

Open House Europe

Audience development guide



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01



Introduction

About this guide

This guide was prepared as part of Open House Europe (OHEu) project, funded by Creative Europe programme of the European Commission. OHEu unites different Open House festivals across Europe, with an aim to embrace a more inclusive debate about architecture as a shared European identity. Open House events are weekend-long festivals during which notable buildings in the city open their doors for free guided tours. The festivals also often include lectures, discussions, performances, and other activities.

Audience development is a strategic approach to strengthening the relationships between cultural organisations and their existing audiences, as well as establishing new relationships with persons that have not been previously engaged.¹ There is no uniform approach to audience development and each organisation can work on its own unique goals. Hence, the OHEu audience development guide does not set targets for audience building, nor provide 'action plans' that must be implemented. The guide seeks to support its users in strengthening their audience building efforts. It seeks to enhance audience engagement in various OHEu consortium activities, as well as support Open House event organisers in making their events more accessible and inclusive.

The guide is primarily dedicated for Open House event organisers but may also serve as an inspiration for other cultural and creative organisations. We invite you to use this guide for reflecting on your audience development activities and taking a more strategic approach. The guide has a twofold purpose – it is both a toolkit proving a step-by-step approach on planning your audience development activities, as well as a catalogue of good practises that can be drawn upon for inspiration.

The suggestions and good practices included in this guide were identified during the research stage through desk-research, survey of OHEu partners, and two workshops. While these practises were identified as noteworthy and potentially impactful, they may require periodic updating in the future. Notably, each Open House event is different and certain practises that work for some festivals may not be relevant or as effective when applied in other contexts.

¹ The Audience Agency (2020) *Creating an effective audience development plan*, p. 53.

About Open House Europe

Open House Europe (OHEu) is a cooperation project, supported by Creative Europe programme of the European Commission. In 2023, coordinated by Architektūros fondas in Vilnius, Lithuania, the project united 12 local Open House events in 11 countries: Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. Cooperation emerged with an aim to embrace a more inclusive debate about architecture as a shared European identity and strengthen the role of architecture as a positive change-maker addressing the most relevant social and environmental challenges. Since then, the project is open to other Open House organisers to join as new partner organisations or guest cities.

Open House events are weekend-long festivals during which notable buildings in a city open their doors for free guided tours and often include lectures, discussions, performances, and other activities. The local festivals offer diverse experiences of architecture free-of-charge and provide a unique opportunity for the public to engage with the built environment.

OHEu seeks to strengthen the architecture sector through collaborative learning, shaping the agenda for contemporary architecture debate, ensuring a more inclusive and engaging access to knowledge, and bringing the values of quality-designed space closer to the public. OHEu is based on values of openness, collaboration, and engagement.

- **Openness**

OHEu is an inclusive project. Its activities are accessible to a widest public as possible. This provides opportunities for the visitors to satisfy a need for learning and spending leisure time in a meaningful way, and for the professional public to deepen their knowledge on architecture and build personal networks.

- **Collaboration**

The project provides opportunity for the Open House community to collaborate and interact. It fills the gap and need of a structured action at a European level. It allows different organisations and experts to work together towards a common goal and mission.

- **Engagement**

Through knowledge sharing between experts and the wider public, OHEu enables local audiences to engage in public debate on architecture. It empowers citizens and fosters

active citizenship. OHEu responds to citizens' need to participate in public debate and influence the decisions being made regarding their surroundings.

OHEu steers shared actions and coordinates common topics among the participating Open House events. The project foresees such actions like calls for visual stories, developing digital atlas of Open House events and their buildings, or having a volunteer exchange among participating Open House events. OHEu also sets annual themes that are integrated in the participating festivals (e.g. sustainability, future heritage). One of such themes is accessibility, which is also closely related to the topics covered in this guide.

Target audiences

Open House festivals aim to attract a large audience to visit guided tours and other events in their festival programme. To ensure smooth operation, each festival usually gathers a large team of organisers and volunteers, while also uniting the professional community and establishing partnerships. Although data on the characteristics, needs, and motivations of different audience segments are rather limited, secondary sources show certain trends regarding common audience groups and the roles they take on during Open House festivals. Below we provide an overview of a few main groups.

Visitors

Visitors come from varied backgrounds: families with children, young adults, or non-professionals who enjoy cultural experiences etc. Additionally, professionals, both new and established, seek inspiration from diverse buildings, alongside tourists exploring the city. This list is not exhaustive, as each visitor group has its own unique characteristics.

Existing data suggest that most visitors are predominantly **adults** (25-65 years-old). They are persons from different fields, not necessarily related to architecture. Yet, in some Open House events, e.g. Open House Lisbon, architects and urbanists make a high share of visitors. Adult visitors also often tend to come with family or friends.

Open House impact studies indicate that adult visitors search for an affordable experience and appreciate that entrances to all festival's buildings are free of charge.² In addition, they appreciate that the event helps to break boundaries between usually

² Open House London 2016; 2016 Worldwide Impact Study, p. 14.

inaccessible government or business buildings and the citizens living in the city, hence creating a more democratic and equitable space.⁵

Another motivating factor for visitors is the desire to learn and spend their leisure time meaningfully. Visitors frequently describe their experience at Open House events as educational, highlighting the chance to learn more about their city.

Children, youth, and seniors are currently less represented among Open House visitors. Children and youth require tailored approaches and age-appropriate programming to enhance their understanding of architecture. Some Open House events have successfully engaged the youngest audience by offering interactive activities or specialised junior programmes. Additionally, children often attend with their parents or guardians, which indicates a need for creating an environment suitable for families and offering family-oriented activities.

For **senior** citizens, alongside meeting the needs of all visitors, the socialisation aspect is particularly crucial. Open House events should consider including activities and amenities tailored to the interests and preferences of senior citizens, encouraging social interaction and engagement within this demographic. Some seniors may be discouraged by long queues or walking long distances, so this should be taken into account when preparing for the event.

It is also important for OHEu to attract **international visitors** and get them involved in different local Open House activities. These visitors include not only tourists temporarily visiting the city but also international residents who study, work, and live in the city. Such visitors often look for activities that accommodate those who may not speak the local language (e.g. tours in different languages).

Volunteers

Volunteers act as advocates for the sites and the event. The size and profile of volunteer teams greatly differ among Open House festivals. In 2023, volunteer teams at festivals organised by OHEu members ranged anywhere from 10 (in Essen) to 602 (in Bilbao). Volunteers typically take on different roles from guiding tours to creating festival programmes, supervising fellow volunteers, or even doing photography for the event etc. While there are no limitations to volunteer age, most volunteers are adults (18-65 years old). Notably, some Open House festivals (e.g. Open House Basel) also engage children in volunteering and guided tours.

Volunteers are often motivated by opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of architecture and learning more about specific buildings, and the city as well.⁴ By volunteering, persons can not only spend time in a meaningful way but also receive

⁵ 2016 Worldwide Impact Study, p. 14.

⁴ 2016 Worldwide Impact Study, p. 17.

training, improve public speaking and other skills. Volunteers also join a community – meet new people, receive exclusive to volunteers benefits (e.g. volunteer parties).

Volunteers usually have varying levels of experience with architecture and urban planning, ranging from limited knowledge to studying these disciplines or already working as professionals. Some Open House events specifically target **students and young professionals**. Open House organisers often have partnerships with universities. Such cities like Barcelona, Rome, Lisbon and Ljubljana offer university accreditation to architectural students, hence establishing a continuous cooperation between the festival and education institutions. For students, volunteering can help to gain more experience in the field, as well as meet new people and network with like-minded individuals and professionals.

Experts

Professionals, contributing as experts, may include architects, as well as other professionals from the cultural and built environment fields. They can actively contribute to discussions or consultations on the buildings. For instance, in 2023, 92 experts contributed to Open House Lisbon event.⁵ Nonetheless, Open House events are still looking for ways to engage professionals and showcase them how Open House events can provide a great platform for establishing new professional connections and contributing to raising awareness on architecture to a wide public.

Partner organisations

Local and international organisations working in architecture and built environment sectors, as well as guest cities of OHEu, constitute a significant professional network. OHEu aims to establish a network of organisations that can exchange knowledge and accumulate expertise in the field. Organisations, by contributing to OHEu and other local Open House festivals, get an opportunity to exchange knowledge and best practices, expand the network of professional contacts, and engage in discussions on topics important to them.

Representatives of buildings and sites

Managers and representatives of buildings included in the programme play a vital role in Open House festivals. Participation in the festival allows companies or individuals owning the building to enhance visibility, improve public relations, or advocate for good design. Opening the building to the public can also reinforce organisational values and provide employees with a fresh perspective, fostering a greater appreciation for the space they work in.⁶

⁵ Open House Lisbon. For more information see: <https://www.trienaldelisboa.com/ohl/en/this-open-house-was-a-success/>

⁶ Open House (2016), p. 29

The audience groups described above are broad categories, not fully reflecting the diversity of persons engaged in different roles at Open House festivals. Each local Open House festival has its own unique audience groups, which can be determined by examining a set of variables. Such variables include role in the festival, age, familiarity with architecture and urban planning, place of residence, and socio-cultural behaviour.

For example, audience members assuming the role of volunteers can greatly differ in relation to other variables. They may be teenagers (aged 12-18) interested in architecture, potentially considering studying it, born and raised in the city, and active participants in cultural events. Meanwhile, another part of volunteers could be young adults (aged 19-34) with basic knowledge of architecture, recently moved to the city, and highly interested in contemporary art. The variety is vast, and Chapter 4 details how to navigate this and construct your own audience groups based on the following characteristics.

Role in the festival	The engagement level can vary, from organisers of the event who are fully immersed in all operations, to volunteers who deliver guided tours, and visitors who attend the event or participate in other activities.
Age group	Audience members span various age groups, from children to senior citizens. While age is the primary demographic characteristic used for this audience segmentation, other factors such as gender, education, ethnicity, etc., may also be significant and used for audience segmentation.
Familiarity with architecture and urban planning	Audience members can range from persons with limited knowledge of architecture and urban planning to those who work professionally in this field.
Place of residence	Audience members can have a different relationship with the city – they may be long-term residents with their own stories to tell, newcomers who want to get to know their city better, or visiting tourists looking to get a glimpse into the local context.
Behaviour	Behavioural metrics related to socio-cultural activities can showcase the overall engagement of your audience with such type of events. This can include frequency of attendance to cultural events (e.g. non-participants, observers, occasional participants, and active participants). Alternatively, it can focus on the ‘taste’ and preferences of the content consumed, indicating whether audience member is seeking for mainstream cultural experiences or is interested in specific and niche topics.

Current situation and challenges

Despite the unique local contexts and challenges encountered by Open House events, organisers commonly face a set of shared challenges.

1. Tailoring activities to different age groups

Children, youth and seniors are among target audiences that are less engaged. Increasing engagement of these audiences requires tailoring different activities to their needs and interests. There are already a few good practise examples where Open House festivals work systemically towards engaging these groups. For instance, Open House Athens organises ‘Open School’ event that takes place parallel to the main festival. This initiative includes visits that are specifically tailored to school children, educational institutions, and other groups with an educational focus.⁷ Open House Dublin has a separate junior programme, featuring activities specifically for families and young people.⁸ Despite the good practise examples, a more systemic approach to including diversified activities for different age groups is needed. The OHEu consortium forms a network of organisations that, through learning from each other, can move towards achieving this goal.

2. Creating an inclusive event

Some Open House festivals face difficulties in attracting diverse visitor groups that would be reflective of the society that live in the city or beyond it. Creating accessible and inclusive spaces for all persons to participate regardless of their abilities is an important priority of OHEu. This need for diversification is evident not only within the visitor composition but also among the volunteer community.

While some organisations have tested various approaches to adapting the event to different needs and abilities (e.g. offering tours in sign language, using tactile materials, including information on accessibility in the event programme), others have less experience in this field. Financial resources play an important factor in this regard, especially in relation to tools and solutions for adapting the physical and digital infrastructure. In-house competencies are also key in planning inclusive and accessible activities. Besides ensuring that the physical or digital space is accessible, establishing meaningful connections with the community of the underrepresented group can be a success factor in increasing participation from marginalised groups.

⁷ ‘Open School’. More information available at: <https://www.openhouseathens.gr/en/event/open-school/>

⁸ ‘Open House Junior’. More information available at: <https://openhousedublin.com/type/open-house-junior/>

3. Building a volunteer community

Most Open House events face difficulties in attracting volunteers and maintaining their engagement from year to year. Some festivals have tested novel recruitment methods by establishing cooperation with different organisations (e.g. presenting volunteer opportunities at universities) or inviting potential volunteers to informal meetings in bars.

Despite a large volunteer community being a desire for many Open House events, it requires resources and competencies to manage it effectively. Effective management of a large volunteer community can pose significant difficulties to some organisers of the festival.

4. Engaging young and experienced professionals

Some Open House organisers notice prejudice and reservations within the architectural community towards the event, as it is not always perceived as a space for professional discussions on architecture. Altering this belief can be a substantial challenge for some Open House organisers. The organisers would like for Open House events to serve as a platform where architects engage with the public and showcase their work. The involvement of architects could be beneficial in creating the programme, consulting on the guided tours, being volunteers themselves or delivering exclusive guided tours in the buildings they designed or their architectural studios.

5. Raising awareness about architecture's role in responding to contemporary planetary and civil society challenges

Architecture can participate in addressing various contemporary challenges, ranging from climate change to creating a more inclusive and equitable society. OHEu contributes to this discussion by providing a platform for local Open House festivals to exchange knowledge and share good practises. OHEu annual themes also draw attention to different challenges and raise a question on architecture's role in tackling them. OHEu also gives international visibility to different sites showcasing quality architecture, fosters visitor awareness of global challenges and the role of responsible urban and architectural development in finding solutions to these challenges.

Creating new activities or customising existing ones to meet the needs of various target groups demands both human and financial resources. The audience development guide is mindful of these challenges and presents some activities that can be implemented with existing resources. In other cases, it acknowledges that some of the suggestions may require investments or additional funding, thus might not be feasible for all organisations to implement.

02



Audience development

Key concepts

Before delving further into audience development, let's align our vocabulary and explain how the different terms are used in this guide.

- *Inclusion* means creating spaces and activities in which all individuals regardless of their background and abilities are valued and can take part.
- *Accessibility* means ensuring that different activities, products, environments, information etc. can be used by all people despite of their abilities. This considers both physical and digital products, services and environments.
- *Participation* means active engagement of citizens or specific target groups that take part in one's activities.
- *Equity* means providing relevant conditions and support that allows persons with different needs and abilities participate on an equal level.
- *Intersectionality* refers to the ways in which persons can experience discrimination and inequality based on several aspects (gender, race, sexual orientation, disability etc.).⁹ Such aspects operate not as mutually exclusive entities but are closely linked. When designing audience building activities, it is important to approach the marginalised groups through the lens of intersectionality – to consider how people and their possibilities to participate can be affected by multiple barriers.

Audience development strategies

Audience development is often concerned with attracting more visitors / participants to events or activities, building stronger connection with existing audience members, and ensuring that the space created is safe and welcoming to persons with different needs.¹⁰ The study on Audience development by European Commission summarises such efforts as 'widening', 'deepening', and 'diversifying' the audiences.¹¹ Such goals are also relevant in the context of OHEu.

⁹ Collins, P. (2015) 'Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas'. *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 41, pp. 1-20.

¹⁰ *Study on audience development: How to place audiences at the centre of cultural organisations. At a glance*, p. 5. Available at: <http://engageaudiences.eu/files/2017/05/StudyonAudienceDevelopment-Easy-to-Read-Summaryv2.pdf>

¹¹ Ibid.

Open House festival organisers can work towards one, two or all three goals at the same time. Each organisation is different and can select their own specific goals to work on that best meet their needs.

Widening

Widening is concerned with attracting more persons to your event from the audience segments that you already are in touch with. Organisations that seek to widen their audience, can scale their existing practises, focus on communication measures, as well as experiment with new type of events to draw attention of a larger group of people. Such efforts contribute to reaching a wider number of persons and growing the festival.

Notably, there is a risk that seeking to attract the same audience segments can result in underrepresentation of certain groups. It is important to keep the question of diversity and inclusion in mind when creating your audience development plan.

Deepening

Deepening focuses on enhancing the relationship with current audiences through various activities, including educational ones. The aim of this strategy is to cultivate your audience's interest in and familiarity with a given topic (e.g. increasing appreciation for quality architecture). You can start by truly understanding the needs and motivations of your different audience segments and adapting your programme accordingly. Deepening strategies should not only focus on creating space for your audience to experience architecture in different forms, but also for allowing them to share their own experiences and impressions of the event (e.g. visual storytelling).

Diversifying

Diversification is concerned with evaluating your current audience composition and identifying which groups are less or not at all engaged. Acting in this direction may require partnering up with organisations working in this field and with respective communities that one seeks to engage. Having a more diverse audience composition, which better reflects the society and place where the festival is organised, can bring numerous advantages. The festivals can contribute to creating a more equitable society, as well as learn from the stories and experiences that in the past were less represented.

Guiding principles

Regardless of each organisation's individual goals – to widen, deepen, or diversify the audiences – the audience development process should be guided by a set of horizontal principles to ensure coherence among different OHEu members. Such audience development principles were identified during the workshop with OHEu members. The OHEu members highlighted the importance of building bridges between visitors who are less familiar with architecture and professionals, focusing on new partnerships, as

well as increasing accessibility and inclusivity of their events. Each Open House organiser can adapt these guiding principles to their own context.

1. Building bridges between non-professionals and professionals

A focus should be placed on creating connection and fostering understanding between the two groups. The connections and practises established should be based on mutual exchange where not only visitors or volunteers who are less knowledgeable in architecture are familiarised with intricacies of a profession, but professionals also gain insight from the wider public.

2. Building partnerships

An emphasis should be placed on creating collaborative relationships between different stakeholders to enhance the impact and reach of Open House events. The principle is about leveraging the strengths of various partnerships to create more impactful programs.

3. Ensuring accessibility and inclusivity

This principle refers to dedication to increase inclusivity of the festival by creating events and initiatives that are open and welcoming to all segments of the population, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities. Fostering inclusivity relates to dismantling barriers that may prevent people from participating in Open House events.

How to use this guide?

You can use this guide for different purposes. You can familiarise with the concept of audience development and creating an action plan by glossing over different chapters of this guide. Yet, we advise to read the guide with a clear idea about which audience development goals you want to pursue. Take a moment and decide on which audiences you want to focus on most and either mark it in the sheet below (all worksheets are provided in a separate document to download and print) or write it down in your own notes.

What do you want to achieve?		Widen	Deepen	Diversify
Visitors	Children			
	Youth			
	Adults			
	Seniors			
	International visitors			
	Students and young professionals			
	Professionals			
	Volunteers			
	Experts			
	Partner organisations			
Representatives of buildings and sites				
Other:				

You can use the guide as a methodological tool that provides a step-by-step approach to planning audience development activities for your specific goals. By following the exercises in Chapters 3 and 4, you will be able to assess the current level of your event’s accessibility, further break down your target audiences into smaller segments, create new ideas and develop a roadmap to achieving them.

If you have limited time and are simply looking for inspiration for new ideas on audience building activities, you can browse through Chapter 5 with good practises. These practises focus on understanding audience needs, tailoring activities to specific audiences, making your events more inclusive and accessible, and other topics.

03



Increasing accessibility
and inclusion

Inclusion

Accessibility and inclusion are one of the horizontal principles of OHEu for audience development and should be integrated into any audience development strategy developed by local festivals. Inclusion refers to ‘bringing people from marginalised groups into decision-making processes, activities, or positions of power’.¹² Creating more diverse spaces and events requires welcoming different viewpoints and persons with various characteristics like age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ability, race, ethnicity, religion or economic or other statuses.¹³ To ensure both inclusion and diversity, intentional effort is needed in terms of welcoming, respecting, and creating space for people from different backgrounds to take part.

When thinking about increasing inclusivity of the event, it is important to approach the marginalised through the lens of intersectionality – to think how people and their possibilities to participate can be affected by multiple barriers.¹⁴ For instance, while improving accessibility of the event is necessary, minimising barriers to participation associated with disability might not necessarily mean that persons with disability have all necessary conditions to take part. They may also face barriers associated with their gender, sexual identity, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status etc. Efforts should be made to understand various barriers and how they are interconnected.

Accessibility

At the beginning of each new initiative or programme, the accessibility needs of various audiences should be taken into account. Accessibility involves making adjustments to physical and digital environments or programming with the aim of removing barriers that individuals with different disabilities or conditions may encounter. The goal is to create a barrier-free event that everyone can equally participate in.

There is a wide range of disabilities and conditions that may require festival organisers to reconsider certain decisions and make appropriate adjustments – e.g. hearing impairments (deaf or hard of hearing), visual impairments (blind or loss of sight), neurodivergent conditions (e.g. autism, dyslexia), physical impairments etc. In this guide, we primarily focus on three types of accessibility – physical, sensory, and

¹² Shift Culture, *Inclusion Handbook*, p. 15. Available at: https://shift-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/SHIFT_Handbook_Inclusion.pdf

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 12-15.

¹⁴ Hassier, H. (2020) ‘Let’s Talk: What Is Intersectionality?’, *Medium*. Available at: <https://medium.com/appreciative-wellbeing/i-am-intersectionality-6ebc6da347e3>

cognitive – which can help make progress in accommodating the various needs of individuals with disabilities.

Physical accessibility	Sensory accessibility	Cognitive accessibility
<p>Physical accessibility refers to the design of environments, products, and services to ensure that they can be usable by individuals with mobility impairments, such as those who use wheelchairs, walkers, or other mobility aids. Physical accessibility can also be relevant for persons with temporary injuries or other conditions affecting their mobility.</p> <p>Common adjustments may include installing ramps, elevators, and handrails; widening doorways and aisles; providing accessible parking spaces; and ensuring that facilities have accessible restrooms.</p>	<p>Sensory accessibility refers to accommodating individuals with sensory disabilities, who are blind, deaf, hard of hearing, or have low vision, as well as individuals with sensory processing difficulties or conditions like autism.</p> <p>Common adjustments to physical environment can include ensuring that spaces are navigable for those with visual or auditory impairments. This can include clear signage or other wayfinding solutions helping to navigate, providing sign language interpretation to guided tours for deaf or hard of hearing, or tours with tactile material for persons who are blind or with low vision.</p> <p>In terms of the digital environment, organisers should adjust their digital environments and content by providing alternative text for images, ensuring captions for multimedia content, maintaining sufficient colour contrast, enabling keyboard accessibility etc. Useful guidelines are presented in web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG)¹⁵ for all digital event materials and platforms.</p>	<p>Cognitive accessibility refers to creating activities and events that are understandable by people with cognitive impairments, such as intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, and neurodivergent conditions. Such conditions can include dyslexia, ADHD, autism, etc.</p> <p>Common adjustments may include providing clear signage, using plain language in instructions and communication, offering quiet areas for individuals who may become overwhelmed by sensory stimuli, and ensuring that environments are free from distractions.</p> <p>In digital environments, adjustments may include using simple and consistent navigation, providing text alternatives for non-text content, offering options for customisation and personalisation, and minimising cognitive load through clear organisation and presentation of information.</p>

¹⁵ Web Content Accessibility Guidelines: <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/>

Assessing your situation

Before delving further into creating specific plans and actions for widening, deepening, or diversifying your audiences, we advise you to take a moment and assess the current level of your event’s accessibility and inclusivity. We provide two checklists – one for improving accessibility of your events and one for increasing diversity and inclusivity – that can help you start thinking about these topics. The two checklists can provide a good start for understanding where you stand at, what you already do well, and where you can improve.

You can also keep these checklists in mind when creating an audience development plan, introduced in Chapter 4. Any new ideas that emerge through this process can be assessed against these checklists to ensure that, to at least some extent, they are more accessible and inclusive.

ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST

Physical accessibility:

- Is there special infrastructure (like ramps or elevators) available for wheelchair users to access all areas of the building?
- Are pathways clear and free from obstacles?
- Are doorways wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs?
- Are there designated accessible parking spaces close to the building entrance?
- Are there accessible toilets available throughout the building?

Sensory accessibility:

- Is the environment adapted to individuals with sensory sensitivities (e.g., quiet areas for those sensitive to noise)?
- Are there options to mitigate sensory overload (e.g. noise-cancelling headphones)?
- Are activities adapted for those with sensory impairments? E.g. are there sign language interpreters available for deaf or hard-of-hearing participants?

Cognitive accessibility:

- Are your communication and information materials clear and concise? Do they use easy-to-understand language?
 - Do you provide opportunity to receive content in advance and in various formats – text, audio, video etc.?
 - Do the venues have clear and logical signage?
 - Do your events have a clear schedule with breaks included, which can be shared in advance with participants?
-

Communication:

- Is the information on accessibility of the tours included in the event's programme (including any potential barriers)?
- Is there a point of contact for participants to inquire about accessibility prior to the tour?
- Is information about guided tours available in multiple formats (e.g., printed materials, audio guides, braille)?

Assistance and support:

- Are volunteers trained to assist individuals with disabilities (e.g. guiding visually impaired participants, helping persons with mobility restrictions)?
- Are volunteers trained in communicating effectively with individuals with different communication needs?

Feedback:

- Are there opportunities for participants to provide feedback on the accessibility of the tours and other activities?
-

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY CHECKLIST

Intersectional analysis:

- Have you considered how different aspects of diversity (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, disability, socio-economic status) may intersect and impact your audience's experience?

Diverse representation:

- Are efforts made to include diverse perspectives in the tour content?
- Are tour guides trained to be culturally sensitive and respectful of diverse cultural backgrounds and traditions?
- Are there opportunities to highlight the contributions and experiences of underrepresented communities within the building's history or context?

Accessible pricing (in case of other activities than free guided tours):

- Is the activity affordable to individuals from diverse backgrounds?
- Are there discounts or scholarships available for marginalized communities or low-income participants?

Inclusive activities:

- Do the tours consider different learning styles and preferences?
 - Are there options for participants to engage with the content in ways that resonate with their interests and experiences?
-

Community engagement:

- Are efforts made to engage with local communities to ensure their perspectives are included in the tour?
- Are partnerships established with community organisations with an aim to increase engagement of various community groups?
- Are efforts made to reach out to underrepresented communities and promote the event as a welcoming space for all?

Training:

- Are volunteers trained on how to foster an inclusive environment (e.g., diversity, cultural sensitivity)?

Feedback:

- Are there opportunities for participants to provide feedback on the inclusivity and diverse representation of the tours and other activities?
-

Risk management

Each organisation is at a different stage in their journey to ensure their events are more inclusive and diverse. It is worth remembering that even if you successfully check all the boxes on the checklists, you may still encounter certain risks and challenges. Here is a list of some most common challenges that you may face and the suggested mitigation strategies.

Risks	Description	Mitigation strategies
<i>Accessibility and inclusion risks</i>		
Low demand for accessible events	Despite efforts to make events accessible, there is a risk that these specialised features may not be utilised to their full potential due to low awareness or interest among target groups.	Intensify marketing efforts towards groups that would benefit most from accessible features. This could include partnerships with organisations dedicated to serving individuals with special needs, social media campaigns targeting specific communities to raise awareness about the events' accessibility features.
Inadequate infrastructure for accessibility	Event locations might not fully meet the requirements for accessibility,	Prioritise venue selection based on accessibility criteria, ensuring that venues have necessary accommodations such as ramps,

Risks	Description	Mitigation strategies
	preventing or hindering participation from individuals with special needs.	elevators, and accessible restrooms. For locations lacking certain features, explore temporary solutions like portable ramps or sign language interpretation services. Additionally, provide clear information about the accessibility of each venue in promotional materials.
<i>Financial and resource constraints</i>		
Financial limitations	Budget restrictions may impede the implementation of comprehensive accessibility measures, potentially affecting the overall inclusivity and quality of the event.	Seek grants specifically aimed at improving accessibility and inclusivity in public events. Develop sponsorship packages that highlight the importance of accessibility, appealing to organisations' corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Consider crowdfunding campaigns that allow the community to directly support the inclusivity efforts of the event. Allocate resources strategically, focusing on high-impact, low-cost initiatives.
Lack of skills and competencies	Team members and volunteers may not possess the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively support participants with diverse needs, potentially leading to inadequate assistance and unintentional barriers to participation.	Provide comprehensive training sessions for all team members and volunteers that cover accessibility best practices, cultural competency, emergency response, and specific needs of attendees with disabilities.
<i>Operational and engagement challenges</i>		
Cultural and language barriers	Potential participants from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds may feel excluded if the event does not cater to their specific needs or if language barriers prevent full participation.	Offer event materials, signs, and audio guides in multiple languages relevant to the community. Engage cultural ambassadors or liaisons who can provide insights into cultural sensitivities and facilitate more inclusive programming. Host multicultural events or segments to celebrate and acknowledge the diversity of participants.
Safety and security concerns	Ensuring the safety and security of all participants, especially those with special needs, requires careful	Develop a comprehensive training for all staff and volunteers that covers accessibility principles, inclusive

Risks	Description	Mitigation strategies
	<p>planning and coordination. Challenges may include emergency evacuation for individuals with mobility issues, safe spaces for attendees with sensory sensitivities, and overall crowd management to prevent accidents.</p>	<p>language, emergency procedures, and the use of any specialised equipment.</p>
<i>Technology and digital accessibility</i>		
<p>Technology accessibility issues</p>	<p>In the digital age, ensuring that online content, registration platforms, and virtual event options are accessible is crucial. Without proper design, these technologies can exclude individuals with visual, auditory, or cognitive impairments.</p>	<p>Adhere to web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG)¹⁶ for all digital event materials and platforms. Provide alternatives, such as phone registration options or materials in accessible formats, to ensure everyone can access event information and participate fully.</p>

¹⁶ Web Content Accessibility Guidelines: <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/>

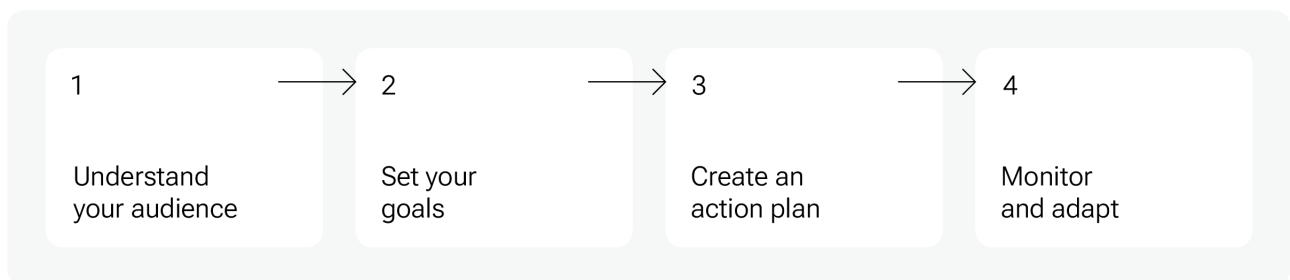
04



Audience development plan

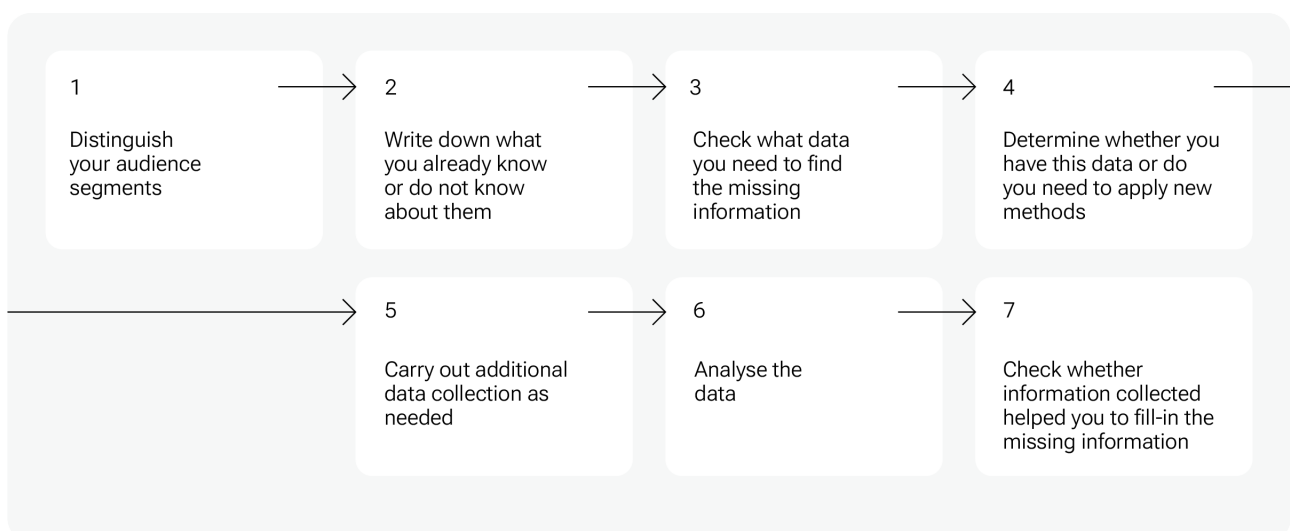
Creating an audience development plan

Once you have decided on which area you want to work on (widening, deepening, or diversifying your audiences), you can proceed to creating an action plan. The process of planning audience development activities constitutes of four main steps. The process is meant to be simple and adaptable to different contexts. At the end of this process, you should have an action plan with clear goals and targets of what you need to achieve in relation to the selected audience development strategy.



Step 1: Understand your audience

Getting to know your audience is vital in boosting their engagement. It also helps to understand which of your activities and ideas already work well and which of them need improvement. The process of taking you from audience segmentation to identifying the needs of different audience groups can vary depending on your internal capacity and time available. Below is one of the suggestions how such a process could look like.



Regardless of the process followed to understand your audiences, we suggest beginning from distinguishing your key audience segments. Offering the same activities to everyone within your current audience may not yield desired results, as a universal approach can disadvantage some of the target audiences and fail to respond to the needs of others. For this purpose, it is beneficial to divide your audience into smaller segments. Audience segmentation is 'the process of dividing and organising the population into meaningful and manageable groups'.¹

Let's say you decided to work on widening the volunteer community. In this case, we suggest taking the role of volunteers and further breaking it down into smaller groups, following the exercise below. Different audience segments can be constructed by looking at a set of variables – role in the festival, age, familiarity with architecture, place of residence, and socio-cultural behaviour. You can always adjust certain categories to your own context – e.g. age classification or add new dimensions of socio-cultural behaviour.

In terms of socio-cultural behaviour, the exercise offers two types of classification: by frequency of attending cultural and social events and by type of content consumed. Frequency of attendance incorporates categories such as non-participants, observers, occasional participants, and active participants:

- **Non-participants:** individuals who have little to no engagement in cultural and social activities.
- **Observers:** individuals who have an interest in cultural and social activities but prefer to engage in a more passive manner.
- **Occasional participants:** individuals who infrequently participate in cultural and social activities.
- **Active participants:** individuals who regularly attend various cultural and social events, as well as actively follow the cultural news and upcoming events.

Regarding type of content consumed, the portrait of different audience groups can be further constructed based on their cultural interests – music listeners, literature enthusiasts etc.

We advise to construct up to 5-6 main target audiences, as having too many audience segments may complicate the process of preparing an audience development plan.

¹ Guide | Segmentation made simple. Available at: https://www.theaudienceagency.org/resources/guide-segmentation-made-simple#What_is_segmentation

What are your audience segments?

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
Role in the festival					
Age group					
Familiarity with architecture and urban planning					
Place of residence					
Behaviour					

Role in the festival:

- Organisers
- Volunteers
- Experts
- Partner organisations
- Representatives of buildings and sites
- Visitors

Age group:

- Children up to 12 years old
- Youth 12-18 years old
- Young adults 19-34 years old
- Adults 35-64 years old
- Seniors 65+ years old

Familiarity with architecture and urban planning:

- Basic knowledge
- Broad knowledge (e.g. art history)
- Interest in urban planning and architecture news, recent developments
- Active engagement in architecture and urban planning as a non-professional
- Studying architecture, urban planning, or related disciplines
- Working professionally in urban development or related fields
- Professional architect or urban planner

Place of residence:

- Long-term city residents
- New residents in the city
- Visitors from other cities
- International visitors

Behaviour:

By frequency of attending cultural events:

- Non-participants
- Observers
- Occasional participants
- Active participants
- Seniors

By type of content consumed (can be adjusted to local context as needed):

- Mainstream / popular culture
- Visual arts
- Performing arts
- Film and media
- Literature
- Cultural heritage
- Multicultural and global content
- Other:
- Other:

Now that you have clear audience segments, you can start thinking about the information that is missing on different audience needs, motivations, as well as challenges faced. You can fill in a template describing each audience segment in more detail below.

Completing this template highly depends on the data you have available. It is common not to have all data needed on your target audiences at hand. In such cases you can explore additional methods and data sources to collect information and identify your audience needs.

Data	Possible data sources and collection methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative data: Social media interactions and other online data (e.g. Google Analytics, Facebook Analytics) • Quantitative data: number of visitors / volunteers etc. (their increase, decrease over the years) • Qualitative data: impressions and opinions of different visitors, participants etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary data: reports from other cultural organisations, statistical information etc. • Focus groups with target audiences • Workshops with target audiences • Gathering information from volunteers, as they usually have a most direct contact with visitors • Online surveys • Feedback collection during the events (face-to-face, QR codes to fill-in the survey etc.)

Tip: If you already have experience identifying your audience needs, assess whether any of the data sources and methods listed here have not yet been utilised by you.

Target audience group

What are the needs and expectations of the target audience?

What motivates the target audience to attend Open House events and activities?

Demographic characteristics

Age, gender, typical occupation etc.

Behaviour & interests

Preferred communication channels:

- Webpage
- Social media
- Radio
- Podcasts
- TV
- Internet portals
- Through partners
- Face-to-face
- Recommendations from family / friends
- Newsletters
- Advertisement

What challenges does the target audience face when engaging in your activities?

What disappoints the target audience in your events and activities?

Step 2: Set your goals

Setting goals is vital in any strategy. Goals and objectives help to clarify the organisation's vision and break it down into actionable steps. The whole team can set their eyes on the target, as well as celebrate when the aims are achieved.

The goals you set can be both quantitative and qualitative. *Quantitative* goals are usually easy to measure (e.g. an increase by 5% in attendance, number of tours offered in other than national language, an increase in volunteer retention from year to year). Meanwhile, *qualitative* goals are usually less tangible (e.g. establishing deeper connections with your audience, audience satisfaction). Below are some examples of both type of goals that could be applicable in the context of your Open House event.

Qualitative goals

- To enhance visitor satisfaction and experience
- To strengthen community engagement
- To improve visitors' understanding on architecture
- To strengthen existing partnerships
- To improve the processes of volunteer recruitment and management

Quantitative goals

- To increase the number of visitors
- To increase the size of your digital audience (e.g. social media followers)
- To expanded geographic reach of your activities
- To increase the number of tours offered in other than national language
- To increase the number of tours in sign language
- To increase the number of volunteers

...and many more!

Each organisation can have distinctive goals that suit their unique mission, resources, and audience. A combination of both quantitative and qualitative goals can provide a well-rounded approach to audience building.

The task of setting goals can benefit from a collective effort. If your organisation does not yet have clear goals, try meeting with your team and having a brainstorming session for this. You can kick-start this process by filling-in the template below.

Once you have clear goals set, it is a good practise to reflect on the challenges that your organisation already faces or might face in relation to these goals. In some cases, achieving the goals may mean solving a certain issue. The existing and potential challenges should be investigated for each of your audience building goal.

Our goal

What do we want to achieve?

Target date for achieving the goal:

Is it a short-term or long-term goal?

Target audience:

Which target audiences are affected by this goal?

What will success look like?

How will we understand that we were successful?

What are the challenges that we might face?

Have we tried solving this issue in the past?

What worked well?

What did not work well? Why?

What are the internal and external factors that can hinder solving this problem?

In case you struggle to fill-in parts of the template related to the challenges, we provide below more guidance that can help you out to clarify the challenge.

Understanding the challenge

There are different methods and tools that can assist you in deepening your understanding of the challenges faced. For instance, there can be three main types of problems: 'known knows', 'known unknowns', and 'big unknowns'.¹

known knows	known unknowns	big unknowns
We understand the issue and have knowledge on how to solve it.	We do not have the knowledge ourselves, but we know where to find solutions.	We do not know how to solve these issues, nor where to find solutions. We do not know the origins of the issue and need further analysis of the problem to find the root causes.

Source: adapted from Board of innovation. *Design thinking crash course*.

The actions that can be taken in case of 'known knows' and 'known unknowns' are quite clear. In the first case you can use in-house competencies to assess your previous actions. In the second case, you can consult experts or other organisations that could provide support.

It might be less clear where to start with the 'big unknown' category. Design-thinking methods can be employed to understand the root cause of the issue and help to realise whether it can be solved using in-house competencies or shed light on who to call for advice. One such tool can be the '5 Whys' exercise.²

¹ Board of Innovation, adapted from A. Millenson. Available at [here](#).

² Ibid.

5 'Whys' exercise

Take the issue that you want to unpack and ask 'Why?'.
Write down the answer to the question.

Then repeat the question 'Why?' to the previous answer.
This exercise helps to dig deeper into the problem, explore cause and effect.

5 questions are usually enough to generate insights.

The issue

Why #1?

Why #2?

Why #3?

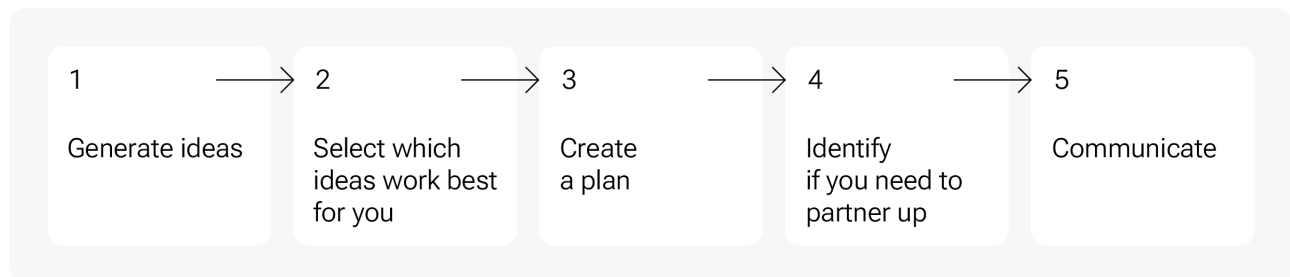
Why #4?

Why #5?

Source: adapted from Board of innovation. *Design thinking crash course*.

Step 3: Create an action plan

Now that you have clarified your goals and challenges that you seek to tackle, you can develop an action plan with activities. We identify a few steps that can guide you through the process of selecting best audience-building measures. It is best to go through this process once you have a clear set of goals that you want to achieve in audience building.



1. Generate ideas

Before deciding on one or several activities that you will apply to tackle the existing problems and achieve your goals, it is good to have a wide range of activities to choose from. These can be later sorted out from least to most relevant. You can begin by reviewing your past experiences, looking at good practise examples listed in this guide, or generating completely new ideas.

At this stage, the main goal is to create a wide pool of ideas. You can start from filling in the following template.

Your goal

What do you want to achieve?

Challenges faced

What key issues do you seek to address?

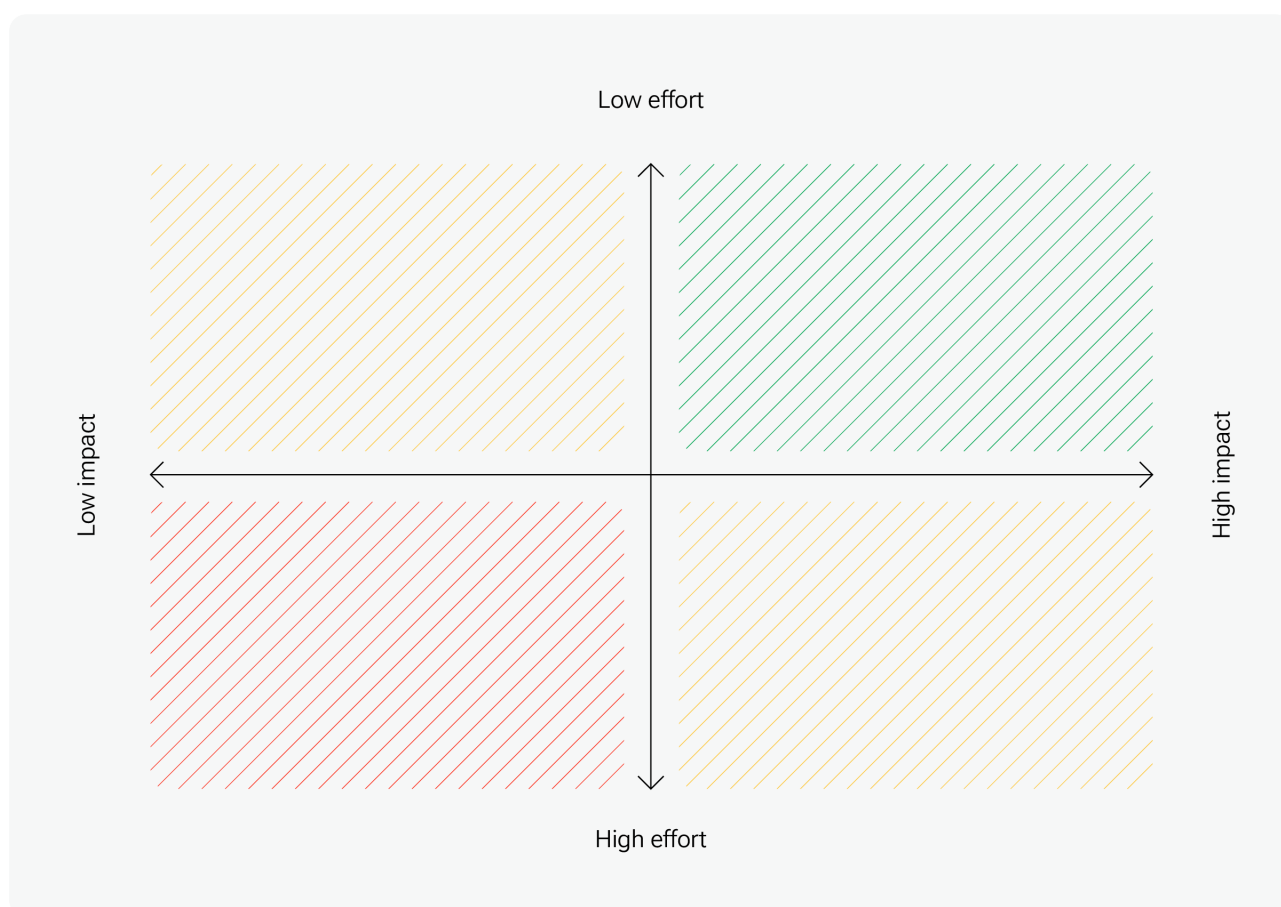
Ideas

What activities and actions could help to achieve your goal and overcome the challenges? List all ideas that come to mind.

2. Select which ideas work best for you

The next step is prioritising the ideas generated and understanding which actions would be most valuable to implement and test. The ideas can be sorted based on two criteria – potential impact and efforts required to implement them. Activities that require relatively low effort but can generate greater impact should be prioritised. This does not mean that other activities should be disregarded. For instance, activities that are impactful but need significant effort (time, additional human or financial resources) are also worth implementing but likely need a long-term approach.

We suggest locating each of the idea you generated in the previous step on the following matrix. This exercise should help to figure out which ideas can render desirable results with most appropriate level of effort. Activities that fall within green quadrant should be both fairly easy to implement and be impactful.



3. Create a plan

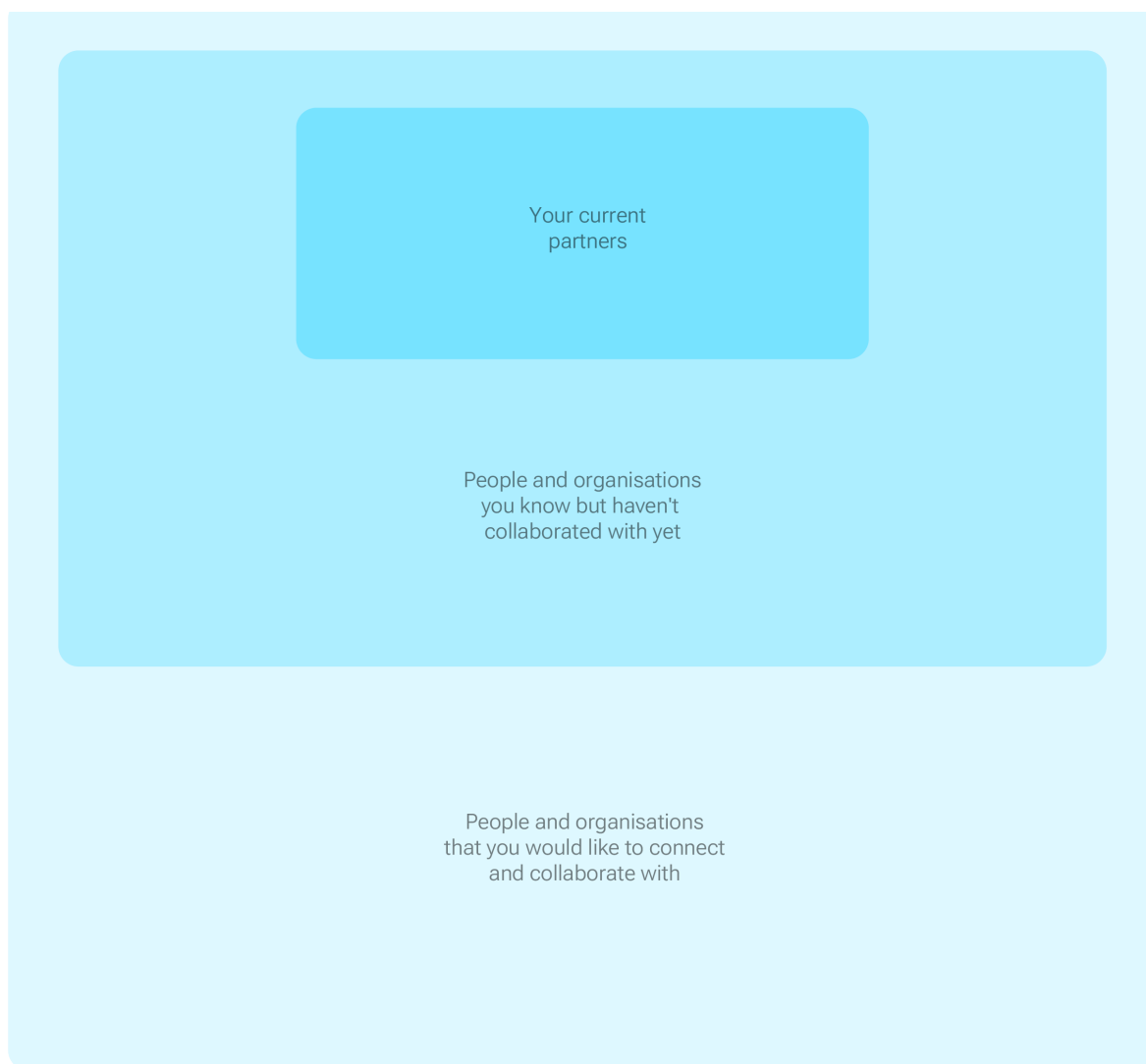
The actions you select as relevant to reaching your audience development goals, can be summarised in an action plan. You can use the template below or one of your own to identify what you seek to achieve, by what time, and who are responsible for the implementation.

Activity	Desired result e.g. number of tours, number of new visitors	Date of implementation	Parties responsible for implementation	Resources needed internal and external

4. Identify if you need to partner up

Partner collaborations can enhance your field of expertise and allow to create events and activities that are both larger at scale and more impactful than your regular work. Mapping your existing and potential partners can help identify possible cooperation opportunities. One way to approach this, is to make a list of:¹

- your closest partners that you already work with,
- organisations and people you know but do not actively work with yet,
- organisations and people that you have not been in touch.



Source: adapted from European Heritage Days Inclusive Events Toolkit.

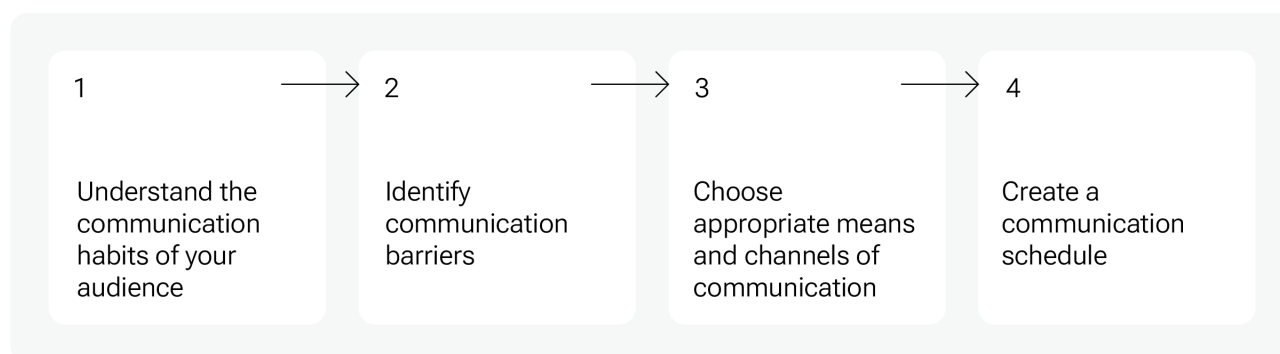
¹ European Heritage Days Inclusive Events Toolkit. Available at: <https://www.europeanheritagedays.com/sites/default/files/2021-07/EHD%20Inclusive%20Events%20Toolkit.pdf>

5. Communicate

Now that you have your activities planned, it is time to consider how you are going to communicate about them. Effective communication is key in developing durable and sustainable relationships with your audiences. Communication goals can vary from festival to festival due to the characteristics of the local context and audiences targeted. However, it is important to keep in mind three general communication goals that can be relevant in different contexts.

To inform	To involve	To cultivate a community feeling
To provide the audience with all the relevant information about the festival and its programme.	To give the audience the possibility to provide feedback on their experiences, needs, and expectations.	To foster a feeling of belonging to the local and international Open House community.

Both general and specific communication goals can be achieved in four steps.



Here are general communication guidelines and specific measures tailored to a few broad audience categories.

General guidelines	Examples of specific measures
<i>Visitors (children, youth, adults, seniors)</i>	
Emphasize affordability and unique experiences, highlighting educational aspects and opportunities to spend leisure time in meaningful ways.	<p>Implement a marketing campaign showcasing free entry as a key feature to attract a broad audience.</p> <p>Develop interactive, educational content across social media platforms.</p> <p>Organize themed events or activities that cater to varied interests, such as family-friendly tours, historical architecture insights, and modern design explorations.</p> <p>Partner with local businesses and tourism offices for broader outreach.</p>

General guidelines	Examples of specific measures
<i>Volunteers</i>	Use diverse media channels to reach all age groups.
Highlight learning opportunities, community building, and the chance to enhance public speaking and other skills.	<p>Create a community atmosphere by sharing stories and testimonials from past volunteers, emphasising the personal growth and impact of their contributions.</p> <p>Establish a mentorship program within the volunteer community, pairing new volunteers with experienced ones for guidance and support.</p> <p>Use direct communication channels like emails, social media, and local volunteering platforms.</p>
<i>Students and young professionals</i>	<p>Organise career development workshops and networking events with professionals in architecture and related fields.</p> <p>Highlight partnerships with universities and professional development opportunities.</p> <p>Use LinkedIn for partnership announcements and to share success stories from the collaborations.</p> <p>Engage student associations through direct emails and social media to promote OHEu activities integrated into curricula.</p>
<i>Professionals and experts</i>	<p>Host expert panels and discussion forums on current architectural trends and challenges.</p> <p>Facilitate opportunities for professionals to contribute to event programming or lead special tours.</p> <p>Utilise professional networks, industry newsletters, and LinkedIn groups to promote events.</p>
<i>Partner organisations and networks</i>	<p>Organise networking events to foster partnerships and collaborative projects.</p> <p>Develop partnership packages that include co-branded events, cross-promotion, and shared resources.</p>

General guidelines	Examples of specific measures
<i>Representatives of buildings and sites</i>	
Highlight the public relations and educational value of participating, showcasing their commitment to community.	<p>Offer publicity packages that include features in event materials and social media promotion.</p> <p>Provide guidance on how to prepare locations for public tours and engage with visitors.</p> <p>Share testimonials or case studies from previous participants to illustrate the benefits.</p>

Below you can find a communication barrier checklist that can help to ensure effective communication with your target audiences. A communication barrier checklist can help Open House events to promote inclusivity, accessibility, and clarity in communication. Like the two checklists on accessibility and inclusivity, the communication barrier checklist also supports event organisers and staff to proactively address communication challenges and identify what to focus on next.

COMMUNICATION BARRIER CHECKLIST

Linguistic and socio-cultural barriers:

- Are you communicating in the languages typically spoken by your target audiences?
- Do you use simple language that can be understood by all parties involved (e.g. avoid specific or professional terminology)?
- Does the communication consider cultural differences: customs, beliefs, values, and social norms of your target audiences?

Physical barriers:

- Is the physical distance between the communication message and the receiver well-planned (for e.g. the distance between the participants and the information panels)?
- Does the communication consider environmental factors that can prevent the audience to perceive the information comfortably (e.g. noise, poor lighting, extreme temperatures)?

Barriers regarding communication channels (e.g. social media, local newspapers, posters, articles):

- Do the communication channels chosen by your festival correspond to the ones commonly used by your target audiences?
- Are the communication channels chosen accessible to your target audiences?

-
- Is the balance between online and offline communication appropriate for reaching your target audiences?
 - Do you partner with organisations that have direct communication channels with your target audience (e.g. tourism information centres, organisations working with / representing persons with disabilities)?

Feedback collection and participation:

- Do the means of communication chosen by your festival enable the participants to leave their feedback: express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions about their experience?
 - Do the means of communication encourage active audience involvement?
-

Step 4: Monitor and adapt

Following implementation of the action plan, it is worth assessing the work done and whether the targets set were achieved or not achieved. Audience building is a long-term process and not all activities may render positive results immediately. Hence, it is important to reflect on previous work and understand what can be continued or improved in future actions.

One way is to look at the action plan prepared under Step 3 and see which of the targets were achieved or not. In addition to this, you can also dedicate time for reflecting upon the process individually or in a group using the template below.

What worked well

What should be improved

Questions that came up

New ideas that emerged

05



Good practice examples

About good practices

This chapter introduces you to the activities that are useful and effective for working towards your audience development goals. The good practises were collected through different research stages by analysing the work of Open House festivals and other cultural and creative sector organisations. Some of these activities are commonly applied, while others are tested by a smaller number of Open House festivals.

For the ease of navigating the guide, each practise is appointed to only one audience development goal – widening, deepening, or diversifying. Notably, each practise can also, to a different extent, contribute to reaching other goals as well, as the three goals are interdependent. In addition, each practise is labelled with target audiences that can benefit the most from it.

Widening your audiences

Selecting appropriate communication channels and offering a diverse range of activities that meet the needs of different audience groups can be a great approach to expanding your current audience. Try reaching out to organisations that have contact with your target group, asking to disseminate information.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Collaboration with tourist touch points | Getting in touch with tourism office, hotels, taxi services or airports can be a great way to spread knowledge about your event to international tourist audience (e.g. OH Athens and Thessaloniki). |
|---|---|--|

International visitors

If regular communication measures do not work, you can try experimenting with different formats of informational events. For instance, in case announcing a call for volunteers on different social media and partner channels do not provide a needed influx of volunteers, you can try creating an informal meet-up with persons interested in volunteering opportunities.

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| 2 | Information days in new locations | Open House Stockholm arranged gatherings for students at pubs where volunteering opportunities at the local Open House festival were introduced. Free drinks were provided. Similarly, Open House Dublin has organised a coffee and chat lunch in a local hotel in Dublin, where anyone interested in volunteering at the festival could find more information about such opportunities. |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|

Volunteers

When it comes to the volunteer community, it can be especially important to highlight the benefits of volunteering in Open House events, as well as provide incentives for participation. Most Open House events offer a variety of benefits – improving public speaking skills, training, exclusive tours to buildings, a sense of community etc. You can also think about extra gains that could motivate the potential volunteers. The offer should consider the needs of your particular volunteer segment.

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|---|
| 3 | Volunteer certificates | This practise is already applied at some Open House events like Open House Thessaloniki, Athens and Bilbao. Certificates can serve as proof of participation, as well as highlight the skills that volunteering at Open House festivals helps to develop. |
|---|------------------------|---|

Volunteers

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | Gaining university credits for volunteering | Establishing partnerships with local education institutions (universities and academies), especially preparing future architecture and design professionals can expand your pool of volunteers. This practise is already applied in several Open House events, where students receive university credits for volunteering at the event. |
|---|---|---|

Volunteers Students

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 5 | Free tickets or entrance to partner events | Such practises with an aim to motivate volunteers are applied at different Open House events. For instance, Open House Slovenia provides each volunteer with a free ticket to the Museum of Architecture and Design and the City Museum of Ljubljana. Open House Dublin offers cinema discount vouchers. |
|---|--|--|

Volunteers

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--|
| 6 | Contests for volunteers | Exclusive to volunteers contests or activities help fostering a sense of community. For instance, Open House Athens organised an Instagram competition for volunteers, where they were invited to upload stories from the preparation of the event. A selected entry was awarded a camera. Such competitions can be extended to the whole volunteer team, where they are invited to showcase their creativity. |
|---|-------------------------|--|

Volunteers

- 7 Exclusive to volunteer tours or activities Tours, talks or other activities that are open only to volunteers can act as a motivator for volunteers to join. In case no additional events can be offered to volunteers, they can receive priority access to events that are open for regular visitors. For instance, Open House Dublin provides volunteers with special wristbands, which provide them a priority access to events and tours during the festival.

Volunteers

In relation to visitors, various events and activities, besides guided tours, can create space and opportunity for different target audiences to experience architecture in ways most convenient for them. To ensure that these activities meet the needs of different audience groups, it is also important to base your programme on the feedback received from them.

- 8 An extended festival Some Open House organisers complement the festival weekend full of guided tours with an accompanying programme. Such programme can include a series of lectures, discussions and talks spaced out throughout the week. For example, in 2023 the Open House Dublin festival spanned over a period of 9 days. The festival included an Open House Junior weekend dedicated to youth and families, new Open Table conversation series, journal articles, podcasts, guided tours, talks, films and exhibitions. Longer festivals can help increase engagement of different visitors as it creates more opportunities for them to take part.

Visitors

- 9 Outdoor walking tours A great addition to regular indoor tours can be walking tours across the city that cover specific neighbourhoods, themes or urban complexes. For instance, Open House Athens has developed an 'Open walk' programme, with thematic walking tours in lesser-known areas of the city. Likewise, Open House Bilbao delivered guided boat tours along the river, which has sparked great interest among the visitors.¹

Visitors

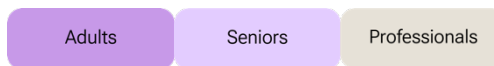
- 10 Bike tours Open House Stockholm has organized guided bike tours. The tours not only showcased its participants the urban landscape and its green spaces but also highlighted the topic of sustainability.²

Visitors

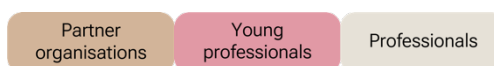
¹ For more information see: <https://www.openhousebilbao.org/project/arquitectura-navegando/>

² For more information see: <https://www.openhousetockholm.com/post/fr%C3%A5n-kaj-till-kaj-med-hampus-busk>

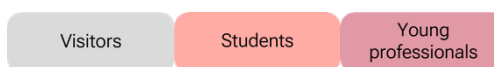
- 11 Lecture series and talks Public lectures and talks on architecture by renowned architects and other related professionals can be not only a great way to spread knowledge about architecture, but also draw attention to important topics and spark a discussion. Lectures and talks can also highlight annual topics and themes. For example, Open House Dublin has launched a series of lunchtime conversations – ‘Open Table’, which focused on Dublin as an inclusive ‘open city’.



- 12 Conferences and forums Conferences and forums, such as the annual OHEu partner meeting and conference, can provide a great moment to engage with themes relevant at European level, as well as exchange expertise with OHEu partners and other stakeholders.



- 13 Interviews Interviews with architects and other relevant professionals can be documented in different formats – ranging from podcast episodes, videos, audio files, or text. For instance, Open House Greece has implemented a series of interviews with architects introducing interesting architectural offices in Athens, as well as architects discussing their work. These videos are posted on YouTube.¹



- 14 Exhibitions and installations Exhibitions can focus on specific themes or highlight achievement of different architects. These can be organized separate to the main weekend or placed in one of the buildings showcased during the event. For instance, Open House Brno organized an exhibition ‘Women in architecture’,² which also incorporated guided tours, children programme, blog posts etc. Likewise, Open House Essen had an exhibition on sustainability. Spatial installations, such as public art installations, like the ones successfully used as part of London Festival of Architecture, can also provoke public discussion on specific topics and enrich visitor experiences.



¹ For more information see: <https://www.openhousethessaloniki.gr/en/event/open-office/>

² For more information see: <https://openhousebrno.cz/cs/vystava-zeny-v-architekture-60-80-leta> and <https://www.architektky60-80.cz/>

- 15 Film screenings Screening films and documentaries on a chosen topic is often applied by other cultural events and festivals (e.g. European Heritage Days). Such screenings provide audience an educational alternative to regular tours or talks.

Visitors

Students

Young professionals

- 16 Tours in different languages Tours in English are already offered in most Open House events. Yet, to improve the experience of non-native speakers, it is worth expanding the number of tours offered and available to them (e.g. Open House Athens has tours in English in all buildings included in the programme). The tours available in other than native language should also be clearly labelled on the programme.

International visitors

- 17 Innovative partnerships Connecting with private businesses or independent professionals can create innovative formats of events. Open House Dublin organised an event in collaboration with a yoga school. Open House Brno together with Gourmet Brno TIC Brno enhanced the festival with a gastronomic experience by advising on the places where visitors can drink / eat, as well as admire architecture of the place.

Visitors

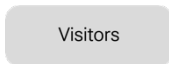
Deepening your audiences

You can take several approaches to deepen the connection with existing audiences. In case of recurring visitors, new tour formats or alternative events, in addition to guided tours, can open new avenues for exploring architecture and increasing visitors' familiarity with the subject.

- 1 An expanded festival programme Renewing part of the programme can help to maintain interest of long-term visitors in the event. The programme can be expanded by including more buildings that help to cover different topics or annual themes (e.g. Open House Stockholm including buildings reflecting on various functions of the city – swimming pools, schools, thermal power station, or a bomb shelter in a garage – into the festival programme).

Visitors

- 2 Annual themes The festival programme can be curated not only to include new buildings that illustrate quality architecture, but also highlight certain topics and themes (e.g. a programme showcasing buildings that were built by the architects from other European countries). Annual themes help to maintain the event relevant and draw visitors' attention to specific buildings. For instance, interested visitors could filter buildings included in the programme by the annual theme 'Sustainability' on Open House Stockholm webpage. An additional sub-page was created on their website and dedicated for the annual theme.¹

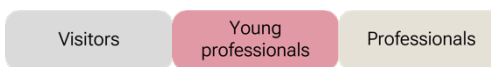


- 3 Tours to architectural studios Tours to architectural studios can give a glimpse into architect's life and profession. Such tours can further help to build the bridge between professional field of architecture and the public, as per OHEu goals.



- 4 Interdisciplinary tours Joining forces together with organisations from other sectors can result in tours, lectures or other activities where new perspectives are shared. For instance, Open House Tallinn, in cooperation with Estonian Lighting Designers Association, developed a lightning discovery tour outside of their main festival programme. The tour took visitors through different urban spaces in Tallinn, exploring night-time architectural lighting design. Open House Milan organised tours in collaboration with a private enterprise that works with sales / rent of real estate (Ideaslita).

Tours led by different professionals, e.g. historians can shed light on different time periods of city history and reflect on it through the buildings.



Interactive workshops or gamified activities can both be educational and enticing, especially for the younger audience.

- 5 Tours with worksheets To make the tours more educational and encourage active involvement, some Open House festivals enrich the tours with printable worksheets. These worksheets can be completed by children with their parents and/or teachers. A great example is the initiative of Open House Brno, where parents or teachers can print worksheets and later fill them in with children during the

¹ For more information see: <https://www.openhoustockholm.com/oheurope>

tour. Although this format is mostly used with children, it has potential to be adapted for adults as well.

Children

- 6 Tours including hands-on activities Including hands-on activities in the tours can help increase the engagement of its participants. For instance, the tours, organised by the London Festival of Architecture, were guided by a professional illustrator. The participants were provided a sketchbook and a fine liner pen and were invited to sketch their impressions along the road.

Children

Youth

- 7 Hands-on workshops Hands-on workshops, such as constructing or gardening together, can help to unfold the festival's program experientially and strengthen ties with the target audiences.

Visitors

- 8 Gamification Adding gamification elements can incentivize your audiences to take a more active part in your activities. For instance, Open House Bilbao implemented 'The Open House passport' initiative. Visitors were handed out 'passports', which would get stamped upon visiting a building. Those that collected at least 3 stamps could enter a game and win a prize. Out of 13 000 passports distributed, 500 people handed in their passports to participate in the draw.¹

Thinking about environmental impact, such activities could also be developed in digital format.

Visitors

Another activity type that can draw attention of the target audience are open calls and competitions. These can help render audience engagement by inviting them to participate. This can be developed in several ways: the winner can be determined by public voting or by a panel of experts.

¹ For more information see: <https://www.openhousebilbao.org/project/pasaporte/>

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| 9 | Photo or visual story contests | <p>Open House Greece (in Athens and Thessaloniki) organised a photo contest on social media inviting the public to share their experiences of the event. The contests can be linked with annual themes or have a topic of their own. Some contests invite visitors to share all type of visual expressions – short videos, drawings, photos etc.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Visitors</p> |
| 10 | Poster competitions | <p>Poster competitions not only create space for interested persons to participate and showcase their creativity, but also offers a platform for showcasing diverse perspectives of the topic. For instance, Open House Athens and Vilnius hold such competitions for designing the poster for the event.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Visitors</p> |
| 11 | Architectural awards | <p>Open House Slovenia carries out awards which are determined by the public vote.¹ All buildings that are included in the Open House programme are nominated. In 2023, the voting gathered more than 8,000 votes. Similarly, Open House Athens invites visitors to vote for their favourite tour. London Festival of Architecture collaborates with cultural organisations, local authorities, business improvement districts and private organisations in organising the LFA Competition (for architectural concepts and existing built structures). This competition facilitates urban innovation and experimentation within the city.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Visitors Professionals</p> |
| 12 | Children worksheet competitions | <p>Open House Brno invites families with children to complete worksheets, related to festival sites and submit to a competition. They can win a prize – in 2023 the prize was a family ticket to the BRuNO family park.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Children</p> |

¹ For more information see: <https://www.openhouseslovenia.org/ohs-award-2022-2/>

- 13 Contests for students Some Open House festivals hold contests in collaboration with higher education institutions with an aim to involve students. For example, Open House Greece organises ‘Open Your Portfolio’ competition in collaboration Vakalo Art and Design College. The initiative awards scholarships for the MA Architectural Design programme. Architektura dla edukacji, an organisation in Poland working with architectural education, organises best thesis award.

Students

Young professionals

To help different audience members feel more connected to the European dimension of their local architecture and the OHEu project, various communication measures can be applied. The ongoing Volunteer Exchange Programme is already a great example of cross-border cooperation and providing opportunity for volunteers to experience different cultures and local architecture in other countries.

- 14 International storytelling Transnational storytelling initiatives and documentation of the outcomes to local and European public can foster the international dimension of the event. For instance, European Heritage Days festival has a specific programme, dedicated for young people from various European countries, sharing their chosen heritage stories.

Visitors

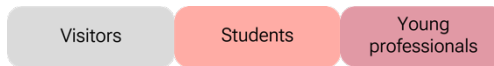
International visitors

- 15 Tours emphasising international dimension or architecture Tours can be thematically related to European dimension. Certain tours can showcase buildings that were built by architects from other European countries, or how ideas spread across Europe and inspired local professionals.

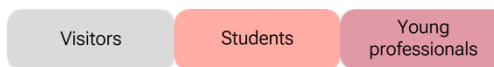
Visitors

Since Open House events take place only once a year, it can be difficult to establish bonds with your audience. Various online resources – documentary videos, interviews or archive of past Open House programmes – allow interested audience members to interact with your content throughout the year.

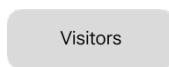
16 Podcasts Open House Slovenia¹ and Dublin² have created podcasts featuring talks / episodes on various topics related to architecture. It is not necessary to have an own podcast. Instead, you can be invited as guest speakers to other existing podcasts where topics of architecture or other culture-related topics are discussed.



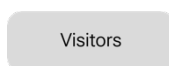
17 Archive of previous editions of the event Open House Tallin has developed a location archive based on the previous iterations of their Open House event. The archive provides information on architecture in Tallinn in 3 languages – Estonian, English and Russian.



18 Self-guided tours Recordings of the tours can allow persons to take self-guided tours whenever they have time available. A good example of such format is Soundwalks, implemented by Open House Lisbon. Audio tours are created by guest curators from different cultural fields and invite the participants to explore Lisbon through their perspective. The tours are available throughout the year on Soundcloud and Spotify platforms.



19 Dissemination of digital materials online Sharing recordings of discussions, lectures, interviews, and other materials online is essential as it allows visitors to engage with, study, and revisit the content. Your website can be enriched by journals and blog posts covering different topics throughout the year. This can also include short videos presenting the buildings. For instance, Open House Dublin has developed short documentaries on their sites, celebrating the architecture of Dublin.



¹ Open House Slovenia's podcast was named *Odprto (Eng. Open)*

² Open House Dublin created a curated selection of podcasts, 'What Buildings Do'.

20 The use of innovative technologies to experience urban space in a new light Innovative technologies allowing to experience the site in novel ways: OH Dublin organised an Open Form Pavilion of Air at Merrion Square.¹ Visitors had to use a mobile application which, by using sound and site-mapping, offered a playful reframing of public space as an essential place of engagement for the community.

Visitors

21 Digital dictionaries Digital dictionaries of terms related to architecture and urban planning can contribute to raising awareness about architecture among the target audiences. For example, Archpedia, created by the organisation Achitektura dla Edukacji, contains short descriptions of key terms, illustrative material, and recommended readings.

Visitors

Students

Volunteering at Open House festivals already helps volunteers to familiarise with architecture, tour guiding, public speaking, as well as connecting to new people. Despite the size of your volunteer team, it is vital to foster a sense of community and create space where different volunteers feel welcomed and are looking forward to this experience.

22 Activities throughout the year Open House Brno organises ‘Volunteer Thursdays’, during which Open House sites are opened to volunteers during the year. Such activities can potentially establish a continuous relationship with volunteers and increase their engagement from year to year.

Volunteers

23 Volunteer events Welcoming meetings, mid-way meetings, as well as closing parties are a common practise. Such activities are essential when it comes to keeping volunteers excited about their work before, during and after the event. The closing part can consist of a concert, free drinks and food, mini awards (for taking an extra mile, best team picture etc.) and informal atmosphere that allows volunteers to share their thoughts on and impressions of the event.

Volunteers

¹ For more information see: <https://openhousedublin.com/locations/baile-atha-cliath-pailliuin-acir-i-bhfoirm-oscailte-dublin-open-form-pavilion-of-air/>

24 Trial tours Potential volunteers may be discouraged by the fact that they are working during the festival, with limited opportunities to enjoy the event as visitors. Organising volunteer-exclusive trial tours can be a great way to provide opportunity for volunteers not to miss out on the event. Such trial tours are practised by different Open House events already (e.g. Open House Vilnius) and can also be a great way for volunteers to practise their guiding skills and build confidence.

Volunteers

25 A balance between expectations of returning and new volunteers To keep the initial training and welcome session interesting to all volunteers, including those that are returning volunteers, incorporate new elements into the training programme or tailor the programme to different groups (e.g. splitting it into several sessions).

Volunteers

26 Community building One way to maintain the relationship with volunteers throughout the year can be updating them with architecture-related information, sending newsletters about your organisation's work or inviting them to volunteer on other occasions.

Volunteers

Partner organisations

A continuous dialogue is key when strengthening the relationship with your current audiences. By understanding their needs and receiving feedback on what works well and what does not, you can improve their experience and create an event that is relevant to them.

27 Visitor surveys To boost response rates to surveys that take place on site, it is worth keeping the feedback survey as concise as possible. It is also important to provide options for persons not familiar with / without the mobile devices to participate in the surveys. For instance, Open House Tallinn has conducted a quick feedback survey before the guided tours.¹ They used QR codes and short links to the form to refer visitors to the feedback survey. The survey had 7 questions on visitor demographics and background. The survey was in English and Estonian languages to accommodate different visitors.

Visitors

¹ Open House Tallinn feedback survey: bit.ly/OHT25.

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| 28 | Anonymous volunteer satisfaction surveys | Such surveys are already implemented during some Open House events. For instance, Open House Bilbao invites volunteers to fill in an anonymous online survey. They can share their opinion on the current event and make suggestions for future events. |
| | | Volunteers |
| 29 | Feedback from volunteers at volunteer parties | Volunteer parties usually mark the end of the Open House weekend. Such events can help to feel the general sentiment and impressions of volunteers and their experience. To allow for all volunteers to express their views, consider different tools for capturing their moods (these can be digital like Mentimeter or Slido) or physical (a board where they can write down their impressions). |
| | | Volunteers |
| 30 | Incentives to take part in surveys | Respondents might often lack motivation to fill-in surveys, especially if the event is finished. For instance, Open House Tallinn conducted a feedback survey with 18 questions in Estonian and English languages. ¹ To get a higher engagement from visitors, they created a lottery. By filling-in the feedback survey, respondents could win one of 5 prizes (two gift cards for two, books, Open House Tallinn backpacks, and 5 Open House Tallinn goodie bag (notebook, pen, yardstick, tote bag)). |
| | | Visitors |

Diversifying your audiences

Diversifying your audience may require finding out the needs of different audience segments. While certain activities can work for all target audiences, it is a good practise to offer activities that are specific to certain groups that are less engaged. This also applies to such groups like children who need a specialised approach to presenting information. While some of the examples focus mainly on families, children and elderly, a similar approach of offering special programmes can be adapted to other audience segments as well.

¹ Open House Tallinn feedback survey: <https://www.openhousetallinn.ee/en/feedback>

1 Junior programmes Open House Greece (Athens and Thessaloniki) carry out ‘Open School’ programme.¹ This programme includes organized visits and tours for schools and other educational institutions on a separate date than the main event. A similar programme is also run by Open House Dublin. The Junior programme, besides guided tours, also provides such activities as animation, creative writing, lego building, sketching or an interactive augmented reality game.



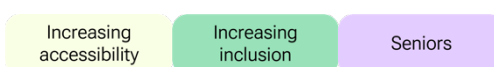
2 Family workshops and activities Different Open House events provide interactive and hands-on workshops for parents and their children exploring different topics in relation to architecture and built environment (e.g. Open House Dublin, Open House Bilbao). For example, Open House Brno and Open House Lisbon provides families worksheets related to festival’s buildings and guided tours that they can download, print and complete. Other organisers design tours that are more sensorial (engaging not only sight and hearing but also other senses like tactility which is important for the youngest audiences).



3 Activities dedicated to local communities Tours and workshops can be dedicated to local (e.g. district) community and focus on a particular area or building. For instance, Open House London carried out design awareness courses for local communities and London Festival of Architecture organised a lecture on neighbourhood commons.



4 Priority access Long waiting times might discourage certain groups from attending. Some Open House events apply the practise of allowing senior citizens or persons with disabilities to jump the queue. For instance, Open House Bilbao provides a priority access for persons with accredited disabilities. Persons with wristbands can enter the buildings without waiting in regular queues, instead a maximum of 2-5 places are reserved for them on each tour. Persons with wristbands can also take with them an accompanying person.



¹ For more information see: <https://www.openhouseathens.gr/en/event/open-school/>

- 5 Communicating in different languages, spoken by communities in your city Providing key information about the event (e.g. the date, the programme) in the languages spoken by main communities in the city can help disseminate information about it. For instance, Open House Essen communicates mainly in German and English, but also makes info posts (with key info on the event – the date, etc.) in other languages spoken by local minority communities (e.g. Turkish, Arabic).

Increasing accessibility Increasing inclusion

Reaching audiences that you usually do not have contact with can be difficult. Hence, collaboration and partnering up with different organisations can accelerate this process. Partnerships can be established to achieve multiple goals – disseminate information and communicate, involve certain groups, or upgrade own services.

- 6 Cooperation with social business to increase inclusivity Open House Vilnius has cooperated with ‘Social taxi’ – an organisation providing taxi services for persons with different needs (e.g. they have vehicles adapted to carrying persons in wheelchairs). During the festival, ‘Social taxi’ provided transportation to a limited amount of visitors, increasing possibilities for persons that would otherwise find transport difficult to participate.

Increasing accessibility

- 7 Collaboration with organisations working on integration Open House Stockholm collaborated with SFX (Swedish for newly arrived professionals). It introduced SFX-students who have background in architecture and related fields with volunteer opportunities at the festival, as well as invited them to study visits to Vasakronan's headquarters and Arena Sergel. Such events help the partner organisation to reach their mission as well, as SFX aims to familiarise the newly arrived individuals with insights into how their professions work in Sweden.

Increasing accessibility International visitors

- 8 Engagement of international students Some Open House events involve international students studying in the city (e.g. Erasmus+). They invite them to contribute as volunteers or take part as visitors. The international student community can be reached through various channels – universities, internet forums, social media etc.

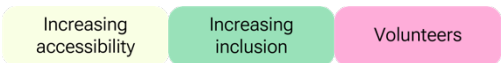
International visitors

Diversifying audiences can mean not only attracting visitors or volunteers who are usually less engaged, but also ensuring that the event is accessible to the widest public possible regardless of their abilities. Engaging target audiences into planning of activities, as well as creating space for them to express their accessibility needs can help you to prepare accordingly.

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| 9 | Engaging target audiences into planning of activities | Inviting target audiences into planning activities help to ensure that activities meet their needs, as well as create a more welcoming atmosphere. This can be done in different formats, e.g. it can include workshops for understanding the needs of different audiences or showcasing the work created by them (e.g. Open House Dublin developed an exhibition ‘Reimagining the Iveagh Markets Exhibition’ showcasing artwork created by local schoolchildren. The exhibitions was part of the Junior programme) ¹ . |
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| 10 | Survey on access needs | Consider including a short survey on access needs together with a registration form for volunteering or attending an event. ² Such form can include questions on possible barriers in the venue or communication that can limit one’s participation, the need for childcare or covering expenses (e.g. transportation). Knowing the barriers the potential participants face can help to adapt the process to their needs. |
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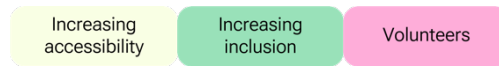
Other practises for increasing accessibility include preparing the team to respond to different accessibility needs, as well as adapting the guided tours and other activities or creating new ones that are accessible to a wider public.

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| 11 | Training for volunteers to respond to different needs | Volunteer training on responding to visitors with different needs, as well as working with teammates from different backgrounds can be essential in ensuring a uniform approach across all sites opened in the programme. For instance, Open House Dublin provides volunteer training, focused on audience engagement, tour delivery techniques, as well as accessibility awareness. The training is delivered by experts and activists in the field to ensure visitors feel welcomed and encouraged to attend. Likewise, Open House Lisbon, in collaboration with |
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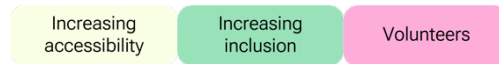
¹ For more information see: <https://openhousedublin.com/locations/reimagining-the-iveagh-markets/>:

² European Heritage Days (2020) *European Heritage Days Inclusive Events Toolkit*, p. 19.

Locus Acceso consultancy, provided specialised training for a group of volunteers.



12 Including volunteers with special needs Persons with special needs (e.g. deaf or blind people) can join the festival as volunteers or they can also be involved in creating the tour and sharing their perspective with the visitors. Such activities can help them to be actively involved in the festival, as well as provide visitors an alternative experience of the tour.



13 Clear communication about access Inform visitors about the accessibility of each building / tour included in the programme. The printed or online programme can incorporate such information like:

- Entrance accessibility (whether it is wheelchair accessible, whether there are steps etc.). This should include not only entrance to the building but also the surrounding location leading up to the building.
- Building accessibility (are there elevators, accessible toilets, facilities for nursing etc.)
- Informational accessibility (e.g. availability of sign language tours)



14 Providing alternatives for buildings that are not accessible It is important to consider accessibility needs when selecting the buildings or places to be included in the programme. Despite efforts to ensure that all buildings are fully accessible, this can be difficult to achieve in practise. Some historic buildings may not be adapted to accommodate persons with mobility limitations or other needs, but still be included in the programme for their cultural and architectural value. In such cases, it is a good practise to consider providing video or audio tours that anyone interested could take on their own.



15 Sensory tours Some Open House events include tactile or touch tours for groups with visual impairment. Open House Dublin developed a sensory tour at the National Gallery of Ireland, where blindfolded participants were guided around the gallery's spaces. The tour was accessible to all visitors, including visually impaired visitors and wheelchair users. Likewise, Open House Lisbon, in cooperation with an accessibility consultancy company - Locus Acesso, designed two sensorial visits adapted to people with visual impairment.

Increasing accessibility Increasing inclusion

16 Adapting the tours to sign language Some Open House events provide sign language interpretation for both the tours and other events. Such events usually hire sign language interpreters for the tours or collaborate with sign language schools, while others also test digital solutions. For example, Open House Dublin used a visual interpreting service Aira, which provides support for people who are blind or have low vision.

Increasing accessibility Increasing inclusion

06



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