of them intellectuals imprisoned for their views, were in continual contact with residents. In my experience, this history contributed to the openness, friendliness and hospitality of the people of Sinop. I also perceived strong social capital and a relatively high level of education.

When we arrived in 2006, much of the city appeared neglected. Historic buildings that had lost their function (the prison, the icehouse, the vegetable market) stood unused and unmaintained, largely because of economic weakness. Opportunities for young people to socialise and develop themselves were very limited. Many left for larger cities to attend university and stayed there for work. Looking back, I see that Sinopale came to have a particular function for children and young people: it offered encounters that could widen their view of the world and of what their own city might become. I do not claim that we set out with this aim in 2006; it became visible to me through practice.

People and working relationships

T. Melih Görgün (hereafter Melih), Elif Kuli and I brought different professional experience and priorities as founders. We had also founded the European Cultural Association together, where I served as president of the board, Melih as vice-president and Elif as secretary general. Although we worked together across the organisation of Sinopale, our initial areas of particular competence reflected our backgrounds. My education in engineering and management equipped me for planning and organisational and project management. Melih, a curator and artist, brought particular expertise in developing and directing the artistic content as the biennial's artistic director. Elif, an architect, contributed particular expertise in spatial planning and design. A shared strength was our ability to build relationships. Our roles overlapped, and over time we also developed competence in one another's areas.

Sinopale's founding circle was wider than the three of us. Many members of the European Cultural Association and of our advisory board contributed to the biennial's foundation and development. I cannot mention everyone, but I want to acknowledge in particular two members of the association whose roles in founding Sinopale and shaping its development were significant: Beral Madra, one of Türkiye's leading curators, and Nilüfer Sülüner, a gallerist.

Melih's relationships in Sinop connected the biennial with local institutions, supporters and everyday life. We worked with several curators rather than placing all curatorial authority and responsibility with one person. Artists, local organisers, volunteers and supporters contributed different kinds of knowledge, work, materials, access and resources. Their relationships made the event possible.

Over successive editions, members of the younger local team learned to coordinate the biennial and increasingly to shape it. Their formation of Hal Kolektif as an independent initiative was a further step in that development. I introduce the changing relationship between their responsibilities and ours as founders here, and examine it more closely in the Power territory.

From here on, I refer to the founders and others by their roles: the artistic director, our fellow founder, the younger team. Readers familiar with Sinopale will recognise who is meant; the choice is not concealment but a way of keeping the reflection from becoming personal.

The founding encounter of two ecosystems

Before the biennial, through the European Cultural Association in Istanbul, we had sought to increase cultural awareness, organise and activate cultural actors as contributors to social transformation, and help them find their place within the wider European cultural environment. We sought to develop cultural communication and cooperation locally, nationally and internationally. Cultural actors with limited resources were invited to assume responsibility for the development of their own sector, forming a community and the networks around it.

Through the European Cultural Association, we worked on training programmes, forums, workshops, international cooperation projects, advocacy, digital communication platforms and publications. Participatory democratic cultural policy was part of that orientation. I recall this history because we did not begin Sinopale from an organisational vacuum. An existing cultural orientation, accumulated experience and a network of support became available to a new place and situation.

EUROPIST, the cultural management training programme organised in Istanbul, had brought cultural managers into a community. In 2006, we invited that community to help make Sinopale. We also asked the European cultural institutes and funding bodies involved in the programme to support the new initiative. Their participation brought more than money: people, professional knowledge, institutional relationships, legitimacy and the experience of working across contexts entered the process.

The artistic director's initial proposition was to direct some of the resources and relationships available through the European Cultural Association towards his own city. Beyond the intention to create an artistic event, Sinopale's form and purpose were not settled. He invited curators and artists to Sinop. The advisory board's visit opened a shared inquiry into what could be done there together.

We developed decisions through the advisory board's collective intelligence. The conceptual framework and artist selection for the first biennial involved a collective curatorial process. The invitation was therefore not only to implement a finished model. It opened a relational process through which a model and purpose could begin to take shape.

We brought this professional and international ecosystem into contact with another existing relational world in Sinop. The artistic director's family relationships, friendships and local connections made contributions possible among residents, tradespeople and institutions. In a small town, personal trust, familiarity and the practice of helping one another were part of the conditions through which the biennial could happen.

We describe this local contribution through imece, the Turkish term for a tradition of collective labour and mutual assistance practised in Anatolia, through which neighbours work together to meet household or community needs. This practical help is grounded in relationships and reciprocity. Calling it simply a set of local contacts would miss its social logic. People did not necessarily contribute because a contract, formal role or institutional mandate required them to. Contributions could arise through friendship, kinship, trust, attachment and the wish to make something possible together.

The European Cultural Association's professional and international relationships met this local world of trust, practical help and knowledge of place. The local network later took the name Informal Görgün Network and appeared with its own logo among Sinopale's supporters. In making the biennial together, we connected these existing ecosystems; we did not create cooperation from nothing.

Over the following years, the European Cultural Association strengthened its place within European networks. I believe our work played an important role in the Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture process. Through the EU cultural cooperation project City and Art, it brought together art academies from Türkiye and Europe for experiential research into artistic practice in public space across European cities. Sinopale benefited directly from relationships and experience developed through this broader work.

Artistic work and forums as complementary forms

The first edition included both participatory artistic practices and works that were not participatory. In our subsequent assessment, we judged the social effects of participatory works to be stronger. That was our evaluation as organisers; we had not established it through a comparative impact study. It nevertheless informed a real decision: participation would become a more intentional direction in later editions. Through the European Cultural Association, we subsequently also organised Sinopale Forums in which residents and cultural actors gathered to imagine the city's future.

The exhibitions and forums supported one another. Artistic work could make a memory, a neglected reality or a possible future perceptible through images, sounds, objects, movement and encounters. Forums allowed people to discuss what they valued, question priorities and imagine what might change. In Collecting the Future, for example, residents could help form a cultural vision for the city through both artistic participation and deliberation. I focus here on how we brought these forms together and what they made possible.

A purpose becoming clearer through practice

We did not begin Sinopale with a clearly articulated purpose of creating a relational ecosystem. We began by connecting and working through existing relationships. This process helped us recognise what the recurring event could make possible.

Projects and successive editions gradually made a wider purpose clearer to me: developing relationships, awareness and the capacity to perceive and act upon the city's cultural possibilities. Collecting the Future connected reflection on the city's past with imagining its future. Hidden Memories, Lost Traces and Wisdom of Shadow opened different inquiries through memory and knowledge. Their concepts did not prescribe one meaning for everyone; they offered changing contexts in which people could help imagine and realise something together.

Buildings and possible cultural futures

The old prison, the former vegetable market and the icehouse became important places in this history of cultural use. Before Sinopale, the prison had been proposed for a private hotel. Its repeated use for art and collective inquiry made it possible to experience a cultural alternative. The building later became a museum. Looking back, I believe Sinopale strongly influenced the emergence of that alternative, while

recognising that ownership, other influences and the final decision lay beyond the biennial.

The former vegetable market also became a setting for cultural activity and houses Sinopale's office. The icehouse, formerly used to preserve fish, became Sinopale's principal exhibition venue for the sixth edition and later a municipal cultural centre and concert hall. In my recollection, its temporary artistic use helped change an earlier plan for a wedding hall; a crowdfunded piano subsequently supported further musical activity. These places suggest how the biennial could contribute to cultural possibilities beyond its own exhibitions. I do not treat their different histories as one proven conversion model.

Local organisation and the distribution of responsibility

For approximately the first ten years, we drew on the European Cultural Association as Sinopale's formal coordinator. The establishment of the Sinop Sustainable Development Association gave an organisational form to local cooperation. Joint projects helped develop the experience, relationships and credibility needed for that association to take fuller responsibility. When we closed the European Cultural Association in 2019, Sinopale could continue through the local association. The closure also reflected economic and political strain, overload, risk and the exhaustion of those carrying the work; it was not simply the completion of a mission.

During the pandemic, Sinopale's eighth edition, Upcycling, took place through an online platform, with team members working from London, Vienna, Istanbul and Fethiye. Our horizontal way of working took a new form organically. Our environment and working structure enabled people to participate and take as much responsibility as they wished, from developing the concept and fundraising to programming and production. Power became more distributed through this practice.

Between the eighth and ninth editions, five members of the younger team established Hal Kolektif as an independent initiative for work beyond the biennial. At Sinopale 9, the collective contributed a project as an artist initiative and was formally announced as the biennial's coordination team. At the opening, the artistic director publicly announced the handover of leadership to the younger generation and gave the floor to the younger team for the opening speeches.

In the tenth edition, now under way, the team has a voice throughout the process, from selecting curators to production. We as founders have fully embraced a supporting role. I return to this movement from coordinating an already conceived edition to helping shape the whole process when I reflect on power, responsibility and empowerment.

Why Care, and Why Now? A Personal Starting Point

Across more than twenty-five years of work in the cultural sector, I have repeatedly had to respond to natural disasters, economic crises, violence, political and social upheaval, public health emergencies and political pressures. I have also had to cope with major crises in my private life. These experiences have followed one another so persistently that responding to crisis has become a continuing condition of my life and work. They have shaped what we could undertake, the resources available to us and the responsibilities we could reasonably carry.

In Sinop, these wider conditions intersect with pressures on the city's cultural, social and ecological life. Among my concerns are energy investments whose ecological risks and lack of community consent I regard as serious. These form part of a broader situation in which priorities continually shift and the conditions for our work remain unstable.

There is also a wider reason. As Part I describes in its opening chapter, political and economic priorities in my own country and across much of the world increasingly place financial interest, competition and control before human and ecological wellbeing, and power is ever more often exercised as domination. I see this as a drift towards authoritarianism and towards a way of thinking that has lost its conscience, serving neither people nor the ecosystems, living and non-living, on which life depends. In this situation, one question has become more pressing for me: with the resources we have in our own small world, how can we contribute to a better one? Sinopale cannot answer this alone, but it is one of the places where I can ask it in practice.

Within these circumstances, the value of what we do has become increasingly tangible to me. Working with art, helping people encounter different possibilities and imagining something together have enriched my life. Sinopale has connected me with people whose values I share and with whom I have formed deep relationships. I have found joy in creating things together and in seeing younger people develop confidence and the capacity to act. Although the financial returns from cultural work have been limited, these experiences have contributed substantially to my sense of living a good life.

At times, Sinopale has also offered me a space in which we could relate differently from the conditions around us: through attention, generosity, cooperation and shared responsibility. That possibility helps explain why its continued existence matters so much to me. It also raises a question about our own practice. How well do the ways we work together sustain the qualities that make this work worth doing?

The seventh edition was a turning point in my understanding of why care matters. In difficult circumstances, we accepted a fundraising arrangement that seemed likely to ease the burden of organising. Looking back, I see how concentrating international resources within one curatorial group also concentrated practical power, weakening the distribution of authority we had sought to maintain

across previous editions. We departed from principles that had guided our work, without establishing sufficiently clear boundaries or negotiating expectations and responsibilities. As conflicts developed, I experienced a breakdown in constructive communication and working relationships that became deeply damaging to our team. Our motivation suffered, and I began to question what continuing the biennial meant under such conditions. During the pandemic, we subsequently used the eighth edition as an opportunity for individual and collective reflection. For me, this process had a restorative, even therapeutic, quality: it created space to revisit our experience and recognise what we valued in working together. The contrast clarified something fundamental. The relationships we formed were among the most important reasons for continuing this work. When those relationships ceased to offer trust, respect and care, the value of sustaining the biennial itself came into question. Care became inseparable from my understanding of what made the work worth doing.

I recognise a paradox in our response to recurring crises. We have developed considerable capacity to adapt, improvise and find ways forward. I experience this as resilience, and I value what we have learned. At the same time, each successful response has required effort, attention and resources from particular people. Being able to manage another crisis does not tell me how much capacity remains, or whether the demands we have learned to manage should continue to be accepted.

These crises have also had a personal cost. Over twenty years, what I invested in Sinopale deepened my attachment to it, and that attachment sometimes made it harder to recognise my own limits; I have experienced burnout twice. Over time, teaching and my work in counselling and coaching changed how I understand my contribution, turning it towards sharing experience and making room for others. I return to these experiences in the Power and Sustainability territories.

The younger team's growing independence gives this reflection a particular relevance now. As they take a greater part in shaping Sinopale, I am reconsidering what support from the founding generation should involve. There is value in what we can pass on, and there are demands and habits that deserve examination before they are carried forward. I want to understand how we can support others' agency while remaining attentive to the conditions under which they assume responsibility.

This is why care has become a central question for me. It connects the value I find in our work with the experience of those who make it possible. It asks me to attend to how we recognise contributions, respond to needs, exercise influence and judge what can reasonably be carried. The wider conditions also matter: our personal commitment cannot supply every missing resource or resolve every institutional and political constraint. Part of the reflection is to understand what we can change through our own practice, what requires a wider response and where we need to recognise a limit.

"Why now?" therefore concerns both accumulated experience and a changing position within it. I can look back across Sinopale's history while also considering how I want to participate in its future. I have

enough distance to recognise things I could not see while trying to make the next edition happen, and I remain involved in choices whose consequences are still unfolding.

The reflection that follows begins from this position. I want to understand what our work has made possible, what it has required of us and how my own understanding has changed. I return first to the question of why we make the festival, before examining the relationships, decisions and conditions through which that purpose takes shape.

TERRITORY 1

Why Do We Make Festivals?

I return here to the question raised in Chapter 1: what does the festival exist to make possible, and how does the way we work serve that purpose? Looking back at Sinopale, I need to distinguish what we produced, what we gradually understood ourselves to be contributing, and what our everyday decisions actually protected.

A purpose becoming clearer through practice

From outside, our most visible result is a contemporary art exhibition. When I first reflected on our purpose, I described the exhibition as a vehicle through which we created a cultural ecosystem. This helped me look beyond the immediate output, but it overstated what we had understood in 2006. It also overlooked the relationships that preceded Sinopale and risked reducing art to an instrument for achieving something else.

We began by bringing existing relationships, resources and experience into contact with a particular city. We imagined what we could do together, made an event, observed what happened and developed our understanding of its significance. Artistic encounters were themselves part of that discovery. What artists, residents and organisers perceived and created together helped us understand possibilities we had not fully anticipated.

I can now recognise relationships, trust, collaborative habits and a growing capacity to act together as central to Sinopale. I cannot assume that this understanding was clear from the beginning, equally shared by all founders or consistently reflected in our choices. Our initial intentions, the purpose emerging through experience and the purpose I can articulate today belong to different moments in this history.

Culture and the city's development

My understanding of that purpose depends on a broad understanding of culture. UNESCO's Mexico City formulation in 1982, reaffirmed at MONDIACULT 2022, places ways of life, values, rights, traditions,

beliefs, and material and intellectual expression alongside the arts. The MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration also recognises culture's role across social inclusion, economic development and environmental sustainability.

The framework Culture in, for and as Sustainable Development helps me think further about these relationships. It distinguishes culture as a fourth dimension alongside the social, economic and ecological; as a process connecting these dimensions; and as an overarching framework through which their relationships and transformation are understood. The latter two perspectives are particularly helpful to me. They suggest how economic choices, social relationships and ways of inhabiting a place are shaped by meanings, values and practices.

Through artistic work and collective forums, we created occasions to examine these relationships and imagine how shared life might develop. This had particular significance in a city from which many young people left and where historic buildings had lost their function. Encounters with artists, participation in making work and discussions about the city could open different ways of seeing what was already there and what might become possible.

I now understand Sinopale's purpose as developing relationships, awareness and collective capacity through which people and institutions in Sinop can perceive, imagine and act upon the cultural possibilities of their city. Through successive editions, we have created situations in which those possibilities could be investigated artistically, discussed collectively, experienced temporarily and sometimes carried into more lasting forms.

This also clarifies what I mean by ecosystem formation. The relationships matter partly because of what people can perceive, contribute and undertake through them. I therefore understand the ecosystem as a condition for collective agency, while recognising that relationships can also have value in themselves. I cannot assume that a stronger network automatically serves everyone or that everyone understands the city's development in the same way.

Recognising purpose beyond indicators

Funders and public bodies have usually asked us for numerical indicators, such as audience numbers or an increase in tourism. We have not regarded quantifying our work as our task. What we value has been largely qualitative and often indirect: young people gaining a wider view of the world, some going on to work in culture; other cultural events being established; historic buildings acquiring cultural functions; neglected hotels, cafés and other places being renovated with care by members of Sinopale's creative team; and changes in the face of the city.

We have recognised these developments through observation, public talks, forums and conversations. Many other people and decisions contributed to them, and I cannot attribute them to the biennial

alone. They have nevertheless helped us understand why our work matters to us.

My conviction that something valuable happened does not establish how everyone experienced it. I still need to ask whose possibilities expanded and whose did not. Imagining Sinopale's absence sharpens that inquiry. Which encounters would no longer take place? Who would miss them, and why? Which relationships, skills and initiatives could continue independently? What others can now carry without us may be part of our contribution, even when it makes the biennial less indispensable.

Purpose in the way we work

The more difficult question is whether our working relationships served the purpose I have described. If participation and collective capacity mattered in the city, they also needed attention within the process of organising the biennial.

Our recurring tension between production and participation made this visible. I wanted sustained attention to participatory decisions, forums, training, communication and recognition of those who supported us; under pressure, immediate production needs often came first. These activities required time and resources of their own. Producing a strong exhibition did not automatically ensure that the people making it possible were heard, recognised or able to influence the process. I return to this tension in Territory 3.

The seventh edition, described in my personal starting point, made the connection painfully clear to me. As working relationships deteriorated, the value of continuing the biennial itself came into question. During the eighth edition, by contrast, our working structure allowed people to contribute across concept development, fundraising, programming and production. Looking back, I see a closer connection there between the collective capacity we hoped to support and the opportunities to participate in shaping Sinopale itself, although others may describe its possibilities and limits differently.

For a long time, we accepted that crises would place additional burdens on us as organisers. We were aware that the workload carried by team members threatened the biennial's sustainability, but we understood the problem largely through our limited resources. As we repeatedly struggled to secure more funding, we came to regard the pressure on the team as something we could not change. Looking back, I see how our understanding of the external conditions narrowed our view of our own possibilities.

Last year, I proposed a workshop on care for our team. Through it, those of us who took part recognised a substantial contradiction between our purpose and our practice. We had worked on Sinopale's vision and mission repeatedly over the years, but only recently recognised that these formulations broadly serve wellbeing: the possibility for people, relationships, the city's cultural life and the environment on which it depends to develop. That wellbeing also concerned the people making the biennial possible. Their working conditions belonged within the purpose itself.

The workshop helped us see that, even when external conditions could not be changed in the short term, some small changes in our own practices might improve the situation. This did not remove the need for funding or make us responsible for resolving every structural difficulty. It opened a space for considering what remained within our reach. For me, this gives concrete meaning to Chapter 1's argument that a festival's purpose is carried by the way it organises relationships as well as by its programme.

Not all team members were able to take part in the workshop. For this recognition to become a shared understanding, we need to return to it together and more thoroughly. This year, difficulties repeating those of previous years, and several team members reaching their physical and psychological limits, brought its priority back to the fore. The question is no longer whether this is necessary, but how to do it: how to give care sufficient priority and make it a dependable part of how we organise. I still value art's capacity to challenge, disturb and open difficult questions. But the contribution we hope to make to the city cannot settle, on behalf of those carrying the work, whether the conditions we create allow them to participate with dignity and sustain meaningful relationships.

Returning to why

Under the pressure of each edition, the question of what we should do next can easily displace the question of why we are doing it. Returning to why helps me examine what our decisions protect and what they allow to be sacrificed, and whether another edition remains worth undertaking under the conditions available.

People can find different meanings in a shared undertaking. I want to understand how team members see their contribution, what they believe it serves and where they experience a gap between our purpose and our practices.

As the younger team takes a greater part in shaping Sinopale, I see this inquiry as something to carry forward. Alongside asking what we want the biennial to make possible, we need to ask how our everyday relationships and decisions serve that purpose. The workshop was a first occasion to make this connection explicit; it now needs to include the whole team. The responsibility now is to keep it present as we prepare, decide and work together, recognising what should continue, what needs to change and what should never be sacrificed merely to keep the festival going.

CARE INSIGHT 1

Purpose can be discovered through practice. Retrospective clarity is useful when it reveals that development; it becomes misleading when it rewrites the beginning as though later understanding had always been present. Care also asks whether the relationships and conditions through which that purpose is pursued are consistent with it.

TERRITORY 2

The Festival as a Relational Ecosystem

Chapter 2 argues that a festival takes part in culture not only through what it presents but through how it organises itself and how it connects places and networks. As I read it through Sinopale, its central message is this: just as artistic work can carry an inheritance into the future by reinterpreting it, the ways we work together can also be inherited, reinterpreted, corrected and passed on. In this territory, I follow that thread from an artistic encounter with a tradition, to the way of working through which we make the biennial, to the places beyond Sinop where that way of working travels. I also distinguish the temporary environment of each edition from the more persistent ecosystem that makes editions possible, and from the effects they leave in the wider world.

Sinopale emerged through the encounter of two existing ecosystems. The European Cultural Association's artistic, professional and support network brought curators, artists, cultural managers, EUROPIST participants, cultural institutes, funders and international partners. The Informal Görgün Network brought local relationships, knowledge of place, personal trust and practical access. I use this distinction analytically: neither network was internally uniform, and professional and personal relationships overlapped.

Through making the biennial, we developed relationships between artists and residents, curators and tradespeople, cultural managers and municipal actors, international institutions and local associations. Local memories entered artistic practices; resources and experience from elsewhere met situated knowledge; professional organisation encountered informal cooperation. The Informal Görgün Network's appearance with its own logo among our supporters acknowledged a relational contribution that an ordinary list of institutions would have missed.

The emerging Sinopale ecosystem involved more than bringing existing supporters together. Working on shared tasks created further relationships, knowledge and capacities. Some continued into later editions or developed independently of the biennial.

What we presented

Helesa offers a concrete example of how contemporary art can bring an existing cultural practice into renewed attention. According to the local legend, a ship sheltering in Sinop exhausted its provisions. Its crew carried a decorated boat through the town, singing verses and asking for help, and residents provided food. This story of mutual assistance is recalled in an annual ritual in which participants carry a decorated boat through the neighbourhoods, sing verses and refrains, and collect contributions. Today, these contributions are collected as money rather than food, for charitable associations.

I understand Helesa as giving ritual expression to a culture of mutual help that we also associate with

imece. In the period I recall, the procession still took place, but participation had become weak. The ritual remained present while the collective experience around it had diminished.

Three artists addressed this tradition in their work. I focus here on a participatory process I recall from Sinopale 5. Through a workshop involving local participants, children and artists, a musician reinterpreted Helesa's collective rhythms, verses and refrains through body music, percussion and voice. Participants worked with a familiar cultural form through a contemporary artistic practice. I remember that year's Helesa becoming a much larger and more festive gathering.

For me, the significance of this encounter lies in how art could recall something receding from attention, invite people to reconsider it and make its value perceptible through participation. The workshop offered another way of hearing and experiencing a tradition already present in the city. Responsibility for regularly carrying out the ritual remained with the institution that organised it. Our contribution as a contemporary art biennial was to open an artistic encounter with that inheritance.

We do the same with the way we work together. Just as the workshop carried Helesa into the present by reinterpreting it, the way we organise the biennial draws on imece, Sinop's inherited practice of mutual help, and keeps adapting it to what a contemporary biennial needs.

How we organised

We also describe aspects of our working relationships through imece. People contributed knowledge, labour, materials, access and hospitality to make a shared undertaking possible. Familiar practices of helping one another found a contemporary setting in the production of the biennial.

This gives imece two connected places in my reflection. Mutual assistance could become a subject of artistic attention, as in our interpretation of Helesa. It could also be practised through the everyday work of making Sinopale. The relationships that enabled the art were themselves part of the cultural life in which we participated.

In the first edition, we tried to involve as many residents as possible in contributing to the biennial, initially simply to make it possible. We then saw that this process mattered as much as the exhibition itself. Comparing residents who had contributed with those who had not, we observed that contributing increased the value people gave to the exhibition and their sense of belonging. It even increased, relatively, their interest in contemporary art, which many of them had found unfamiliar as audiences. This was our observation as organisers rather than a systematic study, but it changed how we understood our way of working: making the biennial together was itself shaping people's relationship to culture.

Our ways of organising also developed through experience. Working with several curators brought different knowledge, sensitivities and relationships into the process. During the eighth edition, our

horizontal way of working took a new, more distributed form, with people able to contribute from shaping the concept and raising resources to programming and production. Members of the younger local team gradually moved from assisting with an edition to helping shape the whole undertaking.

I understand these developments as changes in how we worked together and learned to take responsibility. Their significance within this territory is that cultural practice includes the arrangements through which we collaborate, as well as the artworks we present.

Seen through Chapter 2, our ways of working are part of our cultural contribution, not only the means of producing it. Imece is itself part of Sinop's inheritance. By practising it edition after edition, we keep it in living use, but we also change it, reinterpreting it each time to fit what the biennial needs. In this way we offer the city a culture of producing together and, through repetition, help make it a current cultural practice. Through working with several curators and a horizontal structure that took new forms over time, it practised a distribution of authority rather than its concentration in one person. Through the younger team's growing responsibility, it passed on ways of organising as well as knowledge of art. At the same time, our way of working could also reproduce the hierarchy we hoped to change: for a long time, public visibility remained concentrated in one representative, while much of the work that made the biennial possible stayed in the background. Because both tendencies were repeated edition after edition, the one that distributed authority and the one that concentrated visibility, both became part of the culture we passed on.

How we connected

This way of working does not remain in Sinop. It develops through continuing cooperation: with international institutions, with artists who come from elsewhere, and with experts from outside Sinop who work with us in forums, training programmes, policy development and advocacy. This cooperation allows the culture produced here to travel and to serve as an example, while experience from elsewhere comes back to Sinop. Over the years, for instance, we worked with a foundation that develops policy on the environment and cultural heritage. We drew on the knowledge it had gained from dozens of cities across Türkiye, and it contributed to Collecting the Future. Last year, in a project with one of the foundation's experts, the movement ran the other way: we shared our experience and way of working with a cultural centre being established in Merzifon, another Turkish city. Over the year-long project, volunteers from Sinop worked alongside people in Merzifon to realise pilot events.

Chapter 2 warns that when local knowledge travels outward while recognition and benefit do not travel back, the relationship becomes extractive; meaningful participation requires movement in both directions.

Through the European Cultural Association, we connected Sinop, Istanbul and wider European networks. Relationships developed through one project could open possibilities for another;

professional experience and institutional credibility could become available to a younger local initiative. Our ecosystem extended beyond the people physically present during an edition.

Artists often arrived with an initial proposal for Sinop. Encounters with residents, local knowledge, places and practical conditions helped that proposal take further shape. In my experience, many artists subsequently continued to develop ideas explored in Sinop, adapting them to projects in other countries. What emerged through a particular encounter in the city could therefore enter an artist's continuing practice and acquire new forms and meanings elsewhere. The movement also ran the other way. Some artists brought works they had developed elsewhere and adapted them to Sinop, where the city's conditions transformed them. In this sense, Sinopale has functioned within the international art field both as a starting point for new projects and as a place where existing ones were transformed.

This movement between places also concerns the questions Sinopale works with. Through globalisation, many problems that appear local take similar forms in different parts of the world: public resources allocated to private interests, decisions about land, heritage or energy that do not put people and ecosystems first, and governments favouring corporate interests over those of local residents. When a biennial addresses the local form of a problem that exists elsewhere, the knowledge and awareness it produces are not only local. What is explored in Sinop can speak to similar situations in other places, and this takes Sinopale's contribution beyond the city.

A more structured exchange took place through the European Academy of Participation, an Erasmus+ funded project led by the Goethe-Institut. Its partnership of universities and cultural organisations, including the European Cultural Association, developed a shared educational framework and learning modules for participatory art practice.

Through our involvement, we contributed experience from Sinopale to the development of these modules. Other partners brought experiences from their own settings, and we learned from these in turn. Local practice contributed to shared educational knowledge, while encounters with other practices expanded the knowledge available to us in Sinopale. I understand this as a cycle of mutual learning, developed through what we made, shared, reconsidered and brought into subsequent work.

Our work around the historical prison offers another example of connections between local experience, international cooperation and public institutions. Through Collecting the Future, artistic projects and participatory forums enabled residents and other contributors to explore the city's memories and imagine its future. Using the prison for these activities also allowed people to experience a possible cultural use of the building directly.

The subsequent EU-supported prison project placed civil-society dialogue and international cooperation alongside the restoration of the building. Local stakeholders were represented through heritage site

management bodies. Through the European Cultural Association, we participated in the project and worked to support a participatory approach to considering the building's future use.

Our contribution drew on two kinds of forums. Earlier forums, such as those of Collecting the Future, had already brought people together to imagine the city's future. For the prison project itself, we organised dedicated forums in Istanbul and Sinop, bringing residents, public authorities, cultural practitioners, researchers and other stakeholders into discussion. Guests we invited from across Europe also took part, sharing similar experiences from elsewhere in Europe, so that knowledge and experience could be transferred to the Sinop context. We shared approaches, connected different kinds of knowledge and offered ways of thinking together about the city. In my understanding, our contribution concerned both the possibilities people could imagine and the process through which they could discuss them.

The 2016 Sinopale Forum report records the prison project and its site management plan being opened to wider discussion. It also identifies shortcomings in communication, consultation and feedback during the project. The forum provided an occasion to make those gaps visible and seek ways to address them. This helps me understand our role as one of connecting people and supporting a participatory process whose effectiveness still required work.

Looking back, I believe Sinopale contributed strongly to the visibility of a cultural future for the prison. Its eventual use nevertheless emerged through a wider institutional process. The building's ownership and final decisions remained with the responsible authorities. Here, I focus on how our relationships enabled cultural experience and civic discussion to enter that process.

Edition, ecosystem and effects

An edition brought a temporary intensity of encounters, workshops, exhibitions and discussion. The relationships enabling it often continued between editions: people retained knowledge, worked together again and developed capacities that could support other initiatives. The gradual transfer of coordination from the European Cultural Association to the Sinop Sustainable Development Association is one expression of this continuity.

The pandemic tested this continuity directly. For some years we could not gather in Sinop. The eighth edition, Upcycling, took place online, and its main purpose was to keep alive the relationships we had built. Over several months, a series of conversations looked back across Sinopale's history: what it had changed, which memories it had created and how works first made in Sinop had continued to evolve elsewhere. Working online brought together former curators, artists and residents of Sinop from different editions and many parts of the world, something we could rarely have achieved in one place. Some of the tradespeople, hotel owners and local audiences we worked with took part, but many people could not, particularly older residents without internet access or who did not use the internet.

Sinopale gives priority to embodied experience, and the online biennial was deprived of it. Online gathering could not replace meeting one another in the city; the two forms cannot substitute for each other. When we were able to return to Sinop, we found that seeds planted earlier had grown into saplings: the old prison and the icehouse had been completed as cultural spaces.

I distinguish this organising ecosystem from effects extending into the wider world, such as an artist developing an idea elsewhere, renewed attention to Helesa or changing discussions about a building's use. These effects may involve other people and institutions, continue independently or take directions we did not anticipate. Their relationship to Sinopale needs to be understood in each particular setting.

Our ecosystem also belongs to the city's material and ecological circumstances. Historic buildings, streets, the coast and natural settings enter artistic work and shape the conditions of gathering. Political decisions, economic pressures and ecological threats affect both the people with whom we work and what we can make possible together.

The examples above help me identify what travelled between places and what returned through shared learning. They also leave questions open. Whose experience did we carry into wider networks, and would those people recognise themselves in our account? What knowledge and opportunities became available to local participants? Which people or organisations remained outside the relationships that enabled the biennial, and what could they not access, contribute or influence? I need these questions to keep my account of the ecosystem open to perspectives beyond my own. If I ask which relationship most needs our attention now, I would name our relationship with volunteers. We are very few, and sustaining these relationships between biennials exceeds our current capacity. I see this as a limit to acknowledge, and as a question about how the relationship could be carried differently.

None of the examples in this territory involved care as a deliberate principle; care was not yet part of how we thought about our work. I describe them to show how an ecosystem carries and spreads culture. Read now through care, they raise a further question. If a way of working can travel, so can the care, or the lack of care, that it carries: how contributions are recognised, how decisions are made, what can be asked of people. Care has not yet become a principle or a policy in Sinopale. We are in the period of discussing it and becoming aware of what it asks of us, and the first decisions I describe in Territory 6 have grown out of that discussion. If care becomes part of how we work, it will also become part of what we may pass on, in Sinop and beyond.

CARE INSIGHT 2

An existing ecosystem can make a festival possible, and making the festival can develop new relationships and capacities. The resulting value depends on many people and institutions, not only on the organisation most visible at the moment of presentation.

TERRITORY 3

Acting in an Unfinished World

So far, I have looked at why we make Sinopale and at the ecosystem through which it takes part in culture. In the first territory, purpose became clearer through practice, and I came to see that it is carried by how we work together as well as by what we present. In the second, I followed how that way of working is inherited, transformed and passed on, in Sinop and beyond. If the ecosystem we create can develop or deplete the people and relationships within it, the next question is how we act within it: under uncertainty, with limited resources and in situations where legitimate demands pull in different directions.

Chapter 3 offers a way of looking at our situation from above. Which uncertainties do we have to live with? What are our limits and limitations? How can we describe our field of freedom? Which paradoxes run through our work, what dilemmas do these conditions create, and how have we dealt with them? In our experience, none of these is separate from the others; I take them in turn only to see each more clearly.

Uncertainties

Chapter 3 asks what can be known, decided, planned or accepted when the outcome cannot be foreseen. In Sinopale, uncertainty is part of the nature of the work, and I distinguish two kinds. Structural uncertainty arises from unstable funding, logistics and successive natural, political, economic and social crises. Artistic uncertainty belongs to discovery: the work should be able to change through an encounter with people and place.

Structural uncertainty begins with funding. Funding is rarely secured until the last moment, so even whether an edition can take place is not guaranteed, and this creates anxiety in the team. We begin planning with the invited curators, but for a long time we cannot give them guarantees either. We ask them to choose artists and to talk with them, while asking them not yet to make promises. Everything is planned as if it will happen, yet remains suspended until funding is confirmed.

The places we work in also change from edition to edition, because the city changes and the spaces available to us change with it. Almost every parameter is variable, and in each edition most of them have to be set again almost from scratch. We make uncertainties certain one by one, and some become certain only at a very late stage. Because all these uncertainties are connected, each one resolved late creates further uncertainty for all the others.

Artistic uncertainty, by contrast, follows from our mission, and it is our choice. Exhibiting works that artists have already produced would allow much to be planned in advance. Sinopale instead shows site-specific, participatory works produced in the city. How each work will be made, and where and how it

will be shown, becomes clear only as the work itself takes shape. Invited artists often arrive with a general framework, yet financial and logistical conditions have often left approximately one week for local research, relationships with participants and production with the team's support. Works can change as they encounter available materials, sites and local conditions. This can be experimentally valuable while still creating anxiety. Some funders expect us to describe the works precisely and to provide all logistical and production details in advance, which our way of working cannot do. We do not want to compromise on this, because we consider the ecosystem of relationships the biennial creates as important as the works it shows. This is what makes Sinopale what it is.

Taken together, these uncertainties create anxiety in the team and among the curators. The artists, too, go through anxiety and stress during their short stay.

Limits and limitations

Chapter 3 distinguishes limits that cannot be changed now from limitations that may become changeable over time. Our most significant limits are financial. Public cultural institutions do not provide us with financial support; from public bodies we can receive support only in the form of spaces or certain services. Sinop has no large industry or major businesses, so under present conditions a main sponsor directly connected to the city cannot be found. No source exists through which an edition of Sinopale could be planned as a project and fully funded. Over twenty years, we received three EU grants. Their themes allowed us to carry out projects outside the editions, which supported the biennial indirectly but did not finance it.

We have dealt with these limits by assembling partial support from many small sources. For artists invited from abroad, we seek part of their costs from the cultural cooperation institutions of their countries, where these exist; for artists from some countries, even this is not possible. For artists from Türkiye, we draw on a fund of an NGO that supports artists' production and visibility. All these funds cover only part of the costs related to the artists: some cover travel and fees, others only production, and the rest is left to us. Local partners provide part of the accommodation and meals in kind, but some always has to be paid in cash. Part of the production costs, our general costs, communication and the volunteers' subsistence therefore depend on donations from individuals, whose amount remains uncertain until the last moment. This way of working has itself become one of our defining features. As we do locally, we practise imece at national and international levels too. It began as a necessity, yet it directs us to seek cooperation, with all our strength, at every level.

This financial uncertainty has two consequences. The money we raise goes first to the most essential production, so that sometimes nothing is left for communication, or we have to begin our communication plan very late. And the volunteer team's own expenses are the first to be sacrificed. Other limits add to these. Political and economic conditions are unstable, and there are no written local

cultural policies; support has depended largely on the preferences of each mayor, so each change of administration means starting again. We have no permanent paid staff, so we begin work on each edition late. The number of volunteers is also limited: the number of volunteer assistants who apply does not always match what we plan, some withdraw at the last moment, and the team available has to carry the whole workload.

Our field of freedom

What cannot be changed now forms our limits, and our field of freedom lies within them. Under present conditions, the absence of public financial support, the lack of a main sponsor connected to Sinop and the absence of any source that could fully fund an edition are limits. Not everything we face is unchangeable, however. As we gain experience, we learn which limits can be stretched and which uncertainties can be reduced, and in what ways. As our competence grows, some of our limits become limitations that can change. Each time, we learn and start a little earlier, and there is still more we can do.

Our EU-funded projects also showed us what an ideal situation could look like. In them, not only production but also general costs, communication and salaries could be paid, and uncertainty fell to a minimum. Yet these projects also showed us something else. When stakeholders knew that money was available, their approach changed: the motivation to achieve together what would otherwise be impossible faded, and cooperation turned into seeking a share of the existing budget.

Paradoxes

Chapter 3 distinguishes three kinds of difficulty: a problem calls for a solution, a dilemma calls for a decision between competing values, and a paradox calls for an ongoing capacity to hold two necessary sides together. Within our field of freedom, we have to plan and improvise at once. This is a paradox: both are necessary, and neither can settle the tension for good. The only way we can plan such an event is to treat some uncertain parameters as if they were fixed, and to revise the plan continually as conditions change. A fully predetermined process could make participation merely implementation, while insufficient preparation could transfer the burden of artistic flexibility to people with less authority.

Our professional histories influenced how we read the situation. The artistic director brought artistic and curatorial experience, local relational knowledge and strong improvisational capacity. Our fellow founder, an architect, was also exceptionally capable in crisis management. I brought the planning orientation of an engineer trained in Europe, alongside a commitment to participatory cultural management. These descriptions explain aspects of our mental maps without defining us as fixed professional types.

For me, planning reduced uncertainty and protected capacity. For colleagues working through rapidly

changing conditions, a plan could seem less useful or constrain responsiveness. I made plans but could not require adherence from people who did not share my confidence in their value. I want to understand how we carried these two legitimate needs, rather than judge whose disposition was right in general.

Our multi-curator approach, which I examine in the Power territory, offers another form of this paradox: more coordination could make the work safer by spreading responsibility and widening the capacities available. These tensions call for judgement in particular situations. Neither a universal preference for flexibility nor a universal preference for planning can settle them.

A second paradox concerns funding and participation. A main sponsor could reduce our financial uncertainty, and meeting our needs by purchasing services would ease much of the pressure on the team. Yet we sometimes ask ourselves whether the biennial's social impact would be as great if cooperation were not a necessity for creating resources. That we ask this while we have no such sponsor shows clearly why we should not give up imece if we ever have one. The two approaches pull in opposite directions: cooperation that makes the impossible possible, and the distribution of money already available. Financial security and collective ownership are both necessary to us, and creating a dialectic between them is a challenge of its own.

Dilemmas

These conditions repeatedly confront us with dilemmas.

Some of these dilemmas arise within the team itself. Not all of us stand in the same place in the funding paradox: some of us lean towards financial security, others towards cooperation. This creates a dilemma in our group dynamic, affects our motivation to act and keeps us from moving together towards the same goals. So far, we have not given the search for sponsors our full energy.

As founders, we sometimes differed over what needed attention first. In the decisions I recall, I understood the artistic director's emphasis as bringing high-quality exhibitions into being as practically as possible. His experience as artistic director, curator and artist, together with his skill in building and managing relationships, was central to that work. I read this as a difference in how we prioritised shared purposes under pressure. He may understand the same choices differently.

My priority was to give participatory decision-making and implementation sustained attention alongside production. Another founder and I also devoted attention to forums, training, carefully organised opening ceremonies, recognition and thanks for local supporters, and greater investment in press relations and communication. These activities could seem less immediately necessary for an exhibition to open. I saw them as essential to the participatory and relational purpose of our work, and expressed my preference as smaller production and more communication.

These were not mutually exclusive values. The artistic director did not reject participation or communication, and we did not reject artistic quality. The tension concerned what received scarce time, money and energy first. Under crisis conditions, immediate production needs tended to dominate. The distinction between practicality and participation described a recurring organisational dilemma about protecting legitimate purposes under constraint. Each time resources are allocated, this is a dilemma; over time, it is a paradox, because both sides remain necessary.

Then, now and next

In this chapter, I have used the three existential issues of Chapter 3 (uncertainty, paradoxes and dilemmas, and limits and limitations) to analyse Sinopale's fundamental conditions as a whole. The same theory can also help to understand a single situation: a particular decision, a crisis or a moment of pressure becomes clearer when we ask which uncertainties, paradoxes and limits were at work in it.

Looking back across these conditions, I see a pattern I could not see while we were inside it. Chapter 3 places a paradox at the centre of festival management: delivering the work matters, and so do the wellbeing and agency of the people who deliver it. For many years, we resolved it in practice by letting delivery prevail and treating the cost to the team as the price of continuing. The dilemmas I have described were decided, again and again, in favour of the edition: production before communication, the invitation before the team's capacity, the event before the volunteers' own expenses. Our growing capacity to manage crises, which I experience as resilience, made this easier to accept: each successful response showed that we could cope, without showing how much capacity remained.

Since the care workshop, which I describe in Territory 5, we have begun to look at these conditions differently. Care is not yet a principle or a policy in Sinopale; we are in a period of discussion and growing awareness. Still, I can follow how this perspective changes what we ask of each of the issues above.

With uncertainty, care first asks us to look again at the anxiety it creates. As Chapter 3 describes, a workable degree of anxiety can heighten attention and support motivation and creativity; it becomes harmful when it exceeds the capacities and support available. We experience the first side of this in artistic uncertainty. The artists go through anxiety and stress during their stay, yet when they leave, almost all of them agree that it has been a very special experience for them. They often tell us how the limits of time and conditions developed their creativity and their ability to find alternative solutions in a short time, and they recognise how much collective work contributed to those solutions. They leave with the happiness and satisfaction of having achieved the impossible in about a week. Working together towards the same goal, facing problems and finding solutions together, creates a strong sense of togetherness and belonging. The team experiences the same, and I see this as one of the most valuable sides of Sinopale. Team members, however, do not live this for one week, as the artists do; a

very long process comes before it. This collective success and sense of belonging should not come at the cost of their exhaustion.

This leads to a distinction between what we want to keep and what we can move away from. Artistic uncertainty belongs to the work and is worth protecting. Much structural uncertainty, however, can be reduced by planning around the possibilities that are relatively more certain. In choosing artists, for example, we can give priority to those from countries where partial funding is relatively secure, and submit applications on time. Prioritising what is possible can make the biennial feasible early, even with fewer artists, and leave room to try new possibilities afterwards. Reducing uncertainty also concerns the people we invite. When we explain clearly the conditions under which curators will work, and plan before they need to ask, we can keep their uncertainty as low as possible, ease their anxiety and give them confidence. The decisions I describe in Territory 6, to set out clear conditions for curators and artists from the beginning, point in the same direction.

With limits, care asks what is sacrificed first when resources run short, and which limits we have accepted too readily. So far, communication and the volunteers' own expenses have been the first to go. Within our field of freedom, they can become part of what we protect rather than what we give up. The number of volunteers shows how a limitation can be mistaken for a limit. We always knew it was a problem, yet we saw it as part of the nature of the work and resigned ourselves to it, so we did not focus enough on finding a solution. In the terms of Chapter 3, we treated as fate what lay within our field of freedom. The care perspective showed us that this was wrong and that the problem belongs among our priorities. The idea has since developed of planning for it and looking for solutions long before the biennial. We have discussed that cooperation with educational institutions could make the number of volunteers relatively more predictable. Chapter 3's three horizons help me separate what we must accept now from what we can develop in the medium term, such as support from sponsors beyond Sinop, and what can change only through longer-term work with others, such as written local cultural policies.

With the paradox of planning and improvisation, the change is to move away from an approach that relies on solving crises without giving planning its due. The Reader's cost lens shows why: repeatedly solving crises develops real crisis competence, but it does not necessarily develop planning, documentation, delegation or shared judgement, and the same strength can keep work moving while preserving dependencies. The younger team has already moved in this direction. As they gained influence, the balance gradually shifted towards better planning: respecting the plan as far as possible, and revising it when that was not possible. In the eighth edition, with our support, they gained practice in using the full range of project management tools. In the ninth edition, they went further: alongside project management, they put into writing the important shared principles that should not be changed, which they called the "constitution". In the current tenth edition, they have carried out the planning

entirely themselves and have taken care to work in line with the constitution. Planning in this sense means preparing plans A, B and C and working towards the most desirable one. Plans let us see risks and opportunities in time, while there is still time to act. Revising them as conditions change helps us distinguish variable parameters from fixed ones, and so sets a frame for improvisation. The constitution identifies what should be applied without lengthy deliberation or renewed discussion: some things are fixed in writing so that others can remain open to change. Together, these make the stances we can take towards each uncertainty more defined in advance.

CARE INSIGHT 3

Planning and improvisation are complementary capacities. Care distinguishes the openness that allows art and participation to change the result from preventable uncertainty that transfers anxiety, labour and risk to others.

With the paradox of funding and participation, care asks us to keep imece even if our financial situation improves. For us, the ideal would be not a single main sponsor but several smaller ones. Whether this is possible depends not only on our wishes and the sponsorship strategy we develop, but also on the expectations of the few potential sponsors available.

With dilemmas, the first change concerns the one within our team. While some of us lean towards financial security and others towards cooperation, the care workshop created a shared awareness that a burden of this size on the team should not be accepted as fate, and living through the tenth edition strengthened it. Although the success of that edition was celebrated, we also said that the load carried by a few people had been unacceptable, and the weight has shifted towards wellbeing. These problems and their connection had always been visible to us: if funding is found in time, the burden concentrated on a few people, the excessive anxiety created by uncertainty and the distribution of resources at the team's expense can be removed or reduced. We also knew what would help. What the care lens showed us was its importance. We came to understand more clearly the price of not starting early: the team pays it in the field, and the biennial pays it by not having the effect we want. We understood that the cost of our limits should not fall on individuals. From our evaluations, I have the impression that this awareness will change our attitude. For the next edition, our plan A is therefore to start everything earlier, including the search for sponsors. Starting earlier does not guarantee this result, but it gives us the time to try.

Looking back through care, I can also distinguish the functions of these apparently secondary activities. Forums supported participation; training developed capacity; communication and press work created visibility and connection; thanking supporters recognised contribution and reciprocity; opening rituals could strengthen belonging and community. They were part of the relationships through which the festival's purpose might be realised, even when they did not directly produce an exhibited work.

The question is not whether every opening ceremony should be elaborate or every production smaller. I ask what we protect when we cannot serve all priorities. That choice reveals lived purpose more clearly than a retrospective mission statement. It also reveals the direction of cost: sustained effort paid to producing an exhibition does not automatically become time and attention paid directly to the people and relationships around it.

I do not think we have fully resolved this balance. I cannot conclude that participatory management eventually prevailed or that artistic production became less important. To understand our choices better, I need to return to specific decisions: what we reduced, postponed or protected, who chose and who carried the consequences. I also need to hear the other founders' perspectives on the same choices.

CARE INSIGHT 4

When time and money run short, what we protect first, and what we let go, can reveal which purposes actually guide our decisions, beyond those we say we pursue. Communication, recognition and participation require time and resources of their own; they cannot be assumed to follow automatically from producing a successful exhibition.

Care does not ask us to choose people over the work, but to ask how the biennial can happen without its costs falling repeatedly on the same few people. For me, this means beginning to look at our situation from this perspective and changing our priorities accordingly. Many limits will remain, and many uncertainties belong to the work itself. But within our field of freedom, we can decide differently what to protect first: the time and capacity of the people who carry the work, the relationships around it and the communication that sustains them, alongside the work itself.

TERRITORY 4

Life as Dialogue

Territory 3 showed how often we have had to act without knowing how things would turn out, within limits we could not change and between demands that pulled in different directions. Chapter 4 turns from these conditions to the human response to them. People do not only endure their circumstances; they can perceive possibilities within them and choose to bring some of those possibilities into reality, as distinct persons who are also connected to others. In Sinopale, I see this first in how the biennial itself began.

What follows is my own reading of the theories of Scheler and Frankl presented in Part I, and the conclusions I draw from them for Sinopale.

A city and its fate

I described Sinop's situation before Sinopale in the introduction. Over its history, much of what shaped the city was decided beyond its people's control: exile and its role as a city of imprisonment, an American radar base during the Cold War, factories established and later closed, and a population that shrank as young people left. More recently, political decisions taken from above, such as large energy investments, have again confronted the city with conditions it did not choose. Residents have responded to decisions they did not want, and have resisted some of them. Yet their power to change large impositions beyond their control has been limited. In a few cases it was enough; in most, they had no choice but to submit. In the terms of Chapter 4, what cannot be changed forms the given scene. The scene is not the whole story, but in Sinop it has left people little room to shape what happens to their city.

A personal answer

I see the artistic director's leadership in founding Sinopale as his personal answer, as someone from Sinop, to a question life was asking. Frankl reverses the question of meaning: life asks us, through each situation, how we will respond. For an artist and curator from Sinop, the question could be put this way: how can I respond to the fate of my city? Should I accept only what life has presented, or should I mobilise my life experience, my professional knowledge and the resources I have built for a positive change in my city?

Following Chapter 4, I can trace this answer step by step. The given scene was the city's condition, which no individual could change alone. Within it lay a meaning potential: a possibility that could be perceived and realised, or left unanswered. Chapter 4's three questions help me read how it was discerned: what response could be best for all those involved, what contribution this particular person was especially able to make, and what most urgently required an answer. There were other meaningful answers. An artist can also contribute to their city by opening a gallery or founding an art school. Each person's response depends on their sense of social responsibility, their vision, their capacities and the resources available to them. His answer was to mobilise, for a biennial in Sinop, the experience, relationships and resources we had built together, including through the European Cultural Association. No one assigned him this responsibility; he perceived it as his own and assumed it. Through decision and action, a possibility that existed only in imagination took a place in reality and created new conditions to which others could respond.

From a personal answer to shared meaning potentials

An individual effort realises one person's meaning potential. Leading a collective initiative does something further: it opens a space in which others can perceive and realise meaning potentials of their own. Chapter 4 describes how distinct responses enter a relational field in which one person's contribution changes the conditions and possibilities others encounter. For a person, meaning begins

with perceiving a potential and realising it by taking responsibility for it through action. For a community, meaning potentials first have to become visible. This requires space to think together, so that they can be recognised collectively, and then space to act together, so that people can help bring them into reality. In a city where people's power over the large decisions shaping it has been so limited, Sinopale opened, and continues to open, a field of agency, even if it lies within culture.

We created this space through both artistic content and participatory forums. Artists and residents explored the city's histories, memories and possibilities through making and experiencing works; residents' knowledge and perspectives could help shape what was created. In forums, people discussed the city's values, problems and possible futures more explicitly. These were complementary modes of collective imagination, each able to extend the other while retaining its own ways of inquiry and expression.

The process could change the artists and organisers as well as residents. We all brought knowledge and omissions; none of us simply supplied awareness to others. Relationships made encounters possible, while what people perceived and reflected on together could change those relationships and their capacity to act. Art retained its own ways of making meaning, and people's participation needed to matter beyond serving the production of a work. Neither art nor forums alone guaranteed influence over decisions.

CARE INSIGHT 5

Collective imagination can happen through art as well as deliberation. Care asks whose knowledge and agency shape both, what becomes perceptible through their different forms, and how people can contribute to the vision itself.

Making possibilities visible

Scheler's distinction between reality and possibility helps me understand what this space made possible. Human beings live not only in the world as it is but also in a world of possibility: they can hold in mind what does not yet exist and orient action towards it. The starting point was the city as it existed, including histories and experiences that could remain unseen. Contemporary art can open worlds of possibility: it makes perceptible what does not yet exist, while leaving room for different responses. Artistic work and shared reflection could disclose overlooked realities and make another future imaginable. Possibility here concerns what people might choose to bring into reality through judgement, decision and action, rather than a prediction of how the city would develop by itself.

In 2011, we brought people together through Collecting the Future to consider what Sinop valued, what was disappearing and what the city might become. Based in the old prison, it connected discussion and shared learning with artistic work, allowing possible futures to be explored through both conversation and experience.

The future of the prison itself gave this inquiry a concrete focus. Before Sinopale began, a plan to convert it into a hotel had led to a tender to allocate the building to a private operator. Local residents, civil society participants, public officials and people bringing experience from elsewhere considered its place in Sinop's future as a city of culture and tourism. A building carrying many layers of history and personal memory became the subject of a shared question: what should this historic place become? For me, this was also a question about the purpose of development. Should the building primarily serve the economic interests of private tourism, or could it serve a wider social purpose, enabling the whole community to develop through culture?

Artists explored the city through its sounds, objects, memories and everyday practices. In Museum For A Day, Johanna Reiner, Isabel Termini and Johannes Hoffmann invited residents to bring objects, photographs, documents and stories and to explain what these meant to them. In Agony, T. Melih Görgün, Yeşim Dizdaroğlu and Mürteza Fidan connected research on Sinop's historic fountains with a collective action in which young people carried water from the fountains to a historic sarcophagus in the exhibition venue's garden. Emre Koyuncuoğlu's Join Us and Have a Voice grew from a week of listening to community members' wishes and criticisms and invited Sinopians to speak about their own future, while leaving open how the voices gathered could influence decisions about the city. Çiğdem Borucu worked with the sounds of Sinop and its choir; Müride Sun Aksan's Body, Space and Rhythm explored how people without formal dance training could relate to the city through its sounds and movement; in Işın Önol's Flea Market, children combined disused materials into works for a market they organised themselves.

Reflecting on the city's past and imagining its future required time, attention, listening and a willingness to reconsider familiar assumptions. This was a mental cost. In my reading, paying it could deepen participants' understanding of the city and the artistic content, while increasing the value they gave to the possibilities they had helped imagine.

To give the project a material form, we also needed practical contributions. People helped organise the work, offered their labour and expertise, provided materials or money and supported the making of the artworks. These practical, physical and material costs enabled the event to take place. They also brought a second dimension of meaning: people could recognise their own effort in what they had helped make real, developing a relationship with the work through doing. The same people could contribute in both ways, and thinking and making often developed together.

The prison held these forms of inquiry together. Residents and visitors could encounter memories, sounds and actions in a building whose future they were also discussing. For a time, a possible cultural use became something people could experience. The exhibition gave substance to the question raised in the forum.

The same event offered different meaning potentials to different people. For a resident who brought an object and its story to Museum For A Day, meaning might lie in seeing a personal memory recognised as part of the city's history; for the young people who carried water in Agony, in taking part in something larger than themselves; for an artist, in a discovery that could not have happened elsewhere. Some of these meanings I saw directly. A carpenter who contributed to the production earned an income but also became friends with artists from other countries. Officials from the Ministry of Culture gained knowledge about how cultural planning could be approached. Each was answering a different question within the same situation.

In this way, a personal answer became a space in which many people could answer in their own ways. They helped discern a worthwhile possibility and took responsibility for giving it form through the capacities and resources they could contribute. This is why I read Collecting the Future as a collective process of meaning-making: different people helped form a vision, carried costs to realise it and could find distinct meanings in what they made possible together. The relationship between cost and value depends on contributions remaining meaningful, freely chosen and proportionate to people's capacities.

Across different editions, Sinopale repeatedly showed residents and the responsible authorities that this cultural alternative was possible. Looking back at how the process unfolded, I believe this sustained demonstration strongly influenced the emergence of a new vision for the prison, which was later converted into a museum. I do not attribute that change entirely to Sinopale. The biennial helped make another future imaginable and able to be experienced; ownership and the final decision remained with the responsible authorities.

CARE INSIGHT 6

An artistic intervention can allow people to experience a possible future before that future becomes an institution. Its contribution should be described in proportion to its actual power, without confusing demonstration, advocacy, influence and final decision.

The icehouse in the city centre offers another example of a possible future made tangible through artistic use. It had been used to preserve fish near the fishing boats, and when the fishing harbour moved, the building lost its original function. I recall that the municipality intended to turn it into a wedding hall. We used it as the principal exhibition venue for the sixth edition, temporarily making it function as a contemporary art space, and I recall that this experience contributed to a change of plans. The industrial heritage building later became a restored municipal cultural centre and concert hall; a piano was purchased through crowdfunding, and the space provided infrastructure for new music festivals.

I distinguish three dimensions of this experience: temporary prototyping allowed another use to be tried; advocacy through experience gave residents and decision-makers a concrete reference for

discussing an alternative future; and capacity generation concerned what became possible afterwards, a venue, an instrument and conditions for other cultural initiatives. In the prison's case, this third dimension remained limited: it became a museum rather than a space local cultural actors could use. Reading the prison and the icehouse together, I recognise a possible recurring approach: noticing latent possibility in a building whose function has changed, activating it temporarily through art, allowing a possible future to be experienced collectively, and bringing that experience into public and institutional discussion. Neither building became Sinopale's own institution. A festival may help make something possible without needing to own the result; as with the prison, I attribute to Sinopale a contribution to the change, not the decision itself.

CARE INSIGHT 7

A festival's contribution may become most visible in capacities that others can use beyond the festival. Enabling a possibility does not necessarily require owning it; continued care still asks who can access, maintain and influence what follows.

New meaning potentials across editions

Chapter 4 describes fate as something human beings co-create with life: as life asks questions and we answer them, we also contribute to the questions that will be asked next. I see each edition in this light. Through its concept and the projects of its participating artists, each edition opens spaces in which different stakeholders can find meaning potentials. Planning an edition is like taking a proactive stance towards life: by planning the contribution we want to offer, we partly choose the questions we will be asked. The new scenes life presents then change and reshape those plans. This is how we co-create with life.

By founding Sinopale, the artistic director realised a first meaning potential. Its consequences created new ones, and from these we chose some to realise. Seeing the positive effects that participatory artworks had on audiences was one such potential: we chose the harder path and turned Sinopale into a fully participatory event. Using the prison and the icehouse as venues showed us the possibility of turning them into cultural institutions; these, too, were meaning potentials.

No single event can make every voice heard. Collecting the Future gave space to certain voices within a particular context; in each edition and in our other activities, Sinopale continues to open space for others to be heard. A new concept meets a changed context and brings different meaning potentials into view, and with them other people, knowledge and histories. The third edition, Hidden Memories, Lost Traces (2010), invited artists and residents to explore overlooked stories and traces of lived experience, linking this inquiry to proposals for the future through workshops, exhibitions and performances. The fourth edition, Wisdom of Shadow: Art in the Era of Corrupted Information, asked how knowledge could be shared in ways that helped residents question decisions about their city; its

interactive works invited people's presence and shadows to become part of the art. The question need not concern a building's future use; it may concern memory, knowledge, relationships or ways of living together. Whose knowledge shapes the work, and whose histories are missing, is therefore not a question a single project can settle, but one we return to with each edition.

Meaning potentials do not appear only as opportunities; the crises we went through also became meaning potentials for us. Epictetus held that what happens to us is in itself neutral, and that our view of it, the attitude we take and the way we respond make it positive or negative; Frankl's third route to meaning, taking a stance towards what cannot be changed, points in the same direction. In 2016, despite the shock of the coup attempt in Türkiye, we had to complete the EU project we were running, and this exhausted us. Because of the state of emergency, many of our guests from Europe could not come, and our plans were overturned. Even so, we chose to carry out the activities with the means we had, taking risks, in a tense political climate and a depressed social atmosphere. It was exhausting, but it also gave us psychological support. By continuing our cultural activities in the face of collective depression, we gave ourselves and our participants the message that we were carrying on despite everything, and this had a therapeutic effect. The relational trauma of the seventh edition led us to recognise power relations, and the eighth edition, which we decided to hold online during the pandemic, gave us occasion to look back at our past. Each of these offered every one of us different, personal meaning potentials, and we realised them in different ways: through taking part or staying apart, and through the lessons we drew or did not draw.

Then, now and next

Looking back, I see that the biennial began as one person's answer and became a space in which many people could answer. At the time, we did not describe it in these terms; Chapter 4 helps me see the movement from a personal meaning potential to shared ones. Today, as the younger team takes a greater part in shaping Sinopale, the question is passing to others: what is this city, at this moment, asking of them, and what contribution are they especially able to make? Care asks us to keep this space open in a way that lets people discern and assume their own contribution, rather than receive roles decided elsewhere, and to describe our influence on the city in proportion to its actual power.

In recent years, the work I have been doing with friends in Europe on the theme of care has again been opening new meaning potentials for Sinopale; this Reader is one of them.

Chapter 4 leads me to a conclusion that reaches beyond Sinopale. As I read Fromm and Frankl, human beings find meaning through connection: with other people, with animals and nature, through art, and with the concrete and abstract life they live within. In contemporary societies, people increasingly take part in social life by earning money and consuming. Experiencing and encountering remain important routes to meaning, but when consumption becomes the main way we connect with others, many

meaning potentials remain unrealised. In my interpretation of Frankl, meaning arises in dialogue with life, in receiving from life and giving back to it: by contributing to social life and to nature, and by taking responsibility for what is needed. To create meaning is to co-create with life. People find meaning when they have agency, when they produce, and when they have a part in the continuing transformation of the ecosystem they live in. Social wellbeing therefore depends on creating conditions in which each person can contribute and so find meaning, and I believe this calls for a way of life in which people live by creating and contributing. Cultural initiatives can offer such a way of life. In Sinopale, I have seen people find meaning not by consuming something prepared for them, but by helping to create it. This is also why imece matters to us beyond the resources it brings: it is one of the ways the biennial makes contribution possible.

TERRITORY 5

How Relationships Are Made

Territories 1 to 4 looked at Sinopale as a whole: why we make it, the ecosystem through which it takes part in culture, the conditions within which we act and the meaning people can find in contributing to it. In each, I shared my insights into our fundamental issues and how we might respond to them. With Territory 5, the account moves to another level, from the whole to its core. Chapter 4 ended by showing that the dialogue between human beings and life is carried by smaller, concrete relationships, and that the accumulated quality of those relationships helps determine what kind of shared world can emerge. If relationships are the core of the ecosystem, understanding how they are made, and what needs attention within them, is also a way of influencing the whole.

Chapter 5 therefore begins with the smallest unit: a continuing relationship between two parties, whether two people, a person and an organisation, or two organisations acting through their representatives. It describes such a relationship as communication, cost exchange and expectations across time, three elements that continually shape one another. Relationships, however, depend on situations and on the distinct people within them. The same situation can be answered in many ways, and Chapter 4 reminds us that no general formula can decide in advance what a particular moment asks. The examples that follow are therefore only one or two of countless possible ones. I use them to make the theory easier to understand, not as a complete account of Sinopale's relationships or as rules for how relationships should be conducted. I begin with the informal network of relationships that made the biennial possible.

The local network I described in Territory 2, the web of relationships in Sinop that brought local knowledge, personal trust and practical help to the biennial, eventually took the name Informal Görgün

Network. A logo was designed for it and placed among the logos on Sinopale's promotional material. The name and visual gesture contained a joke: an informal network of human relationships appeared alongside formal institutions in the public architecture of support.

For me, the humour mattered alongside the recognition. The logo made visible that the biennial's infrastructure included friendship, trust, voluntary contribution and relational labour, not only ministries, municipalities, cultural institutes, foundations or sponsors. It gave a public form to work that a conventional list of financial supporters might conceal.

Chapter 5, drawing on Buber, distinguishes I–It relations, in which the other appears through their function, from I–Thou encounters, in which they are met as an irreplaceable person. Care does not eliminate necessary transactions; it organises them without allowing them to close the possibility of encounter. Because Sinopale grew from personal relationships, this is often what visitors to Sinop notice first. Although we go there to work, Sinopale does not feel like a business trip; the stronger impression is of being a guest. Whenever possible, a member of the team meets arriving guests in person. The artistic director and his family invite every guest to their home for breakfast. The people we work with, even municipal employees or other public officials, are usually his friends, or people who have worked or collaborated with us before or contributed as volunteers. Even when we pay a craftsperson for a service, if we need something unusually difficult, or something urgent while they are busy, we ask it as a favour. Our relationships are generally built on acquaintance, friendship or affection.

The old vegetable market, now called the Hal Meeting Centre, where Sinopale has its office and which serves as the biennial's meeting point, gives this quality a place. We share it with the municipality's water and waste offices, associations working in agriculture, livestock and beekeeping, a tailor, a greengrocer, a butcher and a traditional tea house. Bringing together very different people, it is a special place. At the entrance, a panel by the artist Cesare Davolio greets visitors: a plan of the building in which the people working in its different units are drawn as caricatures. Most people come to the Hal to do business, yet no one is anonymous. People are there with their names, not only their functions; they are one of us. Guests, too, soon feel at home there. In the last edition, I was deeply moved when the person who looks after the toilets offered the team liqueur.

We do go to Sinop to work and produce, yet in such an environment we soon adapt from the ways of relating we are used to in large cities to this way of relating. The pressure of producing a great deal in a short time creates tension, and disagreements arise, as they can anywhere; but the caring character of the whole environment softens them. Against this background, those who treat others only as people performing a job stand out all the more.

CARE INSIGHT 8

Making informal contribution visible is a form of recognition. When people meet one another as persons rather than functions, even working relationships can become relationships of mutual care.

A festival such as Sinopale is made of many kinds of relationships. Our work is, at its core, the making of relationships; even producing an exhibition proceeds through them. As a team, what occupies us most, and what we talk about most, alongside the work itself, is the relationships we form. In last year's care workshop, when we asked why Sinopale was valuable to each of us, the answers centred on our relationships with one another, the relationships we form through the biennial and a sense of belonging. Management tools analyse these relationships under names such as stakeholder management, and such analysis has its uses. Yet behind every stakeholder there are people, and what we manage are human relationships. What matters is how we look at them. Seen through an existential lens, our existence gains meaning through the relationships we form. Once we recognise this, we also understand that every act of communication, even a single encounter, affects our own existence as well as the other person's. Being caring then concerns not only others but also ourselves. The question becomes: what kind of relationship am I in with life, with the world and my surroundings, with people, with nature, and with living and non-living beings, at both macro and micro levels? In my view, one of culture's most important functions is to let us reflect, as individuals and as a society, on how we relate, and to create different ways of relating.

Chapter 5 describes every continuing relationship as communication, cost exchange and expectations across time, three elements that continually shape one another. I can see them in my own relationship with Sinopale. Chapter 5 shows how a person values what they pay a cost for, in proportion to the cost they pay. The effort I have invested has deepened Sinopale's value for me in several ways. It created a sense of belonging to a city that was not originally mine. The costs I carried with my teammates strengthened my attachment to them, and the costs I paid for art made me value art still more. The things I value in life multiplied, my relationship with life deepened, and Sinopale added meaning to my life. The efforts we make for one another are what build the value we give to one another, to the work we do together, to Sinop and to the world we contribute to, and our attachment to them. In this sense, our hospitality is also an invitation to guests to take part in this ecosystem of values in their own way.

Yet Chapter 5 also shows that paying cost can go too far. A person's capacity is limited: cost directed to one part of life cannot be directed to another at the same moment, so it has to be distributed justly. I learned this through my own experience. Even when I was seriously ill, I could not bring myself to leave an event we were running. This made me realise that my work had come before even my health. Giving effort and coming to value what we give it to is something positive. But I came to understand how important it is to consider what we value and how much, and to distribute our strength, effort and

energy fairly among all the areas of life that need our care. When we pay an excessive cost for one thing, we neglect the other costs we need to pay and the other things that need our care. The same holds for others. Thinking about the city together and working on it in practice can deepen people's attachment, as I described in Territory 4, but neither makes every demand legitimate.

Paying excessive cost carries another risk: it can disturb the balance of power. Chapter 5 shows that when one party repeatedly pays the other's costs, the one who pays may become excessively attached, while the one whose costs are paid may become dependent and entitled, and may come to value the cost payer less. In a group, repeatedly meeting one person's wishes, giving up one's own wishes for theirs and allowing one's boundaries to be crossed creates such a relationship of dependence. Its effects are not confined to the two people involved. It can shift the balance of power in the whole group, increasing one person's power and leading to favouritism, while the person receiving excessive cost may come to treat what is given as a right and stop recognising what others contribute.

Cost does not only deplete; carried in proportion, it also develops capacity. Chapter 5 describes how the person who pays more cost in an area develops more capacity there, and how someone who makes an opportunity available cannot pay the cost of using it on another's behalf without preventing that development. The growth of Sinopale's younger team, which I described in Territory 3, shows this positive side. We paid the cost of making opportunities available; they paid the cost of learning, by doing the work together with us. As their competence and self-confidence grew, responsibility passed to them step by step, until in the current edition they carried out the planning themselves. Handing over large responsibilities all at once rarely works; responsibility needs to grow together with the capacity to carry it. The opposite also holds: when people's capacity to decide grows but the authority to decide is not handed over, their motivation can fall. In this sense, the younger team's founding of Hal Kolektif as an independent initiative was a step they needed in order to take decisions on their own; I return to it in Territory 9.

What the workshop showed and the current edition tested

Because I had been working with care for some time, I came to some of these recognitions before the rest of the team. As the facilitator of the care workshop I described in Territory 1, I observed several shifts among those who took part. In the workshop, we returned to relational experiences from our past and read them through communication, cost and expectations, from the perspectives of care and power.

The seventh edition

In the care workshop, we returned first to the seventh edition, an experience that had been traumatic for all of us and whose internal evaluation had been very difficult. I do not tell the whole story here; my aim is not to reopen matters that remain contested and could be seen very differently from other perspectives.

The seventh edition took place during a period of transition. The European Cultural Association was in the process of closing, and in practice its board had dispersed. With this, the participatory, horizontal decision-making mechanism that had helped sustain Sinopale was lost. This also meant losing our shared office and beginning to work remotely. These were two connected losses: the association had provided an organisational framework for collective deliberation, while the office had enabled continuous, informal consultation among the founders. Working apart, we no longer had that everyday contact.

Without this institutional and physical setting, the artistic director was left carrying Sinopale's management largely alone. The younger team had not yet become involved in decision-making and did not yet fully hold the memory of earlier editions, so there was no collective mechanism ready to take the place of the one we had lost.

Working with several independent curators had also been one of our principles. We sought to bring different cultural and artistic understandings into dialogue and develop something together through their encounter. We valued this plurality, but coordinating it required considerable work and ongoing discussion. Under the changed conditions, working with a single curatorial team may have appeared to the artistic director to be a more manageable option.

He proposed a curatorial duo whom he knew and with whom he had briefly worked before. They brought an opportunity to secure international funding for the edition as a whole. With the infrastructure we had relied on no longer available, this combination of a familiar working relationship, a simpler coordination arrangement and access to funding made the proposal attractive to us, and we accepted it.

Although the collective decision-making mechanism had been lost, the relational ecosystem developed over successive editions remained. Sinopale continued to be made through local, national and international cooperation, and the seventh edition took place within that accumulated history of relationships, projects and commitments. The programme therefore needed to bring curatorial proposals into dialogue with this wider context. We understood each edition as a stage in a longer-term strategy for the city's cultural development. Projects already under way with different partners and community groups needed continuity, while expectations and responsibilities arising from established relationships with artists, institutions and other local and national partners needed to be considered and

negotiated. I do not know how Sinopale's way of working and its obligations were shared with the curators, or how fully they were understood.

During programming, our working relationship with the curators began to deteriorate. The curators often did not take up proposals from the artistic director and other team members, and did not state their reasons openly, at least not to me. I saw this repeatedly in a project for which I was directly responsible. When I tried to discuss these difficulties with the curators, they did not answer, or answered only late.

One month before the biennial began, circumstances on the curators' side made it uncertain whether they would be able to come to Sinop. I leave the details aside because they are private. Coming on top of an already difficult working relationship, this turned the situation into a crisis of another scale.

The artistic director proposed postponing the edition for a year. The curators rejected the proposal because of commitments they had made. We nevertheless had the authority to decide that the biennial would not take place that year. We did not use that authority, because we did not want the conflict to grow further. Without reaching agreement, we chose to manage the difficulties and complete the edition.

When the curators arrived in Sinop, relations between them and the team were tense and distant on both sides. The curators also wanted to leave out of the exhibition a work that one of the invited artists had produced in Sinop. This was not acceptable to us, and the work was included. The team carried the biennial through. Team members still say that, during that period, they felt as though they were there only to serve.

The edition ended with one of our most serious conflicts. On the closing day, when the edition was otherwise complete, the curators asked to add a film that had not previously been proposed, discussed or included in writing. The artistic director had travelled urgently to Istanbul for a university obligation and received the request by telephone. He declined it for two reasons. First, he did not consider it appropriate to add a work outside the agreed programme at the last minute. Second, a work that might involve political sensitivities required consideration rather than a hurried decision. The curators regarded the refusal as censorship and raised the issue at a later public event in Istanbul. The conflict did not end with the edition. Its effects continued long afterwards, and dealing with them wore us down further.

From the outside, the edition looked like any other: the exhibition and events took place as in earlier editions. Within the team, the edition remains a memory full of negative experiences: some of us were completely exhausted, all of us were worn down, and our team was damaged.

What follows is my own reading of these events: how I experienced them and what I have come to understand since. Others involved, the curators among them, would very likely read them differently.

It began, as I see it, with the structure. Until then, the European Cultural Association and the Sinop Sustainable Development Association together had formed a mechanism with many decision-makers, and the reversal of our positions between them had kept authority among the founders in balance. Once that mechanism was lost, the work, the responsibility and the negotiation came to rest on the artistic director. When the arrangements that share power out weaken, power does not vanish. In our case, the concentration of work also concentrated practical influence: it gathered first with the artistic director, and from there, as I describe below, it later shifted towards the curators. A horizontal, collective way of working rests on two conditions: people who are willing to share the power they hold, and an organisational structure that makes sharing it possible. For six editions, we had both: we wanted to distribute power, and the structure Sinopale had built allowed us to do so. In the seventh, our intention had not changed, but the organisational infrastructure was gone, and power did not remain distributed of its own accord. Distributed power is not a condition an organisation reaches once and keeps; it has to be maintained, and when the structure that carries it changes, a new one must be in place before the old one is gone.

Setting aside the principle of working with several curators also changed the shape of the relationship. Instead of several curators working within a shared process, there were now two parties negotiating with each other, and on our side the negotiation ran through one person. In doing so, we created conditions in which power could concentrate. In this negotiation, different mental maps came into play.

Making an exhibition in Sinopale is not like making one in an institutional gallery. There, the institution appoints a curator, the curator conceives the exhibition and selects the artists, and the institution provides the infrastructure and technical support for its production. For a curator, this is a natural arrangement, but it does not work in Sinopale. The team, the founders included, works on a voluntary basis; there are no paid staff. Volunteers take on roles and responsibilities, but not to carry out decisions made by someone else alone; they are there because they are motivated to do what they have decided to do together. In Sinopale, curators therefore enter a collaborative process with the biennial, and decisions are made together through consultation. There is no division between “us” and “them”, and the relationship is not one of client and contractor: decisions draw on shared thinking, risks are assessed together, concerns are voiced, solutions to problems are sought together, and agreement is reached on what is reasonable. This is not a formality. After years of working collectively, with everyone doing a little of everything, team members understand one another’s work. Each also brings professional expertise from elsewhere: the person responsible for technical work may also be an artist, and the person managing social media may be a lawyer.

Everyone's views and contributions are considered. Because people's personalities and expertise are valued, the preferences of the curators or the artistic director are usually accepted, but any other views are heard as well: the curator's expertise carries weight, but the curator does not rule the exhibition alone. This way of working is necessary because no single person can see all the relationships, sensitivities and requirements an edition involves, and because an edition cannot be made as though it were the first: it inherits the relationships, projects and commitments I described above. For someone who knows Sinopale, this is obvious. For someone used to making exhibitions in established cultural institutions, the gallery model is just as obvious.

Chapter 5 distinguishes what is transmitted from what is perceived: explaining something is not enough; one also needs to check what the other person has understood. I do not know how fully the artistic director was able to convey Sinopale's way of working, or how it was understood. What I observed later led me to think that it had not been understood or internalised: the curators did not raise objections to it, yet in practice they followed their own course. As a result, each side came with expectations the other could not meet. Neither we nor the curators made these expectations fully explicit. As I understood it, the curators expected to make decisions on their own and to be supported in carrying them out, as a gallery would support them; we expected to negotiate and to have our projects, proposals and contributions taken into account. Neither expectation was realistic within the relationship as it had been set up. I think this is also why the curators came to feel that we were interfering too much in their work, and why disagreements followed. Differences of this kind can be negotiated. What turned them into something more was the way we responded to them.

We tended to understand care as hospitality: being good to our guests and keeping conflict away. In responding to disagreements, we were guided less by care than by conflict avoidance, and at times we mistook one for the other. Chapter 6 draws this distinction: care is not conflict avoidance; it makes room for conflict.

Because of this, small disagreements were neither resolved nor clarified, and they grew. Chapter 5's image of fencing and dancing helps me see what happened next. In fencing, the parties see each other as two opposing fronts. In dancing, distinct partners respond to one another and create something neither could produce alone. At some point, our relationship turned from dancing into fencing, and we no longer stood together. I cannot know how the curators perceived this period; as we experienced it, we remained almost constantly on the defensive. This may be the nature of fencing: each side tends to experience itself as the one defending.

We solved immediate problems pragmatically as they arose, but the underlying problem, which I see in the different mental maps and expectations described above, remained unaddressed. Letting things pass was not a dance step: it was a way of avoiding the encounter rather than meeting it. Fencing is a

relationship, and no single party sustains it alone. But neither can one party turn it back into dancing simply by trying to stop. Returning to dancing would have required reparative communication, and that requires both parties to be open to it. When our attempts at communication went unanswered, we understood that this was not possible. What remained was to stop the harmful dynamic by other means. Our mistake lay in what we did next: rather than setting boundaries, we managed the situation, assuming it would end with the edition anyway.

Our concessions began small. When proposals were not taken up and reasons went unstated, we did not insist, hoping to keep the relationship workable. Where collaboration was not possible, we carried on with our own work without the curators' contribution. In this way, the division between "us" and "them" that Sinopale's way of working rules out began to take shape. In the terms of Chapter 5, these were costs we accepted without negotiating them. Each concession made the next seem normal, and more came to be expected. The edition's resources were concentrated in the curatorial team, and, as Chapter 9 notes, whoever controls resources can influence which costs another party must accept. With each concession, the balance of authority moved further towards the curators.

Looking back, I believe postponing the edition for a year would have been the meaningful option in the sense Chapter 4 gives the term: the best possible option for everyone affected, the curators included. A biennial cannot easily open without its curators, and a year would also have given time to address the communication difficulties. The concession we made when postponement was rejected was of a different order. In deciding not to part ways, we set aside our own judgement, our boundaries, our values and the way of working, built on friendship, that we had practised until then. We then carried on with the work and completed the edition on terms that contradicted them. It radically disrupted the relationship between care and power. Until the closing day, we held firm only where an invited artist's work was at stake.

This experience showed me how power can concentrate at the scale of an organisation, and which conditions allow it to. Concentration rarely happens in a single step. It grows through small shifts that are tolerated and meet no boundary. Beyond a certain point, the cost of correcting or ending the relationship becomes so heavy that change seems impossible. This is how it was for us at that moment: we had the authority to decide, but using it seemed to cost more than giving way. Chapter 9 describes how unequal power changes the conditions of conflict; here I saw it happen over a single edition. This is why a structure also needs ways of noticing and correcting concentration early, before the cost of doing so becomes too high.

What had accumulated over months broke out in a single incident. When the artistic director set a boundary on the closing day by declining the film, the disagreement became a public accusation. Chapter 9 reads power partly through what disagreement costs: a party whose refusal carries little

consequence holds more power than one whose disagreement may threaten their income, reputation, access or belonging. In our case, what was at stake was the artistic director's reputation. By the end of the edition, saying no had become costly on our side.

The incident involved a recurring paradox of cultural management: protecting artistic freedom while attending to social, cultural and political sensitivities. Opening such paradoxes to public discussion can be one of the functions of contemporary art, and a debate about censorship would have been legitimate and valuable. In a fully democratic environment, where freedom of expression is protected, the consequences of showing a work fall mainly on those who chose to show it. We were not in such an environment at the time: the consequences could also fall on many others, and Sinopale had a duty to protect its guests, its team and all its stakeholders; the organisers' decisions had to take that duty into account. Territory 8 reads this paradox through Chapter 4's account of meaningful choice: the principles of curating do not change with the conditions of a country, but who carries the risk, and how heavy it is, does.

In my experience, the discussion at the Istanbul event became an accusation directed at the artistic director, who was judged publicly. But discussing censorship is not the same as accusing a person of it. How a disagreement is raised matters as much as its content. The duty to protect does not erase the line between contextual judgement and self-censorship; in such conditions, that line becomes all the more real. The only protection I know against crossing it is to make the reasons for a decision visible and to apply the test of meaningful choice honestly: is this the best possible option for all the parties involved, or does it merely protect ourselves?

Our own part lay in these concessions, and in our share of the fencing. Recognising it does not mean that responsibility was shared equally, but it does mean that the dynamic was not created by one side alone. Care and hospitality practised without boundaries can be turned against those who practise them, and avoiding conflict in the name of care became, in the end, a harm we did to ourselves. It was not only a harm to ourselves. Chapter 9 asks who carries the cost of a decision: much of the cost of continuing fell on volunteers and artists who had little influence over the decisions shaping their working conditions. Our hospitality continued, while our capacity to protect the people providing it weakened.

Looking at the seventh edition through communication, cost exchange and expectations, I can see how they continually shape one another, and how power operates through their interaction. When communication broke down, expectations could no longer be negotiated. Expectations that were not negotiated turned into costs accepted without agreement. Because these costs brought us no greater influence over the decisions that produced them, each one shifted the balance of power further, which made the next conversation harder still. Chapter 1 distinguishes success indicators from purpose: seen

from outside, the edition succeeded, but its indicators could not show what the process cost the people who carried it.

CARE INSIGHT 9

Avoiding conflict does not remove its cost; it may defer it and leave others to carry the consequences. Dialogue is an important first response, but when communication breaks down and harm continues, care may require moving from mediation to protection, even when this disappoints someone.

We learned from this experience. In the eighth edition, our way of working changed. The change came about organically, but it grew out of what we had been through: decisions again involved many people, even without a shared space, and we three founders stepped back from decision-making to work as advisers, supporting the team and intervening only where needed. I return to this edition in Territory 9, reading it through Chapter 9's account of power and care.

A departure

We also reflected on the gradual withdrawal of our fellow founder. Like the artistic director and me, she gave a great deal to the European Cultural Association and to Sinopale, and her emotional bond with the biennial is as strong as ours. She shared the problem all three of us had: because she had invested so much, Sinopale became indispensable to her, and at times she carried on at the cost of exhausting herself. Formally, unlike the two of us, she took on a supporting role in both organisations. Looking back, I am no longer sure that she did not lead; our own understanding of leadership may have kept us from seeing her work as leadership. Mediating conflicts, sustaining relationships, balancing institutional tensions and making it possible for a collective to work together are also forms of leadership. In terms of cost exchange, she paid more for each of us than either of us paid for her. In our individual relationships, she was the one who cared more: she noticed our needs more readily than we noticed hers, and looked after us with great attention. The artistic director and I often disagreed, yet we complemented each other; she was the one who balanced our disagreements and mediated between us.

Her role towards the whole team was similar. While the two of us looked at situations mainly through the work, she saw people's needs and tried to meet them, eased our stress when we were under pressure, and understood the background of disagreements and mediated them. Then, as I now understand it, she too reached exhaustion. I do not know what the breaking point was, but she gradually withdrew. Although we were saddened, we assumed that her withdrawal was a personal choice and did not look much further into what lay behind it.

Her work on concrete tasks, as an architect and in crisis management, was as visible as ours. What remained unseen was a further function she took on in addition to it. When I began to focus on care, I recognised that this function fitted the description of invisible labour, and this was an important insight

for me. In the workshop, everyone who took part came to the same recognition. Chapter 9 describes invisible labour as work that occupies the gap between formal organisation and actual continuity: someone calms tensions, anticipates needs, translates between perspectives or compensates for unclear leadership. Because this work is relational, it may be described as personality rather than labour. This is how we had seen her contribution: as part of who she was, rather than as work that sustained us and the organisation. In the terms of Chapter 5, recognition had not kept pace with the cost being carried. I came to see that, because of this imbalance, we had not given her the care she gave us, although she more than deserved it. The whole group recognised this as well. I also realised that, at times, we approached her own feelings with an attitude that is common in working life: in the middle of a stressful operation, they seemed one more thing to deal with. The one who attended to everyone else's feelings could find her own treated as a burden.

When I asked her how she sees her own position, she described it in her own terms. She is interested in the process more than in outcomes. She likes to understand how others feel, because understanding lets her feel with them; when a feeling is negative, she asks what she can do to turn it into something positive, and being able to do so makes her happy. When we were under stress, she would ask what was causing it and what she could do to ease it. She describes this as opening the way for others, and in Sinopale she positions herself as the one who clears the path of obstacles and negativity. That she finds this work rewarding does not mean it cost her nothing; as I described above, she too reached exhaustion.

Her answer made me see that her approach had a role of its own within the whole web of our relationships: a unifying power that worked through feelings and was different in kind from ours. Chapter 9 describes how power can arise from relationships and trust as well as from formal positions; in this sense, her way of working was also a form of power, and one that our team had not recognised as such.

Her withdrawal from the management of Sinopale did not mean leaving it. She remained part of the community Sinopale had built and continued to support the production team. Her close personal and professional relationships kept her connected to Sinop. As an architect, she had become known in the city through the hotel she designed and renovated there; she went on taking other commissions and travelling to Sinop beyond the biennial, and later designed one of the cafés on the seafront. In my observation, those who stepped back after years of carrying costs never broke their ties, and I do not believe their sense of belonging to Sinop and to Sinopale disappeared. The team, for its part, respected each decision to step back and did not press anyone to return, yet it always welcomed back whoever returned. I believe these returns came not only from the value of the bonds between us, but also from the sense of responsibility towards Sinopale that we share as people who have brought it into being together. Because we treated these withdrawals as personal choices, Sinopale as an organisation did not

respond to them; we did not ask what lay behind them. What happened instead came from individuals, who from time to time showed that they understood what the person stepping back had carried, and this mattered for repair.

What the workshop made visible

Everyone in the workshop was already aware of the problems we had faced and the mistakes we had made. What was new was reading them through care and giving them new meaning. Until then, we had tended to look at them from a management perspective, asking how we could become more professional and more institutionalised. In the workshop, that perspective shifted. Through it, two things in particular became visible: a pattern of conflict avoidance that ran through several of our experiences, and the invisible labour some of us had carried. Looking at these experiences in this way, we could see much that had remained invisible. When a disagreement arises, it is usually understood as a communication problem, as unmet expectations or as a matter of someone's character, and assessed in those terms. People tend to look through the lens of who was right and who was wrong. Cost exchange is far less familiar; in the workshop, it became visible, together with the power relations connected with it. Team members were already aware of the burden people carried, but because psychological load and invisible labour are abstract, their importance was rarely voiced. Someone being hurt while working, someone leaving in anger, someone withdrawing because the load had become too heavy: such things rarely receive much attention, and even when they do, they can seem to have no place in a working environment. A care perspective brings into view what the lens of right and wrong leaves out, including feelings. One of the workshop's most important insights was that feelings need to be taken seriously.

Care came to be seen as the responsibility of all of us rather than of a few. We had known that some among us found it hard to set boundaries. What became visible was that the cost of not setting them was paid not only by those people themselves but also by others in the team. Those who struggled to set boundaries needed encouragement and, I would now add, conditions in which a boundary could be set without having to be defended alone.

What the current edition tested

The current edition tested this recognition. During its preparation, two incidents arose: a conflict with one of the edition's collaborators, and difficulties with an invited artist.

The first incident developed over a series of meetings with collaborators who were new to Sinopale's consensual way of deciding. In these meetings, among people with equal formal authority, as I saw it, one person increasingly took up most of the time and set the terms of discussion, leaving little room for others. They then criticised the others for not contributing enough. In my observation, the others contributed fully whenever space was made for them.

As I explained earlier, our consensual way of deciding is not easy for an outsider to understand. The team had tried to explain how it works, but some things cannot be conveyed by explanation alone; a process like ours can hardly be understood without experiencing it. Instead of first observing how our process worked and finding a place within it, the person, as I saw it, brought expectations that fitted more institutional ways of working. This appeared in proposals that ran against our method of reaching agreement through shared judgement among people with equal standing: introducing more bureaucratic rules, such as limiting who could decide on what or introducing a right of veto; seeking to influence which team members should or should not attend meetings; and showing little flexibility about including in the biennial's programme a cooperation agreement that had been made earlier. I do not think the intention was negative, but an unhealthy dynamic developed. Like every relational dynamic, it formed on both sides. On our side, I saw the repetition of a pattern I knew from before: saying yes to everything that was feasible, for the sake of being kind, even when it contradicted our principles. As a result, the demands and reactions grew, and I recognised a shift from distributed power towards power concentrating in one person.

I warned the team about this pattern, but I did not want to interfere in the work of those who were now managing the biennial. The problem was that, within the new management, views differed. Some felt that we should not interfere in our collaborators' work. Others, as I understood it, were uneasy with the situation but went along with this position. I think that because the differences between these views were not negotiated and brought to a consensus on a shared stance, the team's response followed the familiar pattern, and the cost of a boundary not yet set fell, this time, on me. In a meeting I joined as a guest participant to clarify misunderstandings about a project I was managing, the person reacted towards me in a way I experienced as excluding and demeaning. The substance of the disagreement could easily have been negotiated if the conditions for continuing the dialogue had remained in place. But that was not the case. Unfortunately, not everyone in the team was present at that meeting. Those present stayed silent, I believe out of a wish to remain diplomatic and constructive.

This is where the current edition differed from the seventh. The team found the behaviour unacceptable. Before responding, two team members spoke individually with each person who had been present at the meeting and heard their views. They then wrote to the collaborator, stating politely that the behaviour did not fit our values and that, if we could not agree on this, we could end the relationship. Instead of a caring response that would repair what had happened, the collaborator proposed a business arrangement aimed at continuing to work together. From a pragmatic business perspective, it could be acceptable; seen through care, I missed an acknowledgement of what had happened between us. My own view was that we should part ways, as I thought the concern had not really been understood by the person, but the team did not reach agreement on this. I then told the team that I was withdrawing from the decision-making process: as the person affected, I might not be

able to judge objectively, and I did not want to influence the decision. Aware of what this might cost, the team chose the diplomatic path and accepted the proposal.

I disagreed with the decision; at the time, I considered it an unacceptable compromise. After the decision, I also stepped back from the process in which its consequences would unfold: I withdrew from the biennial team and took a position that left no room for further conflict with the collaborator, working only on my own independent project. I did not withdraw out of resentment. I respected the team's authority to decide, and I knew that, as a founder, my presence and my disagreement could weigh on how they carried out their decision, even without my intending it. I wanted them to see it through independently and to take responsibility for it and its consequences. This did not end my own responsibilities towards them or towards Sinopale. I also did not want the collaborator's reaction towards me to turn into a struggle for power; such a struggle might even have produced consequences that proved me right, at a cost the whole team would have carried. Resolving the crisis took days. Urgent work was postponed, and the psychological weight and the additional workload fell not only on me but on everyone. The group dynamic was damaged and motivation fell.

After the opening, we evaluated what had happened with team members. For a long time, no one had asked me why I had withdrawn, and this had left me feeling alone; I shared this in our evaluation. Several people later told me they had assumed I was absent because I was busy and travelling for work. As with our fellow founder's withdrawal, an absence had been read as a personal circumstance rather than as a sign that something was wrong. My withdrawal had more than one meaning: I had deliberately stepped back, as I described above, but I had also been affected by the conflict and did not feel protected by most of the team. Stepping back from a decision did not mean that I no longer needed care from the people I had worked with for so many years. Although the decision had gone against my view, I was glad that my experience was not dismissed and that I was understood. The team also told me that, after experiencing Sinopale, the collaborator had said they now understood many things they had not understood before. The matter itself was not openly reopened with them. I hope, however, that these conversations have created an awareness of the mistakes made on all sides, including our own.

Looking back, I have come to question my own judgement at the time. The team's diplomatic decision, which then seemed to me ethically wrong and to disregard the lessons of earlier experience, may in fact have been the meaningful one. Reading a team member's reflection on this account helped me see what I could not see from where I stood. I had not been part of the process from beginning to end, whereas that team member had coordinated our meetings with the collaborators throughout. The team had already stated in writing that the behaviour was unacceptable and contradicted our values; a boundary had been set. What remained open was whether to end the relationship or continue it under conditions. Avoiding conflict means leaving a problem unnamed or postponing a decision because it is uncomfortable; diplomacy can mean naming a behaviour as unacceptable and then negotiating the

conditions under which a relationship may continue. Preserving a relationship does not by itself mean that harmful behaviour has gone unrecognised. Rejecting the proposal could have imposed higher costs on more people, and some situations can be repaired through a process that remains open to communication. I do not want to judge the decision by how things turned out, nor to replace my earlier verdict with a new one. That team member was better informed than I was and also carried their own responsibility for the decision; mine is the perspective of the person it affected. The difference between our positions is itself part of what this case shows.

Their reflection also helped me separate two questions that I had not distinguished at the time. The first is whether the team reasoned well enough to reach the most meaningful decision for all the parties involved. The second is whether, in taking and carrying out that decision, we met our responsibility towards the person it affected. At the time, I saw the decision as wrong, and I experienced what followed it as a lack of care; the two judgements were bound together. What I felt then, and shared in our evaluation, still holds: the care I needed after the decision had received less attention than the decision itself. What has changed is that I no longer let my answer to the second question decide the first. The answer to the first may be yes while the answer to the second is no. Care does not end with reaching a right decision; it also asks how a decision is carried out and what it leaves in the relationships around it.

When I consider what may have caused the collaborator's behaviour, I can understand it. I see in it the negative side of the paradox of planning and improvisation that I described in Territory 3. Until the last moment, the biennial's funding, the scope of its programme and the fees we could pay depended on one another and could not be fixed; we talked with artists while their contracts had to wait. Coping with such uncertainties requires flexibility and improvisation in how we work, and a practice of solving together the problems that conditions create and of correcting together the small mistakes that can occur along the way. For someone not used to working this way, this is likely to be a highly anxious experience, and that anxiety may have led to a wish for more certainty and control. These are my assumptions. Whether or not they are correct, they do not justify the behaviour. What the situation needed was flexibility, improvisation and mutual trust. Yet we could not expect our collaborators to understand this by themselves; giving them that trust was to a large extent our responsibility. Nor had the team gently pointed out when the collaborator's behaviour conflicted with this way of working. We needed to think together with the collaborator about how we had dealt with the same uncertainties in earlier editions, and how we could develop alternatives if the conditions we expected were not met. Instead, I believe we increasingly found ourselves in the position of responding to one participant's questions, and the agenda of the meetings came more and more to be set by that participant. As Chapter 5 puts it, understanding is not approval.

The second incident concerned an artist we had invited at the proposal of a partner whose funding we regarded as secure; the invitation rested on that funding. The artist soon made requests we could not meet: private transport, an assistant assigned exclusively to them, particular accommodation and exceptions to arrangements that applied to every other artist. The partner then unexpectedly faced budget cuts and could no longer fund the artist. No contract had yet been signed, and the condition on which our promise rested no longer held. Withdrawing the invitation for these reasons would have been legitimate. Looking back, the question we needed to weigh was not only whether to keep our word, but whether we could bear the cost of keeping it, and on whom that cost would fall. Without the partner's funding, the artist's costs would ultimately come out of what remained for the team at the end. We kept the invitation, accepting some requests and declining others. Its costs fell largely on the production team, and above all on the assistant. According to the assistant, on first meeting the artist said the assistant was not competent for the role, rather than raising any concern with those who had assigned them. The judgement was not borne out: the artist later asked to continue working with the same assistant on other projects. Throughout, as the assistant and others in the team experienced it, the artist's behaviour towards the assistant swung between hurtful remarks and attempts to make amends, and the assistant was treated as being at the artist's personal disposal. The assistant chose to endure it. The attention this one artist absorbed also left some other artists and curators feeling neglected, although their needs had been met. I can see the value we were protecting by keeping our word. I can also see that a promise made on conditions that no longer exist can be withdrawn responsibly, and that those who carried the consequences of keeping it had little say in the decision. In this one relationship, all three elements of Chapter 5 were at work: expectations that were not made explicit at the start, a promise that rested on conditions, and costs that were finally carried by those with the least say.

When we looked back on both incidents together, we found that the workload and psychological weight created when a necessary boundary is not set had already been understood by everyone. The answer to the question of why we nonetheless repeated the mistake was more interesting. When a decision could not be reached unanimously, we tended to fall back on the pattern of conflict avoidance that the workshop had made visible, and on softer solutions. Seeking consensus protected each person's voice, but it also made it harder to act decisively when someone needed protection. My conclusion is that in situations that threaten someone's health or involve psychological harassment, protection should not wait for consensus. Protection does not necessarily mean ending a relationship; it means that the person affected is not left alone with what happened. Those with authority should put the person affected first, putting their weight clearly behind a response and taking on more of the responsibility and risk that it involves. This does not contradict what I said about the team's decision on how to continue with the collaborator. Protection is needed at the moment harm occurs, and repair is needed afterwards, beginning with asking the person affected what they experienced and what they need. A decision about the future of a relationship, by contrast, can take the time that dialogue requires. Acting

without consensus may seem to contradict our democratic way of working; I return in Territory 10 to why I do not see it that way.

Our evaluation also led to a conclusion about expectations. Chapter 5 asks us to make important expectations explicit, to promise the conditions we can provide rather than the experience another person will have, and to make foreseeable costs and uncertainties visible: the outcome may remain uncertain, but the process and its conditions can still be made reliable. The team had explained how Sinopale works, but, as in the seventh edition, had not checked how much of it had been understood. We therefore decided that in future editions we will tell all curators, artists and other collaborators more clearly what they can and cannot expect during the Sinopale process, and give this to them in writing. It is not enough to say that working conditions may change depending on our funders' responses. Because we can sign contracts only once everything is confirmed, we need to set out in advance, in writing, which conditions are variable and how they may change.

I have had to distinguish between situations that can look alike. Someone feeling hurt does not by itself establish that responsibility lies entirely with the other person. Sensitivity, cultural differences in ways of speaking and misunderstanding are part of communication, both sides carry responsibility for it, and such situations can be repaired while communication continues. What I saw in these two incidents, from where I stood, was different: behaviour that, in my perception, narrowed others' room to speak, was visible early and grew because it was not named in time. Situations like these call less for mediation than for a clear boundary, named early. Looking back, those of us with more authority in the team had the greatest responsibility, and the most freedom, to name the behaviour early.

What repeated, in my reading, was not the final decision but an earlier step: a necessary boundary was named late, after others had carried its cost. The difference from the seventh edition matters as much as the similarity. There, the boundary that mattered most was not set when postponement was rejected, and the consequences were severe. Here, a boundary was set, though later than it should have been, and the consequences were far less severe. What we had learned made a difference; what we have not yet learned is to name a boundary early. That this pattern appeared in two different relationships within one edition suggests to me that it is not only a matter of individual courage. Our understanding of hospitality as meeting a guest's wishes, our wish to remain diplomatic and our reluctance to risk a relationship have become, through repetition, part of how we work. Chapter 5 describes how recurring relational patterns become organisational conditions. We have since taken important steps to change this. The decisions I describe in Territory 6 matter to me because they address the pattern, not only the people involved.

My own part

Writing this Reader, I have reviewed not only the behaviour of others but also my own. Working above my capacity for years, as I describe in Territory 11, I came to prioritise efficiency and to focus my attention on whether the work was going as planned. I now see that in those years I often contradicted much of what I describe here. The clearest example is seeing people through their functions. I have always regarded myself as a humanist, and I did not choose cultural management by chance: bringing people together, mediating and building relationships have long been among my strengths. Yet caring for someone requires attention, and while I gave this attention to many people around me, I did not give the same attention to my two fellow founders, the people closest to me in this work.

Telling myself that the work required rationality, I gave little weight to their feelings when we communicated, although I knew better. In everyday disagreements, I saw my impatience as the other person's responsibility. In discussions, I set out rational reasons and argued about who was right, although I knew that disagreements often arise from feelings rather than from questions of right and wrong. Sometimes people need only to be seen, appreciated or told that they are trusted; I withheld these from those closest to me. I have come to think that many of our disagreements did not come from one another. Crises at macro and micro level create anxiety and stress for all of us and lower our tolerance, and we can direct this at those closest to us. The stress we create for one another adds to the stress that already exists and wears us down unnecessarily. If we, who love and respect one another, become more caring towards each other, we can face these crises together more easily.

I had not thought before that, although I was not the reason for our fellow founder's withdrawal, I also bore part of the responsibility for it. Such patterns form between people and grow over time; responsibility for them is shared, and my share is the one I can speak of.

TERRITORY 6

Care as a Way of Relating and Organising

Territory 5 showed how communication, costs and expectations shaped our relationships, and how patterns such as avoiding conflict can become part of how an organisation works. Chapter 6 defines care as the practice through which the conditions of wellbeing are created, protected and repaired, and asks how it can move from personal intention into repeated decisions and structures. For Sinopale, this is where our current discussion stands: we have begun to recognise what care asks of us, but are only starting to give it a dependable form.

I look for care in how we carry particular relationships. Sharing resources with a local association, making space for people to learn and supporting someone's independent initiative can express care

when they respond to that person's circumstances and capacity to act. The same gestures can create dependency if the terms remain controlled by those offering support. The accompanied transition and Hal Kolektif's independent work therefore invite attention to how support was offered, negotiated and eventually changed.

Care also requires limits to what we ask of ourselves and others. The European Cultural Association's closure brings this into focus: continuing to deliver projects did not establish that the conditions of work were sustainable. Recognising an untenable burden was part of responding responsibly. In Sinopale, the unresolved question is how such attention can become a dependable part of organising before people reach exhaustion. Who can ask for help, reduce a commitment or refuse a demand? Who notices when support is insufficient, and what can they change?

The two incidents in the current edition, which I describe in Territory 5, turned the workshop's recognition into decisions. As a team, we agreed to set out in writing, from the beginning, what curators, artists and other collaborators can and cannot expect, as I describe in Territory 5, to formulate principles of hospitality, and to establish a channel to which anyone can turn when a problem arises. These arrangements are meant to make boundaries less dependent on each person's courage in the moment: a team member can refer to conditions we have agreed together rather than defending a refusal alone. We also learned that people joining Sinopale need to be open to uncertainty, willing to share power and, ideally, to have observed its way of working in earlier editions. These decisions have not yet been tested in practice. I cannot yet say whether they will hold under the pressure of an edition, who will be responsible for the channel, or how we will support those who, like the assistant, choose to carry a burden themselves.

CARE INSIGHT 10

Care cannot depend only on the goodwill or courage of individuals. It needs organisational arrangements that make boundaries, support and protection reliable, especially when relationships become difficult. Whether these arrangements work can only be learned through practice and from the experience of those they are meant to serve.

TERRITORY 7

When Does a Relational Ecosystem Become a Community?

Territory 6 looked at care in particular relationships and in the first arrangements we have made. Chapter 7 widens the view from relationships to belonging and community. It describes a movement from a relational ecosystem through shared practice, belonging, continuity, collective memory and shared responsibility towards community, without requiring people to become the same. The question I

ask here is not whether Sinopale has become a community, but under what conditions the relationships around it have begun to develop some of these qualities.

Shared practice

Chapter 7 distinguishes shared practice from an authority distributing predetermined functions. People take part in a shared practice when they exercise agency, carry meaningful costs and coordinate their distinct contributions around something they hold in common; working together is not enough on its own. In Sinopale, the practice of imece I described in Territory 2 offered a cultural ground for this, and the participatory processes I described in Territory 4 allowed residents to help shape what was created, not only to watch it. Shared practice is perhaps felt most strongly in the intense days of production, when artists and team achieve together, in about a week, what had seemed impossible, as I described in Territory 3. Chapter 7 also reminds me that people value what they help sustain, and develop capacity in the practices for which they repeatedly pay a meaningful cost. Where people only carry out tasks assigned to them, their contribution remains closer to participation than to shared practice; this is why, as I described in Territory 5, responsibility needs to grow together with people's capacity to carry it.

Belonging without sameness

In last year's care workshop, when we asked why Sinopale was valuable to each of us, the answers centred on relationships and a sense of belonging. I have felt this belonging myself, towards a city that was not originally mine. Guests often feel it too: the hospitality and the Hal Meeting Centre I described in Territory 5 make people feel at home, met as persons rather than functions. Chapter 7 adds a condition. Caring belonging gives people a legitimate place within something shared without requiring them to surrender difference, dignity, boundaries or freedom. The experiences I described in Territory 5 show where this condition was tested: when belonging was protected by staying silent or by not risking a relationship, boundaries and distinctness were the price. Belonging is caring only when someone can disagree, refuse a responsibility or set a boundary without losing their place. Former participants, new volunteers and people outside established friendship networks may also experience belonging differently from those of us who have been part of Sinopale for many years.

Continuity and collective memory

Sinopale is a biennial: each edition begins and ends, and many participants take part in only one. Chapter 7 describes continuity not as uninterrupted activity or permanent participation, but as the capacity to connect bounded actions, changing participation and distinct editions to a purpose and a shared history that develop across time.

Between editions, continuity has also been carried by projects that grew out of the biennial and continued beyond it. Some kept our inquiry into the city's future alive: Collecting the Future, which I described in Territory 4, and the forums we organised in Istanbul and Sinop for the prison project, which

I described in Territory 2. Others turned the biennial's network towards the city's everyday and economic life. Creatisity: Social Entrepreneurship and Creativity for Sustainable Urban Development, coordinated by the European Cultural Association with the Sinop Sustainable Development Association and ELIA as co-coordinators, and with Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University as an academic partner, developed an organisational model for a social enterprise centre that supported local small producers and craftspeople through design. It linked research, training and enterprise through a forum, a social entrepreneurship training programme, a design workshop and an exhibition. Within it, Yusuf Emre Yalçın, a film director in our team, initiated the Sinopale Film Festival, held for three years, which encouraged young people to make local films through screenings, talks with directors and film workshops. Sinopale – One Day a Month, the Street Is Ours, led by the Street Belongs to Us Association with the municipality, the European Cultural Association and a local women's association, closed streets to traffic for a day and opened them to pedestrians, children, music, games and local produce. Sinopale's archive also travelled: the exhibition Collecting the Future, curated by T. Melih Görgün, Dimitrina Sevova and Nilüfer Sülüner, was shown at Corner College in Zurich.

One project shows especially clearly how continuity and memory can meet. Sinop's Breath (Sinop'un Nefesi), a participatory art project led by Nil İlkbaşaran and Güngör Erdem, who were both Sinopale volunteers and artists, began in the fifth edition in August 2014 and continued for a year and a half, with events in Sinop and Istanbul between editions. In conversations with residents, the artists had heard concern about rapid changes in their living environment: people welcomed the transformation of the urban landscape while fearing the loss of their cultural and natural heritage. The project set out to capture the breath of Sinopians as a metaphor for this heritage, in glass, a material bound up with the city's recent history. For about twenty-five years, Sinop had Türkiye's largest handmade glass factory; it closed in 2005, when it could no longer compete with machine production, and 1,700 workers lost their jobs. For one day, the disused factory was opened again. Its former workers and their families were invited, and glass-blowing demonstrations and a concert brought residents together and brought back years of the city's memory. More than five hundred people took part in the glass-blowing workshops. Participants were repeatedly asked to name the values they wanted to protect, and their answers formed an archive of the city's social fabric and heritage. Musicians, composers, multimedia artists, photographers and filmmakers joined of their own accord. Working closely with the Sinop Sustainable Development Association, the project encouraged residents to turn ideas raised in its workshops into sustainable initiatives, and it was carried by many partners, from municipalities, foundations and glass craftspeople from Istanbul and the Netherlands to local associations, small businesses, a local radio station and local newspapers.

These projects show what Chapter 7 means by continuity. They did not depend on the same people taking part all the time; they connected bounded actions to a shared purpose. Through them, some

volunteers and team members took on new roles as initiators and artists, and residents who had met the biennial in one edition could meet it again in their street, in a former factory or in a training programme. Institutions also carried continuity. For many years, the Department of City and Regional Planning at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University was Sinopale's academic partner, contributing through student research projects, expert contributions to forums and trainers in our programmes. Master's and doctoral theses have also been written on Sinopale. In this way, the ecosystem between editions was nourished, widened and strengthened by the contributions of people and institutions. The eighth edition then turned this continuity into an explicit inquiry into our shared memory.

The eighth edition's concept was Upcycling. Isolation had created opportunities to reflect on our own lives, and we extended that reflection to what I described as the biennial's sixteen-year history. Meetings brought back stakeholders from earlier editions to consider progress, achievements and shared memories. People who had participated temporarily and then left were included again. Remembering these contributions strengthened my sense of belonging and of our shared history; others may have experienced the return differently.

Upcycling applied not only to objects or an exhibition theme but to accumulated organisational experience. What had been created together? What retained value? Whose contributions remained in the history even when they were no longer present? What could be recovered, reinterpreted and carried forward? The biennial became a setting for its own retrospective inquiry.

Memory could become recognition, and recognition could connect changing participants across time and deepen belonging. I read this as a form of continuity that did not require permanent attendance: former participants remained part of the shared history without having to be continuously active. Collective memory becomes a capacity for community, however, only when it can hold different experiences and interpretations of the past, including difficult ones, and make them usable for the practice we share today.

While I was writing this Reader, a project of the current edition came to feel almost like an artistic counterpart to these reflections on collective memory. Waters That Remember, realised in cooperation with Brunnenpassage, began in Vienna in May 2026 as part of the Klima Biennale Wien. In participatory performances by the artists Zuzana Ernst, Susana Ojeda and Çiğdem Borucu, participants were invited to feel the water within their own bodies as water that remembers: water that carries the shared memories of all the world's people and beings, and moves within the same cycle as rivers, rain and every living thing.

CARE INSIGHT 11

Collective memory can reconnect people whose participation was temporary. Care asks whether returning to that memory recognises distinct contributions, includes difficult experience and creates a legitimate place from which people can influence what comes next.

Adaptation and repair

Chapter 7 also asks whether a community can adapt and repair what has been damaged. Our history includes ruptures: the seventh edition, the withdrawal of our fellow founder and the crisis in the current edition, which I described in Territory 5. What matters for community is not that such ruptures are avoided, but whether they can be acknowledged and repaired. After the seventh edition, we reorganised our way of working in the eighth. After the current edition, our evaluation made it possible for me to say that I had felt left alone, and to be understood. That we talked about it without delay, right after the stressful days of the opening, and the warm responses I received did me good. Repair is not yet a settled practice in Sinopale, but these moments show that it is possible.

From negotiation to collective agreement

Chapter 7 describes how repeated negotiation between people can grow into a collective capacity for agreement, and stresses that agreement is not sameness: it creates sufficient common ground for distinct people to act together. The clearest example in Sinopale is the "constitution" the younger team wrote in the ninth edition, which I described in Territory 3: a set of shared principles that should not be changed, which allows much else to remain open to negotiation. In my reading, it turned principles that had largely been carried in the memory of a few people into an agreement that newcomers can also read and refer to. The written conditions we have now decided to give our collaborators, which I described in Territory 5, extend the same logic to people who join Sinopale for a single edition.

Shared responsibility

Chapter 7 warns that a community may appear to hold itself together while its continuity, memory and repair are being carried by a small number of people. This describes much of Sinopale’s history. For many years, we three founders carried much of the responsibility, and our fellow founder’s invisible labour held relationships together until she too reached exhaustion. Shared responsibility does not mean that everyone does the same amount. It means that responsibility is distributed according to capacity, and that those who carry it have the information, support, recognition and authority they need. The younger team’s growing responsibility, and their founding of Hal Kolektif as an independent initiative, are steps in this direction, which I examine in Territory 9. A strong sense of belonging does not by itself guarantee a fair distribution of responsibility; participation can connect someone to a shared undertaking while its public story leaves that person in the background.

Then, now and next

Looking back, I do not think the whole relational ecosystem around Sinopale became a single community. Different relationships developed different degrees of belonging, influence and responsibility; some remained within a single edition, while others grew into a shared history. What I can say is that community began to emerge where people moved beyond supporting an event towards seeing themselves as contributors to a shared cultural practice, carrying its memory across editions and taking responsibility for what they wished to sustain together. This development is neither uniform nor complete. The question for us now is not whether Sinopale has become a community, but whether its relationships and organisational conditions allow people to sustain, develop, question and repair what they hold in common without losing their distinctness or being depleted by their contributions. In this sense, community is not an achievement to be possessed but a capacity that has to be renewed with each edition.

TERRITORY 8

Domains of Care

Territory 7 asked how belonging, memory and shared responsibility can connect people across editions. The preceding territories have allowed me to revisit Sinopale's history through questions of purpose, uncertainty, meaning, relationships and community. In doing so, I have recognised both capacities we developed and conditions we did not sufficiently attend to. Chapter 8 gathers these ideas into five domains of care: relational, organisational, supportive, spatial and cultural.

Care, however, is a relatively new subject for the Sinopale team. We did not organise our past work through an explicit framework of care, even if some of our practices can now be understood from that perspective; we are only beginning to discuss it. I therefore do not use the five domains to show how caring Sinopale has been. I use them to organise the questions that our past experiences and present circumstances now make necessary. For each domain, I note what we have seen, the questions I think we need to ask and, where we have taken them, our first steps. A first step is not a solution: some questions may lead to changes we can make now, while others require conversations with people whose experiences differ from mine, or information we have not yet collected. The domains do not provide answers. They help us recognise what responsible judgement will need to take into account.

The domains direct attention to different dimensions of the same festival ecosystem; they are not five separate areas of performance. A practice that strengthens relationships may also create unsustainable workloads. An artistic intervention may reveal new cultural possibilities while leaving questions of physical access unanswered. Supporting someone's development may increase their agency, but it may also transfer responsibilities without sufficient resources.

Relational care

Territory 5 described relationships built on acquaintance, friendship and affection, in which guests are met as persons rather than functions. It also showed how the same closeness could make boundaries harder to set, how silence was chosen in order to remain diplomatic, and how the withdrawal of two people, our fellow founder and, in the current edition, myself, was not sufficiently examined as a possible indication of difficulties within our relationships and ways of working. Territory 5 also shows my own part: under sustained pressure, I gave more attention to whether the work was going as planned than to the feelings of those closest to me, and in disagreements I argued about who was right rather than asking what each of us felt or needed. Care can be extended widely and still be missing in the closest relationships, where it is most easily taken for granted. In terms of cost exchange, we readily give our labour to the work and pay its costs, but we do not always give the same to one another.

These experiences leave us with questions rather than answers. The first concerns withdrawal: how can someone express discomfort before withdrawing becomes their only remaining response, and when someone does withdraw, who notices and asks why? The second concerns those closest to us: we readily give our labour and attention to the work, but to whom, among those closest to us, are we not giving the care they need? The third concerns disagreement: how can feelings be brought into it, rather than leaving it to be settled by reasons and by who was right? And since taking someone's experience seriously does not require adopting the decision they would make, how do we sustain our responsibility towards them when we decide differently? Our evaluation after the current edition's opening was a first step: these experiences could finally be spoken about and heard. But it came after the difficulties had already taken their toll. We have not yet found a way for such difficulties to be raised while they are still arising, before someone withdraws.

Organisational care

Our consensual way of deciding aims to give each person a voice. Yet, as Territory 5 showed, we had not sufficiently clarified who could act, and with what authority, when someone needed protection. We explained expectations without always checking whether they had been understood in the same way, and responsibility did not always grow together with the authority to decide.

The team has also observed that new tasks judged necessary at the last minute, which particular people then have to take on, hold up planned and essential work that still needs to be finished. This disrupts the

work and creates stress, and it also produces new workload for other team members. That workload has further costs: volunteers who work in other professions often have to postpone or neglect the paid work on which their livelihoods depend. The team's conclusion is that new work should not be taken on through individual initiative, but agreed together, with its consequences for planned work and for others' workload in view.

Here, too, three questions remain open. The first concerns protection: who can act, and with what mandate, when someone needs protection, including when those involved hold unequal power? And how can a decision that takes all parties into account also protect those affected by its implementation? The second concerns expectations: how can they be made explicit and mutually understood from the beginning? The third concerns learning: how can what we learn from difficult experiences change our working arrangements, rather than remaining a matter of individual awareness? The arrangements I describe in Territory 6 are our first answers. The channel to which anyone can turn when a problem arises responds to the first question; the decision to give collaborators in writing what they can and cannot expect responds to the second; and the younger team's constitution is an attempt to turn what we have learned into shared principles. So are our plan A for the next edition, to start everything earlier, including the search for sponsors, and the idea of planning the number of volunteers with educational institutions, which I describe in Territory 3. Whether these arrangements will provide reliable protection, clearer responsibilities and more sustainable working conditions remains to be tested in practice.

Supportive care

Territory 3 showed that uncertainty creates anxiety for the team and the curators, and that the volunteers' own expenses are the first to be sacrificed when resources run short. Territory 5 described my own illness and the assistant who chose to endure a heavy burden. Pressure also comes from outside our work: crises at macro and micro level create anxiety and stress for all of us and lower our tolerance, and the stress we then create for one another adds to what already exists. Better planning may reduce avoidable pressure, but it cannot eliminate situations in which people need support.

How can we recognise a need for support before someone can no longer continue? What forms of practical, physical and psychological assistance should be available to team members, volunteers, artists and curators before difficulties arise? And how can we support those who choose to carry a heavy burden without taking that choice away from them, while distinguishing a freely chosen responsibility from a burden someone feels unable to refuse? And how can we offer the simplest forms of support, such as being seen, appreciated or told that one is trusted, which require attention rather than resources? I cannot yet point to a dependable arrangement for recognising and responding to such needs. Recognising this gap is itself part of what this domain asks of us.

Spatial care

Spatial care concerns not only the places where the public meets art, but also the spatial and temporal conditions in which the team works and produces together. Between editions, while an edition is being prepared, much of our work now takes place online. This enables people living in different cities and countries to take part, but it does not provide everything: one of the current edition's directors recently told me that what motivates them is spending time together, which remote work does not offer. The seventh edition showed what is lost when a shared working space disappears: the open office in which we could consult one another at the moment a decision was being made.

In Sinop, the Hal Meeting Centre, which I described in Territory 5, offers what remote work cannot. It is not only a place where very different people can meet; in my experience, it has also become a place where people develop a sense of belonging and feel at home in the city and in the biennial.

The venues in which works are produced and exhibited are mostly disused buildings, and their infrastructure can be very limited: even basic needs such as a clean toilet or a place to rest may be missing for those who work there. Yet Sinop's city centre as a whole offers a caring environment. In the current edition, the exhibition hall could not provide this infrastructure, but there was a public toilet in the building next door; a café by the sea, a short walk away, became our place to rest and meet; restaurants around us served our lunches; shops close by supplied whatever we needed; and the Hal Meeting Centre was not far away.

The works were created and produced on site within about a week, while the exhibition hall was being prepared for them at the same time. The artists depended on the performance of a small technical team, and a heavy load fell on four of our friends, two of them architects. Part of this follows from the nature of Sinopale, in which works are made on site and exhibited in disused spaces, and we do not want to give that up. The very short production time and the small technical team, however, reflect our current limitations in resources rather than artistic choices we wish to preserve. The store where we kept tools and exhibition materials from earlier editions was put in order after each edition. When the municipality took the space back, we had to distribute its contents across different places. Changes in the spaces available to us are a recurring condition of our work.

The conditions a venue offers its audiences are a separate question: whether people can reach it, move through it, rest in it and take part in what happens there. This applies to online spaces as well as physical ones. When the eighth edition's events moved online, some older residents of Sinop without internet access could not take part, as I described in Territory 2; a digital environment is not automatically more accessible.

Some questions have begun to find answers. Time together can be treated as part of the work rather than a reward for finishing it: after the main events of the tenth edition, the team members living in

Istanbul organised a widely attended joint visit to the Çanakkale Biennial, to evaluate the edition together, to compare it with another biennial and to have fun together. What a single building lacks, the city around it can provide, and this can be considered when venues are chosen.

Other answers concern preparation. Giving more time to production would require resources we do not yet have, so it remains a medium-term goal. In the nearer term, training and preparing more volunteer assistants in advance, so that they know beforehand what the works will require, and bringing materials together in a temporary store in the exhibition venue before each edition may reduce avoidable pressure on the technical team.

Some questions remain open. How can physical and online working environments sustain not only coordination but also relationships and motivation? We all know what we would change if we had far more money. The more pressing question is what small changes in our organisation and on site, possible without additional resources, could reduce the stress of producing in a short time and the anxiety that uncertainty creates. This returns me to the paradox of planning and improvisation in Territory 3. We want to preserve the uncertainty and improvisation involved in creating works on site in disused spaces, while reducing the avoidable costs that better preparation and infrastructure could prevent. And when we adapt buildings that were not designed for contemporary art, or move events online, whose physical, sensory and practical needs do we anticipate among our audiences, and who is left out?

Cultural care

Cultural care concerns what our repeated practices help a shared world learn to notice, value and sustain. Some of our practices draw on cultural inheritances we value, such as imece. Others have become habits through repetition, including our understanding of hospitality as meeting a guest's wishes, our wish to remain diplomatic and our reluctance to risk relationships, as I described in Territory 5. These practices shape not only how we work together, but also the ways of relating and acting that Sinopale helps cultivate. As I described in Territory 4, successive editions have opened different possibilities for people to contribute their knowledge, memories and interpretations to the city's cultural life; cultural care now invites me to consider also what values our ways of working carry into that life.

Cultural care also involves one of the recurring paradoxes of cultural management: protecting artistic freedom while attending to social, cultural and political sensitivities. I consider the protection of freedom of expression, including artistic expression, one of our duties as cultural managers. Art can have social impact by challenging taboos and offering other perspectives, sometimes through provocation. At the same time, curating always involves selection, and selection always leaves something out. The question is not whether to choose, but on what grounds and in what context.

Through the care lens, the decisive question for me is who will bear the cost of a choice. An artist may decide to show a work that could endanger their career or provoke their funders; if they carry the cost themselves, that is their freedom to exercise. Seen through care, a curator's freedom is limited by who will pay for the risk taken. The understanding of meaningful choice I develop in Chapter 4 from Frankl's work helps me here: the meaningful option is the best possible option, within the conditions of the moment, for oneself and for all other parties involved, including those affected without being present. A choice that reflects only a curator's own perspective, or mainly increases their visibility, while the institution, other artists, the country's cultural sector or the city's residents bear its consequences, does not meet that test. The principles of curating do not change between a country where freedom of expression is fully protected and one where it is not; what changes is who carries the risk and how heavy it is, and therefore the judgement required. This is why, in Sinopale, curators and the team make decisions together, drawing on the knowledge of those who know the local context: no single perspective can see everyone a choice will affect. In Territory 5, I describe how this paradox became the occasion of one of our most serious conflicts in the seventh edition.

Which of our habits deserve to continue, and which should change? How can artistic freedom be protected while recognising and negotiating the risks and consequences that artistic choices may create for others, and how can disagreements about freedom be raised so that inquiry remains open rather than becoming an attack? And how do our artistic and organisational practices influence what we learn to value and protect in the city's natural and cultural environment? The principles of hospitality we have decided to formulate, which I describe in Territory 6, are a first step towards the first of these questions; how they will change everyday behaviour remains to be seen.

Looking across the domains

Looking across these five domains, I recognise that the same experience can raise questions in several areas of care. Our reluctance to risk valued relationships, for example, affected how we communicated, how decisions were made, whether people could seek support and which ways of working became normal. Some of these questions have already led us to take first steps. Others require further reflection, conversations with people whose experiences differ from mine, or changes we have not yet identified. The domains help us see these questions together, rather than treating each difficulty as an isolated incident. They also remind me that recognising a problem is not the same as changing the conditions that produce it. If care is to become a more conscious and reliable part of Sinopale, we need to understand how our decisions affect people across these domains, and to learn whether the changes we introduce actually improve their conditions. This leads to the question of power: who has the authority and capacity to make those changes, and whose experience can influence the decisions?

TERRITORY 9

Power Is Already in the Relationship

Each of the domains in Territory 8 led to the same question: who can define, decide, refuse and influence what follows? Recognising what needs attention does not by itself give anyone the capacity to change it. Chapter 9 shows that power is already present in communication, cost exchange and expectations, and that it does not coincide with formal authority. Power runs through the whole history of Sinopale: in how influence gathered around particular people and places, in what happened when the arrangements that distributed it weakened, and in how responsibility gradually passed to a younger generation.

Local capacity and concentrated power

Formal positions did not tell the whole story. Although we were founders, we did not possess equal capacities to influence events in Sinop. Two of us founders, including myself, were not residents of the city. Local relationship-building and local fundraising depended particularly on the artistic director's knowledge and connections. He built the association's local relationships, personally hosted visiting guests and represented Sinopale to local institutions. For many years, artistic expertise, practical influence and authority were concentrated in him. Trust, access, presence and the ability to act within local conditions gave him power beyond his title. In Istanbul projects, I experienced the distribution of power as more balanced; in Sinop, we needed to adapt more to his capacity and way of working. Our formal roles also balanced one another. In the European Cultural Association, which formally coordinated Sinopale, I was president of the board, the artistic director vice-president and the third founder secretary general. In Sinopale itself, leadership was reversed: the artistic director led the biennial. This crossing of leadership helped keep authority among us in balance.

Power gravitated towards the artistic director because this lay in the nature of the biennial itself: local relationships, funding and the trust of institutions in Sinop grew through him. At the same time, it meant that in Sinop the work largely followed his ways of working, and the rest of us had less influence over how things were done there. It also placed an uneven burden on him, because much of what Sinopale needed locally depended on one person. As the seventh edition later showed, this is where concentrated power becomes fragile: when the arrangements around it weaken, the burden and the risk rest on the same person.

CARE INSIGHT 12

Power does not follow the organisational chart alone. Local knowledge, trust, relationships and the ability to mobilise resources can concentrate influence—and responsibility—in a person whose formal title tells only part of the story.

For a long time, the prevailing perception was that the artistic director organised the biennial. His leadership was real, but so was the collective effort that made Sinopale possible. Over time, it came to be understood that we organised it together.

Shared curating

Our preference for working with several curators was a deliberate way of sharing power, authority and responsibility. Curators from different countries brought different sensitivities, competencies and experience of working in different places. Their networks and access to resources enriched the cooperation, brought greater diversity and broadened what the biennial could draw upon.

Through the care lens, I see how this also widened our field of attention. Different people could notice needs, relationships and possibilities that another might overlook, and bring different capacities to responding to them. Cooperation connected these distinct perspectives and capacities, creating a broader field of care.

The paradox was that working this way was more demanding, yet, in my experience, safer. It required more coordination, but shared the responsibility for responding and reduced dependence on one person's knowledge, attention and connections. The additional effort could itself help make the work more dependable. This gave collective organisation a practical form, while leaving wider questions about influence and recognition within the biennial unresolved.

Contribution and recognition

We acknowledged supporters through logos on publicity materials and individual thanks in opening speeches. Even so, we did not achieve fair visibility for everyone who contributed personally. We discussed this within the team and tried to improve it, but the gap remained. The younger local team was a particularly significant example: its members contributed substantial work and gradually assumed demanding responsibilities without receiving corresponding public recognition.

For me, this connects power with the fairness of cost and return. A sense of belonging depends partly on how opportunities to contribute, the costs of doing so and the returns from participation are distributed. Fairness does not require everyone to carry the same workload or receive identical authority. It requires attention to what each person contributes and can reasonably carry, and to whether recognition, influence and support reflect that contribution. Public thanks matter, but they cannot by themselves settle the distribution of power. Public recognition is not only a return for past contribution; it can also affect whose knowledge is trusted, who gains access to new relationships and opportunities, and who becomes able to influence future decisions.

I have learned that contribution does not automatically bring a corresponding return in recognition or influence. In a biennial, public representatives, artists and curators are often the most visible people.

Much of the work behind the scenes is itself directed towards making the artistic programme visible. The people carrying that work may therefore remain less publicly recognised even when their contribution is substantial and appreciated by those working alongside them.

Care places a responsibility on those who already hold power and visibility to acknowledge these contributions and create opportunities for others to speak, represent the work and exercise influence. From the beginning, we as founders encouraged this and made room for it, although the opportunities offered did not immediately produce an equal change in public visibility.

Taking up such opportunities also involves personal willingness and initiative. Becoming a public representative can require confidence, effort and the courage to assume responsibility. Recognition of someone's work, however, should not depend on their willingness or ability to promote themselves. Care means recognising contributions in their own right while supporting those who wish to take a more visible and influential role.

Multiple functions and unequal returns

In Sinopale, we welcome people who wish to take on more responsibility, while leaving that choice to them. Across its history, people have moved between roles from one edition to the next: an artist in one edition has returned as a curator in another; volunteers have later taken part as artists, and artists as volunteers; curators have come back to realise a project of their own; and the same curatorial team has curated two editions. Some have also worked within the volunteer team while developing projects for the same edition. They sought these roles because they felt they belonged, and wanted to remain part of Sinopale and contribute to it in other ways. Moving between functions can enrich the common undertaking: someone helps make the biennial possible and contributes artistic or curatorial work to its content.

I see a paradox when a team member secures funding for their own project and that funding can benefit only the project, while their artistic or curatorial role brings substantially greater public visibility than the work of other team members. Their initiative and project make a valuable contribution. At the same time, the people sustaining the shared work may receive a much smaller return in resources and recognition. Additional responsibility and contribution therefore do not necessarily lead to a fair distribution of what people receive.

The use of project funds is not solely the project holder's choice. In my experience of funding in Türkiye, many funds support an artist, the production of a work, or the artist's travel and accommodation, while leaving the labour of the festival team—and sometimes even the project management team—outside the supported budget. Funders determine which purposes and costs they will support. A project holder may therefore be unable to direct money towards the common organisational work on which the project also depends.

This can create an unfair distribution without the project holder having chosen or caused the funding restriction. The artistic work may deserve the attention it receives, while the collective labour enabling it remains under-supported and less visible. Care requires us to recognise this relationship and its consequences. The distinction between responsibility for creating a condition and responsibility for responding to it matters here: what can each person or institution perceive, acknowledge and change within their actual power?

The questions are concrete. Whose work makes a funded project possible, and how is that contribution recognised? Which costs fall outside its budget, and who carries them? What return is possible within the funding conditions, and which conditions would need to change? How can those with public visibility acknowledge the shared work behind their projects? I leave these questions open for us as organisers, project contributors and funders; I cannot yet describe a resolution of the imbalance.

CARE INSIGHT 13

The distribution of power is shaped not only by who contributes, but also by which contributions attract resources, recognition and future opportunities. Care recognises the common labour that makes individual projects possible, including where funding conditions leave it unsupported.

From shared resources to local agency

The European Cultural Association remained Sinopale's formal coordinator until the Sinop Sustainable Development Association was established, a period I recall as approximately ten years. During that time, Sinopale drew on the European Cultural Association's resources, networks and experience. Our contribution went beyond administrative hosting. Artistic knowledge, cultural management practice, funding relationships and international credibility accumulated elsewhere became available to the biennial.

The Sinop Sustainable Development Association was founded by people who had already been working together informally for Sinopale, as a local umbrella for that cooperation. I understood its purpose in this transition as strengthening local agency: responsibility and the capacity to act should move closer to the place in which the biennial happened. The distinction is between continuing to do something for local actors and creating conditions in which they can act with their own knowledge, authority and relationships.

We did not withdraw the European Cultural Association's support immediately after the Sinop Sustainable Development Association's formation. The two associations carried out EU projects together, allowing the Sinop Sustainable Development Association to develop international project experience and credibility. The transition was accompanied. Formal responsibility alone would not have transferred the knowledge, relationships, resources and confidence required to exercise it.

Through the Reader's power sequence, I read this history at several levels. The European Cultural Association used capacity it already possessed by sharing resources. Joint working could enable local actors to exercise knowledge they already held. Repeated project responsibility could support empowerment as further competence, legitimacy and influence developed. I distinguish these related processes rather than saying we simply gave power to the local organisation.

CARE INSIGHT 14

Transferring responsibility is not the same as developing agency. An accompanied transition connects responsibility with knowledge, relationships, resources, experience and credibility while allowing the receiving actors to shape the process.

When the principle was set aside

The seventh edition, which I described in Territory 5, showed what working with several curators had protected. There I traced how, once the arrangements that distributed power weakened, the concentration of work also concentrated practical influence. Chapter 9 allows me to read the same experience through its practical questions: who can decide, who can refuse or question a decision safely, and who carries the cost? That year, the answers changed. Decisions came to rest with fewer people; the team's proposals were often not taken up and the reasons went unstated, while saying no became costly on our side; and, as I experienced it, much of the cost fell on volunteers and artists who had little influence over the decisions.

Chapter 9 describes two failures that can meet within one relationship: power without care, and care without power. I cannot speak for how power was exercised on the other side; the failure I can name is ours. Care without power may remain sentiment or good intention. We had the authority to postpone the edition, and we did not use it. Our care for the effort already invested and for our practice of deciding together was real, but our difficulty was not an absence of power: it was a failure to turn that concern into protective action through the power we held. Care needed power to become effective, while power needed care to remain responsible towards the people affected by its use.

Learning to coordinate and shape the biennial

Over successive editions, Sinopale's younger local team developed the ability to coordinate the biennial from beginning to end once its concept and participating artists had been determined. They brought local knowledge and acquired experience of organisation and production. Conceiving a new edition, building relationships with stakeholders and securing resources required further experience and connections. Their growing competence in coordination therefore coexisted with areas in which they still depended on the founding generation.

This development changed the distribution of capacity that had supported concentrated power. Some things that initially depended heavily on one person could now be carried by others who combined local

knowledge with organisational competence. As the younger team became able to represent Sinopale externally, public representation and visibility began to spread alongside responsibility. Their work had been just as valuable before it became visible; visibility did not create its value. Nor did this shift come from one of us winning an argument or from a formal reform that redistributed titles. It grew gradually, as their capacity grew.

During Sinopale 8, horizontal working took a new form through practice rather than a declared governance reform. The online environment and working structure made it possible for people to take part and assume as much responsibility as they wished across concept development, fundraising, programming and production. This widened the field in which people could exercise judgement, beyond carrying out a programme already determined by others. In my experience, power spread through these opportunities to contribute and act.

What made the difference was that, for the first time, the group worked without a leader and without curators. We founders remained present and worked alongside the team, but we did not manage it. Because there was no exhibition, neither local knowledge nor our professional expertise was needed, and in the online environment the younger team was more competent than we were. Management became genuinely horizontal: we planned together, and in dividing the work, each person took on the tasks they wished to. Online working did not distribute power by itself; what mattered was that the conditions in which our advantages had counted changed, and that none of us held authority over the others.

This also had a cost. Because authority rested with no one in particular, when someone who had promised to take responsibility for a task did not carry it out, the work fell to others. Care was not yet on our agenda at the time. Seen through care, leaving a promised task undone is not only a gap in organisation: it transfers its cost to others. Had care been part of how we talked about our work, this might have become visible to all of us. The extent to which each participant could use the opportunity also depended on time, resources, confidence and circumstances, and choosing a level of responsibility needed to include the possibility of taking less or declining.

CARE INSIGHT 15

The freedom to choose a task is not the freedom to abandon it at will. Volunteering carries a responsibility towards those who rely on what we have promised. Stepping back remains possible, but care means saying so in time, so that the cost does not pass silently to others.

Independent initiative and the development of authority

Between the eighth and ninth editions, five members of Sinopale's younger team established Hal Kolektif as an independent initiative to undertake activities beyond the biennial. I see its formation as a step towards greater independence from the previous generation. Working under their own collective

identity gave them opportunities to develop projects through the whole process: forming an idea, building relationships, finding resources and taking responsibility for its realisation. Through this practice, they developed capacities that coordinating an already conceived biennial had not required them to exercise to the same extent.

This experience helps me understand empowerment as a process that also involves initiative from those assuming greater responsibility. Authority can be offered, but exercising it requires relevant capacities, access to resources and the willingness to take responsibility for decisions and their consequences. It also requires the courage to become visible. The team's independent work helped develop the confidence to represent their own projects publicly and stand behind their judgements. Those offering support have a responsibility to make room for that initiative and provide conditions in which it can develop.

Their earlier contribution had already been recognised within the production process: curators, artists and others working alongside them saw and appreciated their effort. Public visibility was another matter. Because everyone had known from the beginning that the artistic director led Sinopale, the public account continued to centre on him even while the younger team coordinated the biennial. What changed through Hal Kolektif was their capacity and confidence to appear publicly under an identity of their own. In my observation, the initiative attracted interest within the arts community and received media attention that gave their work the recognition it deserved.

At Sinopale 9, the members of Hal Kolektif took on two roles: they contributed a project of their own as an artist initiative, and they continued to coordinate the biennial, as they had done in earlier editions. The artistic director had spoken at earlier openings of his intention to hand over to the younger generation, but the group had not yet been ready. This time, they had acquired the competence to take it on. At the exhibition opening, he formally announced the handover, and after his own speech he did not keep the leading role; he stepped back and left the stage to the younger team, who delivered the opening speeches. This did not mean that he ceased to lead the biennial. What changed was who stood before the public. For me, it marked a decisive break with the team's position in the public background, and an acknowledgement of capacities developed through years of work, including their independent practice beyond Sinopale.

In the tenth edition, now under way, two members of the younger team have been formally named co-directors and presented as such in the press. The team has a voice in every area, from selecting curators to production, and we as founders have fully embraced a supporting role. This does not change our role as founders, or the artistic director's role as leader. The media and many of those we work with continue to turn to us as the founders they know, and his knowledge, experience and unifying leadership remain needed; his decisions are respected and given priority. What has changed is how

power is shared. Managing a biennial is not the same as leading a community: the artistic director, like the rest of us, now leads from a more supportive position. Their participation therefore reaches decisions that frame the edition as well as the work of realising it. For us as founders, this means placing our experience and relationships at the team's disposal as they exercise judgement and carry responsibility. The current edition offers an opportunity to reflect on how this support works in practice and how disagreements, resource constraints and accountability are handled.

I see a possible movement through participation, learning, capacity, responsibility and authority towards more distributed power, with wider representation and recognition. These dimensions need not grow at the same pace, and the sequence should not imply that every volunteer followed it or that authority automatically accompanied growing competence.

The organisers who now coordinate Sinopale began as volunteer assistants themselves. None of them had trained in cultural management; through years of this work, alongside their own professions, they have become highly competent cultural managers. Some later went on to train in cultural management. Others who were part of the team in earlier years now work elsewhere in the cultural sector. They pay attention to what motivates newcomers and to work that goes unrecognised, and they are considering ways of making such contributions visible as a matter of practice. Their own path shows why this matters: their contribution became publicly visible only after years of work, when they began to represent the biennial. Recognition should not have to wait that long. For each new group of volunteers, it needs to become a dependable practice, rather than something that depends on who happens to notice the work.

Volunteer labour became agency for those who could stay long enough to gain experience and authority, and staying was not equally possible for everyone: it took years, and those years carried costs, many of them unpaid. Learning and recognition were available along the way, but so were excessive burdens. That our organisation benefited from increasingly capable volunteers does not by itself show that those volunteers were empowered. Empowerment shows in what people can do for themselves, as Hal Kolektif's independent work does.

CARE INSIGHT 16

Empowerment develops through opportunities to exercise judgement, carry responsibility and initiate work of one's own. Care connects growing responsibility with resources, influence and recognition, while making room for others to pursue purposes they have themselves helped define.

Using power with care

The current edition showed that we had learned from the seventh, though not yet enough. The two situations were not the same. In the seventh edition, we had the authority and did not use it; in the current edition, it was not clear who could act, and with what mandate. Chapter 9 describes what

follows from such a gap: responsibility without sufficient authority exposes people to expectations they cannot meet. When no one is clearly mandated to take a decision, the burden stays with the person most exposed, as the two incidents I described in Territory 5 showed.

Sharing authority does not remove the need to use it. Chapter 9 describes how care makes hierarchy more horizontal without losing the clarity of roles and final responsibilities, and names what care may require: setting a boundary, refusing a harmful demand, protecting a person or making a decision that cannot be postponed. Caring power therefore means acting within an agreed mandate, rather than waiting for everyone to agree, and then repairing what the decision may have strained. Such authority remains caring only as long as it stays, in Chapter 9's words, proportionate, explainable, accountable and open to review; this is what distinguishes it from authoritarian power. The question is not whether power should be reduced, but how it is used, and whether its use strengthens or replaces the agency of others.

Then, now and next

My university teaching, and later my work in psychological counselling and coaching, gradually changed how I approached cultural management. I increasingly wanted to share what I had learned, help others develop their capacities and make room for younger people. I came to place greater value on this work than on personally organising every activity.

Accepting that priority did not immediately change my practice. It took years to redirect more of my time, attention and energy towards teaching, supporting and opening space. I did not need to abandon organising altogether; I needed to reconsider how I distributed my resources and responsibilities. The supporting role we now embrace as founders gives this change a practical form. I understand it alongside the younger team's own initiative, independent work and willingness to carry responsibility, which have their own history and cannot be reduced to our intentions as founders.

In the tenth edition, after withdrawing from the organisation, I have limited my role to managing one independent parallel project. Beyond that, my contribution to this edition is this Reader. I hope it will give us an occasion to discuss matters we have long been talking about, as they appear from my perspective and through the lens of care, and that this discussion will help us improve how we work together.

The younger team's response to the conflict in the current edition made me recognise another dimension of sharing power. Passing on experience does not mean that those who receive it must reach the same conclusions. They may know the history, understand the principles we developed and still judge that a different response fits the present situation. If I expect them to exercise independent judgement, I must also accept that their decisions may differ from mine and treat those decisions as legitimate. This is why I stepped back, as I described in Territory 5, not only from the decision but also

from the process through which its consequences would unfold, so that the team could see its own choice through. Sharing power can mean more than inviting others into decisions: it can mean recognising when one's own experience, authority or involvement may limit their independence and choosing not to use that influence. My responsibility to question a decision when I believe something important has been overlooked does not disappear, but its nature changes: my experience becomes a contribution to their judgement, not an authority that overrides it. The same experience also showed me the other side. While I was protecting the team's independence, my own need for care went unseen for a long time. Neither side was simply right or wrong; stepping back from a decision is not the same as stepping back from a relationship.

CARE INSIGHT 17

Sharing power does not mean withdrawing care, and caring for someone does not mean taking away their authority to decide. Care requires respecting others' independent judgement while remaining attentive to the relationships, needs and responsibilities that continue after authority has been shared.

Looking back, I see a change in how we could carry the original paradoxes. Production and participation still required judgement; plans still needed adaptation. More people could now contribute to that judgement and act upon it. The unresolved tension did not vanish, but the relational conditions around it changed.

Being present without managing, as we were in the eighth edition, and leading from a supportive position, as we do now, are not in themselves the same as sharing power. Our experience, relationships and recognition as founders still carry weight, and the team may still depend on them in ways none of us fully sees. The question for us now is how to make that experience and those relationships available without allowing our continued presence to limit the team's independence. And as more people gain influence, we will need to examine whether responsibility, authority, resources and recognition are distributed justly, rather than assuming that wider participation is enough.

CARE INSIGHT 18

Care did not eliminate the tension between production and participation, or between planning and improvisation. What changed was the ecosystem's capacity to carry those tensions: more people acquired experience, responsibility and authority. A possible achievement of care is a more just and sustainable capacity to work within a paradox that remains unresolved.

TERRITORY 10

Care, Participation and Democracy

Territory 9 followed how power concentrated and how it came to be shared more widely. Chapter 10 asks what this means for democratic life: participation becomes meaningful only when people can influence what affects them, disagree safely and share responsibility. In Sinopale, I look at the different forms participation has taken, and at what our own democratic way of deciding has made possible and difficult.

We bring participation into artistic production, public discussion and organisational work. I distinguish these forms when examining what people could shape. Contributing an object or story to Museum For A Day helped shape what could be seen and understood. Joining a forum could contribute to a vision for the city. Neither, by itself, established authority over the prison's future. The prison has since become a cultural institution, but not, as we had proposed, a space that local cultural actors can use. Participation helped shape the vision; it did not decide how the building would be used. The distinction between expression, deliberation, influence and decision remains essential to reading the experience.

The eighth and tenth editions offered two different experiences of participation in shaping the biennial itself. In the eighth edition, which I described in Territory 9, horizontal working under particular conditions allowed everyone to take part in decisions across concept development, programming, fundraising and production. In the tenth edition, the younger team's capacity, developed over years, now reaches decisions that once depended on the founders, including the selection of curators. Both go beyond implementing another person's choices.

Working with several curators distributed authority and responsibility within the curatorial process. Forums opened another space for collective judgement. Their democratic significance depends on how different perspectives affected choices, how disagreements were handled and what reasons were given when a proposal could not be taken forward. These are the points at which participation becomes either meaningful or symbolic. As organisers, we cannot judge this alone: those whose proposals were not taken forward may have experienced the same process very differently.

In my work in the cultural sector, I have repeatedly seen advisory boards set up while cities prepared bids for international cultural titles or municipalities developed cultural policies, in some cases less to shape the direction than to legitimise one already chosen. Participation is the first condition of democracy; without it, there is nothing to build on. But creating a participatory process and asking for people's views does not by itself make a process democratic. What follows depends on the quality of participation: whether people's views can change the possibilities under consideration, and whether they receive a reasoned response. Democratisation is a long process, perhaps one that takes

generations, because it asks something of both sides. Those who take part need not only the opportunity to speak, but the agency to insist when they are not heard, to treat being heard as a right they can claim and to persist in seeking what is meaningful, in the sense of Chapter 4: the best possible response for all the parties involved in a particular situation, not only for themselves. This also means remaining open to changing their judgement in response to others. Those who hold power need to listen, to open space for others to speak, to help develop the agency of those who have less and to protect those who are most exposed. Their responsibility is the greater, because objecting costs more for those with less power. And all involved need to be willing to stand against a decision once they recognise it as a mistake, and against power when it begins to gather on one side. This is what I mean by a culture of care. It does not have to wait for a new generation; it can begin within the relationships we already have.

CARE INSIGHT 19

Inviting participation does not by itself make a process democratic. Participation becomes meaningful when people's views can change what is decided, when those who hold power listen, protect and remain accountable, and when all involved are willing to challenge power as it begins to gather on one side.

In Territory 5, I described how, in the current edition, we tended to fall back on the pattern of conflict avoidance that the workshop had made visible, and on softer solutions, whenever a decision could not be reached unanimously, and I concluded that protection should not wait for consensus. Chapter 10 helps me see why this is not a departure from democratic working. It describes democratic relationships as allowing people to contribute and to question authority safely, and protecting someone's dignity is one of the conditions of their participation. Such protective authority differs from authoritarian power because it remains proportionate, accountable and open to review, as I set out in Territory 9. In democratic terms, what matters most is that it takes on responsibility and risk instead of passing them to those most exposed, and that, wherever possible, its mandate is agreed in advance, as the arrangements I describe in Territory 6 are meant to do.

The decision described in Territory 5 also showed me that democratic responsibility does not end when a collective decision has been made. Listening to different perspectives before deciding is necessary but not sufficient: those perspectives need to be able to shape the decision, and afterwards its effects on those involved need to be followed, overlooked consequences recognised and the decision reconsidered where necessary. In that case, the listening came before the decision; what received less attention was what followed it.

Looking across the territories, I see the same relational principles at three scales, and a path between them that Sinopale has begun to walk. Individual awareness can develop into shared organisational

practices and, through deliberate agreement, into policies. These arrangements can in turn shape how people relate and act. What is gained can also weaken: repetition can entrench harmful habits as easily as good ones, and power can concentrate again, as our seventh edition showed. Care has not yet reached the stage of policy for us. Between two people, these principles decide whether each can be heard, can disagree and can set a boundary. Within an organisation, they need to become reliable arrangements through which people can contribute, influence decisions, question authority and be protected. In public life, the counterpart of such arrangements and policies is democratic institutions. A common mistake, and one I have shared, is to assume that institutions guarantee democratic life. Just as the younger team's written constitution does not by itself ensure that everyone acts by it, the existence of democratic institutions does not ensure that democracy is practised. Institutions remain indispensable: they protect rights and can help cultivate democratic practice. But how well they work also depends on the quality of our relationships at the micro level, and on the shared understanding and way of life of a society, its culture.

Sinopale's experience does not show that our work has made public decisions in Sinop more democratic. What it has shown me concerns our own organisation. In Territory 5, I described how power could concentrate at the scale of our own organisation when small shifts were tolerated and boundaries were not set. That experience has made me think that the same dynamics, and the same need to correct concentration early, apply at a far larger scale to the governance of countries. Chapter 10 suggests that when people feel unseen and unable to influence what affects them, authoritarian power can appeal to them as a way of regaining a sense of dignity and agency. Our experience suggests that the alternative is also learned in small settings: each time someone can disagree without being treated as an opponent, have their contribution recognised and be protected when they need it, we practise the relational conditions on which democratic life depends. Making these conditions reliable within our own work is the part of democracy we can take responsibility for.

TERRITORY 11

Sustainability Without Depletion

Territory 10 asked how participation and shared responsibility can become real. Chapter 11 adds time. When sustainability is discussed in cultural work, it usually refers either to an organisation's ability to keep going, above all financially, or to specific environmental measures such as waste management and reducing a carbon footprint. These matter, but Chapter 11 understands sustainability more broadly. It asks whether meaningful activity can continue across successive editions without exhausting the people, relationships, organisations, places and living systems on which it depends. A festival that balances its budget and reduces its emissions may still be unsustainable if its continuation uses up those who carry

it. Ecological sustainability, in this sense, is not only a set of measures. It concerns whether the world human beings create respects the cycles of the living world, and how far it intervenes in, threatens or respects living beings and the non-living world on which they depend. This is why, for the Reader, ecological care is not an addition to care but follows from it. Integrating care into cultural practice therefore also requires attention to the living systems on which that practice depends and to the ecological consequences it creates. A festival can reduce the damage it causes, but it can also help shape the culture within which ecological decisions are made; within the power it actually has, this is one of culture's important responsibilities.

Sinopale has engaged with ecological questions through its artistic programme. The eighth and ninth editions, Upcycling and Before All Runs Out: The New Values of Cosmos, took sustainability as their theme, and almost every edition has included works questioning our relationship with the living world. Yet addressing ecological questions artistically is different from making our own production practices ecologically sustainable. In this territory, I look at the dimensions that our own way of working has tested most directly: the closure of the European Cultural Association, where an organisation ended so that the people carrying it would not be depleted and its contribution could continue; my own experience of burnout and of changing capacity; and the conditions under which a younger team now carries the work.

Ending an organisation and sustaining its contribution

We formally closed the European Cultural Association in 2019. My first explanation was that we believed its mission had been completed. I still see this as part of our decision, but the conditions under which we had been carrying the organisation were part of it too.

Economic and political conditions substantially reduced the European Cultural Association's income. As volunteer managers, we depended on other work to sustain our own lives, and those livelihood opportunities also diminished. Repeated national crises altered what we could reasonably carry. Cultural commitment did not remove the material conditions of the people making the work possible.

One critical incident occurred during an EU project when a state of emergency was declared. Some partner institutions withdrew for security reasons. The project had already been carried by a small team; the workload multiplied while conditions necessary for fulfilling the original responsibilities changed or disappeared. We managed the crisis and found a way through, but the successful response required substantial additional work and an intense psychological burden. This was one among several major crises, not an isolated explanation of the closure.

What stands out to me is that our responsibility for the project remained, while the conditions that had allowed us to carry it, partners, resources and a manageable workload, no longer did. Ending the story with "we managed the crisis successfully" would conceal what that success cost. The work was

delivered, but the people delivering it were being depleted.

CARE INSIGHT 20

Care is visible in who carries the cost that makes cultural value possible. Successful crisis management may protect an outcome while depleting the people who achieve it; success does not settle the question of cost.

Over time, increasing unpaid responsibilities, uncertainty and risk brought me to the limits of what I could carry, while I also saw the strain on my colleagues. I describe my experience as burnout. The gap between our responsibilities and the resources, capacity and tolerable risk available to us had become too great for personal commitment to bridge. Others may describe their experience in different terms.

We weighed the European Cultural Association's continuing cultural contribution against those costs and risks. Sinopale, our recurring project, could by then be transferred fully to the Sinop Sustainable Development Association, whose capacity had matured. Two conditions therefore met: the European Cultural Association's enabling role in relation to Sinopale had become transferable, and the human cost of sustaining the European Cultural Association had become unbearable for those carrying it.

The closure was neither simply a failure of sustainability nor an uncomplicated story of mission accomplished. It was a judgement about what could and should continue under changed conditions. The earlier development of local agency mattered because protecting the people carrying the European Cultural Association did not require abandoning Sinopale. The continuation of the cultural activity had become less dependent on the continuation of the original supporting organisation. Organisations and buildings are places where a part of culture finds a home for a time. They can close; what remains is the relational ecosystem they helped build and the people who grew within it.

CARE INSIGHT 21

Supporting others well can mean making oneself unnecessary. When an organisation has helped others develop the capacity to carry a shared undertaking, that undertaking can continue even after the organisation itself steps back or closes.

I do not regard closure as cost-free. Ending an organisation responsibly also raises questions about how commitments are concluded and how records, relationships and unfinished projects are cared for, and partners may have experienced our decision differently from us. Looking back, I also recognise that we did not have to reach exhaustion before a boundary could be legitimate.

CARE INSIGHT 22

Care does not always mean sustaining what exists. It can require recognising when meaningful continuation is no longer possible under existing conditions, protecting those carrying the work, transferring what can continue and allowing an organisation to end.

Meaningful work and personal limits

As I described in Territory 5, the costs I paid made Sinopale more valuable to me, at times to the point of feeling indispensable, and even serious illness did not stop me. I have experienced burnout twice. Seen through Chapter 11, the question is not only what this attachment cost me, but whether a commitment can be sustained without depleting the person who carries it.

To sustain my livelihood, I was teaching at three universities while managing the association, developing and running projects, consulting and attending international meetings. I was handling dozens of tasks alongside the responsibilities of forming and sustaining a family and raising a child. Major crises in my private life added to these demands. The capacities I brought to cultural work were the same capacities I needed in the rest of my life; I could not allocate them to each commitment as though the others did not exist. Working above my capacity also had a cost I recognised only while writing this Reader: it narrowed my attention to whether the work was going as planned, and those closest to me paid part of that cost, as I describe in Territory 5.

As I grew older, I noticed my physical endurance diminishing while my mental capacity continued to develop. This is my experience of changing capacity. It helped me reconsider what I could contribute: judgement, knowledge and experience could increasingly support others, even as I became less able to carry the same physical intensity myself. In Territory 9, I describe how this gradually changed the way I contribute.

Work that has become indispensable to me can be sustained only if I stop treating myself as an expendable resource. Past commitment does not create unlimited future capacity. What I can responsibly carry now differs from what I carried twenty years ago, and some responsibilities need to be shared, reshaped or left to others. Honouring what we have built includes recognising this.

Then, now and next

The same lens applies to how responsibility is now distributed within Sinopale. A younger team's greater competence cannot justify transferring an unsustainable workload to it. The team's own observation, which I described in Territory 8, that last-minute tasks force volunteers to neglect the paid work on which they live, shows that this question is already present. Independent initiative, public recognition and a supporting role for founders need to be accompanied by resources, tolerable demands and the ability to set limits.

Sustainability is also relational. In Territory 5, I described how those who stepped back after years of carrying costs never broke their ties, and how their returns came both from the bonds between us and from a shared responsibility towards Sinopale. When people need to step back, sustaining relationships can leave open the possibility of returning, without making continued participation a condition of belonging. Depleting those relationships through unrecognised labour, unspoken disagreements or care

withheld from those closest to us would weaken an essential capacity on which the biennial's continuation depends.

Sinopale's continuation is not only the holding of further editions. Much of what it has created continues beyond them: skills, relationships, records, cultural spaces, the projects between editions that I described in Territory 7, and the capacity of others to initiate work, as Hal Kolektif shows. These continuing capacities offer possibilities for cultural sustainability, especially when they remain accessible, are passed on and can be reinterpreted by others.

In our own production practice, ecological sustainability has not yet been addressed systematically. We have made attempts, but our capacity has not allowed us to put them into practice. Reusing disused buildings, keeping materials from one edition for the next and the Upcycling theme point in this direction, but they do not by themselves answer questions about materials, energy, travel and waste. Here the human and ecological dimensions of sustainability meet. As Chapter 11 warns, an ecological transition cannot depend on the invisible labour of a few committed people. With a small volunteer team already at the limits of its capacity, adding ecological measures without the resources to carry them would transfer their cost to the same people. Our task is therefore not to postpone ecological responsibility until we have more capacity, but to identify what we can change within our present limits and what additional resources, knowledge and cooperation would make further changes possible.

TERRITORY 12

Meaning: Bringing Possibility into Reality

Territory 11 showed that continuing is not enough: something can continue while depleting those who carry it. The Conclusion of Part I returns to meaning. It asks what a festival, within its particular power and limits, can responsibly help bring into reality, and what deserves to continue, change or end. In this last territory, I look back across Sinopale's history with that question.

Søren Kierkegaard, whom I introduced in Chapter 3, wrote that life can only be understood backwards, but must be lived forwards. This is the position from which I write. We lived Sinopale forwards, choosing among possibilities without knowing where they would lead; I came to understand aspects of that experience only retrospectively. We did not establish the biennial with a fully formed ecosystem-of-care theory. Practice made some of its meaning visible to me later. In reflecting, I bring that understanding into contact with what we actually did and with the experiences of people who may read the same history differently.

In Territory 4, I described a city whose fate had largely been decided elsewhere, and the artistic director's personal answer to it. Read through the Conclusion, Sinopale began from the recognition that Sinop's existing reality was not the only reality possible. Possibility, however, is not yet meaning. Many things were possible for us at different moments: to grow, to keep an organisation going, to hold each edition in the same way. What made a possibility meaningful was a judgement about which of them called for a response under the conditions we faced, considering those affected, the capacities available and the consequences our choices would create.

Across the territories, I see three ways in which Sinopale has brought possibility into reality. Temporary artistic encounters made cultural possibilities perceptible: in the prison and the icehouse, another future for a building could be experienced before it was decided, even when, as with the prison, the decision did not follow our proposal. Capacities developed that allowed others to act for themselves: the Sinop Sustainable Development Association, the younger team, Hal Kolektif and now two co-directors. And what had been created could be reinterpreted for the future, as Upcycling made memory and reflection part of festival practice. Beside these stand what they cost and what remained unseen: the seventh edition, the exhaustion that preceded the European Cultural Association's closure, the invisible labour of those closest to us, and my own part in it, which I described in Territory 5.

Cultural work has brought me limited financial returns, yet it has helped me live a good life. Working with art has allowed me to contribute to making the world more beautiful. Supporting young people as they develop their agency, and forming deep relationships with people around the world who share similar values, have enriched my personal life and my own development. These are substantial returns from the work itself, and I experience them as sources of resilience.

I hold that value together with what the work has cost me. The joy, relationships and learning do not cancel my experiences of burnout or illness, and those experiences do not erase what I have gained. I can value Sinopale deeply while changing the part I play in it. At different stages of my life, a meaningful response may involve organising directly, sharing experience, supporting another person's initiative or making room for a responsibility to pass to someone else. What becomes meaningful for me also changes as the capacities of others develop: a responsibility that once required my direct involvement now calls for me to support another person's judgement and make room for their initiative.

I do not combine these strands into a story of inevitable progress. Participatory art does not prove democratic governance. A strong informal network does not prove free choice. A converted building does not prove a single cause or equitable access. Successful crisis management does not prove wellbeing. More distributed authority does not prove that the original tensions are resolved. What became possible has to be kept beside what remained costly, incomplete or unseen.

With this in mind, I return to the Reader's question. What deserves to continue is what gives Sinopale its nature: works made on site, with residents, in disused spaces; participation that reaches the artistic process itself; hospitality built on relationships; working with several curators; deciding together; making room for a younger generation; and an artistic programme that questions our relationship with the living world. What needs to change are the conditions under which this is carried: giving planning its due alongside improvisation, setting out expectations in writing, protecting people without waiting for consensus, bringing care into how we communicate with those closest to us, recognising invisible labour, distributing workload so that it can be sustained, and taking ecological responsibility in our own production. What needs to end are habits: avoiding conflict, staying silent in order to remain diplomatic, leaving boundaries unset and allowing power to gather on one side. Some things have already ended or changed form: the European Cultural Association closed so that its contribution could continue, and the founders' role has moved from managing to supporting.

Sinopale cannot carry every responsibility for the city's cultural development, and its value is not only ours to define. Those who contributed may see what they gained, what they carried and what they could influence differently from me. Neither withdrawal from all responsibility nor an unlimited cultural mission would do justice to this history. What matters now is to recognise, within our actual capacities and relationships, which possibilities call for our contribution, which belong to others, and how we can help create conditions in which more people can act on what they find meaningful, without disregarding the people, places and living systems affected by our choices. Some of this does not have to wait for organisational change. It can begin with how each of us listens, what we make visible and which costs we stop passing on. Without those costs, the work can be done with more joy. Writing this Reader has been my attempt at that kind of contribution. My own meaning potential now lies in work that helps bring this understanding of care into Sinopale.

CARE INSIGHT 23

Possibility is not yet meaning. A festival's responsibility is not to realise everything it could, but to judge which possibilities deserve to be brought into reality, within the power and conditions it actually has and with the judgement of those who will carry the consequences.

Reflection looks backwards, but its purpose lies ahead. Understanding what Sinopale has made possible, and at what cost, matters because its next editions will still have to be chosen without certainty. Care asks that these choices remain open to the perspectives and contributions of those who will live with their consequences.

PART II

A Reflective Framework

Reading your own festival through care

How to Use This Framework

The questions that follow are invitations, not a test. You do not need to answer every question. Choose one experience and enter the territories that help you understand it. You can follow the same experience through several territories or choose different experiences as you proceed. A focused reflection on one relationship or decision can be as valuable as a comprehensive one. Change the scale of your inquiry as you need, but keep the whole map in view: an experience entered through one territory often leads into others.

The twelve territories follow the order of Part I. Territories 1 to 11 take up Chapters 1 to 11 in turn, from meaning and purpose through relationships, care and power to sustainability, and Territory 12 returns to meaning in the Conclusion. The territories are not separate areas of management but different ways of directing attention to the same experience. A single decision about a venue may concern purpose, memory, access, labour, power and ecological consequence at the same time.

You can also begin within the field of relationships you already influence. As the Conclusion of Part I proposed, transformation does not have to wait for complete organisational change. The signs that deserve attention are often visible first in one's own role and immediate working relationships.

You do not need to have answered the questions in Part I in order to use this framework. Where it builds on ideas from Part I, it recalls them briefly.

Begin with the experience before deciding what it demonstrates. Identify the people, place, period and conditions involved, and the moment that makes the inquiry concrete. Then follow the movement below.

THE REFLECTIVE MOVEMENT

What was the situation? → How did I understand it then? → What was done? → Who participated, carried costs and held power? → What happened? → What can I see now that I could not see then? → What might I do differently?

Each territory opens with a brief reminder of the chapter it draws on and an invitation to choose an experience to keep in mind. Each step begins with a short note, followed by a core question that keeps

the reflection focused; “Go deeper” opens further questions when you want to explore more. Each territory closes with “Then, now and next”, which asks what you can see now that you could not see then and what it might mean for your practice.

The questions are written for individual reflection, even when they concern a shared undertaking. When a question uses “we” or asks about other people, answer from your own knowledge and position. No single person can speak for a whole festival. It helps to distinguish between what you experienced, what you observed, what you understood at the time and what you would need to ask others. Record the questions that require another person’s perspective or further evidence.

Your account can properly include statements such as “We did not recognise this as a question at the time”, “Looking back through the care lens, I now see…” or “I cannot yet answer this question.” The absence of an answer is not a failed assessment.

Reflection develops over time. A question that cannot be answered today may become clearer after a conversation, a later edition or a change in your own position.

If you use the framework with colleagues, allow each person to develop their own account before comparing perspectives. Differences in memory, interpretation and experience can become material for further inquiry. Collective reflection does not need to produce a single agreed version.

TERRITORY 1

Why Do We Make Festivals?

A festival's purpose is not its programme, its function or its success indicators. It is what the festival seeks to make possible in human and cultural terms, and it is realised not only through what is presented but through how relationships are organised.

Starting point. Choose a moment in your festival's history when its purpose was defined, questioned or changed, such as its founding, a new direction, a funding application or a crisis. Keep this moment in mind as you move through this territory.

1. The situation

A festival can be understood as an answer to a situation rather than as a product seeking an audience.

When your festival began, what situation was it responding to: in a place, a community, an artistic field or your own life? Who first perceived that situation, and how?

▸ **Go deeper**

– How was the festival's purpose first described, and by whom? How much of that description concerned content, function or expected benefits, and how much concerned what should become possible for people?

2. Purpose today

Purpose is what a festival seeks to make possible in human and cultural terms, beyond its own continuation. Different purposes may pull against one another.

In your own words, what does your festival seek to make possible today, beyond presenting a programme? What change in experience, relationships, memory or public life would make the work worth doing?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Which two purposes of your festival sometimes pull in different directions, for example artistic freedom and public responsibility, or protecting a tradition and reinterpreting it? Recall one decision in which this tension appeared. How was it judged, and would you judge it the same way now?

– Beyond its events, which conditions for cultural life has your festival helped create, such as spaces, relationships, skills or ways of taking part? Which of them would remain if the festival stopped?

3. What and why

In the pressure of delivery, the question of what to do next can crowd out the question of why. Purpose is then assumed rather than revisited.

Recall a moment during preparation when the pressure of what had to be done next left no room to ask why. What might returning to that question have changed in that moment?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Whose wellbeing does your festival seek to enhance, and in what ways? Recall one occasion when pursuing that aim overlooked someone else's wellbeing.

– Choose one indicator your festival is asked to report. What does it show about what you do, and what does it leave out about why you do it?

4. Method

A festival's purpose is carried not only by what it presents but by how it organises relationships. Neither art nor people should become mere instruments of the other.

Choose one recurring practice, such as how partners are involved, how artists are contracted or how the team works in the weeks before opening. Does it express your festival's purpose or contradict it? Who would be the first to notice a contradiction?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Has your festival been asked, by funders, authorities or its own team, to justify its work mainly by benefits such as tourism, wellbeing or social cohesion? How did this affect artistic choices?

– Conversely, has the pursuit of artistic ambition ever treated people mainly as means to that ambition? What made this visible, and to whom?

– In what ways, if any, does your festival let people experience a way of living together that everyday life does not easily offer? What in the way it is organised supports or undermines this?

5. Then, now and next

Looking back changes the view. What was understood when the festival began differs from what can be seen now, and both matter for what comes next.

What can you now see about your festival's purpose that you could not see when it began, or when it was last described? What might that change in how you work today?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Has the purpose changed over time? Was the change chosen, or did it happen through growth, funding pressure or habit?

– Look again at the moment you chose at the beginning. Which relationships (Territory 2), costs (Territory 5) or questions of power (Territory 9) does it open?

TERRITORY 2

The Festival as a Relational Ecosystem

A festival does not only present a programme. Through the way it is organised and repeated across editions, it creates a relational ecosystem, and that ecosystem carries culture: through what the festival presents, how it organises itself and how it connects places, people and networks.

Starting point. Imagine that your festival could not take place for two years. Which relationships would continue without the event, and which would fade? Choose one relationship that would continue, and keep it in mind as you move through this territory.

1. The ecosystem

Each edition is temporary, but the relationships through which editions become possible continue and accumulate between them. This ecosystem is different from the effects the festival leaves in the wider world.

Sketch your festival's relational ecosystem as it exists between editions: the people, groups, institutions, places and living systems it depends on. Which relationships are strongest, which are fragile, and which exist only during the event?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Which parts of this ecosystem, such as residents, suppliers, places or living systems, rarely appear when your festival describes itself? Why?

– What effects of your festival remain in the wider world after an edition, in audiences, artists, a neighbourhood or a place? Which of these do you know about, and which do you assume?

2. Programme and culture

Culture is inherited, encountered, interpreted, contested and transformed. A programme can affirm, question or reshape what it receives.

Choose one work or strand from a recent programme. What inherited form, story or practice did it carry into the present? Did it affirm, question or transform it, and how did audiences or the local community respond?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Has your programme ever questioned a value, taboo or practice held by the community around it? What happened to your relationship with that community?

– Whose cultural forms rarely appear in your programme? What keeps them out?

3. Organising as culture

How a festival welcomes, pays, hears and involves people is itself a cultural practice. Repeated across editions, it teaches ways of living and working together, whether or not this is intended.

Choose one way your festival repeatedly works: how people are welcomed, paid, heard or involved in decisions. What does it teach those involved about living and working together? Is this the culture your programme speaks for?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Recall a moment when someone pointed out a gap between what your festival presents and how it works. How was it received, and did anything change?

– What has repetition turned into habit in your festival without anyone deciding it?

4. Networks and return

When local experience travels outward but recognition, influence and benefit do not travel back, the relationship becomes extractive.

Recall one occasion when your festival brought local experiences, stories or practices into a regional, national or international network. Who decided what would be presented? Would the people concerned recognise themselves in it, and what came back to them?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Who speaks for the communities connected to your festival, and how did they come to do so?

– Has your festival's participation in networks changed any policy, funding or practice in your locality, or has it mainly increased the festival's visibility?

5. Interdependence and inequality

People can depend on one another while having very different capacities to shape the relationship. Much of the work that holds an ecosystem together is never named.

Think of one person or group your festival could not easily do without. If the relationship ended, what would it mean for your festival, and what would it mean for them? Which of you could more easily find an alternative?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Recall a decision your festival made about timing, noise, fees or the use of space that affected people with little influence over it. How were their consequences considered?

– What work holds your ecosystem together that no job description names, such as introducing newcomers, remembering local sensitivities or calming conflict? Who does it, and is it recognised?

6. Then, now and next

Looking back changes the view. Relationships once treated as background may turn out to be part of what makes the festival possible.

Which relationships did your festival once treat as background that you now see as part of what it is responsible for? What would taking that responsibility seriously involve now?

▸ **Go deeper**

– If care is the way a festival takes responsibility for the relationships and conditions through which its purpose becomes possible, which relationship most needs your festival's attention now, and why?

– Which of the relationships you have considered here opens questions of cost (Territory 5), community (Territory 7) or power (Territory 9)?

TERRITORY 3

Acting in an Unfinished World

Festival work takes place without complete knowledge, simple answers or unlimited capacity. Uncertainty, paradoxes and dilemmas, and limits and limitations cannot be removed, but people and organisations can distinguish them, judge within them and decide how to respond.

Starting point. Choose a period in your festival's history when you had to act without knowing how things would turn out, such as a funding gap, a change of venue or a difficult edition. Keep it in mind as you move through this territory.

1. Mapping the field

Before turning to the period you chose, it can help to map the conditions within which your festival works as a whole.

Which uncertainties does your festival have to live with, and which limits does it face? Within those limits, how would you describe its field of freedom: what remains genuinely possible?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Which of these uncertainties belong to your festival's purpose and are worth protecting, and which could be reduced? How are they connected, and who carries them until they are resolved?

– Of the limits you named, which cannot be changed now? Which limitations could be widened or overcome in the short, medium or long term, and what would each require?

– Which paradoxes run through your festival's work, and how do you live with them?

– What dilemmas do these conditions create for you, and how have you responded to them?

2. Delivery, pressure and capacity

Effective delivery and people's wellbeing both matter. Demanding work can develop capacity when clarity, authority, support and recovery are in place; without them, the same demand turns into distress.

Recall the most demanding moment of that period. What did delivering the festival require from people, and which conditions (clarity, authority, resources, support, recovery) helped them meet that demand or pushed them into distress?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Where did efficiency and people's wellbeing pull apart, and how was the tension resolved?

– Which exceptional effort from an earlier edition has become the normal expectation? When conditions deteriorate, can someone propose doing less without it being seen as failure?

– Where does your festival rely on people who are inclined to carry more? And who is kept below their capacity, with only familiar tasks and little responsibility?

3. Uncertainty and decision

A decision cannot remove uncertainty, but it can create direction. When it is unclear who decides, uncertainty tends to move towards those with the least authority.

Choose one important uncertainty your festival faced during that period. Who decided how to respond, when, and how was the decision communicated? Until it was made, who was left carrying the uncertainty?

▸ **Go deeper**

– What did the decision make clear: what was chosen, how it would be carried out, who was responsible and which values guided it? What remained unclear?

– During that period, was it clear who had the authority to decide? Where it was not, where did the uncertainty end up?

– Before that period began, what did your plans assume, for example about funding, audiences, partners or the team's capacity? Which of those assumptions proved wrong, and when conditions changed, how and by whom were the plans revised?

4. Problems, dilemmas and paradoxes

Not every difficulty is of the same kind. Some can be solved; some require weighing competing values and deciding; some are lasting tensions between two sides that are both necessary.

Name one difficulty that keeps returning in your festival. Is it something that could be solved, a decision between competing values, or a lasting tension between two necessary sides? How has it been treated so far, and what has that treatment cost?

▸ **Go deeper**

– If it involves a decision between competing values, which responses were considered: giving priority to one, combining elements of both, alternating between them over time or creating a third possibility? Which values and which people did the chosen response protect, and which did it leave out?

– Recall a change of plan. Who carried the consequences of adapting, and did they have any say in the change?

– Is there a difficulty your festival now treats as unavoidable that might have been preventable?

5. Limits and possibilities

Some constraints cannot be changed at the moment of action and must be accepted; others can be changed through learning, reorganisation or collective action. What cannot be changed now may become changeable over time.

Choose one constraint your festival faces now. At this moment, what can and cannot be changed about it, and what remains possible within it? Looking ahead, could it become changeable over time, and what would that require: learning, organisational change or collective action with others?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Recall a constraint that was once a fixed limit for your festival and later became changeable, or one that seemed changeable but proved to be a limit. What made the difference: time, capacity, relationships or wider conditions?

– Which constraint is described in your festival as “just how festivals are” that might in fact be changeable?

– Has a limit your festival had to accept become part of what makes it recognisably its own? How did that happen?

6. Judgement and learning

Judgement weighs a situation; decision commits to one possibility. Judgement develops through practice, and it becomes shared when reasoning is made visible.

Recall a significant decision in your festival. Whose knowledge was heard, what distinctions were made and what remained uncertain? Was the reasoning behind the decision made visible to others?

▸ **Go deeper**

– In the decision you recalled, did others have a real, proportionate part in it, with the information and support to learn from it, or did they wait for one person to decide?

– If the person who makes most judgements in your festival left tomorrow, what reasoning would leave with them?

– Recall a time a rule was applied in a way that contradicted what it was meant to protect. What would good judgement have required?

7. Then, now and next

Looking back changes the view. What could reasonably be known at the time differs from what can be seen now, and both matter for what comes next.

Looking back at the period you chose, what could you reasonably have known and done at the time? What can you see now that you could not see then, and what does it suggest you might do differently today or prepare for in the future?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Which difficulty from that period would you now describe differently, for example as something that could have been changed rather than simply endured, or as a tension to be held rather than solved? What changed your view?

– Which experience from this territory opens questions of relationships (Territory 5), care (Territory 6) or power (Territory 9)?

TERRITORY 4

Life as Dialogue

Human beings become themselves in relationship with others. Meaning is not handed to a person from outside: it emerges when someone perceives what a situation asks and responds to it, and relationships carry these responses into a shared world.

Starting point. Choose a situation in your festival work in which you had to decide what was yours to do, such as taking on a new role, responding to a request or stepping in during a difficulty. Keep it in mind as you move through this territory.

1. Distinct and connected

People seek connection without wanting to lose themselves. Connection that requires people to give up their distinctness becomes submission rather than belonging.

Recall a moment in your festival when you felt part of something larger than yourself, such as a performance, a shared effort or a celebration. What made that connection possible, and did it leave room for you to remain distinct: to disagree, keep your own limits or contribute in your own way?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Recall a period when your festival work left little room for the rest of your life. What drew you in, and what did it take from you?

2. What the situation asked of you

Each situation contains possibilities that can be realised or lost. A meaningful response considers everyone involved, including oneself, the distinct contribution a particular person can make, and what most urgently needs a response.

What did the situation you chose ask of you? Considering everyone involved, including yourself, what contribution were you distinctly able to make, and did the response you chose fit your capacities and limits at the time?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Was anything presented to you as urgent? Was the urgency real, or did it come from poor planning, pressure or someone's ambition?

– Was your response shaped by a wish to please someone, avoid guilt or appear committed? How can you tell?

– Was the most visible response the most meaningful one for you? What less visible response might have served better?

3. Meaning cannot be assigned

Others can make needs, responsibilities and consequences visible, but they cannot decide on another person's behalf what is meaningful for them. Even when a situation leaves no say in a decision, the position one takes towards it remains one's own.

Think of a role or responsibility that came to you in your festival work, whether you chose it, negotiated it or had no say in it. What did you come to see as yours to do within it, and what position did you take towards the parts you could not choose?

▸ **Go deeper**

– If you had room to negotiate, could you say “I can contribute in another way” or “I need support to carry this” without it counting against you? What made that possible or difficult?

– If you had no say, was accepting that a meaningful response, or did it cover something that could and should have been questioned?

– Have you ever given someone a role assuming it would be meaningful for them? How did you find out whether it was?

4. From attendance to contribution

A festival can offer practices of contribution, not only experiences of attendance. Meaning then emerges between artworks, people, contributions, place and circumstance.

Think of one group that encounters your festival mainly as attendees or recipients, such as audiences, residents or sponsors. What could one person from that group contribute that would make the festival partly theirs, and what would your festival need to change to make that possible?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Recall an encounter at your festival, between an artwork and a person or between people, that produced something none of them could have produced alone. What conditions made it possible?

– Which people relate to your festival mainly through money, such as funding, sponsorship or tickets? What other way of taking part might they value?

– Where does your festival invite contribution but in practice ask only for labour, legitimacy or the implementation of decisions already made?

5. Then, now and next

Looking back changes the view. What seemed at the time a matter of duty or chance may now appear as a response you chose, or could have chosen differently.

Looking back at the situation you chose, what could you reasonably have perceived at the time? What can you see now about what it asked of you, and how would you respond to a similar situation today?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Which aspect of this situation opens questions of cost (Territory 5), community (Territory 7) or power (Territory 9)?

TERRITORY 5

How Relationships Are Made

A continuing relationship is shaped by what the parties communicate, what they give, carry and receive, and what they learn to expect from one another over time. Repeated across many relationships, these patterns become the conditions of an organisation.

Starting point. Choose one continuing working relationship in your festival in which you are one of the parties: with a colleague, an artist, a partner, a funder or a public authority. Keep it in mind as you move through this territory.

COMMUNICATION

1. Perceiving the other

Each person perceives through a mental map shaped by a lived life. A map holds real knowledge, but also gaps and distortions, often ones that protect what we already believe. Curiosity begins when we accept that another person may see something we cannot.

Recall one misunderstanding in this relationship. What did you observe, and what did you add through interpretation or assumption? What might the other party have seen that your way of seeing did not allow you to see?

▸ **Go deeper**

– As you came to know this person better, did you realise that a view or reaction you had first found wrong or difficult came from experiences you had not known about? What changed in how you responded?

– Recall a moment when this relationship moved beyond its practical purpose and you met as persons. What made that possible?

– What would it take, in time, attention or effort, to understand this person better? Would that investment be proportionate, and what has kept you from making it, or from limiting it?

2. Communicating from meaning

Communication can be driven by the effect we want to produce, such as being right, appearing competent or securing agreement. A meaningful response is guided instead by what the situation asks: the option that serves everyone involved as well as possible within the actual conditions, including oneself and those affected but not present.

Recall a conversation in this relationship that mattered. Was your attention mainly on the effect you wanted to produce, or on what the situation asked of both of you? Looking back, which option would have served everyone involved as well as possible, including you and anyone affected but not present?

▸ **Go deeper**

– What moved you to speak, and what were you trying to make possible? Did the way you spoke serve that purpose, and what effect did it actually have?

– Recall a time you tried to persuade the other party of something. Looking back, have you come to see that your proposal served you more than them or others affected? Have you realised that they would have needed more information, more time or a real possibility of refusing in order to decide freely?

– Did anything you learned during or after the conversation lead you to revise your view? If it did not, what made it hard to take in?

3. Being understood

What is communicated is not only what is intended but what the other person can perceive and understand. Responsibility for understanding is shared, but those with more authority or more control over the conditions carry more of it.

Recall an important message you gave in this relationship. What were you trying to make possible? What form, timing and amount did you choose, and how did you know what had actually been understood?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Recall a moment in this relationship when the other party went quiet, delayed a response or seemed to miss what you had said. Looking back, could the amount, pace or intensity of what you communicated have played a part? Did you realise this at the time, or only later, perhaps in another conversation?

– Recall a time one of you had to change your language, timing or channel so that the other could understand. Who was it, and has the other ever done the same?

4. Communicating as a festival

A festival also communicates as an organisation and through its programme. More messages, information or content can produce less understanding and less encounter when they exceed what people can take in.

Choose one message your festival sends to many people, such as a call for artists, a volunteer briefing or a programme text. What does it assume its readers already know, even something as basic as where the festival takes place, how much does it ask them to take in at once, and how would you find out whether it was understood?

▸ **Go deeper**

– When your festival connects two parties, such as an artist and a community, how do your choices of language, timing and framing shape what each of them can say?

– Does your programme offer different ways into its works, such as sound, image, movement, conversation or making, or does it rely mainly on written or spoken explanation? Who does that include, and who does it leave out?

COST, EXPECTATIONS AND CONFLICT

5. Cost and return

Every relationship involves costs such as time, effort, risk, responsibility and restraint. The one who carries a cost develops capacity in that area; the one whose cost is repeatedly carried by another may not. A just exchange is not an equal one, but one that fits each party's capacity, responsibility and need.

Since this relationship began, how has the balance shifted between what each of you gives, carries and receives? Recall a moment when you noticed that one of you was carrying a cost that belonged to the other. What had that done to each of your capacities, and when did you first notice it?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Have you noticed a moment when your effort went unacknowledged or was treated as expected, or when you took the other's effort for granted? Looking back, could it be connected to who had been carrying cost for whom?

– Looking back, is there a boundary in this relationship that you now think should have been set earlier? What would it have protected?

– Is the effort you give in this relationship paid to this person, or mainly to the festival, a manager or a funder? Which costs of the relationship have been postponed or passed to people outside it?

6. Expectations

Expectations form through promises, previous experience and repetition. A benefit presented before it is certain can turn into disappointment; a cost left unspoken can damage trust.

Recall a moment when you or the other party were surprised or disappointed by what the other did. What expectation became visible then, and where had it come from: a promise, repetition or an assumption?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Has something one of you once offered as an exception become an expectation? Was that ever discussed?

– Looking back at how this relationship began, was any benefit presented as more certain than it was, or any cost left unspoken, by either of you?

– When an expectation in this relationship was not met, how was the relationship repaired, if at all?

7. Conflict

Conflict is a normal part of relationships between distinct people. It becomes destructive when the other person becomes the problem; negotiation begins when the conflict becomes a shared matter. A meaningful resolution is fair to everyone involved, and power shapes whether a conflict can be negotiated safely.

Recall a disagreement in this relationship. Did it become a contest between you or a shared matter you could work on together? Looking back, what might each of you have been protecting, and was the resolution fair to both of you and to others affected, or mainly to the one with more power?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Was there something in the other party's experience that you could have acknowledged without agreeing with their conclusion? Did you realise this at the time, or later?

– Looking back, was there a moment when the other party accepted something they might have wanted to refuse? What might refusing have cost them?

– Have you experienced or witnessed in your festival something that went beyond ordinary conflict, such as repeated humiliation, exclusion or intimidation? What did it need that negotiation could not provide?

8. From relationship to organisation

When relational patterns repeat across many relationships, they become organisational conditions. Personal care is necessary but not sufficient.

Does a pattern you have found in this relationship also appear in other relationships in your festival? If so, what might allow it to continue: roles, schedules, budgets, the flow of information or habit?

▸ **Go deeper**

– If you or the other person left, what would the festival lose that depends on this relationship alone? What would need to change for it to become a shared capacity?

9. Then, now and next

Looking back changes the view. What could be seen at the beginning of a relationship differs from what its history now reveals.

Looking at how this relationship has developed, what could you reasonably have seen at its beginning? What can you see now, and what one change in communication, cost or expectations could you make in it today?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Which aspect of this relationship opens questions of care (Territory 6), community (Territory 7) or power (Territory 9)?

TERRITORY 6

Care as a Way of Relating and Organising

Care is not kindness, rescue or comfort. It is the relational and organisational practice through which the conditions of wellbeing are created, protected and, when damaged, repaired, and it becomes reliable only when it shapes roles, resources and decisions.

Starting point. Choose a situation in which you tried to take care of someone or something in your festival, such as a colleague under pressure, a difficult working arrangement or a group of participants. Keep it in mind as you move through this territory.

1. What care is not

Kindness, rescue, avoiding conflict and deciding for others can look like care while leaving harmful conditions in place or reducing another person's ability to act.

In the situation you chose, what did you do? Looking back, did your response change the conditions that created the difficulty, or did it mainly ease the moment? Did it strengthen the other person's ability to act, or replace it?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Recall a time you stepped in to rescue a situation. Why was rescue needed, and who had the authority to change the condition that made it necessary?

– Recall a time when a warm working atmosphere existed alongside an unrealistic workload or an unfair arrangement. What made that combination possible?

– Recall a time you decided what was good for someone without asking them. When and how did you learn how they saw it?

2. Your place in the field of care

The one who gives care is also entitled to receive it. Care is distributed according to need, capacity, responsibility and circumstance, not according to equality or visibility alone.

Looking back at the situation you chose, did your own needs, limits and capacity to continue count in how you responded? Did anyone attend to them, and did you let them?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Recall someone whose need you noticed only late because they seemed to be coping. What had made their need invisible?

– Recall a time you received care you had not asked for. Did it strengthen your ability to act, or take something from it?

3. Judgement within roles

Roles, contracts and safety procedures create legitimate duties. Within them, a person still judges: they may identify a danger, ask for support, say they lack the authority to act, or refuse an unsafe instruction.

Recall a responsibility that came with your role in the festival. Was there a moment when you judged that carrying it as expected would be wrong or unsafe, or that you lacked the authority or resources to carry it? What did you do, and how was it received?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Some responsibilities in a festival are necessary even if no one would choose them. How were such responsibilities distributed where you worked, and did recognition and support come with them?

4. Care as organisational practice

Care becomes reliable when noticing, interpreting, responding and reviewing are built into roles, information, planning, feedback routes and budgets.

Think back to the situation you chose. What in your festival's organisation helped care happen, such as roles, information, time, a way to raise concerns or a budget line? What did it depend on that rested only on someone's goodwill?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Recall a challenge given to you or someone else that developed capacity, and one that exceeded it. What was different in the support, authority and recovery that came with each?

– When something went wrong for someone in your festival, how did the organisation learn of it, and who carried the work of repair?

– Choose one value your festival states publicly. Where in its budget or schedule can that value be seen?

5. Then, now and next

Looking back changes the view. A response that felt caring at the time may appear different in the light of its consequences, and the reverse.

Looking back at the situation you chose, what could you reasonably have done at the time? What can you see now about its consequences, and what would make care in a similar situation depend less on one person's effort today?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Which aspect of this situation opens questions of community (Territory 7), the domains of care (Territory 8) or power (Territory 9)?

TERRITORY 7

When Does a Relational Ecosystem Become a Community?

A relational ecosystem is not automatically a community. Community develops when distinct people take part in a shared practice, recognise one another's contributions, carry a shared memory across time and take appropriate responsibility for what they hold in common, without having to become the same.

Starting point. Choose one group connected to your festival that you belong to, such as the team, the volunteers, local collaborators or returning artists. Keep it in mind as you move through this territory.

1. Ecosystem or community

Not every relationship in a festival needs to become community; some rightly remain contractual or temporary. Community begins when people contribute to something they recognise as partly held in common.

Recall a moment when you first felt that this group was, or was not, something you held in common with others. What made the difference?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Have you ever said, or been told, that someone working for your festival, such as a freelancer, a technician or a volunteer, was "part of the family" or "part of our community"? Did it come with clear, fair terms for their role, time and pay, or did it make it harder for that person to ask for such terms, for example a contract, defined working hours or fair pay? Or, in the opposite direction, has someone with a long history with your festival been treated as easily replaceable?

– Are there several communities within your festival's ecosystem, such as artistic, professional or local ones? Where do they meet, and where do they stay apart?

2. Shared practice and collective capacity

Groups become capable of collaboration by paying its costs: planning together, explaining, negotiating and repairing. Capacities that are avoided remain weak, however much they are valued.

Which capacity has this group developed by practising it together over time, and which has it avoided? Recall one occasion that shows the difference.

▸ **Go deeper**

– In this group, who takes on the visible, rewarding contributions, and who carries maintenance, coordination and repair? How did that division come about?

– Recall a time when a practice this group relied on stopped working. Did the group adapt it or keep it unchanged, and what did that choice cost?

3. Belonging and distinctness

Belonging means having a legitimate place without having to prove it again and again. It becomes unhealthy when it requires conformity, silences disagreement or depends on having an outsider.

Recall someone who joined this group after you. What did they need to understand, adopt or prove before they seemed to belong? Looking back, which of those requirements were necessary, and which only reflected how things had always been done?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Has the group ever drawn its sense of unity from contrast with others, such as another team, the management or outsiders? What did that make easier, and what did it hide?

– Recall someone who left the group and later returned, or tried to. How was their return received?

4. Memory and continuity

Collective memory is not an archive but a shared understanding of what happened, why decisions were made and whose contributions mattered. When memory is held by only a few, it becomes a form of power.

Which knowledge about this group's history, such as why things are done as they are, what went wrong before or who contributed what, is held by only one or two people? Recall a moment when a newcomer needed it.

▸ **Go deeper**

– Which contributions, conflicts or failures are left out of the stories this group tells about itself? Who would tell the story differently?

– When someone stops taking part, who carries what they leave behind? Is that decided, or simply absorbed?

5. Shared responsibility

Shared responsibility is responsibility appropriate to each person's role, capacity and power. When information, authority and recognition do not come with it, sharing responsibility can become a way of passing work on.

Recall a time when a responsibility in this group was described as shared or collective. Did information, authority and recognition come with it, or was it a way of passing on work that belonged elsewhere?

▸ **Go deeper**

– If the people who quietly hold this group together stepped back for a season, what would stop happening? Which of it is recognised as work, and do those people have a say in how the group works?

– Recall someone who stepped back from the group. Did anyone ask why, or was it read as a personal circumstance?

6. Then, now and next

Looking back changes the view. Habits that once helped a group hold together may later keep newcomers out or come to rest on too few people.

Think back to how this group worked when you first became part of it. Which of its habits or unspoken rules helped it hold together then? Looking at it now, which of them still serve the group, and which would you change so that it can welcome others and continue over time?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Which aspect of this group opens questions of the domains of care (Territory 8), power (Territory 9) or participation and democracy (Territory 10)?

TERRITORY 8

Domains of Care

The relational, organisational, supportive, spatial and cultural domains of care are not separate kinds of care but different views of the same reality. A practice cannot be called caring because it performs well in one domain while causing harm in another.

Starting point. Choose one activity from a recent edition that involved several kinds of people, such as a workshop, a site-specific work with local participants or a public event. Keep it in mind as you move through this territory.

1. Relational and organisational care

Relational care concerns how people perceive, communicate with and value one another. Organisational care makes these qualities reliable through roles, workloads, schedules and budgets.

In the activity you chose, how did the people involved perceive and treat one another? Which arrangements, such as fees, schedules, workloads or responsibilities, supported or undermined that?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Who could define the terms of the relationships involved, and who had to accept them?

2. Supportive care

Supportive care includes the support a festival provides when people's capacity is reduced or at risk, such as psychological support, physical care for performers, first aid or places to rest and recover. It works best when it is planned before it is needed, and when it helps people carry what they cannot carry alone without taking over what they could decide or do themselves.

Which forms of support were in place for this activity before anyone needed them, such as first aid, psychological support, physical care for performers or a place to rest? Who were they designed for, and who was left without them?

▸ **Go deeper**

– When someone struggled during the activity, who decided what help was needed? Could the person receiving it influence, accept or refuse its form?

– Was anyone left with a burden they could not carry, or relieved of something they could have learned to carry?

– Which support existed only because one person happened to offer it, rather than being planned and resourced?

3. Spatial care

Space, time, sound, light, access, rest and sensory intensity show whose body and participation were anticipated, and whose were not.

Walk through this activity in your mind, from arrival to departure. Whose body, pace and senses was it designed for? Where might someone with different needs have struggled to enter, stay, take part or recover?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Who had the authority and resources to change these conditions? Whose difficulty had to become visible before anything changed?

4. Cultural care

Repeated festival practices teach a shared world what to notice, value and remember, including its relationships with places and living systems.

Whose knowledge, stories or practices entered this activity, and who was credited for them? What returned to the people and places whose knowledge it drew on?

▸ **Go deeper**

– What did this activity teach participants to notice and value? Did it make any relationship with the place or its living systems visible?

5. Across the domains

Success in one domain can hide harm in another. Repair may require a change in conditions, not only an apology.

Looking across the previous four steps, where did this activity succeed in one domain while causing difficulty in another? Who noticed, and did that insight reach someone who could change the conditions?

▸ **Go deeper**

– No one person can see every domain. Who knew what about this activity, and how did that knowledge travel, or fail to travel, between them?

6. Then, now and next

Looking back changes the view. An activity remembered as a success may look different when it is seen through all its domains.

When the activity took place, what could reasonably have been seen, and by whom? What can you see now, and what one change would you make if it were repeated?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Which aspect of this activity opens questions of power (Territory 9), participation (Territory 10) or sustainability (Territory 11)?

TERRITORY 9

Power Is Already in the Relationship

Power is the capacity to influence what becomes possible, what is decided and who carries the consequences. It is present in every relationship, not only in formal authority. Care needs power to change conditions; power needs care so that it does not reduce people to instruments.

Starting point. Choose a decision in your festival that affected several people and in which you took part in some way, whether you made it, influenced it or had to live with it. Keep it in mind as you move through this territory.

1. Where power sat

Formal authority is only one source of power. Information, money, reputation, access, specialist knowledge, organisational memory and the ability to refuse or leave also shape what happens.

In the decision you chose, who defined the issue, who influenced which options were considered, who decided and who carried the consequences? What gave each of them that position?

▸ **Go deeper**

– What power did you have in this decision, including power that did not come from your formal role? How did you use it?

– For whom would refusing or leaving have been easy, and for whom would it have carried a heavy cost?

2. Power in communication, cost and expectations

Power is not a separate element of a relationship. It shapes whose voice is heard, who can refuse a cost and whose assumptions become obligations for others.

In this decision, whose voice changed the outcome, and whose was heard without effect? Who was able to refuse a cost, and who had to accept it?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Whose expectations became obligations for others? Who could change an agreement without bearing equal consequences?

3. Using power with care

Caring power is necessary, proportionate and directed towards protecting or developing wellbeing and agency. Sometimes it means opening a decision to others; sometimes it means acting decisively.

Looking back at how power was used in this decision, by you or by others, was it proportionate to the situation? Was there a moment when it should have been used more decisively, or held back so that others could contribute?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Recall a time a constraint was presented to one person as theirs to solve, when only leadership or collective action could change it. What happened?

– Recall a situation in which someone's influence grew step by step, through small behaviours that others tolerated. At what point could a boundary have been set at the least cost, and what kept it from being set?

– When someone needed protection, was it clear who could act, and with what mandate? Did waiting for agreement delay that protection?

4. Enabling and empowerment

Enabling power removes the barriers that stop people from using the knowledge and judgement they already have. Empowerment develops capacity, legitimacy and influence over time.

Who in or around this decision had relevant knowledge or experience that did not reach it? What stood in the way: timing, access, fear, language or the way the process was designed?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Where in this process was responsibility given without the authority, information or resources needed to carry it?

– Recall someone in your festival whose influence grew over time along with their capacity. What made that possible, and who has not had the same path?

– Whose strength has your festival relied on so heavily that it has become invisible? Does their influence match what they carry?

5. Hierarchy and accountability

A just distribution of power is not an equal distribution of authority. When care shapes how power is used, hierarchy does not disappear, but it becomes more horizontal. Influence is shared more widely, knowledge can move upwards, and authority remains explainable and accountable.

After the decision, could those affected question it, ask for its reasons or have it reviewed? Did knowledge from lower in the hierarchy change anything?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Over time, has decision-making in your festival become more horizontal or more concentrated? Which roles and final responsibilities stayed clear, and what allowed influence to spread, or kept it from spreading?

– If disagreement followed, could everyone involved speak with similar safety? What protected, or failed to protect, those with less power?

– After the decision, did anyone ask those it affected what they experienced and what they needed?

6. Then, now and next

Looking back changes the view. The power one had often becomes clearer afterwards, and so does the power one did not use.

Looking back at the decision, what could you reasonably have seen about power at the time? What can you see now, and how would you use the power you actually have in a similar decision today?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Which aspect of this decision opens questions of participation and democracy (Territory 10) or sustainability (Territory 11)?

TERRITORY 10

Care, Participation and Democracy

Democracy is more than a procedure. It lives in relationships in which people can understand what is happening, contribute, question authority safely and influence the conditions whose consequences they carry. Festivals can practise these relationships, or reproduce their opposite.

Starting point. Choose one process in your festival that involved people beyond the core team in shaping something, such as a community project, a co-production, a consultation or a partnership with a local authority. Keep it in mind as you move through this territory.

1. Forms of participation

Participation takes different forms: attendance, interpretation, expression, contribution, co-production, co-decision and co-governance. All can be legitimate; the problem arises when one is presented as another.

In the process you chose, which of these forms did different participants actually have? Where did the way the process was described suggest more influence than people had?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Were participants able to see from the start what was open to their influence and what had already been decided?

– Map your festival's main activities against these forms. Where would moving one step further be meaningful, and where would it not be appropriate?

2. Who could take part, and at what cost

Participation carries costs. When those costs are excessive, unrecognised or carried without choice, participation becomes extraction; when only those who can afford it can take part, it excludes.

Who took part in this process, and who could not? What would it have taken, in time, money, language, access or trust, for those who were absent to take part?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Draw a map of this process that shows not only who had interest and influence, but what each party contributed, needed, carried and could decide. Who is missing from the map because their stake is not yet recognised?

– Did those who had contributed longest make room for newcomers, or did their past investment turn into a sense of ownership?

3. Structure and openness

Participation needs enough structure for people to take part with clarity and dignity, and enough openness for their contributions to change the result. Professional reliability can protect people, or close spaces shaped by community knowledge.

In this process, was there enough structure for people to take part clearly and safely, and enough openness for their contributions to change what happened? Where did improvisation pass uncertainty or work on to participants?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Has professionalising part of your festival made it more reliable but less open to contribution? What would keep it open?

4. Being heard

When people's experience is repeatedly unheard or dismissed, forms of power that promise recognition through domination can become attractive. Care reopens other possibilities: solidarity, organised agency and more just conditions.

In this process, whose experience or knowledge was taken seriously from the start, and whose had to be proven? Did anyone leave feeling unheard, and how did the process respond?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Recall a time when people who felt unheard organised themselves to be heard, in or around your festival. Did your festival treat this as a threat, an inconvenience or a contribution?

5. Leadership, organised agency and institutions

Lasting change needs caring leadership that uses institutional power to widen participation, and organised social agency that contributes, questions and holds power accountable. Institutions make it durable.

In this process, what did leadership, including yours if you held it, do to open space for others, and what did participants organise for themselves? What, if anything, became a lasting procedure, budget line or partnership?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Has a local authority or funder asked your festival to deliver outcomes such as social cohesion, participation or tourism with resources for only part of them? Who carried the gap?

– A festival can let people experience difference without exclusion, belonging without conformity, authority without authoritarianism and conflict without silencing. It can also make possible contribution that develops capacity, participation that shapes a shared practice and power that answers to those who carry its consequences. Which of these did this process make possible, and which did it contradict?

6. Then, now and next

Looking back changes the view. A process remembered as participatory may look different from the position of those with the least influence in it.

Looking back at the process, what could you reasonably have seen at the time? What can you see now, and what one change would give participants in a similar process a real part?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Whose stake, such as future participants, a place or its living systems, had no voice in the process at all? How might it be represented next time?

– Which aspect of this process opens questions of sustainability (Territory 11)?

TERRITORY 11

Sustainability Without Depletion

Sustainability asks whether a festival can continue without exhausting the people, relationships, organisations, places and living systems that make it possible. The question is not only whether it can continue, but what and who is being depleted so that it can.

Starting point. Choose one recurring element of your festival that has continued across several editions, such as a flagship event, an annual production process, a residency or a way of working. Keep it in mind as you move through this territory.

1. Whose wellbeing, at whose cost

Wellbeing can be unevenly distributed. The comfort of audiences may depend on exhaustion backstage, and present success may be bought with future capacity.

Across the editions in which this element has taken place, whose wellbeing has it sustained, and at whose cost? What has become easier over time, and what has become harder?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Has this element continued mainly because it is financially viable or expected, while trust, knowledge or people were being lost?

2. Five dimensions

Sustainability has human, relational, organisational, cultural and ecological dimensions, and they affect one another.

Look at this element through each dimension in turn: workload and health; trust and repair; authority, knowledge and resources; living transmission and access; materials, mobility, energy and place. Where is it being renewed, and where is it being depleted?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Where has pressure in one dimension pushed another out of view, for example when organisational urgency set human or ecological costs aside?

3. Seeing depletion before breakdown

Care makes interdependence and cost visible before breakdown. It spreads opportunities to learn as well as burdens to carry, so that essential knowledge and care do not rest on a few overstretched people.

What signs of depletion around this element were visible before they became a problem? Who noticed them, and did their observations reach someone who could act?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Which knowledge or care needed to continue this element rests on one or two people? What would it take for others to learn to carry it?

4. Ecological relationships

Ecological costs do not disappear when they are left out of a budget. They are transferred to other places, people, species or future generations who cannot take part in the decision, and their absence increases the responsibility of those who decide.

What does this element take from places and living systems, and where are those costs carried? Who, or what, bears them without having any say?

▸ **Go deeper**

– A festival shapes its ecological footprint through its purpose and growth, mobility, production and procurement, energy, food, water and waste, its relationship with place and biodiversity, working conditions, and partnerships and advocacy. In which of these areas has your festival learned something that now shapes its decisions, and in which does each edition start again?

– Has an environmental measure been adopted mainly so that the festival would appear greener?

– What would change if the question were how to create cultural value without depleting people, places and living systems?

5. Continuing, changing or ending

Sustainable continuation may require doing less, changing rhythm, sharing resources, limiting growth or ending a practice that no longer serves its purpose. The aim is not institutional permanence but fidelity to meaning.

If this element were reduced, held every other year, shared with another organisation or ended, what would be lost, what would remain and what might become possible? Who in your festival could propose such a change?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Recall a practice your festival ended or reduced. How was the decision reached, and how was the loss acknowledged?

6. Then, now and next

Looking back changes the view. What once looked like vitality, such as growth, repetition or endurance, may now appear as a cost that someone or something has been carrying.

Looking back at this element's history, what could reasonably have been seen at the time about what it was using up? What can you see now, and what one change would help it continue, or end well?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Which aspect of this element opens the question of what deserves to continue (Territory 12)?

TERRITORY 12

Meaning: Bringing Possibility into Reality

A possibility is not a forecast of what current conditions will produce. It is something not yet real that people can recognise as valuable and help bring into being. Care creates the conditions in which distinct people can contribute to it; power makes it possible to act.

Starting point. Look back at the experiences you have considered in this framework. Choose one possibility that has become clearer to you: something that does not yet exist in your festival but could be brought into reality. Keep it in mind as you move through this territory. If you are starting here, choose a possibility you would like your festival to move towards.

1. Projection and possibility

Projection asks what is likely to happen if the present continues. Possibility asks what does not yet exist but could be realised through judgement, decision and action.

If your festival continues as it is, what is it likely to become in five years? How does that differ from the possibility you chose, and what exactly makes the difference?

▸ **Go deeper**

– What would bringing this possibility into reality change in the people involved, including you, as well as in the festival?

2. What deserves to continue

Sustainability cannot decide what deserves to continue. Meaning has to judge what should be sustained, repaired, transformed or ended.

Looking across your festival, what deserves to continue as it is, what needs to be repaired or transformed, and what might be allowed to end? Choose one example of each.

▸ **Go deeper**

– Who else should take part in making these judgements, and how might their view change yours?

3. A distinct and proportionate contribution

A festival is not responsible for changing everything. It is responsible for recognising the power and limits it actually has, and for making the contribution its distinct capacities allow, without withdrawing and without claiming more than it can carry.

What contribution to this possibility can your festival make that no one else is as well placed to make? Where might it be tempted to claim more than it can carry, and where to do less than it could?

▸ **Go deeper**

– Who else, such as artists, communities, public authorities or networks, would need to contribute for this possibility to take shape? What would connect your festival's contribution with theirs?

4. Starting within your own reach

Transformation does not have to wait for complete organisational change. Each person can begin within the relationships they already influence, while responsibility still grows with authority.

Within your own role, what one small change could you make now that would move towards this possibility? What organisational change would it need in order to last, and who has the authority to make it?

▸ **Go deeper**

– A year from now, what signs would tell you whether this change had made a difference? Who would notice first?

5. Then, now and next

Looking back changes the view. Reflecting through care may have made visible what you could not see before, and also what you still cannot see alone.

Looking back across the experiences you have reflected on, what can you now see that you could not see before? What remains uncertain, and whose perspective would you need to understand it better?

▸ **Go deeper**

– With whom would you like to share one of these reflections, and what conversation might it open?

A closing word

This framework does not end with its last question. Reflection is not something completed once: its questions can be returned to after each edition, as conditions, people and understanding change. Many of them become clearer when they are asked together with others, with colleagues, artists, volunteers, partners and the communities a festival lives among. Care, as this Reader has tried to show, is practised relationship by relationship and decision by decision. If these pages help open even one such conversation, they will have done what I hoped.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mahir Namur is a cultural manager, educator, psychological counsellor and existential coach based between Istanbul and Vienna. His work brings together international cultural cooperation, cultural policy, organisational development and meaning-oriented approaches to human relationships and collective life.

He studied civil engineering in Istanbul and construction management and economics in Vienna, and began his career on international construction projects. In 1998, he brought this experience of project management and cross-cultural work into international cultural cooperation. In 2003, he co-founded the European Cultural Association in Istanbul, serving first as president of the board and later as secretary general. Until its closure in 2019, the association worked to strengthen cultural cooperation between Türkiye and Europe and to develop the capacities of cultural organisations and professionals. In 2006, he co-founded Sinopale – International Sinop Biennial. He served on the advisory committee of Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture and has been a member of the Strategy Group of A Soul for Europe since 2004.

Alongside this work, he trained in coaching, logotherapy, existential analysis and psychological counselling. He has taught cultural management and project development at universities and cultural institutions across Europe, developed the training programmes Relationship Management and Meaning-Oriented Strategic Planning, and has worked as a coach and counsellor since 2010.

Festivals as Ecosystems of Care grows out of this combination of professional practice, philosophical learning, personal experience and reflection. It invites cultural professionals to reconsider not only what festivals make possible, but also how they are created, whose contributions sustain them and what responsibilities arise through their work.

More information: www.mahirnamur.com

CREDITS

Published by
European Festivals Association (EFA)
Within the framework of
EUFEAST – Festive Pathways to a Sustainable Tomorrow
Author and concept
Mahir Namur
Editorial coordination
European Festivals Association (EFA)
Proofreading
Simon Mundy
Graphic design
Studio Grid & Quasi
Year of publication
2026

ABOUT EUFEAST
Project reference
03C1036
Project period
May 2025 – July 2029
EU funding
€1.26 million
Project partners
Region of East Macedonia and Thrace (REMTH), Greece; European Festivals Association, Belgium; Xanthi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Greece; Local Government and Municipality of District 11 of Budapest, Újbuda, Hungary; Local Government Division, Ministry for National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government, Malta; City of Łomża, Poland; Fund for European Affairs and Development of AP Vojvodina, Serbia; Region Värmland, Sweden

EUFEAST project website

This publication has been produced with the financial support of the European Union. The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the EUFEAST partnership and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the views of the European Union, the participating countries and/or the authorities of the Interreg Europe 2021–2027 Programme.