



Creative, Artistic and Social Management Plan

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
CASMP	Creative, Artistic and Social Management Plan
DoA	Description of Action
EC	European Commission
INO	Irish National Opera
LICEU	El Gran Teatre del Liceu
SAMP	Sociedade Artística Musical dos Pousos
WP	Work Package



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Creative, Artistic and Social Management Plan (CASMP) is a roadmap for the three opera co-creation trials in TRACTION. It contributes to Task T1.3 by ensuring that the partners operate to a consistent set of values and concepts, albeit adapted to their specific contexts, and that they are engaged in critical dialogue and reflection to share their progress. It draws on intensive planning and preparation within the consortium and between the trial leaders and their partners in each country. It feeds into Tasks T3.1, T3.2 and T3.3 (the co-creation trials), Deliverables D3.4, D3.5 and D3.7 (on cross-fertilisation activities) and Deliverable D4.5 (on social transformation impact).

Chapter 1 introduces the TRACTION concept, explaining briefly how it will be developed in the trials and the technology toolset that will be tested involved. It summarises TRACTION's key innovations and anticipated impact, noting progress on the theorising and evaluation of their social dimension.

Chapters **2**, **3** and **4** describe the planning and current position of each of the trials:

- T3.1 **The LICEU Trial** involves people living in inner city Barcelona at risk of exclusion (including migrants and people with disabilities) in co-creation activities for a main stage community production, Opera Prima Raval, in the opera house;
- T3.2 **The SAMP Trial** involves prisoners, their relatives, local residents and others (also including migrants) in co-creation of a new opera at Leiria Youth Prison to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders in Portugal;
- T3.3 **The INO Trial** involves people at risk of exclusion who live in three remote, rural and peripheral places in Ireland (including Irish speakers) in the co-creation of a virtual reality opera for community and festival performance.

Each of these chapters describes the management plan in terms of context, aim and objectives, activities, use of technology, anticipated social impact and risks involved in the trial. Since the trials will evolve during the activity period as a natural consequence of co-creation, this management plan is a benchmark of current thinking against which progress will be tracked and the evolution of the activities recorded.

Chapter 5 describes TRACTION's cross-fertilisation activities (Task T3.4) and notes how the differences between the trials enrich the range of social situations and creative practices to be tested. It sets out the Reflective Practice Methodology that will be used to monitor progress, support co-creation practice and share learning between the three trials.

The concluding chapter considers the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the trials and what can be done to keep this to a minimum. Some planned actions will be affected but, since many trial activities investigate remote co-creation, TRACTION's outputs will be even more relevant to a performing arts sector urgently rethinking its ways of working.

The Creative, Artistic and Social Management Plan also includes two appendices:



- **Good Practice In Artistic Co-Creation** outlines TRACTION's current thinking about good practice in artistic co-creation. This work in progress is part of the project's innovation in defining a replicable model for building relationships with marginalised communities (Deliverable D4.5). This Section is aligned with all WP6 deliverable and all Ethics-related tasks in the project.
- **Social Inclusion and the Capabilities Approach** outlines TRACTION's current thinking about social inclusion and the potential of the Capabilities Approach in promoting social cohesion: it too will feed into Deliverable D4.5.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The TRACTION concept

Opera uses all the visual and performing arts to create extraordinary experiences of passion, ideas and sensibility. It is rightly recognized as a great achievement of European culture and yet a form that has inspired social and artistic change is now often seen as the staid preserve of elites. TRACTION is a three-year research project that aims to reveal opera as a path for social and cultural inclusion, and a factor in positive social change. It does not aim to make opera palatable to those who don't attend but find new ways in which marginalized groups (people living in poverty, migrants, young offenders, people with disabilities and others) can co-create opera performances with professional artists to tell stories that matter to them, and reconnect the form with its potential for social change.

By combining best practice in participatory art with digital technology's innovations of language, form and process, TRACTION explores new approaches to co-creation, and innovate in three fields:

- Opera creation and production;
- Immersive and interactive digital media; and
- Social integration and community development.

Experimental trials in inner-city Barcelona (LICEU), a youth prison in Portugal (SAMP) and three rural and peripheral communities in Ireland (INO) are testing new ideas in partnership with the other members of the TRACTION consortium: Vicomtech, CWI, Virtual Reality Ireland, Dublin City University, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and François Matarasso. TRACTION is funded by the European Commission through the Horizon 2020 programme.

1.2 TRACTION's technology

1.2.1 The TRACTION toolset

The TRACTION Toolset is a foundation of the project. It consists of three digital technologies designed to support the process of opera creation and presentation before, during and after the actual performance.

- **MEDIA VAULT** allows for the storage of heterogeneous media objects (2D and 360 videos, volumetric media etc.) and enables asynchronous communication between users around the uploaded content, for conversation and co-creation. It supports the generation of stories and production ideas based on the stored content and in the present context is especially useful in connecting remote creators through an accessible user interface. The Media Vault is expected to be used in the INO, SAMP and LICEU trials.
- **PERFORMANCE ENGINE** is a communication infrastructure, deployed at a theatre and in other spaces to enrich live performance by choreographing the stage in real-time. It allows people in remote locations to see the show, contribute media and communicate



with performers and other audience members. The Performance Engine will be used in the SAMP and LICEU trials.

- **IMMERSIVE INSTALLATION** includes authoring tools (for creating) and rendering engines (for deploying) immersive and interactive experiences in the form of capsules or new opera productions. This environment will enable static (dome-based) and moveable (HMD based) installations, pushing the boundaries of immersive media consumption. It will also enable browser-based remote experiences. Immersive Installation will be used in the INO, SAMP and LICEU trials.

These technologies are not static. Although each is already a powerful and capable tool, they will develop further in response to needs identified during the TRACTION trials. Formal tests will take place at regular intervals during the project lifetime, and the first round of these will be conducted between September and December 2020. Work is currently underway to identify and storyboard user personas for these tests.

1.2.2 Using the technology

In the first phase of TRACTION user requirements from different disciplines (opera, technology and evaluation) have been gathered for the user-centric approach that is the basis of the project methodology (D4.1). Different end-users have been defined (including professionals and non-professionals), and work is currently underway to define the user journeys that map the interaction of technology and artistic co-creation (D4.2).

This user-centric approach is important because some people may find it hard to imagine *how* new technology could facilitate their work or solve their problems. For example, although many musicians recognise that opera could be more inclusive, and that it must respond to how digital technology is changing the creation, distribution and enjoyment of music, they do not have sufficient knowledge of technology to see how it could be applied to resolving those challenges. Bridging such gaps is at the heart of TRACTION's approach to co-creation. In bringing together people with deep but widely varied expertise, TRACTION meets remotely to develop cross-disciplinary understanding. Its cross-Work Package activities encourage full participation and inclusive co-creation. Through this approach TRACTION is identifying solutions and processes – such as the user profiles and journeys – that could make them easier to find in other professional and social contexts.

Another aspect of TRACTION's innovation is in bridging the different working practices of technologists and artists. The first are used to developing solutions to pre-defined needs (T2.2) and proceeding through a structured methodology (T4.1). Artists, on the other hand, often work in a process of discovery, unsure where they are going, or how to express that destination clearly. They work by intuition, relying on the unconscious and non-rational, trusting whether something *feels* right. That is especially true in co-creation processes involving people with different experience, capabilities and knowledge: needs and results cannot be specified in advance if they are genuinely inclusive. At this stage in the project, when the artists and technologists communicate largely through sketches and ideas that are still abstract, it takes time, effort and imagination to cross that gap. But it is a rich process of collaboration that is the essence of co-creation and has important lessons for other initiatives concerned with the application of new technology to ancient art forms (D2.2).



1.3 TRACTION’s social innovation and impacts

Through innovative work in three related areas, the TRACTION trials aim to have an impact on social integration, opera creation and technological advancement. The following table summarises these and their relationship:

Area of innovation	Area of impact
Social integration: definition of a principle-based and replicable model for cultural co-creation and inclusion (cf. Appendix 1)	Strengthening social cohesion, with respect for cultural diversity and recognition of multiple identities and voices
Opera creation and production: establishing and testing new uses of digital technology in opera co-creation	Renewing the relationship between citizens and cultural institutions to make the art form attractive to new audiences
Technological advancement; creation of a toolset for use by artists and producers, in transforming their offer to audiences	Helping to overcome the relative under-use of digital technology in the performing arts

Table 1: Innovation and Impact in TRACTION

To a large degree, these areas of innovation and their impact are interdependent and they are being developed simultaneously in the trials. At the same time, they relate to very different areas of expertise within the TRACTION partnership, so they are grouped into four areas in the Evaluation Methodology (D4.1), each with its own evaluation leader:

- Tools and technology (Evaluation leader CWI)
- Co-creation and training (Evaluation leader UAB)
- Opera performance and capsules (Evaluation leader UAB)
- Social transformation impact (Evaluation leader FM)

As its title implies, in describing the TRACTION trials, this management plan focuses primarily on artistic outputs and social impact. Artistic outputs are relatively straightforward: their evaluation can be more effectively planned when they have progressed further. But, as will be seen from the detailed work undertaken on social impact included in each trial chapter, the connection between artistic work and social change is very close. For instance, a co-created opera project can have important effects on social cohesion both in its activities and because it changes a cultural institution’s relationship with citizens.

The critical need at this stage is to plan for specific outputs and outcomes in order to be able to identify the eventual impact. That has been done by drafting an aim and objectives statement for each trial that reflects its specific concerns within the overarching goals of TRACTION. These are set out in each trial chapter, together with the specific outputs and outcomes that flow from them. Detailed evaluation plans will be prepared with the trial evaluation coordinators during autumn 2020. [Appendix 2](#) sets out some of the theoretical ideas that will underpin the evaluation of the social dimension of TRACTION.



2 T3.1 LICEU TRIAL

2.1 Introduction

The **Gran Teatre del LICEU**, founded in Barcelona in 1847, is one of the world's oldest and most prestigious opera houses. The LICEU is committed to a long-term community programme called Opera Prima, aimed at renewing its place in the social life of Catalunya through regular projects. The first of these, running from 2018 to 2021, focuses on LICEU's own neighbourhood, Raval, a district characterised by diversity (about half of its residents coming from outside the EU) and sharp differences in wealth. Opera Prima Raval is scheduled to be performed twice in the principal auditorium in November 2021.

The ambition and complexity of Opera Prima distinguishes the LICEU trial from the others. The initiative is a collaboration between groups of actors – the opera house, freelance artists, municipality, community organisations, etc. – with different motivations and degrees of control. They all want to involve local people, but have different experience, expertise and reasons for doing so. The Opera Prima initiative will concern, in one way or another, all the staff of a huge institution, but only some will be involved with the TRACTION trial. Opera Prima Raval will have a high profile in the city and beyond, bolstered by a TV documentary that is following the process. Its success is very important to the LICEU, and would demonstrate the artistic and social vitality of co-created community opera.

This context is essential because, having been initiated in 2018, much of the Opera Prima Raval's concept and planning is independent of TRACTION. However, the LICEU trial will happen *within* Opera Prima Raval, supporting and enhancing the production through digital technology. Defining the trial's aim and objectives was a key step in convergence of concept, methods and ethics between this trial and the other two. The LICEU will focus particularly on how technology can facilitate the inclusion of people with disabilities and at risk of exclusion into design work associated with Opera Prima Raval.

2.2 Aim and objectives

- **The aim of the LICEU trial is to increase participation in Opera Prima Raval of people at risk of exclusion.**

It will achieve this by:

1. Building trust and common purpose with community partners in and near Raval;
2. Involving local people in co-creation of costumes, access and marketing resources for Opera Prima Raval;
3. Using digital technology to facilitate and enhance the co-creation process;
4. Producing physical and digital resources to reach new audiences for the opera and the process of its co-creation; and
5. Documenting and evaluating the TRACTION trial to identify transferable learning.



2.3 Activity planning (Co-creation and training)

2.3.1 Opera Prima Raval

The libretto of Opera Prima Raval is written by [Victoria Szpunberg](#), based on interviews with local people facilitated through [Tot Raval Foundation](#), which unites about 50 community organisation and is a key partner in the initiative. The opera's narrative and characters will therefore reflect the community of Raval in a radically new way. Music is being composed by [Arnau Tordera](#) with the score due in November 2020, at which point the creation of the production will begin, under the direction of [Ricard Soler](#) (stage) and [Alfons Reverté](#) (music). Music students and non-professional singers from Raval and beyond will be involved in the rehearsal and performances. The TRACTION trial and its co-creation activities take place within this larger community opera framework. The artistic success of the main stage production has only an indirect relationship to evaluation of the TRACTION trial, which is concerned with co-creation, technological innovation and social impact.

2.3.2 Co-creation activities

The TRACTION trial includes three co-creation activities taking place during the creation of the production, and one – the digital capsules – that will take place during and after the performances; (only the co-creation are described here as the digital capsules are still in development). Each co-creation activity is self-contained, and contributes specific elements to the achievement of the main production. They are concerned with: design and production of costumes; conception of a visual brand identity and visual materials; and development of accessibility resources for non-reader audiences. The activities planned in each of these elements is described below.

Design and production of costumes

People from the Raval community with skills or interest in sewing will be invited to work directly on creation of costumes with the relevant department of the LICEU theatre, and the production designers. Discussions are taking place with five associations in Raval, including [Dona Colors](#), to identify potential partners and participants. The project will involve the women directly in costume conception and design, and not just production activities, so that there is a real process of co-creation and they can see their ideas on stage. In this way, Opera Prima Raval will include local people's imaginative vision throughout the opera.

Such an activity would typically be done in creative workshops with face-to-face exchange, and some of that will happen, as far as possible. Today, public health restrictions make such contacts difficult and unreliable, so digital technology will make the connection. In addition to using videoconferencing, text and chat applications, the trial will use the TRACTION media vault to enable professional and non-professional participants to share ideas, video of work in progress and other material, including film of rehearsals, and recordings of music, so that costume makers are integrated in the artistic development. It will also serve to document and archive the co-creation process, and produce material that can enrich digital capsules and exhibitions. Finally, use of the media vault will facilitate communication between the costume designer-makers and the two other co-creation activities.



Conception of a visual brand identity and marketing materials

The visual brand identity of Opera Prima Raval will be created through the joint work of members of **Sínia day centre** and art students from **Escola Massana** art and design college. Work will follow guidelines from the LICEU communication department, exploring the theme of photography (chosen for all LICEU productions in the 2020/21 season) and will create art for the production posters and programme. It is expected that 3-6 students in the 4th grade of their university course will participate. The work will be facilitated by a specialist tutor recruited by Escola Massana and the creative support staff at Sínia. The people with disabilities at Sínia are experienced artists, but have mobility, speech and other impairments. Work will begin at the Sínia centre beginning in autumn 2020.

In July 2020, the wider potential of this work was discussed by the LICEU team and FM. It is proposed that the Sínia and Massana artists be supported to explore the visual language of Opera Prima more widely – for instance by connecting with the costumes designers – and that the results could be used to promote the production and enrich audience experience. Expanding the trial in this way will support the participants' sense of engagement in the co-creation of the production and bring greater potential for social impact. The intention would be to produce a body of finished artwork inspired by the story and music of Opera Prima Raval. This could be presented publicly in various ways, such as:

- An exhibition of artwork at the theatre (e.g. in the 'balco-foyer');
- Use of the art work as elements in the digital capsules and/or performance engine;
- Sharing work in progress online and through social media;
- An event to project digital images of the artworks on suitable walls in Raval;
- Use of the artwork in everyday objects (restaurant place settings, shopping bags etc.)

Presenting the art co-created by the disabled and non-disabled artists in this part of the trial will enrich the audience experience, give a broader purpose to their work (because it could all be shown publicly), and raise awareness of Opera Prima Raval in ways and through networks new to LICEU.

Co-creation of accessibility resources for non-reading audiences

The LICEU theatre already supports access by people with disabilities in several ways. Places are reserved in the auditorium for people with mobility impairments, while audio description, surtitles and sign-language interpretation are available for people with sensory impairments. The work is currently supported by UAB accessibility team and although discussions focused initially on opening this up to community participation, it would offer limited opportunities for co-creation. The possibility of involving non-professionals in that work remains open, but it should be seen as part of introducing them to other aspects of the LICEU's technical and creative work such as design.

Recent discussions between the LICEU trial leaders and FM have therefore focused on another area where creative work could introduce an innovative element to the accessibility resources, alongside the existing provision. The idea is to develop a resource for non-readers, principally people with learning disabilities, (although if that is successfully achieved, and there is capacity, the material might also be reworked for people who do not speak the opera's languages). This resource would take the form of a printed programme in which the opera's story, characters, and insights about the production are conveyed through images.



This might be produced in a form accessible by a smart phone, perhaps in the form of a PDF, but other possibilities exist (e.g. [The Difference Engine](#), though that is language-based).

This part of the trial will involve students from the Centre de Formació [Institut Miquel Tarradell](#) in Raval, supported by UAB and other experts, artists and facilitators as necessary. It would also involve at least one organisation working with learning people with disabilities. The students and people with learning difficulties would work together to understand the story of the opera, and explore visual ways of representing the information. They would use the media vault, to access emerging material about the production and share their ideas.

The output would include a printed programme, designed for non-readers and people with learning disabilities, but could also be extended to support inclusion activities around and during the performances in November 2021. These might be pre-performance workshops to meet the access needs of audience members with learning difficulties.

There may also be scope for the performance engine to support the access needs of people with learning disabilities during the performance, though again language needs will be an important issue. Like the other two elements of the trial, this is highly innovative work that has the potential to break new ground in terms of access to opera by people with disabilities and others at risk of exclusion. For this reason, [Apropa Cultura](#) (a specialist cultural access project in Barcelona) is likely to be a key partner in facilitating and advising on the work.

Trial activities and the production of Opera Prima Raval

It is vital that these co-creation activities are fully integrated in the larger business of the opera's creation. Everyone involved in the LICEU trial must be included in the whole creative work of the production. They need to see its evolution, and be able to contribute their views of what is emerging, for at least three reasons:

- LICEU trial participants need to take inspiration from the evolving work if they are to create artwork that enhances Opera Prima Raval as a whole.
- They are (and must be recognised as) creative contributors to the artistic project, which ranges much wider than a conventional opera production. Unless everyone has a voice in the process, Opera Prima Raval risks missing its goal of social inclusion.
- They come from the neighbourhood that Opera Prima Raval intends to include and represent: their response to its ideas is an invaluable test of the evolving artistic work and its potential to speak to local people.

In short, local people's influence must make Opera Prima Raval clearly different from the LICEU's usual productions for it to achieve its social aims. It follows that the media vault needs to give everyone involved in Opera Prima Raval access to the evolving creation of its different aspects: music, direction, scenography, design etc. It is also essential that those who are working away from the theatre itself should be regularly invited to come to the LICEU in the months leading to the performances, both to observe the creative process (e.g. rehearsal) and to meet and become familiar with the staff and the building.

This is central to the project's aspiration of social inclusion, but it will not happen unless it is recognised as vital and planned in advance.



2.3.3 Technology in the LICEU trial

The trial will make extensive use of the media vault, as the main way in which people participating in the three co-creation activities described above will communicate and do their work together, and how they access and feel part of the wider production. This might stretch the existing capabilities of the media vault and require innovative solutions: for example it might need to include still images, as well as video and sound files. Likewise the interface for the media vault will need to be accessible to people with disabilities and people for whom Spanish or Catalan are not primary languages.

LICEU TRIAL	Media vault	Performance engine	Immersive installation
Before (Co-creation)	Definite		
During (Performance)		Definite	Possible
After (Distribution)			Possible

Table 2: Use of the TRACTION toolset in the LICEU trial

The performance engine will be used during the performances themselves, and as suggested in 3.3.2 above, it could have a distinctive role in supporting the access needs of people with learning disabilities, though this a tentative idea at this stage. There is also scope to use digital technology in the creation in the design and creation of costumes, visual material for the marketing, and access materials for non-readers. After the première in November 2021 there will be room for technology again in the production of digital capsules that will extend the life and reach of the opera. The form and creation of this aspect of the LICEU trial is not yet fully developed.

2.3.4 Artistic outputs (Opera performance and capsules)

The artistic output can be divided into three parts, those directly involving the co-creation activities mentioned above, the community opera they are part of and support, and the capsules of digital material to be available during and after the performance. The trial co-creation activities are expected to produce the following artistic output:

- Costumes for the opera production, design sketches, and associated materials;
- Designs for the poster and the programme, and visual material for exhibitions, digital projections, and online platforms;
- A visual guide to the opera for non-readers, perhaps with associated creative activities for audience members with learning difficulties.

Artistic control and responsibility for each of these elements will be with the trial leaders and the participants. They are self-contained and can be assessed as artistic projects in their own right whilst simultaneously being part of the larger opera co-creation programme. Opera Prima Raval is the principal artistic creation of the LICEU initiative. The TRACTION trial contributes to that and will have a share in its artistic achievement. When it comes to the evaluation particular care will need to be taken to consider the added value resulting from the co-creation activities in the audience's access and experience, as well as the artistic success of the opera itself.



2.4 Social transformation impact

The table below sets out the anticipated social impact associated with each objective of the LICEU TRACTION trial, the broad indicators of change and the evaluation methods through which they will be tested. These are high-level outcomes and indicators, whose details will be clarified as work proceeds. It is possible that this will reveal further outcomes, either not anticipated or prioritised by the project at this stage, and it will be important to record them.

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	METHOD
1: Building trust and common purpose with community partners in and near Raval		
Better relations between theatre and community	Increased use of LICEU by Raval people	Interview, focus group + participant observation
Increased enjoyment of opera by new audiences	Further involvement in opera	Interview, focus group + participant observation
Increased community participation in LICEU activities	Further community engagement	Interview, focus group + participant observation
2: Involving local people in co-creation of costumes, access and marketing resources for Opera Prima Raval		
Increased capabilities of people with disabilities	Sense of personal choice	Interview, focus group + professional assessment
Increased capabilities of people at risk of exclusion	Sense of personal choice	Interview, focus group + participant observation
Increased capabilities of students	Sense of personal choice	Interview, focus group + participant observation
3: Using digital technology to facilitate and enhance the co-creation process		
Inclusive technologies for opera co-creation	Added value of technology	Interview, focus group + professional assessment
Inclusive technologies for opera audiences	Added value of technology	Interview, focus group + professional assessment
Transferable new technologies	Added value of technology	Interview, focus group + professional assessment
4: Producing physical and digital resources to reach new audiences for the opera and the process of its co-creation		
Increased access to culture by people at risk of exclusion	New and increased audiences	Records, focus group + professional assessment
5: Documenting and evaluating the TRACTION trial to identify transferable learning		
More inclusive opera work	Take up of the materials	Records, focus group + professional assessment
More and better use of technology in opera	Take up of the materials	Records, focus group + professional assessment

Table 3: LICEU Trial – anticipated social impact



2.5 Risk assessment

Each of the TRACTION trials presents its own particular challenges and risks. The following table sets out briefly the key risks facing the LICEU trial and the action that will be taken in mitigation. (It does not the challenges raised by the Covid-19 public health restrictions which are considered in the final part of this plan.)

Risk	Mitigation
Failure to recruit sufficient community partners	Ensure that the offer is strong and that it meets people's own needs and concerns
Difficulty retaining the community partners because of the new social pressures caused by the lockdown	Be flexible and supportive towards organisations and individuals facing difficulties
The TRACTION trial being marginalised within Opera Prima Raval	Ensure that there is a good understanding of their contribution and value
Insufficient progress is made because enthusiasm wanes	Work to empower the participants and ensure good communication

Table 4: LICEU Trial – Risks and mitigation



3 T3.2 SAMP TRIAL

3.1 Introduction

Sociedade Artística Musical dos Pousos (SAMP) is a community music school in Leiria (Portugal), with its own orchestra, band and choir, as well as a strong community outreach programme in local institutions. For several years, these have included Leiria Youth Prison, where SAMP has produced three well-received Mozart operas performed by inmates with professional musicians and singers. As a result, a good relationship has developed with the prison, many of the detainees and their families, and with institutions such as the Ministry of Justice and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

The SAMP trial will take this work into a new phase with three important developments: the creation of new operatic works, the use of digital technology, and the inclusion of prisoners' relatives and friends, prison staff and local people in the process. The trial will produce a newly-composed community opera that uses digital technology in which people can tell stories that matter to them. The people involved are separated, literally and metaphorically, by walls that limit their contact and understanding of one another's lives, stories and hopes. Digital technology will connect them during the co-creation period, in the performances and in presentation of the work afterwards.

The SAMP trial is ambitious and challenging. Security conditions are strict, far-reaching and not always predictable, touching on everything from personal safety to how technology can be used within the prison. Activity is always liable to be interrupted by something as simple as a shortage of prison officers, while inmates can be unavailable or transferred without warning. The ethical questions raised are complex, and must take account of the Portuguese legal position: for instance, if a person has given consent to appear on film while they are in prison, that consent ends automatically on their release. There are also political sensitivities about how a prison opera project is reported in the media.

Fortunately, the SAMP team bring great expertise to the task. They have built experience and confidence in previous opera projects with the prison, and understand the challenges. But they also understand the work's potential in reaching people at risk of social exclusion inside and outside the prison, and its importance both to individuals and in demonstrating the value of the arts in the education and rehabilitation of prisoners.

3.2 Aim and objectives

The aim and objectives of the SAMP trial have been modified since their first iteration in March 2020, in the light of the situation and work undertaken so far.

- **The aim of the SAMP trial is to build support for art in rehabilitation of offenders**

It will achieve this by:

1. Engaging Leiria prison inmates and staff with relatives and locals in opera co-creation, production and performance;



2. Using digital technology to enable remote participation in co-creation and performance;
3. Presenting three opera capsules and a full-scale community opera to the public;
4. Promoting understanding of and support for the arts in the criminal justice system; and
5. Documenting and evaluating the TRACTION trial to identify transferable learning.

3.3 Activity planning (Co-creation and training)

3.3.1 Co-creation activities

Because of the pandemic lockdown, SAMP's work inside Leiria prison was delayed. They used the time to develop the trial team's plans and involve the selected composers. The creative relationship that emerged from this has led SAMP to invite the three composers to work together on the project, instead of choosing a lead composer next year as had been planned. SAMP also used this time to establish a strong local advisory team that includes relatives, former inmates and experts from the criminal justice system. Having secured the necessary support in the Ministry of Justice and the Gulbenkian Foundation, a press conference was held in July 2020, leading to very positive media coverage.

The following week, the musicians began working inside the prison, observing new sanitary protocols. Sessions take place in and outside the 'Mozart Pavilion' a former classroom dedicated to SAMP's music activities. Working with about 40 inmates (all volunteers) the team has introduced each composer through music activities, films of opera and discussion.

SAMP have also worked with prison guards, spending time at their social club and cafeteria. Many guards live away from their families, with low pay and poor housing conditions. Some have also expressed frustration that their contribution to the success of past opera projects is not recognised. The contact has been very positive and SAMP is now exploring setting up a traditional music group with regular sessions for the warders.

During the last four months of 2020, SAMP musicians, the composers and the librettist will begin a process of musical co-creation to explore the inmates musical capacities and interests and develop three short musical pieces (capsules). SAMP is encouraged by the growing commitment of the prison management, which has suggested a piece about the history of the prison and its farm. They are considering if the three capsules could tell the same story from the perspective of a prisoner, a prison guard and the management or a relative.

In September 2020, SAMP will also begin involving family (mothers and partners) and friends of the inmates. These people often live far from Leiria (throughout Portugal, the islands and in other countries) and so the technology is vital to connect them. Many are poor and do not have smartphones with cameras, and SAMP is looking into whether and how to provide them with the technology to participate.

The first half of 2021 will involve work on the capsules, with the focus of co-creation, music, dramaturgy and rehearsal moving outside the prison to families and local people, while work with the inmates and guards continues on a reduced scale. A presentation will take place in June, at the prison, at a theatre in Leiria and in the small concert hall of the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon. As well as their intrinsic value the performances will test the technology in live situations and build participants' skills, experience and confidence.



After June 2021, the process of 2020 will be repeated with intensive work in the prison, drawing on the lessons from the first iteration of the cycle, but focusing on the creation of a new, full-scale opera. By December 2021, the text, music, scenography and technological aspects of the production will be settled, so that from January 2022, the project can move into a full rehearsal mode with a larger creative team. In June 2022, the main production will be presented in the prison and at the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, with the participation of the Gulbenkian Orchestra.

3.3.2 Technology in the SAMP trial

Digital technology is essential in the SAMP trial to connect the different groups involved in the co-creation. The media vault will enable people to share work in progress as in the other trials. It will also (subject to the security and privacy needs of the prison context) enable inmates to share some of their creative work remotely with family members. In this sense it supports the project’s goal of strengthening relationships strained by incarceration, which is so important to rehabilitation and social inclusion. The performance engine will be vital in the performance, where it will allow live performance from at least two sites to be integrated through screens. It is not yet clear whether, and if so how, the immersive installation might play a role, but this might be in the planned capsules.

SAMP TRIAL	Media vault	Performance engine	Immersive installation
Before (Co-creation)	Essential		Possible
During (Performance)	Possible	Essential	Possible
After (Distribution)			Possible

Table 5: Use of the TRACTION toolset in the SAMP trial

3.3.3 Artistic outputs (Opera performance and capsules)

The artistic outputs of the SAMP trial include two elements. One is the three capsules – self-contained short pieces of opera – which will be co-created and performed during 2021 and 2022, inside and outside the prison. These will allow everyone to build their capabilities, develop stories, characters and scenographic ideas, and test how to use technology creatively. They will also build interest and audiences and give participants more confidence. The capsules will be artworks in their own right, and might be made available in digital form, as well as producing artistic material that is reworked in the main opera.

That opera will be a completely new work, co-created by the inmates, families, guards and local people with professional artists. It will tell a story that reflects their life experience and concerns enlarging the range of operatic expression. This work is anticipated to take place live in two locations: inside the prison, and in a community venue in Leiria, perhaps a theatre. There will be an audience at each location, and they will be able to see what is happening in the other site via large screens or projection. The focus of the action will shift between these locations, and it might also include pre-recorded media. The whole production will be online (though probably not live, for security reasons). There will be two performances, one in Leiria, and one in Lisbon, at dates in June 2022.



3.4 Social transformation impact

The table below sets out the anticipated social impact associated with each objective of the SAMP TRACTION trial, the broad indicators of change and the evaluation methods through which they will be tested. These are high-level outcomes and indicators, whose details will be clarified as work proceeds. It is possible that this will reveal further outcomes, either not anticipated or prioritised by the project at this stage, and it will be important to record them.

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	METHOD
1: Engaging Leiria prison inmates and staff with relatives and locals in opera co-creation, production and performance		
Increased capabilities of people at risk of exclusion	Increase in personal choice	Interview, focus group and participant observation
Improved post-release outcomes	Post-release record	Records, focus group + professional assessment
Increased skills, confidence and self-awareness	Record of achievement	Questionnaire and focus group
2: Using digital technology to enable remote participation in co-creation and performance		
Viable new technologies for opera creation	Added value of technology	Interview, focus group + professional assessment
Viable new technologies for opera audiences	Added value of technology	Interview, focus group + professional assessment
3: Presenting three opera capsules and a full-scale community opera to the public		
Cultural inclusion	Participants' appreciation	Focus discussion group
Sense of achievement	Audience appreciation	Questionnaire & focus group
4: Promoting understanding of and support for the arts in the criminal justice system		
Institutional support	Changes in policy	Documentary review + interview
Positive reception of the project	Media coverage	Documentary review
5: Documenting and evaluating the TRACTION trial to identify transferable learning		
More inclusive opera work	Take up of the materials	Records, focus group + professional assessment
More and better use of technology in opera	Take up of the materials	Records, focus group + professional assessment

Table 6: SAMP Trial – anticipated social impact

3.5 Risk Assessment

As noted above, the SAMP trial is risky because its focus on a youth prison and the vulnerability of many of the people who will participate, including families and friends of the inmates. Not all the issues can be recorded here, but we can begin to map them.



Risk	Mitigation
Negative outcomes for vulnerable people	Even within the prison population, there are people who are more or less vulnerable. Ensuring anonymity or privacy for everyone who wants it will be essential, and it should be possible to build this into the opera from the start using technological and creative ideas.
Participants withdrawing consent	Since everyone must be free to participate and withdraw as they wish, plans must take this possibility into account, for instance by having several people able to play the same role
Losing contact with participants	Some people may drop out of sight for many reasons, but without formally withdrawing. Plans need to be in place regarding how their input might or might not be used in such circumstances
Security impacts the work	Permission to work at the prison or to invite the public to see a performance can always be withdrawn, therefore there always needs to be a contingency plan that means work can continue in such emergencies
Problems between participants	Personal conflicts can cross into the rehearsal space so steps need to be taken to establish ground rules for behaviour and ensure that everyone can participate safely, for instance in deciding w
Lack of support from guards or prison administration or national institutions	Constant dialogue to ensure that there is good understanding and valuing the input of each individual or organisation
Critical media coverage	Build trust and understanding with the key media outlets, so that the purpose of the work is well understood

Table 7: SAMP Trial – Risks and mitigation



4 T3.3 INO TRIAL

4.1 Introduction

Irish National Opera was established in 2018 with the merger of Opera Theatre Company and Wide Open Opera. Like other recently-formed national companies (e.g. National Theatre of Scotland, 2006 and National Theatre Wales, 2009) it has no venue of its own. Instead its 10 staff members work with a network of freelancers to bring the best Irish and international opera artists to Ireland's cities, towns and rural areas, and build engagement in the art form. In its first two years, INO produced 72 performances of 14 operas in 24 places.

The INO trial tests the potential of virtual reality (VR) technologies in the creation and presentation of opera. Ireland has full-scale venues for opera only in Dublin, Cork and Wexford (and Belfast in the North). Although INO's predecessor, Opera Theatre Company, performed in more than 100 places on the island, it often presented reduced versions. Radio, TV and the internet giving some access to opera, but also offer partial experiences. Now, VR technology has the potential to offer immersive experiences which, while not the same as live performance, still have the emotional power that make opera what it is. The INO trial is testing whether VR could be a way to create intense opera experiences in a contemporary idiom, freed from the technical requirements and costs of traditional opera production.

The INO trial is artistically innovative, since there have been few attempts to create opera in virtual reality. There will be no physical, live performance. The work will not be a recording of a traditional opera: it will exist *only* in digital form. The extent of its technological innovation will depend on choices made as the trial develops. The use of VR also has constraints: e.g. the length of time people may be willing to use a VR headset, the technology's inaccessibility to people with sensory disabilities, and the challenge of replicating the communal experience that is, for many, central to the joy of opera.

The INO trial will involve co-creation with three very different communities: in outer Dublin, in a mid-size midlands town, and in an Irish-speaking island. Here, social exclusion can be a matter of geography, language, culture or poverty, and may be hidden. It takes the form of restricted capabilities, so the opera will draw on stories shared by members of each community, to create work that resonates with the diversity of contemporary life in Ireland.

The project has the overall title 'Out of the Ordinary', which expresses both the extraordinary experiences offered by virtual reality headsets and the intention to create a work out of everyday life experiences and stories. It also recognises how the Covid-19 situation has changed ordinary life in Ireland.

4.2 Aim and objectives

The aim and objectives of the INO trial have been slightly modified since their first iteration in March 2020, in the light of the evolving situation and work undertaken so far.



- The aim of the INO trial is to enable contemporary opera to contribute to social inclusion in Ireland

It will achieve this by:

1. Working with three communities on opera co-creation with professional artists;
2. Testing how VR technology can enrich opera creation and audience experiences;
3. Co-creating VR opera that reflects the communities' culture, lives and stories;
4. Presenting the resulting opera(s) in each community and nationally at festivals;
5. Documenting and evaluating the TRACTION trial to identify transferable learning

4.3 Activity planning (Co-creation and training)

4.3.1 Co-creation activities

Irish National Opera have identified the three communities that will take part in the trial, and begun planning work with local partner organisations. The pandemic has slowed this process and it is possible that the location of the Music Generation partnership will change. However, at present the trial will take place in:

- **Inis Meáin**, an Irish-speaking island with 150 inhabitants off the coast of Galway in the west of Ireland. The partner for the trial is **Conradh na Gaeilge**, a democratic forum for the Irish-speaking community with over 200 local branches.
- **Tullamore**, the county town of Offaly, with a population of about 14,500, in the rural Irish Midlands, about 60 miles from Dublin. The partner is Music Generation and the trial will focus on a secondary school.
- **Tallaght**, a suburban district in South Dublin, with a population of 76,000, including people who have migrated to Ireland. The partner is the **Civic Theatre**, the town's principal arts organisation.

During a lockdown that prevented non-essential travel in Ireland, INO focused on research and building relationships in 2020. The community groups have been sent VR headsets pre-loaded with a rich arts programme to introduce them to the technology, accompanied by a booklet about the community opera trial. Participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire about their experience with the headsets. In autumn 2020, as conditions permit, work will begin to introduce three elements of opera across the communities: narrative in Inis Meáin, music in Tullamore and design in Tallaght.

In 2021, INO will return to each community to begin the work of co-creation, exploring stories and themes that resonate with the participants. The working process will be varied, responding to the different social life of each community. For instance, on Inis Meáin, it may be better to work intensively over a series of weekends, while activities with Music Generation might integrate with a regular programme of weekly sessions. These choices will also be influenced by which professional artists are recruited to work with each community.

The trial will explore how digital technology can be used in the co-creation process, and which platforms or applications are most effective in making VR accessible to professional and non-professional artists. Traditional and conventional media will nonetheless remain



important. For example, if traditional music is to play a part in the opera, it is likely to be performed on traditional instruments and recorded as material to be included in the VR resources. At this stage INO is flexible about which technologies the non-professional artists will want to use, and which can facilitate or add value to the co-creation process.

Whether there will be one opera, three operas, or one opera with three parts will be settled through the co-creation process. The choice is partly artistic, and partly about the interests of the communities and the common ground they establish. It will be decided in 2021, when work on the composition and the libretto will begin. The media vault will enable the three geographically-distant communities to understand each other, their concerns and their creative ideas, while videoconferencing and other communication tools may also be used.

In 2022, the final work will be presented in each of the communities. The presentation will include a significant celebratory element, perhaps with live music, food, opportunities for discussion, and so on. The VR opera will form the centrepiece of those activities but it is essential that they become genuine community events that allow people to reflect on and appreciate the work that they have been part of. After these three community *premières*, the opera will be toured to festivals and other cultural events, where it can reach new audiences, and the three communities’ stories can be shared. The possibility of using the recorded material in other forms – for instance in a podcast or online – remains open.

4.3.2 Technology in the INO trial

The primary focus of the INO trial is on how VR technology can bring the experience of opera to more people in a country with few large scale theatres. In taking opera to rural and remote areas, and so contributing to social and cultural inclusion, Irish National Opera needs imaginative solutions. It is here that VR could bring people something of the power of a full scale opera, albeit in a very different context. In responding to this challenge, the INO trial explores two interconnected subsidiary questions:

- How to co-create an opera in virtual reality with non-professional artists and community participation;
- How to use VR to offer both individual and collective experiences capable of enhancing community ties and social inclusion.

As in all the trials this involves three stages: *before*, in the process of development and co-creation, *during* the performance(s), and *after*, in the distribution and continuing life of the created work. The following table shows the current expectations about the use of the TRACTION toolset. It doesn’t include the virtual reality work to be created by Virtual Reality Ireland since it is not part of the toolset, and is likely to fall into the category of innovative use of existing technology rather than technological innovation.

INO TRIAL	Media vault	Performance engine	Immersive installation
Before (Co-creation)	Expected		
During (Performance)			Expected
After (Distribution)		Possible	Possible

Table 8: Use of the TRACTION toolset in the INO trial



The media vault can support the co-creation process, as a way to store and share elements of creative work (sound and video) that will form the material with which the VR opera will be created. There is also potential to enhance the VR experience in performance and subsequent touring to festivals with the immersive installation technologies, including CWI’s work on social virtual reality. The use of the toolset will be further defined through the first round of INO TRACTION tests, on 30 September 2020. They will map the responses to VR in co-creation and performance of professional users (artists). Subsequent tests will extend this work to audiences, and help understand the possibilities and challenges to be considered for workshops and for the artwork(s) that will eventually be created.

4.3.3 Artistic outputs (Opera performance and capsules)

The INO trial will lead to the creation of at least one VR opera, which is to say an opera that exists only in virtual reality. The challenge is therefore to use VR as a creative medium, rather than to import into it sound and video from a performance created conventionally. This will be a new work of art, that reflects the lives and concerns of the participating communities, made and experienced in virtual reality.

The opera itself will have at least two forms of presentation. The first, scheduled for 2022, will be in, for and with each of the communities involved. INO want this to be a community event – an occasion that brings everyone together to celebrate what has been achieved – so it is likely to have some live musical and dramaturgical elements to enhance the experience of the opera gained through the headset. Following these premières, the work will be toured to festivals and similar events across Ireland, so that INO is able to reach completely new audiences in radically new ways.

4.4 Social transformation impact

The table below sets out the anticipated social impact associated with each objective of the INO TRACTION trial, the broad indicators of change and the evaluation methods through which they will be tested. These are high-level outcomes and indicators, whose details will be clarified as work proceeds. It is possible that this will reveal further outcomes, either not anticipated or prioritised by the project at this stage, and it will be important to record them.

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	METHOD
1: Working with three communities on opera co-creation with professional artists		
More enjoyment of opera, music and art	Further involvement in opera	Interview, focus group and participant observation
More participation in the community	Further community engagement	Interview, focus group and participant observation
More confidence in local culture and identity	Further local culture activity	Interview, focus group and participant observation
Professional development of artists	Reporting	Interview and/or focus group

Continues below



2: Testing how VR technology can enrich opera creation and audience experiences		
Increased capabilities of people at risk of exclusion	Sense of ownership	Interview, focus group and participant observation
Raised profile of participating communities	Awareness of communities	Audience surveys and/or focus group
3: Co-creating VR opera that reflects the communities' culture, lives and stories		
Viable use of technology in opera co-creation	Added value of technology	Interview, focus group + professional assessment
Positive reception of technology by audiences	Added value of technology	Audience surveys and/or focus group
4: Presenting the resulting opera(s) in each community and nationally at festivals		
Greater confidence in local culture and identity	Sense of achievement and pride	Interview, focus group and participant observation
Changing ideas among audiences	Audience reaction	Audience surveys and/or focus group
5: Documenting and evaluating the TRACTION trial to identify transferable learning		
More inclusive opera work	Take up of the materials	Records, focus group + professional assessment
More and better use of technology in opera	Take up of the materials	Records, focus group + professional assessment

Table 9: INO Trial – anticipated social impact

4.5 Risk assessment

Each of the TRACTION trials presents its own challenges and risks. The following table sets out briefly the key risks facing the INO trial and the action that will be taken in mitigation. The largest and most unpredictable risk now faced by TRACTION is the are the public health restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, but since it affects all the projects it is discussed in the final part of this plan.

Risk	Mitigation
Failure to secure sufficient community participation	Ensure that the offer is strong and that it meets people's own needs and concerns
Difficulty retaining the community partners because of the Covid-19 pressures	Be flexible and supportive towards organisations and individuals facing difficulties
Weak connection with INO's main programme	Invite participants as guests to other INO performances
Resistance to or dislike of virtual reality as an experience	Ensure a supportive and attentive approach and that not all activities need VR
Enthusiasm and interest wanes because of the time and distances involved	Ensure regular milestones to see progress, support local activity beyond the trial, keep people informed throughout

Table 10: INO Trial – Risks and mitigation



5 T3.4 CROSS-FERTILISATION ACTIVITIES

5.1 The rationale of cross-fertilisation

The consortium sees cross-fertilisation activities as critical to the TRACTION project, ensuring that the trials operate to a consistent set of values and concepts, albeit adapted to their specific contexts, and that they are constantly in contact, and engaged in critical dialogue and reflection to share their progress, difficulties and responses to the challenges of community dialogue and opera co-creation. As will be clear from the preceding pages, each trial works in a distinct context that shapes its aims, practice and how it uses co-creation in opera production. The three trials are also different as regards the type of organisation leading them, the location and venues, the social profile of the participants, and the part played by technology (as outlined in D2.1, *Technical Requirements, Architecture and Integration*).

This is one of TRACTION's strengths. There is not just one way of opening up artistic creation to non-professionals. Instead, co-creation is better understood as a *territory of action*, defined by the values, ideas, practice and intentions of those involved (Matarasso 2019: 84). The TRACTION trials reflect a wide spectrum of positions within that territory, and the project benefits greatly from diversity in co-creation, processes and situations. It brings more possibilities to test ideas, methods and technologies and to use the results to guide what the other trials are doing. Thus, by trialling the media vault with prisoners, with people with disabilities and with an Irish-speaking island community (to name just three of the groups involved) we will learn much more about the strengths and limitations of the technology, and its use in co-creation. In TRACTION, the whole aims to be greater than the sum of the parts and it is the cross-fertilisation activities that ensure that is possible.

5.2 Cross fertilisation activities

The trials have mostly been concerned with planning and development in the early months of the project, but cross-fertilisation activities have still been part of that process. It is unfortunate that planned visits to meet community opera and related organisations such as [Opera North](#), [Sage](#), [Streetwise Opera](#) and [The Lawnmowers](#) had to be cancelled because of the Covid-19 lockdown and the impossibility of travel. As soon as conditions permit, we intend to resume these meetings, and also begin exchange visits (such as that between trial composers that was postponed in May).

For the present, monthly video-conferences between the trial teams (with other members of the consortium always invited) have been instituted before the regular consortium meetings. These have included internal discussions on themes such as the ethics of participation, recruitment of participants, and the process of co-creation, alongside round tables with external speakers: the first of this was with [Šančiai Community Opera](#) from Lithuania. The opportunity has also been taken to commission texts from leading figures in the field of community opera such as Bill Bankes-Jones (of [Tête-à-Tête](#)) and the composer [Jonathan Dove](#), whose production at the LICEU had to be postponed due to the lockdown. These



activities have helped the consortium connect with others in the field and raise awareness of the TRACTION project through a [blog and social media](#) campaign.

Drawing on the expertise of external advisors is another aspect of the cross-fertilisation activities and TRACTION has recruited an eminent International Core Advisory TEAM (ICAT), whose membership spans digital media, opera production, co-creation and evaluation. They are:

- **Oriol Pastor**, Founder and Director of Mira Festival
- **Matt Peacock**, Artistic Director of With One Voice and founder of Streetwise Opera.
- **Hugo Seabra**, Project Manager at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's Social Cohesion and Integration Programme
- **Helen Simons**, Emeritus Professor within Southampton Education School at the University of Southampton.
- **Aljosa Smolic**, Professor of Creative Technologies at Trinity College Dublin
- **Marian Ursu**, Director of Department of Theatre, Film, TV and Interactive Media at University of York
- **Richard Willacy**, Executive Director, Birmingham Opera Company

A first workshop, on co-creation, was held with the partners in July 2020. Each trial also has a Local Advisory Team (LAT) and, subject to language, we will involve some of those people in discussions involving all the trials. As TRACTION progresses, the cross-fertilisation activities will continue to be frequent and enriching, alongside the consortium meetings, so that learning is shared actively between the trials.

5.3 Reflective Practice Methodology for co-creation

TRACTION's multidisciplinary and cross-cutting approach means that activities often serve more than one purpose. The Reflective Practice Methodology designed to guide the trials as they move into activities is a case in point. It simultaneously supports the trial teams in their work, monitors and records progress, and contributes to the knowledge exchange within TRACTION. The term 'reflective practice' recognises that TRACTION is an exploratory process, whose learning must be continually applied in the development of the work. This is, of course, how most creative artists work, but where the outcomes are innovation and impact that instinctive process needs to be formalised and transparent.

As from September 2020, in addition to the monthly trials videoconference, FM will facilitate a monthly online meeting with each trial to discuss current activities, progress against goals and evaluation. It will follow the same structure, based on broad questions, though these remain open and may be added to or changed as the work evolves:

- What did you do? Description of co-creation activities, participants and artists
- What did you intend? How the activities were expected to contribute to the project
- What happened? Description of the sessions including any unexpected events
- How was it received? Participants' response to the session
- What was good? Reflection on which aspects were most satisfying
- What didn't work? Reflection on disappointing or ineffective aspects
- Memorable moments Incidents, impressions or things that were said



- How do you feel? Overall sense of how the work is going

This approach will help trial leaders improve their work, identify problems at an early stage and build a record of our evolving thinking during the course of the project. The notes of each meeting will be shared with the other trials and the wider partnership to ensure that there is a good understanding of progress.



6 NEXT STEPS

6.1 TRACTION and Covid-19

Planning of the TRACTION trials is well advanced and activity has already begun at SAMP, with the INO and LICEU trials beginning work in September and October. This is in line with the timetable and workplan set out at the start, which, given the public health measures implemented in response to the coronavirus pandemic, is a real achievement. Still, it must be recognised that, as the trials begin to involve people in co-creation activities for the next phase of their work, the practical challenges and uncertainties will multiply. This final section of the plan is an overview of how the project has been affected so far and what measures the TRACTION consortium will take to minimise disruption of its next steps.

6.1.1 TRACTION during lockdown

The TRACTION project began with a kick-off meeting in San Sebastián in February 2020. The following month, Italy entered lockdown, followed by Spain, France and most of Europe. The pandemic's social effects have been profound, especially for vulnerable people, including those who are the focus of TRACTION's work. In Raval, for example, the lockdown has made many people dependent on food donations.¹ The public services and NGOs who support vulnerable people face major difficulties, as their income falls while demand grows. Most opera houses, concert halls and theatres are closed and many artists, musicians and technicians have no work: the economic viability of the cultural sector is compromised. This context, which touches both people at risk of exclusion and the performing arts, inevitably creates new conditions for TRACTION.

Because lockdown coincided with a period of research and development, the effects have so far been limited. The second Consortium meeting, set for Newcastle in May was cancelled, but otherwise technology has enabled good communications and work progressed well between February and August 2020. Indeed, the reliance on remote work may have allowed the TRACTION consortium to develop faster than it anticipated. This Creative, Artistic and Social Management Plan is one result and it shows the solid foundations of the three trials. However, as TRACTION begins the co-creation activities, the public health measures present a range of new challenges we will need to overcome or at least to find ways to live with.

6.1.2 TRACTION after lockdown

The new sanitary protocols represent a challenge for the planned conduct of the TRACTION trials. Participatory art typically depends on physical proximity and often, in the performing arts, on physical contact. Singing, the heart of opera, has attracted attention as a factor in transmission. At the same time, the public health rules now in operation vary widely and can change rapidly; so does their observance. When SAMP began work in the prison, they found no masks or antibacterial gel, and little awareness of the importance of these basic



defences. The team have had to supply both, and adopt new working methods, for instance working with smaller groups of inmates and staying outside whenever possible.

Performance is also challenging. Outdoor performances of **opera** and **rock** have been tried, and the **Salzburg Festival** is testing ways of working safely, but it remains to be seen how viable these models are. As summer recedes, the first will cease to be an option anyway. Staff have returned to the LICEU but the opera house is planning only smaller events to respect the new rules. Fortunately, Opera Prima Raval is due in November 2021, by which time ways of performing within the constraints of public health measures may be in place. International travel remains difficult and sometimes impossible, an obvious handicap in a European project dedicated to partnership working. Videoconferencing has been an immense help, and it will continue to play a big part in TRACTION, but there are times when face-to-face working is needed.

Many of the people we will involve in co-creation activities are especially vulnerable to the illness because of age, disability or other factors. Data shows that, for complex and interconnected reasons, poorer social groups have been especially badly affected by Covid-19. Involving them in co-creation activities will require new risk assessments to identify the measures needed to keep them safe. There is also the important question of people's willingness and ability to participate. There is evidence that many vulnerable people are reluctant to resume their former activities, and that arts venues, even where they are able to open, will not be high among their priorities.² The social situation of many vulnerable people is likely have to deteriorated in recent months, especially through loss of income, so their capacity to take part in an artistic project may well have suffered too. The trials will need to work with care and sensitivity, ensuring that people have the necessary support to enable their participation.

As this brief overview shows, there are many new risks that need to be assessed in relation to Covid-19 and it seems wise to take a global approach to the issue. The consortium is confident that the project can be delivered in the new conditions, with appropriate safeguards and adjustments, but contingency now need to be put in place. The needs TRACTION set out to address remain urgent. Insofar as technology could permit artistic co-creation that minimises the risk of infection, the project's innovations now have even more potential to bring new working practices for opera in a changed world. The consortium will review the situation in September, expecting to proceed according to the timetable, but with care and contingency plans ready.



APPENDICES



7 APPENDIX 1: GOOD PRACTICE IN ARTISTIC CO-CREATION

7.1 Ethics, good practice and guidelines for co-creation

Ethical principles are abstract and it is not always obvious how they should be applied in given situations. [...] Some of the most intractable ethical problems arise from conflicts among principles and the necessity of trading one against the other. The balancing of such principles in concrete situations is the ultimate ethical act.

E. R. House (1993)³

Because TRACTION is a research project with university partners and funded by the European Commission, its research activities are conducted within ethical guidelines and overseen by those bodies (see WP6 deliverables). The stated purpose of those guidelines is to ensure the protection of vulnerable people in the research process. Risks also arise in co-creation, but the complex and diverse nature of the process demand another approach to ethical issues:

- Co-creation involves a wide range of practices and situations, many of which cannot be specified or even known in advance.
- People's participation may extend over a period of weeks, months or even years, and the nature of that participation may change a lot during that time.
- People who are not recognised in law as vulnerable may place themselves in a vulnerable situation by taking part (for instance by sharing personal stories or performing in public).
- Conventional research concepts such as informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and publication access are either inapplicable or impractical.
- Ethical practice in research typically aims to 'do no harm'; ethical practice in artistic co-creation typically aims actively to do some good.
- Artists are often motivated by values such as human rights, social justice, democracy and empowerment, especially when they are working with people.
- There are always inequalities of power and different interests when professional artists involve non-professional artists in their work.
- Attention to ethics in co-creation is in itself a public expression of respect for all participants' dignity and human rights, and a learning opportunity for all.

Co-creation activities do not involve a small number of replicable models, such as interviews or focus groups, but a spectrum within which participants may take different roles at different times. Since in TRACTION, the activity is also intended to bring about 'transformational social impact' (which is necessarily rooted in individuals) people's opinions of their own participation may change during and after the project because of what they have experienced.



This document described a first attempt to map and respond to some of the *risks and ethical issues in artistic co-creation for the TRACTION trials*. It will be developed in discussion with the partners and through further research. This should not be confused with the Ethics requirements related to the research project (see WP6), since this Section refers to the complex issue of ethics in co-creation. For consistency, in TRACTION we will refer to the latter as ‘good practice’ but use the word ‘ethical’ where context demands it.

7.2 The need for good practice in co-creation

7.2.1 Professional responsibility

TRACTION has recognised the distinction between professionals and non-professionals as fundamental to both co-creation and research (cf. WP4 [categorisation document](#)). There are several reasons for this, including the different *intentions* and *experiences* of each group. It is also a useful concept when thinking about the ethical responsibilities artists have towards people they invite to participate in their work.

The origin of the word ‘professional’ is the verb ‘to profess’, which originally meant to make a public declaration of special importance.⁴ The first professionals – doctors and lawyers – *professed* to put their client’s interest before their own, which is the basis of any trust we put in their advice. That idea raises practical and philosophical questions, and it certainly doesn’t always work, but it is why there are autonomous professional bodies in medicine and law to uphold standards and provide redress.

Today, the meaning of professional has become very loose, and in the arts it is often used simply to distinguish people who are paid from those who are not (amateurs). But it is useful to remember that the status of a professional brings obligations that concern artists who involve people in their work, especially when their stated aim is social change. Their relationship with those people has parallels with the relationship that a doctor, lawyer or therapist has with a client. Although they do not have a professional body to oversee their work, artists who work with people need good practice standards for everyone’s protection.

7.2.2 Good practice is more than good intentions

Artists have a duty of care towards the people they invite to participate in their projects. This may seem self-evident, but some contemporary artists see things differently. In 2000, Santiago Sierra paid four prostitutes in Salamanca ‘the price of a shot of heroin to give their consent to be tattooed’. Sierra’s film of his action was published in an edition of three and one copy was bought by [Tate](#), which describes it as ‘ethically ambiguous’. Personally, I don’t see any ambiguity in a work that should never have been made, shown or bought.

This may seem an extreme example, but some of those who will take part in the TRACTION projects are as vulnerable as the women paid by Sierra: prisoners, irregular migrants, people living in extreme poverty and others. There is a real risk that the artists’ desire to create aesthetically powerful work or meet the project’s deliverables comes into conflict with the wishes, needs or interests of some of these people. How should we resolve a situation where a young woman’s participation is important to the performance but unexpectedly



puts them at risk from a violent ex-partner? Or what if a someone regrets having shared a story with a director in a workshop, perhaps feeling unhappy with the way it has turned into art?

In these situations, good intentions will not be enough. We should prepare for difficult questions by agreeing in advance some principles of good practice, and sharing them, as appropriate, with participants. Even so, there will still be few simple or consistent answers: 'The balancing of such principles in concrete situations is the ultimate ethical act.'

7.3 Issues for consideration

In proposing good practice principles in the TRACTION trials, I have considered some of key aspects of artistic co-creation. This is a tentative list, and other issues may need to be added as we learn from the work in practice, but it offers some areas for reflection.

AESTHETICS The aesthetics of art are a key vector of meaning and interpretation. Artists are used to being in control of their vision and choices, constrained only by budgets. When working with non-professionals, professional artists have great authority over artistic judgements, where they are seen to be expert. But if the final work shows no sign of input by the non-professionals, if it *looks and sounds* like everything else the artists do, what is their contribution? And if people don't recognise themselves in the work, what do they gain from being involved?

AUTONOMY The co-creation process works on the basis of free participation, at least as far as adults are concerned (with children, we recognise the need to make some decisions on their behalf). Even in prison, people should not be obliged to take part. This is partly a matter of human dignity, and partly about how the process works: its energy comes from the desire to take part. Everyone involved in a co-creation process should be able to withdraw at any point. However, the practice is rooted in interdependence and mutual responsibility so people must take account of commitments freely made to the group. There are legitimate reasons for being unable to continue (e.g. a family crisis) and trivial ones. Withdrawing because you have lost interest is the behaviour of a child. We also have dignity when we assume our responsibilities.

COPYRIGHT Co-creation leads to artistic products that are open to exploitation, and consequently dispute. In 2004, a London primary school looked into selling a quilt *made with the children by Tracey Emin*. The artist was outraged and demanded the return of 'her' artwork, while simultaneously denying that it was an 'authorised work'. A compromise was reached, but it shows that questions of ownership and exploitation can be complex. Creative artists, such as writers and composers, may see their work as belonging to them even if it involves others as sources or participants in creation. Shared ownership or vesting ownership in the opera company may be one solution, but it will not always be acceptable. Creative Commons licences are



increasingly used but they too can bring problems. If the work is used by a news media company, it may acquire a context and notoriety that the creators did not anticipate. Not everyone wants to see their singing go viral.

CREDIT Who is acknowledged and how is another delicate issue. Professional artists often have their names feature prominently in the work, so that to most people it seems that they are its author. Non-professional artists may be named but in ways that subtly diminish their contribution: ‘with thanks to’, ‘with the participation of’ ‘inspired by’ are common examples. Another is the listing of participants only by their first names, or without any role ascribed. How people are credited should always be agreed with them.

CONSENT The principle of informed consent is familiar from medical and research ethics. People need to agree to participate, but they also need to know what they are agreeing to, including any risks involved. But, as already noted, it is not possible to know everything that might be involved in an artistic project. Just as importantly, it is expected that people will change by participating, and so their agreement might also change as a result. Helen Simons proposes an approach she calls ‘rolling informed consent’, in which regular discussions give participants an opportunity to reflect on where they are, and confirm or withdraw their consent to continuing involvement (Simons 2011).

DUTY OF CARE Professionals working on co-creation activities have a responsibility to know and observe all legal safeguarding regulations in in the country. Beyond that they should consider what duty of care they might have towards the people with whom they work. For example, paying taxi fares so that female participants can get home safely at night might be an important duty of care.

EMPOWERMENT Some people are wary of using the term empowerment, because they think it is condescending, as if they were giving power to another. But power is not a finite resource. If everyone in a group has gained new skills, they have become gained power – or capabilities – that they did not have before. No one has lost or ceded any power to enable that to happen. Power gives people more choice in their lives, and thus is reinforces human autonomy and dignity. A successful project will always leave people stronger and with more choices than before.

JUDGMENT The authority of professional artists means that others will often defer to them when it comes to making judgments about the work that is being created. They must be very careful how and when they use that power, being open and explaining their reasons. Whenever possible, they should invite other people into the discussion, because in the end, each person has the right to assess the value of art work they are involved in.

POWER Inequalities of power exist in every aspect of human relations, and there is no reason why they should be absent in artistic co-creation. The professional artists are on familiar ground, they have knowledge, expertise, and



authority, they are involved in decisions the non-professionals do not even know are being made, they are expected to know the answers, and benefit from a lot of goodwill. That gives them enormous power in the relationship with non-professionals. There is no standard method of equalising the relationship, but being ready to make oneself vulnerable (e.g. by admitting uncertainty, which can leave space for others) can help. But even in that, it is vital to ensure that facilitation doesn't become manipulation. Being open and honest about what is happening is key.

RELATIONSHIP There are different ways to imagine the relationship between professional and non-professional artists, each of which reflects often unconscious assumptions about the distribution of power between people. I like the metaphor of a mountain guide. Here is a path that the professional has used many times before, and about which they have deep, even instinctive knowledge. Their task is to accompany someone who is making the journey for the first time, and to make their knowledge available as necessary – and especially when there are dangerous places. But everyone is making their own journey, interpreting it as they go, and everyone has to make their own choices about when to walk, when to stop and when to admire the view. There are no explorers and no Sherpas: no one is carrying anyone else's pack. It is a shared journey, and no one must be left behind. At the same time, co-creation can be an intense and emotional process. Some people, especially if they are vulnerable people, may come to depend on the professionals they come to see as friends or even more. It is important to understand and be wary of the lines that separate professional work and personal relationships.

STORIES The increasing reliance on people's lived experience in participatory art (and contemporary art) raises important moral questions. The intention is often to 'give people a voice' or enable them to 'represent' themselves. But life is not art, and in the process of turning experience into a work of art, there are often tensions about interpretation, ownership and exposure. At worst, people's lives can become material for an artist's work, but at its best co-creation can bring unheard stories (to use INO's term) into a society's cultural space. The simple answer is that people should retain control of their own life stories, but that has never been easy and in a media-saturated culture it may be impossible. So how can people speaking for the first time, often from positions of vulnerability, be safeguarded and made aware of the risks, without discouraging them?

TRUST All artistic co-creation depends on trust between people. Professional artists may need to work to gain the trust of people who see no obvious reason to get involved in making opera. In my experience, this is not so hard, because most of us want to help, especially when the activity seems to be worthwhile. But it is also not so hard to lose people's trust by not being reliable, misleading people (even with good intentions), allowing your words to be out of step with your behaviour and all the other things that



makes us stop believing others. Trust is the most essential asset in co-creation: don't lose it.

7.4 Proposed good practice principles

7.4.1 Principles for the trials

Many complex issues have been raised in the previous sections of this paper, and they do not represent more than a sketch of the dilemmas of co-creation. But there is one overriding necessity in drawing up good practice principles: they must be understandable to everyone involved. With that in mind, FM drafted these six principles in 2018 for a community arts organisation called City Arts. These might make a good starting point for TRACTION.

Artistic co-creation in the TRACTION trials should be:

- CREATIVE** because we make new art from today's ideas, situations and interests
- RESPECTFUL** because everyone has the same right to participate in art and culture
- EMPOWERING** because making art is a way to learn, grow and be stronger
- AMBITIOUS** because everyone wants to achieve the best they can
- TRUSTWORTHY** because our work depends on reliability, transparency and confidence
- ENJOYABLE** because if art doesn't bring pleasure it's no use to anyone

7.4.2 Good practice standards for the professional artists

There is also the question of the standards that professional artists might be asked to meet as part of the employment contracts. This is about professional performance, rather than morals, although working to a high standard could be seen as a moral obligation. Again, rather than invent new terms or concepts, I suggest that TRACTION could adopt the Artworks Code of Practice, developed through consultation with socially engaged artists in the UK in 2013-14:

As an artist working in participatory settings, I commit to:

- *being skilled in working with individuals and groups*
- *being well prepared and organised in my work*
- *having appropriate artform skills*
- *taking responsibility for my actions*
- *undertaking safe practice*
- *evaluating and reflecting on my work*
- *maintaining my professional competence⁵*

7.4.3 Finally

Arlene Goldbard is an American artist and writer who has been working with communities since the 1970s. She is one of the most thoughtful people on these questions and she is



often invited to give workshops to other artists. Her notes for those workshops include the following idea, which reinforces the principle expressed in the quote at the start of this paper.

The key is being able to size up each situation and respond with skill and flexibility. That skill comes with practice. Thinking and talking about values and ethics strengthen our self-knowledge, giving us ethical ‘muscles’ to handle future challenges. Engaging with these questions, we become more present, skilful, and creative.

Then, when ethical challenges arise—as they inevitably will—by knowing ourselves, by together exploring meaning and value in the situation at hand and achieving common understanding of what's at stake, we can find mutually acceptable resolutions and move on.

Arlene Goldbard

7.5 Further reading

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8 APPENDIX 2: SOCIAL INCLUSION & THE CAPABILITIES APPROACH

8.1 Social inclusion and social exclusion

Since social inclusion underpins TRACTION's social impact It is necessary to clarify how we understand the concept. Social inclusion and social exclusion are used almost interchangeably according to context (both appear throughout the TRACTION grant agreement and DOA). There is, however, an important difference between them. Put simply, social exclusion is a **process** that can be identified and analysed (even if there is debate about how that is done). Social inclusion is a **goal** intended to be achieved by assisting specific individuals or groups. For that reason, in conceptualising the outcomes of TRACTION, the term social exclusion is used. Even so, as just noted, there are important differences in how this is understood. In what has been called the French tradition⁶, social exclusion is:

A social process within a whole society rather than a way of categorising individuals and groups within that society.⁷

In focusing on process, this conception opens questions about underlying causes that might lead to policy responses. In contrast, Anglo-American theorists have tended to equate social exclusion more narrowly with poverty, leading to a focus on individuals and access to work. The [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) is concerned with *Equal opportunities and access to the labour market, Fair working conditions and Social protection and inclusion* (but does not mention culture). The Irish government's [Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025](#) also links poverty with social exclusion, defining its goal in the following terms:

Social inclusion is achieved when people have access to sufficient income, resources and services to enable them to play an active part in their communities and participate in activities that are considered the norm for people in society generally.

Poverty is both a cause and a consequence of social exclusion but they are not the same, since people who are not poor are also 'excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society'.⁸ Racism is an obvious example of structural exclusion that is not primarily financial.

One way to understand social exclusion is in the relations between majority and minority groups. Societies exist because of human interdependency and they have a tendency to organise in ways that meet the needs of the majority but can exclude others. Steps are a convenient way to move between levels in buildings, unless you have limited personal mobility: then what aids others excludes you. This is an obvious example, because the barriers are visible. But many cultural and social differences operate in the same way. If your faith prevents you from borrowing money at interest, how do you take out a student loan or a mortgage? If you are vulnerable to alcohol addiction, how do you socialise in a culture where drinking is the norm? Such barriers exist in all societies and they are not necessarily unjust



or preventable. The challenge in terms of human rights and social justice is to recognise them and take steps to mitigate or avoid their negative consequences.

Lack of money is only one reason why people do not attend opera or other elite arts provision, which is why many such institutions invest so much effort in access and outreach activities. Cultural factors are central to people's choices and participation in social life. But where cultural institutions have a dominant position, supported through public funding, the question of people's exclusion becomes a matter of justice and politics.

The TRACTION trials all focus on people who are at risk of social and cultural exclusion, though their experiences vary. A young person in a Portuguese prison is more excluded from cultural participation than a peer living in rural Ireland. Even within the prison, there may be differences, for example, between local inmates and foreigners. TRACTION cannot remove the excluding norms and structures which produce social exclusion, even in the relatively limited context of opera. Instead it seeks to understand and draw attention to these, and to empower those who participate in the trials to improve their own situation. One way of doing that is by using the capabilities theory of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum.

8.2 The capabilities approach

The capabilities approach has been principally used in development evaluation rather than the social impact of participation in the arts, but it is universally applicable as well as theoretically coherent, and it is very relevant to social exclusion, and theories of empowerment that have informed community art practice for many years.⁹ In 2009, Sen defined the capabilities approach as:

An intellectual discipline that gives a central role to the evaluation of a person's achievements and freedoms in terms of his or her actual ability to do the different things a person has reason to value doing or being.¹⁰

It may be noted that the capabilities approach accepts a person's judgement of the choices that are important to them as a fundamental principle of human dignity. In this respect, it is in line with the 'respect for how people assess their own experiences' mentioned above as a principle of the TRACTION evaluation. Martha Nussbaum also places human dignity and freedom at the centre of her explanation:

What are capabilities? They are the answers to the question, "What is this person able to do and to be?" In other words, they are what Sen calls 'substantial freedoms,' a set of (usually interrelated) opportunities to choose and to act. [...] They are not just abilities residing inside a person but also the freedoms or opportunities created by a combination of personal abilities and the political, social, and economic environment.¹¹

In combining personal capabilities with 'the political, social, and economic environment' Nussbaum acknowledges the importance of *both* individual circumstances (such as poverty) *and* the social norms and structures that differentially affect people's choices and exclusion. She argues that it is the job of government to enable people to pursue 'a dignified and minimally flourishing life' defined as a threshold level of 10 central capabilities. These naturally



include areas such as life, bodily health and integrity, practical reason and affiliation. But the fourth capability is especially relevant in the present context:

Senses, imagination, and thought. Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason—and to do these things in a “truly human” way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid nonbeneficial pain.¹²

TRACTION, in identifying opera co-creation as a route towards social inclusion, implicitly endorses the importance of having the capability to create ‘works and events of one's own choice’, to ‘use one's mind [for] artistic speech’ and to ‘have pleasurable experiences’. It also stands on an older and legally protected principle, in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that:

Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement.

The capabilities approach does not yet appear to have been used in the evaluation of artistic co-creation or cultural rights, so TRACTION's approach will be innovative in this respect too.¹³ As this brief outline of the proposed approach demonstrates, there is much work to be done before we can be confident of having a fully worked out methodology to achieve this. The relevant sections of the trial chapters (sections 2.4, 3.4 and 4.4) are work in progress. However, we believe that testing the capabilities approach in evaluating the social impact of the TRACTION trials is part of meeting our commitment to innovate and that it has the potential to move forward the current discourse about the social impact of culture.



REFERENCES

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- ² Audience research in the UK shows that only 14% of regular arts attenders would come to venues as soon as they can open, though 67% would consider it if social distancing was in place. See *Act 2 National Audience Research*, Katy Raines, Indigo Ltd., July 2020, <https://www.indigo-ltd.com/covid-19-after-the-interval-national-audience-survey>
- ³ Simons 2009: 96
- ⁴ 'Profess' has evolved since the Middle Ages: the Oxford Dictionary defines it as being to 'Claim that one has (a quality or feeling), especially when this is not the case', which may be a sign of declining trust in professionals.
- ⁵ <https://www.artworksalliance.org.uk/awa-resource/artworks-code-of-practice/>
- ⁶ See Gerda Jehoel-Gijsbers and Cok Vrooman, *Explaining Social Exclusion, A theoretical model tested in the Netherlands*, The Netherlands Institute for Social Research/SCP The Hague, July 2007, p. 13-14
- ⁷ Ali Madanipour, Goran Cars and Judith Allen, *Social Exclusion in European Cities: Processes, Experiences and Responses*, London, 1998, p. 11
- ⁸ 'As a result of inadequate income and resources, people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society', 1997 National Anti-Poverty Strategy, quoted in the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025, p. 9
- ⁹ Cf. François Matarasso, *A Restless Art*, London 2019, pp. 110ff.
- ¹⁰ Amartya Sen, Cited in Ingrid Robeyns, *Wellbeing, Freedom and Social Justice: The Capability Approach Re-examined*, Cambridge: Open Book Publishers 2017, p. 7
- ¹¹ Martha C. Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities*, Harvard University Press 2011, p. 20
- ¹² Nussbaum op. cit. p. 33
- ¹³ Professor Helen Simons, an expert in evaluation methodologies and a member of the TRACTION International Advisory Team has confirmed this absence.