

FOR PLURILINGUAL FAMILIES - THE CASE OF KOLIBRI FESTIVAALI

SPACES OF ENCOUNTER

Building

Creating Communities

In Helsinki 16% of the population is second or third generation immigrant. Statistics also show that one in four persons will be talking in other languages than the official ones by 2035 (HUF 2018). That means that there is an important proportion of locals and immigrants raising children with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. These families need and are creating communities to support their special conditions, beyond the basic services offered by schools and municipalities. They do this since official channels have uneven strategies and lack specific actions to support them or because they lack spaces for practicing heritage languages in informal, active and rich atmospheres.

As active members of an immigrant association, grappling with migration issues, we have been developing several actions in response to some of these challenges. We are documenting here our model and experience so far.

We want to ask:

How can we, as a society, develop new skills that take into account diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and sustainability around Children's Culture?

What kind of spaces are needed to offer intercultural dialogues, between children that are not living in a diverse cultural and linguistic environment, and new/second/third generation immigrants (and their families)?

What is the role of creative practices in promoting mutual understanding, equal treatment and respect from early ages?

Making this documentation was possible thanks to a grant from Moniheli ry.

We want to thank the Ibero-American community, cultural workers and volunteers of Kolibrí festivaali, our allies in Finland and abroad and above all the families that visit Kolibrí each year.

Building cultural diversity through children's eyes.
 Construyendo diversidad cultural a través de la mirada de la infancia.
 Construindo diversidade cultural através do olhar das crianças.
 Luomme kulttuurista monimuotoisuutta lapsen näkökulmasta.
 Vi skapar kulturell diversitet sedd med barns ögon.

Kulttuurikekus Ninho ry © 2020
 Laura Gazzotti, Andrea Botero, Ina Fiebig
 info@ninho.fi
 www.ninho.fi



Kolibri Festivaali

Kolibri Festivaali is an interdisciplinary and multicultural, free and open art festival for children and their families organized in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area since 2015. The Festival invites artists, scientists, educators and cultural workers of different backgrounds and origins, to make up an intergenerational and plurilingual program with no counterpart in the Nordic Region.

Kolibri is a new model - from an immigrant community's perspective - that offers children and their families the opportunity to experience, enjoy and value the arts, science and culture increasing their wellbeing. The festival supports their identities and capacities to actively participate in society. It creates a safe space where heritage languages spoken at home are not a secret and intercultural dialogue can flourish.

The program of the Festival combines multiple active experiences through intergenerational, plurilingual, accessible workshops, performances and concerts, selected through an open call from the local community. The program usually includes music, visual culture, dance, design, literature and in recent years also STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) activities. The program is complemented by sessions dedicated to kindergarteners and/or primary school children, seminars for professionals and parents and exhibitions targeted to families and professional audiences interested in developing children's culture in Finland. We also invite an international guest(s) that brings a special dimension to the program.

www.kolibrifestivaali.org

How we got here...

YOU NEED TO KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY!

It is important to find the issues that are significant and resonate with your community and use them as starting points.

For example, many of us had been involved in arranging other festivals, groups for families and found ourselves lacking spaces to practice our heritage language with our children, we also felt a bit isolated and had many unused talents. We soon learned we were not the only ones with those issues.

RESOURCES AT LOCAL + NATIONAL LEVEL
 Find out what you have and what you are missing or like to change!
 Look around who can collaborate with you
 Map everything that your community has been doing already, take advantage of all talents that exist.
 Collect and join all the small things that happen already (sewing circles? groups of friends?)

NEEDS + PROBLEMS
 What is missing in your community and who wants it?
 Talk to people and find more people to join, they will be your audience!

BUILD NETWORKS!
 Find who knows more, make allies and fans, learn about other's experiences, successful or not.



PROBLEMATIZATION OF THE ISSUE
 Look at those issues you identified also in relationship to what is happening in society. Find out what policies are in place and who gives support. Then rethink your issue in those terms as well.
 In our case we reformulate our initial ideas in 3 levels:
 1) Families: children's identity development without language barriers
 2) Individuals that strive for social inclusion and need to develop their professional competence and creativity.
 3) Institutions (local) that need concrete proposals to work for multiculturalism and against racism. Linking our own individual "problems" with larger discussions in Finnish society.

WORKING GROUP
 Start formalizing little by little. An association is not always needed in the beginning and a working group allows to build reputation

BUILD A PROPOSAL
 A short summary helps to communicate to others around it and search for collaboration. Sit down and expand it. Write the ideas, give them a name and a description, specify what you need and what you would like to do.
 We made our first written proposal in 2011. Three of us had some time in our hands (one was a poet, the other an educator and the third one a student) so we started searching for resources. Eventually we got a grant that allowed us to grow. Writing it increased our shared understanding of what we could influence (or not) in Finnish society.

FROM WORKING GROUP TO ASSOCIATION
 An association is good idea when applying for bigger funds, however during the first 2 years and without a history is of not much use

CO-OPERATION + FUNDS
 Not only money, resources of other types are also useful

MAKE PILOTS OR PROTOTYPES
 Try things out first and learn how you can do it, what it feels, what it requires.
 In our case the first versions of our festival where done as activities within other events in our community. There we learned what sorts of things worked and how to collaborate. We made many mistakes, but everything was a learning opportunity. We must admit that some of our pilots were rather ambitious, and that was ok sometimes.

To learn more about our process read the history of our festival in our blog:
www.kolibrifestivaali.org/2020/02/09/the-wings-of-kolibri

Components of a SPACE OF ENCOUNTER

FOR CHILDREN'S CULTURE from the perspective of a migrant community



1 LANGUAGE
Using heritage languages to learn, enjoy, play and make new friends.

We have plurilingual workshops in at least 4 different languages.
Heritage languages are not a secret. In Kolibri we also have activities that are only in our minority languages, eg. storytelling time and children music.

2 NOBODY LEARNS ALONE
Both children and adults need to learn to appreciate the richness of diversity.

Intergenerational activities that are thought eg. for the active participation of Finnish grandparents or other local friends. Integration works both ways :)
All workshops are thought for a dyad of adult and children.

3 DIVERSITY
Acknowledging what makes each of us unique.

Safe and positive environment where all are welcome.
We are working on improving our accessibility.

4 SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW
Activities include everything from ancestral traditions to new developments.

e.g learning about Papatotes and Capoeira.
e.g practicing Architecture or doing DNA workshops.

5 TEAM
Assembled through interested motivation and life circumstances. Volunteers are key.

Very multidisciplinary and plurilingual.
Continuous experimentation in how to self-organize.

6 Allies
Gather all that already doing something and key people in key places.
We have also research for obvious and not obvious partners.

7 ACCOUNTABILITY AND DEMOCRACY
reflected in open calls for proposals, transparent criteria, plurilingual information.

8 SUSTAINABILITY
Funding and resources are all key components that need more than creativity! We try to generate own resources and funding, we try to seduce funders and collaborators. We continue learning.

