

LIST OF MAIN FINDINGS ON THE TRAINING PATHS, SKILLS AND COMPETENCES FOR AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Bringing in new audiences and retaining loyal followers is crucial for the health and sustainability of the cultural sector. With the complexity of such a challenge how can Europe support cultural managers and practitioners responsible for attracting audience development? What are the skills and attributes these “audience developers” need to successfully expand their institution’s reach? How can they implement audience development policies while keeping their current cultural consumers loyal and happy? How can “audience developer” skills, attributes and best practice be adapted and transferred to different cultural sectors and countries in Europe?

These are some of the questions explored by the ADESTE (Audience DEveloper: Skills and Training in Europe) project. Running over the course of 30-months (01/11/2013-30/04/2016) this project, funded by the European Union’s Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo Da Vinci – Development of Innovation – aims to support cultural organisations and practitioners in having a greater impact on access to culture and cultural participation.

In the framework on the ADESTE project’s Work Package 2, namely “Research, Analysis and Mapping”, the consortium carried out surveys to map European training paths and practices related to Audience Development. The purpose of this work was to collect and produce evidence-based data and information need for the development of the project’s other work packages.

The data and information was gathered from February to June 2014 in two phases: first to analyse and understand how audience development is taught in Europe; and second, to understand the competences required by the labour market by gaining insight from professionals working in culture and the arts as well as audience development trainers, consultants and experts.

This work resulted in an internal report for project partners to use in the next work packages, but the report’s main findings are listed below. The main findings highlight the need for discussion and further attention to the national contexts involved in the ADESTE consortium, paying particular attention to European countries not directly involved in the project. It should be stressed that the mapping was extremely helpful in raising awareness on the issues addressed by the ADESTE project among cultural organisations and professionals as involved in the process from seven European countries as well as India and the United States.

Main findings:

1. **Audience Development (AD)** is a growing issue, and training in this field has been increasing substantially in the last five years.
2. **AD is still a “professional issue”**, trained by and targeted to professionals already working in the field, whilst formal education paths are not yet completely aligned with this new market need.
3. **Many courses and training paths delivered by educational institutions do not tend to consider essential “strategic” subjects**, such as the empowering of **soft skills and personal attributes**, while professionals consider these competences as being strongly needed.
4. Professionals have a variety of different backgrounds and **have multiple academic and professional backgrounds**: this could suggest the need for working on mind-shifting capability for future audience developers.
5. **Personal skills and attitudes are fundamental**: to build an audience developer occupational profile means to enable personal and organisational empowerment.
6. **Marketing vs educational perspectives are more in agreement** then it could seem at first glance: the friction between these perspectives happens more in phraseology than in facts or practices.

7. **Strategic thinking and management involvement are compelling:** both in countries where AD has a stronger tradition and where it does not, professionals emphasise that results cannot be achieved by adopting only one point of view.
8. **An “Audience Developer” is not only a cultural mediator,** but also a project manager able to collect and connect resources to put together and reshape the organisations, helping them to focus on their impacts (rather than on their activities) involving attitudinal, strategic and practical skills.

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- The Audience Agency, London, UK
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- Academy of Performing Arts, Bratislava, Slovakia
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