Annual Report

MitOst

2022/23
Dear members, dear friends,

The past year has been a very peculiar time for the world in general, for civil society, and for our MitOst Network in particular.

Because of the pandemic, over the last two years we had to completely alter and adapt to a new way of working. Obliged to remain distanced in physical gatherings, which are the true essence of our community, hindered from bringing together our community, we nevertheless managed to advance our internal transition and engage our network in this process. We kept evolving into a new structure that will better mirror our daily reality. We did our best to retain our ties while facing several challenges.

Then, in 2022 our communities were shaken again, mainly due to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Since the very beginning, MitOst has been a very active stakeholder in eastern Europe and over the years many projects were implemented in the region and many ties were created.

The full-scale invasion profoundly affected our team and communities and we felt the need to respond by showing solidarity in support of our friends in Ukraine. We were very impressed by your immediate response and by the general wave of support over recent months. After a long time of isolation and silence, we felt the power of MitOst. We would like to sincerely thank each of you for being present and supportive during this difficult time.

We understand MitOst as an agile, proactive, and diverse network that strives to promote local change and resilient civil societies through local, regional, and transnational cooperation. We hope to create safer spaces for individuals, organizations, and wider communities and to build lasting connections to scale our collective impact. Let’s do it!
An agile, pro-active and diverse network.
MitOst is an open and diverse network that connects civil society actors rooted in different local contexts across Europe and neighboring regions.

In 2022/2023, management of the MitOst Network activities became the responsibility of the Network Team consisting of network coordinator Marta Kanarkiewicz, network officer Florentina Abendstein, and European Solidarity Corps volunteer Esterina Ukaj. As part of the network’s development plan, the Network Team and the Board set strategic priorities for 2022, which created a basis for activities implemented in the network during that period.

The objective was to support the network’s growth to a knowledge sharing, collaboration, and connecting platform.

In 2022/2023, the MitOst Network invited members to two MitOst Salons in Krzyżowa, Poland co-organized by the Bosch Alumni Forum and recently embarked on travel to Tunisia in the MitReisen study trip format. Moreover, the Network team continued to implement a new communications strategy, focusing on maintaining member connection and engagement through social media and monthly newsletters.

The flagship annual MitOst event, the 20th International MitOst Festival, took place in June 2022 in Maribor, Slovenia. As the first in-person gathering on a network scale after two years of online and hybrid events, it was a great success in terms of reconnecting and strengthening relationships within the network. The co-created program featured workshops and sessions hosted by the participants as well as local cultural events curated by the local host organization of the festival, hiša! The overarching theme, Resilient Communities in Times of Uncertainty, connected festival activities to contemporary global events.
As of 24.04.2023: MitOst has 1,440 members in 47 countries, 56 of which are institutions. In 2022/23 a total of 16 new members joined, specifically from Germany (11), Greece (1), Turkey (1), Ukraine (1), Slovenia (1), and Armenia (1).

More than half of the members live in Germany (764). The association has particularly large numbers of members in Russia (159), Ukraine (96), and Georgia (51). Last year, 31 resignations were recorded.
The International MitOst Festival is the central event of MitOst and an important setting for the communities connected with MitOst to meet. The Festival has converged in new locations each year since its inaugural event in 2003 in Pécs, Hungary. It offers learning and networking opportunities, intercultural activities, and attracts up to 350 participants from all over Europe and its neighboring regions.

The 20th International MitOst Festival took place in June 2022 in Maribor, Slovenia as an in-person gathering and it was co-hosted by a local partner, hiša! and the MitOst Network Team based in Berlin. Despite initial concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic still lingering around the globe and divided opinions on the righteousness of organizing the Festival amidst escalating Russian war in Ukraine, the decision to gather MitOst Network under the annual format was taken. It was motivated by a conviction that in divisive times of conflict, a safe space to exchange and learn together is needed more than ever.

The theme of the Festival, corresponding with the global events and resulting

CIVIL SOCIETY

ACTORS ROOTED IN DIFFERENT LOCAL CONTEXTS.
The International MitOst Festival is our central event and an important setting for the communities connected with MitOst to meet. Since the inaugural event in 2003 in Pécs, Hungary, the festival has been held in different locations each year. It offers learning and networking opportunities, intercultural activities, and attracts up to 350 participants from all over Europe and neighboring regions.

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The theme of the festival, corresponding to the global events and resulting concerns, was “Resilient Communities in Times of Uncertainty.”

As we witnessed the power of civil society networks in demonstrating solidarity with people in Ukraine and those who fled the war and how civil societies in the region manifested themselves across borders and showed up for people in need, we decided that this year’s festival should act as a platform to explore this further. We decided to focus on how networks and communities demonstrated resilience and how we can build upon that in the future.

Participants were invited to co-create the program and bring their sessions, which should fit under one of three pillars: Art, Culture, and Conflict; Self and Organizational Care; or Civil Society Now and in the Future.

The final program point of the festival consisted of workshops and sessions hosted by the participants, by panel discussions, networking opportunities, and local cultural events chosen from the annual “Living Courtyards” Festival in Maribor. For many communities within the MitOst Network, including alumni of the Theodor Heuss Kolleg and Lektorenprogramm and the Civil Society Cluster members of the Bosch Alumni Network, the festival was an opportunity to reconnect. The final program consisted of 60 activities.

Moreover, a number of participants decided to showcase art installations at the festival offices. Works by Sasha Kurmaz, Lesia Khomenko, and Yasia Khomenko were exhibited at the entrance to the central meeting space and photographs collected by Lukas Jednicki were displayed as an ongoing presentation in one of the rooms.

Overall, in a post-event evaluation and reflection, we came to the conclusion that the MitOst Festival fulfilled its purpose as a place to gather, exchange, and learn, and that it did so in a respectful way, honoring difficult circumstances in which civil society actors found themselves at the time.
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The MitOst Network

International MitOst Festival

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Resilient communities in times of uncertainty.
The focus of MitOst Hamburg is youth work, in particular German-Russian youth encounters. None of these projects in collaboration with their Russian partners could be realized due to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

The team therefore responded with new formats to meet the shift of values and the severely constrained funding: 26 young people with and without refugee experience from Germany, Ukraine, and Russia set sail for 10 days on the Roald Amundsen training ship. Another in-person project was implemented in Georgia where a German-Russian-Georgian youth group created a space for dialogue and encounter and dared to look into the upcoming year and a possible common future. In September 2022, MitOst Hamburg participated for the first time in the European Solidarity Corps program with one volunteer position. Additionally, they were able to offer civil society actors in Russia a way to develop their expertise further in times of repression and intimidation. A continuation in 2023 is planned.

In 2023, with dwindling space for German-Russian youth exchange both locally and financially, projects with partners in Poland (German-Polish-Ukrainian youth exchange) and Tanzania will be carried out. However, the longstanding relationship with Russian partners is now perhaps more in demand than ever to enable people-to-people encounters. Therefore, it is important to explore new funding channels and to vigorously check existing ones.
The Civil Society Cluster connects around 1,700 members of the Bosch Alumni Network who work on pressing societal challenges and drive meaningful impact across the globe. It offers a safe space to reflect on urgent issues connected to civil societies and their actors in different countries and to identify new, potentially useful mechanisms to strengthen the accountability and resilience of civil societies. The Civil Society Cluster is co-developed with iac Berlin and hosted by MitOst.

As part of the collaboration, several activities were organized for the members of the Civil Society Cluster and many others were open to join.

Cluster members were invited to participate in the Civil Society Toolbox Training in May 2022. This intensive 2-and-a-half-day training of trainers introduced participants to theoretical foundations of organizational development and to the Civil Society Toolbox – a tangible toolkit with methods that support small teams, initiatives, informal groups, or small organizations to further build horizontal, healthy, and efficient structures and processes. Fourteen participants travelled to Berlin to take part in the training.

Moreover, seven teams were supported with Organizational Development Grants by the Civil Society Toolbox in 2022. Grants were meant to support civil society organizations to develop the structure and processes of their team and organization.
Under the Erasmus Umbrella, Key 1 Action: Learning Mobility of individuals, MitOst has been carrying out the project “Building Capacities for Innovation and Change,” which aimed at building capacities of employees, volunteers, and external facilitators.

The goals were defined as:

- being more efficient in responding to the changing needs of our target groups
- increasing capabilities to evaluate, strategize, share knowledge
- innovation within a community of learning organizations
- reflecting on the impact of our work
- and ultimately, adapting and building an innovative organizational model, which will serve for more sustainable work in the future

The implementation of the project should have started in 2019, but most of the activities were terminated due to pandemic restrictions in 2020/2021. Therefore most of the trainings and job shadowing took place in 2022.

This project was planned as a complementary mechanism to strengthen the personal and professional growth of our staff members, facilitators, and volunteers. During the application process, we evaluated the needs, necessary skills, and competencies of our organization. We identified the focus area for our capacity building to meet our development needs and at the same time reflect global and European trends of life-long learning and the demands of the changing labor market (in the NGO sector) in the new hybrid and digital reality. Being providers of transformative learning experiences and implementers of educational programs requires continuous improvement of strategic management, leadership skills, intercultural and conflict management competencies, as well as skills to coach and facilitate various international and cross-sectoral partnerships in our programs. Seeking potential for innovation, we needed to connect to other organizations to learn and share our successful professional practices and exchange innovative tools, methods, and approaches we apply in the international ecosystem we work with.

To address the mentioned needs and achieve the goals of the project, we implemented the following activities:

1. International structured courses and trainings, which served to increase strategic thinking and management skills, leadership, conflict management skills, evaluation and needs assessment skills as well as coaching, mentoring, and facilitation skills to respond to the needs of our target groups (11 participants from staff members and facilitators, 11 trainings in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Denmark);

2. Job shadowing in collaboration with partner organizations in European countries, which served for mutual professional exchange and creation of a common learning space with application of innovative methods, tools, and approaches (14 job shadowing programs in Estonia, Greece, Slovenia, Italy, and Hungary);

3. Training assignments abroad, which served to share our expertise, to apply innovative methods in the facilitation of strategic development processes, to provide new frameworks for designing learning activities, as well as to create a reflective and feedback space for our facilitators to improve the quality and content of their performance. Additionally, this type of activity helped us to establish new international partnerships and map out the possible directions for collaboration (one training in Hungary with 35);

Lastly, we implemented a series of reflective labs and knowledge-sharing events internally with respected partners and our network members.
MitOst has been active in Ukraine for over two decades and is part of a strong, decentralized network of independent initiatives, dedicated professionals, and cross-sectoral stakeholders working in democratic and human rights, arts, and culture, (non-formal) education, or media. Currently, there are over 80 active organizations and 400 individuals throughout this network. They include politicians, civil servants, activists, artists, educators, facilitators, journalists, and business people. As soon as the invasion of Ukraine by Russia began, MitOst, as a grassroots organization, acted quickly and responded with great flexibility to the immediate needs and challenges with a sound Ukraine Solidarity Campaign. This consisted in offering logistic, financial, and psychological support to MitOst’s closest partner organizations in Ukraine and countries that welcomed Ukrainian refugees in- and outside of Europe.

A successful fundraising campaign was launched in March 2022, through which €1,421,737 was collected and redistributed by MitOst’s Ukraine Solidarity Fund.

www.mitost.org/ukraine
What’s next?

MitOst planned its work along different work packages:

> Providing support to civil society and cultural workers staying in Ukraine, project: Tolocar
> Providing support to civil society and cultural workers leaving Ukraine (or coming back to Ukraine), program: Vidnova Fellowship
> Together with partners on-site and in Europe, MitOst started to work on ideas for post-war rebuilding
> If financially still possible, MitOst will further help to coordinate humanitarian aid and refugee assistance inside and outside Ukraine
> If financially still possible, MitOst will further support the protection of Ukrainian cultural heritage and evacuation of artworks.

More information [here](#).
The Members’ Assembly is the most important decision-making body of the MitOst association. All MitOst stakeholders are welcome to attend the MitOst Members’ Assembly, but the right to vote is reserved exclusively for paying members of the association. The Members’ Assembly on 24 September 2022 took place online.

Members considered and voted on the following:

- Changes to the statutes
- The discharge of the previous board
- The election of a new Executive Board of eight (8) members

Changes to the statutes, in short, are the following:

- New governance structure: membership model with individual members and institutional members. Both have voting rights.
- Change from voluntary board to executive board. Only persons who were nominated by an institutional member and hold a paid position or honorary role in the organization of that institutional member may become elected members of the Board.
- Two subsidiaries (Commit and .zusa) are represented by their managing directors on the board.
- Members of the board are elected for a three-year term.
Since the Members’ Assembly on 24 September 2022, the board members hold a three-year mandate. They work voluntarily and chair the work and development of MitOst.

In 2021/2022, the executive board members were Sofia Corsi (Italy/Belgium) as the first chairperson, Ivo Krug (Germany) as the second chairperson, Yasmin Ouberri (Germany) as treasurer and Liubov Kuznetsova (Georgia), Hanna Kishkurna (Belarus) and Joanna Nowosad (Germany/Poland) as assessors.

In September 2022 a new Executive Board was formed. Alona Karavai (Ukraine) was elected as first chair and Ivo Krug (Germany) remained in his function as second chairperson.

Six new board members were elected during the Members’ Assembly in 2022. We welcomed Maja Pegan (Slovenia), Stelios Voulgaris (Greece), Safak Ersozlu (Turkey), Yana Mrkichyan (Armenia), Annegret Wulff (Germany) and Jotham Sietsma (Germany) as assessors.
In the designated period, Commit’s partners held two assemblies (in June and December 2022). During the last partners’ assembly of Committ gGmbH on 14 December 2022, three new partners were accepted and one partner decided to leave. Thus, MitOst now holds 65% of commit gGmbH shares. The rest are held by four current staff members and three former staff members: Annegret Wulff (5%), Marischa Weiser (5%), Malwina Fendrych (5%), Maxim Smekhov (5%), Iliyana Gräbner (5%), Lisa Gimbert (5%) and Monika Stobbe (5%).

In January 2023, the commit team had a 7-day retreat in Greece for strategic planning for the future of commit and for team building. We had some nice oceanside walks and fireside talks and enjoyed the hospitality of Maria Scordialos at her wonderful olive farm in the countryside.
We strive for societies where everyone counts.
During the 20th International MitOst Festival in Maribor, 16 members of the Theodor-Heuss-Kolleg community met on 25 June 2022 to get updates from three community hosts Insha Osyta, BLGU, and MitOst and to discuss the further community organization and activities.

All came to the agreement that the THK community can be organized in the framework of the MitOst Network since all activities such as updates and events are also interesting for this larger community and therefore a separate newsletter, website, or fundraising efforts would not make sense.
One of the program highlights in 2022 was the second community meeting of the Idea Challenge winners in Maribor. The event was organized in combination with the MitOst Festival so the Civic Europe fellows could already dive into the MitOst world. At the community meeting, participants reflected on their project implementation and impact, developed future plans for themselves and for partnerships, and gained new knowledge and competences in several workshops. By the end of 2022 all 18 local projects were successfully implemented and an external and internal evaluation of the program was carried out with recommendations for further development of the programs. In 2023, the team focused on the accounting and reporting phase of the program and organized exchange meetings of facilitators and around the Civil Society Toolbox. An Erasmus+ application was submitted with former program partners. The Civic Europe program ended in April 2023 but its impact will continue. Altogether, we were able to support more than 100 organizations and teams over these past years. The program was successfully implemented in 12 countries all over Europe. Both program strands, the Idea Challenge and the Capacity Building, strove to support organizations and individuals in the peripheries and in places that we called civic deserts. We conducted research on civic deserts selecting four specific regions in Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria. For details, please visit the website here.
We were able to support over 100 organizations and teams.
From January 2022 until April 2022 MitOst e.V. implemented “Addressing Inequality,” a five-week online introductory course on systems thinking in cooperation with iac Berlin and the School of Systems Change by Forum for Future. The course offered an overview of the key concepts and approaches behind systemic practices. It also provided opportunities to explore and experiment with methods and tools to understand complex inequality challenges. Further, it stimulated reflections about key actions to implement positive change. 21 participants from 12 different countries took part in the course.

In April 2022 MitOst e.V. implemented “The Social Innovation Incubator” program in Almaty, Kazakhstan with support from the Eurasia Foundation and funding from USAID. The program aimed to provide an educational platform for civil society leaders from Central Asia to tackle pressing social challenges in the region. Out of 220 applicants from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, 25 professionals were invited to join the program. The participants included civil society actors, social and creative entrepreneurs, journalists, cultural managers, and IT specialists. The program featured interactive discussions, group work, gamified activities, and visits to social innovation practitioners in Almaty. At the end of the program, the participants presented their ideas for innovative solutions to social challenges in their professional context. The program also aimed to challenge the participants’ current ways of thinking about complex social and environmental issues.

Overall, the Social Innovation Incubator program aimed to foster the exchange of ideas, experiences, and best practices among the participants to rethink their usual perception of social innovation.
In 2022 the German version of the Civil Society Toolbox was implemented in cooperation with Engagierte Städte, BBE and was funded by Robert Bosch Stiftung. Along with the translation of the Toolbox, a new path on generational change and leadership transitions was developed. Methods of the new paths were tested at the 20th International MitOst Festival in June 2022.

The cross-sectoral teams and especially the coordinators of Engagierte Städte were introduced to the Toolbox and the new path through one in-person training in December 2022 and two online trainings in February and March 2023. 70 cities from Engagierte Städte have already received the physical Toolbox.

The Toolbox will contribute to supporting sustainable structures of engagement in Germany. The material is available online in the digital library here. Hard copies can be requested via horizontalschool@mitost.org.
The project aims to contribute to alleviating inequalities among young people by improving the quality of education in non-formal citizenship and political education. The project addressed experts and experienced facilitation practitioners from Germany, Moldova, Poland, and Ukraine working in remote areas as well as marginalized young people.

The "Rethink citizenship education in times of change" project examined, explored, and named current trends in citizenship education through a 3-steps program:

1. Hackathon in Chisinau (Moldova, August 2022) aimed at researching and mapping trends in citizenship education, exploring the needs and goals for the facilitators’ handbook, and drafting initial concepts for publication and ideas of the podcast series.

2. Writing Residency (Gut Stolzenhagen, September 2022) provided space to develop ideas for articles, exchange between the authors, and jointly shape the content and format of the completed publication. The meeting aimed at writing, editing, revising the articles, and drafting and recording a podcast.

3. "Rethinking Citizenship Education. A Collection of Voices" publication (September-December 2022). With the publication, contributors wanted to support youth workers, trainers, facilitators, teachers, and other professionals in the field of citizenship education in navigating crises and transformations. As such, this collection of practitioners’ voices comes at the right time – when the outbreak of a full-scale war in Europe and multiple crises (inflation, migration, climate change) put our way of life, choices, and practices under major scrutiny. The articles draw on professional experience while occasionally addressing the theory behind the practices. It is the result of the cooperation of nearly 25 people, including 10 authors. The articles are enriched with dedicated podcasts, complementing the content.

The publication and dedicated podcasts are available here.

The project was implemented by MitOst in cooperation with Insha Osivita, EcoVisio, and funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Alleviating inequalities through improving education.
horizontal school offers spaces to learn how to facilitate, develop practices for the self, team, organization, or community, and to connect in a learning community. The core of horizontal school is facilitation and the yearlong Facilitator Qualification Course offered.

In 2022 we implemented the workshop series #StandWithUkraine covering topics such as conflicts in teams and groups, working in uncertainty, and media literacy. We launched the second round of the Facilitator Qualification Course with 18 learners and around 40 learners participated in our training of trainers (in-person and blended). Within the course, we host bi-monthly peer talks and every other month a thematic workshop on the topics of participatory processes, online, and hybrid events, group dynamics, and group effects. We additionally hosted some free events to give potential participants a taste of our approach and style and to touch base and get to know us better.

In addition to the open trainings and course, we implemented diverse in-house trainings such as the learning labs for the Civic Europe community, the workshop series for the Cross Culture Fellowship program of ifa, a conflict management and intercultural training for Anna Lindh Network, and a workshop on reverse cultural shock for the DAAD.

What was new in 2022 was the implementation of educational projects, adding a third income stream to the financial model with the project "Rethink citizenship education in times of change" together with Insha Osvita and EcoVisio. This resulted in a first co-created publication "Rethinking Citizenship Education. A Collection of Voices" and several podcasts published on the new learning space www.horizontal.school. Additionally, the German version of the Civil Society Toolbox including a newly developed path on "Leadership in transition" was implemented along with trainings with the Toolbox for coordinators of Engagierte Stadt.

2023 started with a new team constellation in horizontal school. Ela Tekgül ended her ESC and started as program assistant and Maxim Smekhov transitioned from Civic Europe to horizontal school team. In April we are hosting a workshop series on Transformational Learning Spaces and launched the third round of the Facilitator Qualification Course with a new module on Dealing with Complexity. In addition, we received funding for a small-scale project from Erasmus+ to implement the project "Mind the game" on gamification in learning processes.
In February 2022 many civil society actors in Ukraine were displaced due to Russian military aggression. They lost their local contexts and were disconnected from their end beneficiaries. Vidnova Fellowship emerged as a chance for Ukrainian civil society actors in exile to continue their work in connection with diverse European partners.

The concept of the program came together in March 2022. In the following months a crowdfunding campaign was held engaging EVZ Foundation as a main partner and donor as well as Robert Bosch Foundation, Mercator Foundation, and Gerda Henkel Foundation as additional donors. In early May the open call was published and by late May the first cohort of fellows was selected for participation. In the last days of June, the orientation meeting took place in Berlin, marking the start of yearly fellowships for 24 fellows. It was followed by a Project Design Meeting in early November. By the end of 2022 most of the fellows submitted their project proposals and 21 projects started during January-March.

Additionally, from October 2022 to March 2023, Vidnova Ukraine (the Ukrainian part of the program, operated by the local partner Insha Osvita) supported 20 fellows who returned from their exile to Ukraine and wanted to continue their professional activities there.

As of April 2023, Vidnova Ukraine fellows completed their participation in the program and Vidnova Europe is preparing for a Reflection Meeting that will mark the end of the fellowship for the participants from the first cohort.
Impact statistics:

- 300 applications received for Vidnova Europe
- 3,602 applications received for Vidnova Ukraine
- 24 fellows in Vidnova Europe from July 2022 to June 2023
- 14 fellows in Vidnova Europe from March 2023 to August 2023
- 23 fellows in Vidnova Ukraine from October 2022 to March 2023
- Altogether 61 fellows supported by both programs in 2022-2023

What did we learn?

From the very beginning, Vidnova Fellowship was a very special program in the Commit ecosystem due to the urgency of the situation in which the program was created and due to commit’s long-standing connections to Ukraine. Flexibility and speed were in the program’s DNA, allowing us to be efficient and resourceful in a time when the world was volatile and rapidly changing, both for the participants and the team. In time we learned that flexibility requires structures to be stable and we therefore started to create these structures that still allow us to be flexible. We learned that high-pace work needs breathing spaces to be sustainable, so we started to slow down and invest in quality management and team building. We also learned that this program is still extremely relevant one year into the war even more than before, so we intend to create frameworks to support Ukrainian civil society through Vidnova Fellowship and hopefully other programs to come.

Publications

- Interview with Annegret Wulff about Vidnova by EVZ Foundation
- Interview with Maryna Hovorukhina | Medium
- Interview with Iryna Lisova | Medium
- Interview with Daria Podolian | Medium
- Interview with Daryna Dmytrievska | Medium
24 February 2023 marked one year of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. It was, first and foremost, an attack on Ukraine but also on much that we believe in and work for throughout our networks.

As a continuation of our efforts to support people in Ukraine as well as those fleeing the country, MitOst, commit gGmbH, iac Berlin, and Robert Bosch Stiftung, together with our close partners from Ukraine – Asortymentna Kimnata, Insha Osvita, Opera Aperta, proto producícia, and ReStart Ukraine joined Cafe Kyiv. Cafe Kyiv was an art intervention on 27 February initiated and coordinated by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung that temporarily transformed the historic Cafe Moskau into Cafe Kyiv.

Over 2,500 people gathered at Cafe Kyiv to support Ukraine. It has become a center for workshops, discussions, talks, salons, informal exchange and networking, and culture in the eleven rooms of the building.
Over 2500 people gathered to support Ukraine.
MitOst and partners contributed five program points:

- From crisis response to evidence-driven spatial recovery: role of civil society by Daryna Pyrogova
- From the beginning? – Ukrainian civil society in Ukraine and in exile moderated by Nata Yeromenko, hosted by Annekret Wurff (committ gGmbH), Anastasia Bobrova (Vidnova Europe), Ottile Bälz (Robert Bosch Stiftung), and Kira Okhrimenko (Vidnova Ukraine)
- What did cultural workers do during the war? Urgent grass-root initiatives for artists, museums, and artefacts by Olha Honchar, Alona Karavai, and Serhiy Klymko
- "War Diary / Anfang des Krieges." Reading from the works of Yevgeniya Belorusets, by Yevgeniya Belorusets and Alona Karavai
- "Lullaby for Mariupol," a music performance by Opera Aperta

More information visit the website [here](https://www.mitost.org/).
In the 2022-2023 reporting period, zusa held two partner assemblies (in February and December). The website was launched in December 2022. Programs implemented by the zusa team in 2022/23:

- Tandem – Culture without Borders
- Tandem Regions of Solidarity
- Tandem 360°
- Tandem Community
- Capacity Development of Cultural Educators in the Digital Era
- All-Around-Culture

Civil Society Exchange
i-Portunus Houses
VAHA – Building Common Ground for Spaces of Public Discussion and Dialogue
AiR zusa
Tolocar
Bazar BYzarre
Neustart in Deutschland
Zusa; the art of collaboration as a force for systemic change
Tandem was developed by MitOst together with the European Cultural Foundation. The program goes far beyond the core approach of international understanding and offers the participating cultural actors a well-founded insight into the cultural scenes of the participating countries and the space to build a sustainable partnership. The socio-political appeal of the program is revealed by its very broad interpretation of the term “culture and cultural managers,” which extends far into other areas, such as journalism, urban planning, work with children and youth, education, migration, and more. Tandem operates by strengthening new ideas and organizations in this field to build a sustainably active transnational community whose local actors encompass a wide variety of countries, regions, socio-political issues, and areas of work.

In a one-year process, Tandem offers cultural actors a safe framework to form learning partnerships (tandems) to jointly develop concrete ideas for further cooperation and a cross-border (pilot) project. Group meetings at the beginning, half-way and at the end of this Tandem process are accompanied by intensive mentoring from the program team and serve the practical exchange of experience and knowledge among the participants. In addition, the participants complete a two-week placement at the work site of their Tandem partner.

The aim is to strengthen existing local approaches to work of cultural actors through cross-border cooperation and to fertilize them conceptually. In addition, the internationalization of cultural managers and their organizations strengthens their professionalism. Another goal is to increase the visibility of the initiatives at the local level, i.e., where activities of the participants, which have been strengthened through Tandem, have an immediate impact.

To date, the program has brought together over 700 actors from more than 40 countries. More information on the current programs here.
Tandem Regions is an ongoing network that builds on the experience, network, and philosophy of Tandem programs. Tandem alumni and partners come together to tap the potential of areas that are alive and kicking with ideas, with energy, and that are ripe for change. Places where people understand the value of their locality and have a vision for how it could progress. Tandem Regions develops as a prototype initiative, a cross-border exchange and responsive, policy-influencing program that does not presuppose any certain way of doing things.

Building on three rounds of Tandem Europe, MitOst, together with ECF and 8 Tandem partners and alumni, i.e., 4iS-Platform for Social Innovation (PT), Arcadia/Leeuwarden Fryslan 2028 (NL), COMMON (GR), Creative Scene (UK), Ideas Factory (BG), Insha Osvita (UA), R84 Multifactory (IT), and Transitory Museum Pfyn (CH), designed the pilot phase for Tandem Regions of Solidarity. The pilot phase ran until spring 2023.

More information here.
Places where people understand the value of their locality.
Another addition to the wide Tandem family was Tandem 360°. With 40 participants from the MENA region, this program was designed to foster international exchange and collaboration across the region in 2020-2022.

The schedule was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic that required rapid adaptation of offline methods and tools to online possibilities. This was a big challenge for the implementation team, as the design of the meetings for the participants required more time and effort than a physical meeting.

In 2021 and 2022, 40 of the selected actors from 7 countries fully committed to the implementation of their pilot projects and to the overall program. All participants joined regional exchange and intercultural dialogue during joint online and offline meetings (online: 2 partner forums, 2 collaboration design meetings, 1 ecosystem basecamp, hybrid: 1 ecosystem basecamp, 2 reflection meetings). All participants were engaged in learning and mentoring moments to support their capacities in mapping the local ecosystem through a range of Tandem tools. In addition, separate one-on-one meetings with mentors were organized for each partnership.

All collaboration projects as well as reflections from participants are available on the Tandem website. Tandem 360° was financed by the Federal Foreign Office of Germany.
The large community of Tandem that started in 2011 and counts more than 600 members and alumni today is still active and always supports anyone who feels they belong to Tandem’s community and extensive network.

The aim of this community is to continue sharing experiences, to search for project partners, to exchange best practices, and to move forward in the spirit of “do it together.” The organizers of the Tandem program want to continue working as partners with former and current participants and encourage them to get involved in different capacities: as experts, as mentors, and as partners for future activities.

In addition, there are Tandem community activities that are intended to provide support to sustainably develop the connections between cultural actors and activists and to consolidate the existing Tandem network. These Tandem community activities are administered by zusa. To support continuous exchange within the Tandem network and to continue to bring people from different disciplines, cultures, and countries together, the following points were implemented in 2022 and 2023:

- On 9 November 2022 zusa team hosted a Tandem dish party in our Berlin office, where 12 alumni gathered in a cozy atmosphere with food.
- On 7 February 2023 zusa hosted the launch of its new website and invited several communities in Berlin.
- On 19-21 February 2023 the Tandem Region networking meeting took place in Sofia, Bulgaria. More than 40 Tandem alumni were invited to the meeting to explore new connections and partnerships and discuss the experience of Tandem Region and include the expertise and experiences of the invited Tandem Alumni.
- Joint activities/calls with the (relevant) target groups: newsletters (Tandem postcard), emails, social media.
- Support with knowledge about methods and design of meetings was offered (depending on capacity).
- zusa is part of several ongoing partnerships with members of the Tandem network. Tandem regions in Europe with 7 partners developed a new partnership with 4 partners from the SWANA region called Tandem Amwaj, among other partnerships in development now and is always open for future partnerships and collaboration.
Continuously sharing experiences.
zusa Programs: Capacity Development of Cultural Educators in the Digital Era

BY SARAH HERKE

Together with seven partners, MitOst developed the strategic partnership “Capacity Development for Cultural Educators in the Digital Era,” built on the Cultural Managers Network with around 200 members. This partnership was funded through the Erasmus + Program of the European Commission.

The strategic partnership ran until summer 2022 and ensured the continued existence of the most important network elements, which the members identified as personal meetings and professional exchange of experiences.

In the reporting period, two physical meetings took place:


July 2022: “Arts and Culture in Times of Crisis” Maribor, Slovenia with around 50 participants

Find more information here.
All-Around-Culture is a four-year EU-funded program that enables social and economic integration of young people through culture in seven Arab countries. The program includes five components in support of the ecosystem approach implemented by MitOst, Culture Resource, L’Art Rue, and Mohammad and Mahera Abu Ghazaleh Culture and Arts Society. The following milestones were implemented between April 2022 and March 2023.

Cultural Alliances supports cultural institutions in building collaboration within alliances and wider partnerships at local, national, and regional levels to facilitate and improve access to culture in their communities.

Eleven alliances, each consisting of three cultural institutions, were selected in August 2021 and received a grant of up to €110,000 to implement their cooperation projects until December 2023. A meeting was held in Beirut in October 2022 where more than 30 organizations from the 11 alliances gathered to evaluate and reflect on the collaboration journey, exchange and connect with the other alliances, to adjust and decide on how to proceed further in their partnerships.
Youth-led cultural and civic initiatives aim to foster community-based and contextual projects with collaborative approaches and improve the know-how and capacities of young artists, collectives, and cultural workers from underserved areas. After the research phase, which included 31 applicants, 23 of the 31 participants were selected for a production grant of up to €16,000 to complete their projects by August 2023.

(Thoulathy) South/North Collaboration Fellowships support collaboration between cultural organizations in the southern Mediterranean countries and their northern Mediterranean partners. Ten collaborations involving 30 cultural workers/managers of cultural organizations were selected from 68 eligible collaboration proposals. A meeting in September 2022 took place in Izmir, Turkey to kick off the program and further develop their collaboration concept.

The program offers a grant of up to €40,000 for the implementation of selected collaboration projects as well as mentorship and placements for each organization to visit their partners.
More than 30 organizations from 11 alliances gathered in Beirut.
Civil Society Exchange is a mobility-centered, capacity-building project organized in collaboration with Istanbul Bilgi University Center for Civil Society Studies and supported by Stiftung Mercator to address the issue of shrinking civil society in Turkey and Europe. The project encourages civil society organizations to form and foster partnerships across borders to learn from each other and strengthen their organizational capacities.

The Civil Society Exchange Partnership Program (CSEPP) started in 2020 to test the "capacity through mobility" model in different contexts and multiply the impact across various civil society networks.

As a result of the program, network organizations from Turkey and abroad co-designed and implemented four separate international mobility programs to strengthen the capacity of their members. Experiences of these partnerships were later collected to improve the model and better understand how mobility can be leveraged to support organizational capacity of civil society organizations in Turkey and Europe.

The third phase of the Civil Society Exchange project came to an end in November 2022. zusu will continue to support the Civil Society Exchange Alumni members in 2023 through online learning labs.
i-Portunus Houses is a pilot scheme to support the cross-border mobility of cultural professionals from Creative Europe Countries. Between 2021 and 2022 MitOst implemented a mobility program for artists and cultural professionals on behalf of the European Commission and in collaboration with Kultura Nova (Croatia) and European Cultural Foundation (Netherlands).

i-Portunus Houses was open to the 40 Creative Europe countries + UK and offered specific mobility support for local hosts to team up with up to five artists and/or cultural professionals. The scheme put the focus on hosts, underlining their value in providing safe and inspiring residencies and working environments for creative individuals. The role of hosts was taken by organizations or established cultural actors. Warmly hosted by their peers, the teams were able to learn, exchange, create, and produce together. MitOst was responsible for the implementation of mobility support, preparation of a mobility toolkit, and for providing inspiring space for connection by offering a series of market square events and matching sessions where hosts, artists, and cultural professionals met, formed teams, and came up with additional ideas to successfully co-design and submit a joint proposal.

i-Portunus Houses has enabled around 250 artists and cultural managers to travel to 74 locations in Europe and built connections for future collaborations. The program ended in 2022.
The VAHA (“oasis” in Turkish) program was developed in dialogue with alumni of the Tandem Turkey program and other local partners to support independent cultural spaces in opening public discussions and dialogues locally and transnationally. The program began in 2020 with the selection of participating hubs and supporting local collaborations in Turkey and in other Council of Europe countries. In the second phase, which was launched in July 2021, 13 local hubs worked in five transnational collaboration projects on topics common to the socio-political contexts they work in. These included intercultural heritage, empowerment of female artists, peacebuilding, ecology, the role of the urban environment for culture and arts, displacement, and reflecting on common history. VAHA participants continued to work on their projects throughout 2022 and supported their knowledge exchange journey through study visits and participating in thematic workshops.

In November 2022 all participating hubs came together in Antalya, Turkey for the Closing and Dissemination Meeting.
of the VAHA program. At this meeting, hubs shared the outcomes of learnings from their international collaboration projects, reflected on the process and on the impact the program had on their work. An impact evaluation session was also held to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The final day of the meeting was dedicated to discussing dissemination strategies. Participants shared their ideas for disseminating their project outputs in new contexts and discussed these with potential partners.

In the third and the final phase of the VAHA program, participants will implement their dissemination strategies in collaboration with other hubs in the network or with new partners. Through this phase, the hubs will have the means to reach out to new communities and form new alliances.

In February 2023, southeastern Turkey and northern Syria were struck by devastating earthquakes that resulted in the loss of lives, homes, and cities for members of the VAHA and Tandem Turkey networks. Many members of the VAHA network actively participated in humanitarian and cultural relief efforts and a call for solidarity was quickly issued to address the situation and emergency relief activities of cultural organizations in the affected areas. The call stressed the importance of maintaining support and visibility for the issue and provided recommendations for civil society organizations and cultural institutions outside of Turkey to contribute to the relief efforts. An online meeting was subsequently organized with participants from the VAHA, Tandem Turkey, and Civil Society Exchange (CSE) networks to exchange information, develop ideas, and formulate strategies for solidarity.

In 2023 the program will continue to support cultural spaces that aim to create safer spaces for public discussions and dialogue. VAHA is organized in partnership with Anadolu Kültür and supported by Stiftung Mercator, the European Cultural Foundation, the Crest Foundation, and the iac Berlin.
AiR zusa aims to facilitate an opportune framework, a transdisciplinary and safe space for resilience in times of war and persecution of artists by hosting cultural managers, curators, culture, and art activists from countries at risk and supporting their mental well-being.

The program was launched in 2022 with a round of short-term (1-3 weeks) and long-term (2-6 months) residencies dedicated to visual artists from Ukraine (both those who fled the country and those who stayed). Through a process and reflection-oriented residency program, it provides cultural actors and professionals with time and resources to restore their mental health and well-being. Each residency in the framework of AiR zusa is prepared based on the resident’s personal needs, but also include activity proposals such as external, professional mental health and coaching support, networking, and exploration of the local culture scene. Nonetheless, residents are primarily encouraged to simply spend their time in Berlin relaxing, resting, recuperating, and taking things slow.

The residency program is organized in fully-equipped apartments in peaceful Berlin-Lichtenberg with shared spaces, separate bedrooms, two balconies and lots of calming green areas around. In 2022 AiR zusa hosted Ukrainian visual artists with financial support from the Goethe-Institut and a special funding program called “Residencies for Visual Artists from Ukraine” organized by Kunstfonds together with the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media.

In 2023 AiR zusa had continued its work by hosting 15 artists and cultural managers from Ukraine.
A Tolocar is a mobile makerspace, a van equipped with conventional and digital fabrication tools. In Ukrainian, toloka is a traditional form of solidarity where a community comes together to perform a task collectively.

Tolocar is an ongoing project funded by the GIZ (Germany’s Society for International Cooperation) to support Ukrainian makerspaces and initiatives responding to Russia’s full-scale invasion with cultural relief activities, civic tech, and sustainable solutions for community infrastructure and repair. MitOst implemented the pilot phase of Tolocar from May until November 2022 together with Cadus e.V., Ukrainian partners Insha Osvita, Platform Ostriv, Metalab, and Maker Hub Ukraine. As a flexible response initiative mitigating war-inflicted damages and community needs, Ukrainian partners were supported with equipment, materials, and the construction of two mobile makerspaces (Tolocars) for local interventions. Within six months, Tolocar implemented 10 humanitarian projects, and supported 13 local organizations and institutions through re-construction or renovation of local buildings to provide housing and social services to internally displaced persons. Most of these interventions took place in western Ukraine and from July on in liberated regions of Kyiv and Kharkiv.

Insha Osvita, in cooperation with various artists and cultural organizations, implemented 14 cultural relief activities with communities of internally displaced persons, ranging from crafts master classes to designing and painting murals at local community spaces.

A series of workshops implemented by Cadus e.V. and the Ostriv platform trained 40 makers in first aid, emergency response, and technical skills for digital fabrication with wood, glass, and metal. Together with further local partners we developed and tested four prototype solutions for circular and sustainable water and heating systems. The Life Systems Laboratory is sustainably developing modularized water, heating, and electricity supply solutions for rural households in need of increased infrastructures for internally displaced persons.

In June 2022, the Tolocar team presented its initiative and vision at re:publica in Berlin, connecting further to international partners and supporters. In addition, the project was presented at the Maker Fair Hannover and the Fab City Summit in Bali. The MitOst-lead pilot phase of Tolocar engaged 18 civic and public actors and directly reached more than 1,000 Ukrainian citizens with its actions.

Since December 2022 Tolocar has been led by HIWW (Hamburger Institut für Wertschöpfungssystematik und Wissensmanagement) in close cooperation with Ukrainian partners and stakeholders increasing activities and measures of capacity building and open technology provision to Ukrainian makerspaces and local communities.
18 civic and public actors reached 1,000 Ukrainians.
The Belarus Project, later called Bazar BYzarre, was initiated in 2021 by Bosch Alumni Network member Aliaksey Strelnikov and representatives of iac Berlin who invited MitOst e.V./ Tandem, the Wroclaw Institute of Culture, and the Belarusian Council of Culture to join the core team and co-design a project that would offer space to foster connections between Belarusian cultural managers (in Belarus and in exile) and their peers and institutions/organizations in other countries.

During 2022 a community of almost 40 people met online every other month to share, learn, and work on their joint project development. The meetings focused on topics identified by the working groups. The whole community underlined the need to exchange alternative professional tracks for cultural workers and the importance of professional development while prioritizing the well-being of BY activists who are exposed for pressure, risks, and uncertainty.

In 2022 the Bazar BYzarre community gathered around the following questions:

- How do we navigate through the cultural residency environment? How does one apply for a residency?
- What is it possible to do within Belarus? How do we network?
- Exploration of other formats such as peer-to-peer learning online
- Mental health exercises, self-care
- Big players, who’s who; the larger framework of financing culture in the EU
- How do we stay connected when we’re disconnected?
- How does one apply for Creative Europe programs if one is from Belarus?

In the framework of Bazar BYzarre, the group decided to dedicate seed funding for four initiatives that were represented by community members: CreateCulture Group, Neue Nachbarschaft, sekktor, and Reading by heart.

Bazar BYzarre is continuing its work in 2023 with the same core team, organizing instructed meetings (online and offline) to reach the goal of supporting Belarusian cultural workers to navigate the creative scene abroad and to give space for Belarusians in wider, international networks.
The project Neustart in Deutschland was funded by Fonds Soziokultur and ran from spring until the end of 2022. With this project, we initiated a process to better understand the eastern German context and realities of cultural and other civil society initiatives. So far, as an organization based in Germany, we only had a small network with the German cultural scene and took the safe space for cultural participation and co-creation in Germany for granted. With the rise of right-wing populist and authoritarian currents in Germany, we saw the need to change this and bring our experience in international exchange to Germany.

Together with former participants and other actors as experts in socio-cultural practice, we aimed to find out how this can be prudently designed.

The main question here was: How can MitOst support German actors who are concerned with cultural participation as a counterpoint to right-wing populist and authoritarian tendencies?

For that, we held a network meeting in Bautzen in July 2022 and participated in a number of thematic meetings around the topic of eastern Germany.
## Association’s Finances 2022/23

**BY ANNA BELIKOVA (FINANCE COORDINATOR), MAJA PEGAN (BOARD MEMBER), ANNEGRET WULFF (BOARD MEMBER)**

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<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Total Turnover</th>
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<td>2022/23</td>
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<td>2023</td>
<td>7,952,672 €</td>
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The total turnover in 2022 was 4,255,679 €. The profit generated in the financial year of 2022/23 was 158,82 €. The total turnover in 2023 was 7,952,672 €.
The results of the 2022/23 financial year in detail:

Earmarked Revenues
In the 2022/23 financial year, the association collected a total of €3,592,190 for its purposes. This amount is composed of earmarked receivables to MitOst for the programs and projects (€3,534,807), and the earmarked funds to organize the festival/network gathering (€57,383).

Free Funds
The free funds of the association amounted to a total of €663,489 in the 2022/23 financial year. The amount breaks down as follows: membership fees and donations (€56,140), overheads from the programs (€189,171) and other income (€24,614). In the reporting period, €393,564 was collected for aid to Ukraine.

Expenses
Without taking the earmarked funds from which the festival (€24,711) and programs were financed into account, the association’s expenses in the 2022/23 financial year totaled €303,470, consisting of €147,441 for personnel costs, €7,308 for committee work, €143,647 for material office expenses and €5,074 for press and public relations work. Donations received for Ukraine amounting to €393,188 were forwarded to private individuals and organizations in need. The association’s assets amounted to €168,218.57 as of 30 April 2023.

The following table shows the balance sheet for the 2022/23 financial year and the budget for 2023/24 approved by the Board:

### MitOst Budget

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### Projects

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Partners & Funders

We connect civil society actors from different backgrounds.
We would like to thank all our friends and partners, sponsors, and supporters for their trusting cooperation and the joint development of our new ideas and formats.

We would also like to thank all MitOst members for their commitment, participation in the development of the association and both their financial and non-financial support.

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