THE PROSPER PROTOTYPE
a toolkit for artist residencies

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This toolkit is the outcome of PROSPER: PROtotype for Sustainable residencies in PERipheries, a collaborative project exploring how culture can foster resilience and connection in environmentally vulnerable regions. Rooted in the belief that peripheries are not margins but spaces of solidarity, PROSPER brought together artists, grassroots organizations, and local communities from all over the world to the island of Euboea in Greece and Lake Ohrid in North Macedonia—two regions deeply impacted by ecological degradation and the social fallout of COVID-19.

Through a series of transnational cultural exchanges, residencies, and capacity-building initiatives, PROSPER aimed to co-develop new, meaningful, and sustainable models for artistic collaboration, inclusive cultural tourism, and community engagement. This toolkit shares the insights, methods, and learnings gathered along the way, offering a flexible resource for anyone looking to initiate or sustain meaningful creative work in the form of a residency in peripheral or environmentally fragile contexts.

All insights from the project have been distilled into eight guiding principles, each accompanied by key considerations, as well as green flags (indicators of promising conditions) and red flags (warnings of potential challenges). Together, these elements help identify what supports a sustainable residency model—and what might hinder it.

SPACE & LOCATION

accommodation

accommodation

personal space
Ensure private and quiet areas are available for artists to rest and focus

work space
Ensure private and quiet areas are available for artists to rest and focus

communal space
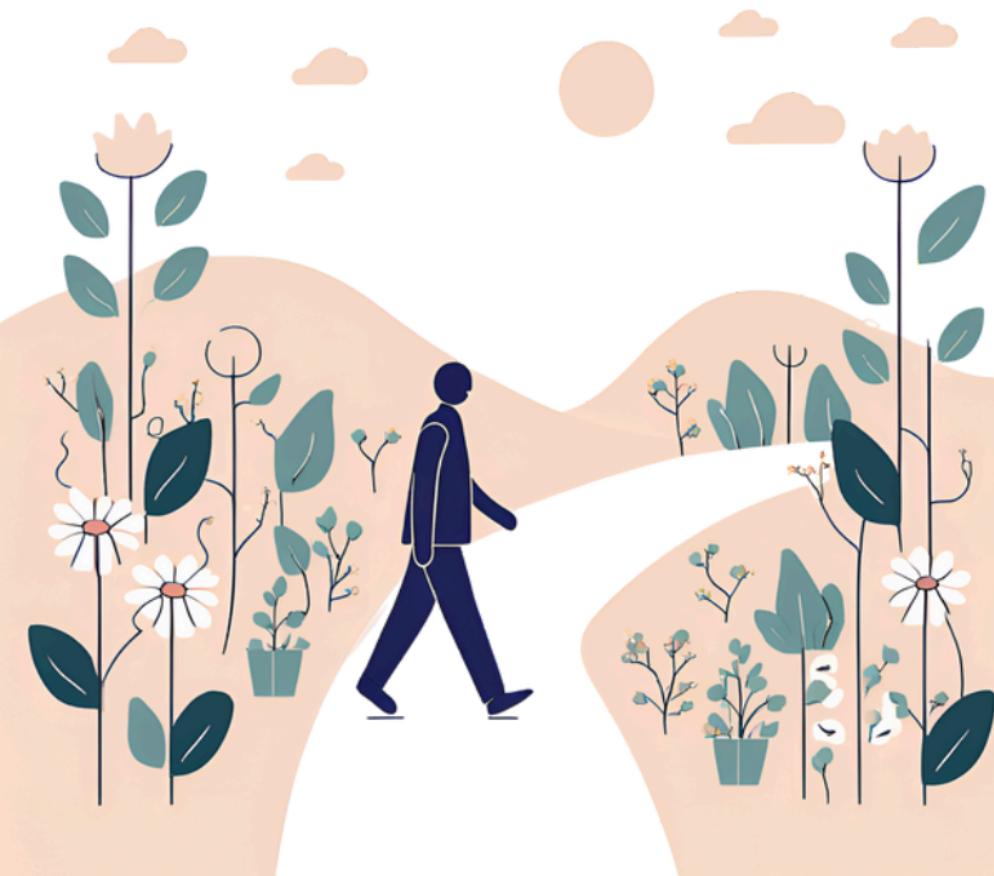Create communal dining spaces and encourage group meals

geographic value
Choose a location with local relevance and community ties

- Lack of privacy in shared rooms caused discomfort, strained interactions, and lower productivity.
- Absence of collaborative spaces led to isolated working and limited idea exchange.
- Disconnected eating arrangements missed opportunities for social bonding.
- Irrelevant location diminished connection to the artists' work and reduced project impact.

- Private rooms supported comfort, creativity, well-being, and productivity.
- Shared workspaces enabled spontaneous collaboration and peer learning.
- Communal dining fostered group cohesion and cultural exchange.
- Contextually relevant settings inspired meaningful artistic output and authentic community engagement.

mobility

walking distances
Ensure that artists can walk to places for a change of scenery

public transport
Look into public transport options in the area and communicate them

eco-friendly vehicles
Provide eco-friendly transportation like bicycles or electric vehicles

carsharing
If other options are unable, ensure that there is at least one car to share

- No support for eco-friendly transport, leading to reliance on fossil fuel vehicles.
- Individual car rentals increased emissions and discouraged shared mobility.
- Lack of public transport guidance pushed participants toward private taxis.
- Remote, car-dependent locations raised environmental impact and reduced walkability.

- Availability of bicycles and electric vehicles supported low-impact commuting.
- Organized carsharing minimized emissions and encouraged participant connection.
- Accessible public transport info empowered eco-conscious travel choices.
- Walkable environments enhanced sustainability and local engagement.

ACCESS TO FUNDS

livelihood

livelihood

individual spending

Do you want to promote personal agency and responsibility?

group spending

Do you want to promote fairness through shared budgeting?

fair production costs

Should be pre-decided to ensure artists can create without financial burden

special circumstances

Artists with specific needs or disabilities may cost more but ensures inclusion

- Unclear spending guidelines caused conflict over shared resources.
- Unequal production budgets led to tension and mistrust among artists.
- Lack of flexibility in funding excluded participants facing special circumstances, increasing financial stress.

- Transparent budgeting for individual and group expenses fostered equity and reduced stress.
- Fair and open resource allocation built trust and encouraged collaboration.
- Flexible funding supported diverse needs and enabled full, inclusive participation.

nourishment

nourishment

plant vs animal

Balanced plant and animal options, focusing on local, sustainable food

allergies & conditions

Address allergies & health conditions with restriction or customizable meals

mental health

Intentionally contribute to the physical & mental well-being of the artists

emergencies

Health insurance & emergency plans ensure safe participation

- Limited plant-based options excluded vegan/vegetarian participants.
- Rigid meal plans triggered anxiety and overlooked personal or cultural needs.
- Missing allergen labeling posed health risks.
- Unclear emergency procedures led to confusion and delayed responses.

- Diverse, balanced menus supported dietary needs, ethics, and sustainability.
- Flexible meal planning respected cultural, personal, and mental health considerations.
- Transparent allergen communication safeguarded participant health.
- Clear emergency protocols enabled quick, effective responses.

SPENDING TIME & RESOURCES
programming

programming

residency goals

Clarify goals—whether focused on production, research, or relaxation.

responsibilities

Clarify the roles and expectations from each member of the residency

work-rest balance

Make sure to consider this balance in the program to avoid undesired outcomes

budget & resources

Budget constraints should be factored in to balance ambition with resources

- Over-scheduled programming led to artist burnout and reduced inspiration.
- Unclear expectations caused frustration and misaligned project outcomes.
- Unclear roles and responsibilities led to confusion, duplicated efforts, and group tension.
- Unexpected expenses created financial stress and strained participant experience.

- Flexible schedules supported artist well-being, productivity, and growth.
- Clear, transparent expectations helped artists plan effectively and contribute meaningfully.
- Defined roles and shared expectations fostered accountability, smooth collaboration, and a sense of ownership.
- Defined budget guidelines enabled sustainable planning and encouraged creative financial solutions.

HOSTS &
hospitality

hospitality

setting expectations
Define the support that residents can expect from hosts and vice versa

rules & boundaries
Establish clear rules and boundaries for private and shared spaces

rituals
Incorporate events such as dinners, daily reflections, or ceremonies

knowledge sharing
Facilitate it through artist talks, presentations or workshops

- Unclear duties and expectations caused confusion and disorganization.
- Ambiguous rules led to interpersonal conflicts and discomfort.
- Lack of communal activities created social fragmentation.
- No knowledge-sharing platforms resulted in missed opportunities for learning and exchange.

- Transparent communication promoted mutual respect and accountability.
- Clear boundaries reduced conflict and supported respectful coexistence.
- Regular gatherings fostered group cohesion and shared identity.
- Ongoing discussions enabled cross-disciplinary learning and collaboration.

LOCAL
participation

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participation

inspiration
Balance in inward (self-reflection) and outward (community engagement)

local context
Encourage interaction through partnerships or site-specific projects.

giving back
Ensure that the residency gives back to the local community (e.g. festival)

group engagement
Create structured group engagement activities to foster connection

- Excessive isolation led to creative stagnation.
- Disconnection from local culture reduced relevance and impact.
- Extractive practices caused resentment within the community.
- Individual-focused programming led to social isolation.

- Balanced activities encouraged personal growth and community interaction.
- Collaborative events promoted cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.
- Workshops and exhibitions created value for local audiences.
- Group projects built a supportive, dynamic community.

CURATION &
production

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production

curator with vision
a curator with a clear vision should guide the residency's artistic direction

production support
offer production support, such as technical assistance, materials & space

dissemination
Plan when, where, and how to communicate to relevant audiences

post residency
Ensure sustainability through alumni networks and material reuse

- Lack of curatorial direction resulted in a fragmented and incoherent experience.
- Inadequate support limited artistic output and caused frustration.
- Poor dissemination reduced visibility and impact of the artworks.
- No post-residency support or material plan left residents feeling disconnected and raised sustainability concerns.

- Visionary curatorship led to impactful, thought-provoking projects.
- Comprehensive support empowered ambitious and successful work.
- Effective dissemination expanded audience reach and visibility.
- Continued resident engagement and use of biodegradable or natural materials ensured long-term impact and sustainability.

Thank you

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