

# Digital Platforms, Gender & Cultural Policy

## The Berlin-Barcelona Nexus

*Analysis of the Challenges in Cultural Public Policies for Promoting Inclusive Digitalization*



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December 2023

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This publication is based upon work from COST Action P-WILL, CA21118, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).



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## **Abstract**

This report examines the integration of digitalization in cultural policy, focusing on gender perspectives in Berlin and Barcelona. It explores how these cities utilize digital tools to enhance their cultural landscapes, considering the impact of public policies on fostering inclusive and equitable outcomes. The study delves into the role of cultural policy innovation, scrutinizing the effectiveness of policy environments in both cities in promoting socioeconomic development and gender equality. Drawing on insights from various scholars, it emphasizes the need for gender-inclusive digital policies and the development of a feminist political economy framework for the digital economy. The report presents a detailed analysis of interview results and workshop findings, offering comparative perspectives on the approaches of Berlin and Barcelona. It highlights the challenges and opportunities each city faces in implementing gender-inclusive cultural and digital transformations. The conclusions synthesize these insights, suggesting future research directions and potential pathways for cities to harness cultural and digital innovation in a way that promotes inclusivity and equality. In the annex of the report, additional resources, inspirational cases, organizations and networks are included to reinforce the value of the research performed.

## **1. Introduction**

This research project focuses on Barcelona and Berlin, aiming to explore the nature and impact of cultural policy innovation and digitalization from a gender perspective. It specifically examines the role of public policies in promoting inclusive and equitable outcomes. Recognizing the pivotal influence of policy interventions in the interplay between cultural innovation, gender perspectives, and digitalization, the study seeks to evaluate the policy environments in Berlin and Barcelona, assessing their effectiveness in fostering an environment conducive to socioeconomic development and gender equality.

Various scholars have highlighted the significance of incorporating gender considerations in digital contexts, stressing the necessity for gender-inclusive digital policies and their potential influence on areas like work (Zolotareva & Bezrukov, 2020) and technology entrepreneurship (Jiao et al., 2022). However, the digital economy currently exhibits a lack of theoretical consistency in gender analysis. There is a pressing need for developing a feminist political economy framework tailored to the digital economy (Grau-Sarabia & Fuster-Morell, 2021). This working report aims to contribute significantly to strengthening the gender perspective within the digitalization of public policies in the cultural sector.

The selection of Berlin and Barcelona for this research is not arbitrary. These two cities stand as epitomes of cultural innovation and digitalization, showcasing proactive policy environments and a strong commitment to gender equality. This study delves into how these unique characteristics of Berlin and Barcelona contribute to and influence their cultural and digital landscapes. Berlin and Barcelona are selected for their key roles as centres of cultural innovation and digitalization, their proactive policy environments, and their commitment to promoting gender equality.

Berlin, known globally for its digital innovation, thrives due to its vibrant creative industries and diverse cultural institutions (Ebert & Kunzmann, 2007; Lange, 2009). The city benefits from a tolerant urban environment conducive to open-source communities and self-regulated organizations (Louekari, 2006). The role of “culturepreneurs” in Berlin is significant in market access and innovation (Lange, 2009). On the other hand, Barcelona has implemented innovative policies to support the cultural and digital sectors, such as the Barcelona Digital City Plan and policies to support cultural spaces and

creative industries (Bonet-Marti & Serrano-Miguel, 2021). The shift has been marked by the use of information and communication technologies and the creation of virtual city spaces (Gdaniec, 2000). The city's cultural and creative industries contribute to urban development and social innovation (García et al., 2015; Maddah & Arauzo Carod, 2021).

In Berlin, EU initiatives have influenced policies in the cultural sector and digital economy, aiming for economic competitiveness (Bodirsky, 2012). Challenges include social and ethnic boundaries and gentrification (Jakob, 2010). Socially innovative initiatives in neighbourhoods like Wedding and Kreuzberg highlight community empowerment and urban renewal (Pradel-Miquel, 2017). Policies in Barcelona, including the Barcelona Digital City Plan, promote digital practices and democratic values (Parteka et al., 2018). The city's Smart City initiative and policies foster a conducive environment for innovation (Bakıcı et al., 2013; Font-Cot et al., 2023)

Regarding gender equality, Berlin has integrated G7 and G20 gender goals (Berger et al., 2020) and developed gender equality considerations in public procurement (Sarter, 2020). The extent of policy change varies across different domains (Wahl, 2006). Barcelona's policies focus on legal compliance, equal pay, and work-life balance in the cultural sector (Barrios & Villarroya, 2022), local gender equality policies in municipalities (Lombardo, 2002), gender-focused human resource policies in accommodation (Noguer-Juncà et al., 2020), and gender perspectives in urban planning (Muxí Martínez & Ciocoletto, 2009). In the case of Barcelona, the inclusion of a gender perspective in public policies has been primarily promoted under left-wing government administrations. There was a notable shift starting in 2015 with the governance of Barcelona En Comú political party.

In summary, the selection of Berlin and Barcelona as focal points in this study offers a unique lens through which the interplay of cultural innovation, digitalization, and gender equality policies can be explored. Both cities present a dynamic and evolving landscape, providing valuable insights into the effective integration of these elements in urban development. This research aims to contribute to a broader understanding of how cities can harness cultural and digital innovation in a way that promotes inclusivity and equality.

This research builds upon two prior research studies conducted by the Dimmons research group<sup>1</sup>. The first study, titled "A New Economy for a New Culture: Transformative Cultural and Economic Innovations in the City of Barcelona" (Dimmons, 2018), aimed to create valuable resources for the cultural sector in Barcelona, while also providing insights for the formulation of public policy recommendations to support existing projects in the city. The primary objective of this research was to analyse the extent to which innovations in the cultural sector align with novel models of economic sustainability; to explore how the economic sustainability of culture is evolving and how it frames and shapes culture itself; and to study ways to facilitate a creative process that identifies new economic sustainability opportunities tied to emerging cultural innovations.

The second initiative, MatchImpulsa (2021-2023)<sup>2</sup>, is a public-policy action-research program sponsored by the Barcelona City Council, Barcelona Activa (Barcelona's local economic development agency)<sup>3</sup>, and the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya. MatchImpulsa is a feminist hub that includes programs for the digital platformization of the Social Economy. Initiated in Barcelona in 2021, it has engaged approximately 150 Social Economy enterprises. This program expands on the previous research carried out by Dimmons, aiming to conceptualize alternative models in the platform economy

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<sup>1</sup> Dimmons research group <https://dimmons.net/>

<sup>2</sup> MatchImpulsa <https://matchimpulsa.barcelona/about-matchimpulsa-eng/>

<sup>3</sup> Barcelona Activa, local development agency <https://www.barcelonactiva.cat/en/home>

based on empirical research (Fuster Morell & Espelt, 2018; Fuster Morell et al., 2020; Morell et al., 2021). The conceptual and empirical framework of this proposal (Fuster Morell & Espelt, 2019), which centres on the platformization of the social economy, considers factors such as governance, economic models, data and technological policies, and social responsibility, all approached from a gender-inclusive perspective.

Following this introduction, the report unfolds into a structured exploration of the subject. It first delves into the framework guiding our analysis, then proceeds to a detailed methodology section that outlines our approach to gathering and interpreting data. Subsequent sections provide an in-depth analysis of interview results from Berlin and Barcelona, offering comparative perspectives on each city's approach to cultural policy innovation and digitalization. The report also includes a comprehensive analysis of workshop results, further enriching our findings with diverse expert viewpoints. Concluding sections synthesize these insights, drawing broader implications and suggesting pathways for future research.

## 2. Framework

The 'Digital Platforms, Gender & Cultural Policy: The Berlin-Barcelona Nexus' framework operates at the intersection of digital innovation and cultural policy, adopting a gender perspective in the urban contexts of Berlin and Barcelona. Building upon the Star of Democratic Qualities of Digital Platforms (Figure 1), developed in Fuster & Espelt (2019), it analyzes various dimensions, including governance structures, economic models, data management practices, digital infrastructures, and the broader social responsibilities and impacts of digital platforms in the cultural sector. This framework outlines the key analytical aspects under each dimension, offering a structured approach to evaluate the integration of digitalization in cultural policies with a focus on gender inclusivity and equity. It serves as a guiding tool for policymakers, cultural practitioners, and researchers, enabling them to assess and navigate the complex landscape of digital cultural policy development.



Figure 1: Star of democratic qualities of digital platforms (Fuster & Espelt 2019)

**Governance:** Governance encompasses the mechanisms, processes, and institutions that enable stakeholders, including citizens, to influence outcomes and access information. Analytical aspects for this dimension:

- Decision-making structures: Understand the hierarchies and consensus-building methods of digital platforms.
- Representation and participation: Analyse the gender distribution among platform users, content creators, and leadership roles.
- Stakeholder involvement: Examine who has a voice in the decision-making processes and who is excluded, paying particular attention to gender representation and cultural groups.
- Regulatory oversight: Investigate the policies, laws, and regulations governing the operation of digital platforms, especially in relation to gender and cultural content.

**Economic Model:** This dimension focuses on how digital platforms are monetized, the flow of capital, and their overall business model. Analytical aspects:

- Revenue streams: Delve into how platforms generate income, e.g., ads, data monetization, subscriptions.
- Value distribution: Understand how economic benefits are distributed across stakeholders, from content creators to platform operators.
- Gender and culture in the economy: Explore any disparities in pay, opportunities, and recognition for content creators and professionals of different intersectional genders and cultural backgrounds.

**Data Management:** Concerns the collection, storage, use, and sharing of data, especially user data. Analytical aspects:

- Data collection practices: Assess what kind of data is collected, from whom, and for what purpose.
- Privacy and security: Gauge the measures in place to protect user data.
- Content biases: Examine platform algorithms and content for gender biases or stereotypes.
- Gender and culture nuances: Investigate if and how data practices might disproportionately affect users based on their gender or cultural background.

**Digital Infrastructures:** The underlying technologies and architectures that support the operation and accessibility of digital platforms. Analytical aspects:

- Technology stack: Understand the technologies behind these platforms.
- Access and equity: Examine the inclusiveness of these platforms, considering aspects like regional availability, language, and accessibility features.
- Cultural compatibility: Check if the platform's design and infrastructure accommodate diverse cultural norms and expectations.
- Safety and harassment: Study platform mechanisms to handle gender-based harassment and safety concerns.

**Social Responsibility and Impact:** The roles and impacts of digital platforms in society, considering their potential positive and negative effects. Analytical aspects:

- Content representation: Evaluate the representation of different genders and cultures in platform content.
- Platform ethics: Scrutinize platforms for any practices that might perpetuate harmful stereotypes or misinformation.
- Community and user well-being: Assess the measures taken by platforms to ensure user safety, mental health, and overall well-being.

### 3. Methodology

The methodology used in this research was designed to ensure a thorough exploration of the intersection among digital platforms, gender, and cultural policy in the Berlin-Barcelona comparison. The approach utilizes two primary techniques:

- **Semi-Structured Interviews:** A total of ten individuals have been interviewed, between July and October 2023, with a deliberate selection of six participants from Berlin and four from Barcelona. This selection process was guided by the logic of the quadruple-helix model (Roman et al., 2020), which encompasses government, academia, industry, and civil society to ensure a multi-perspective and holistic understanding of the research subject. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for guided yet flexible discussions, enabling participants to elaborate on specific points of interest and divulge insights that might not emerge in a more rigid interview format. Each interview was conducted with a carefully prepared set of questions designed to elicit detailed responses while allowing for organic exploration of topics that participants deemed significant. The analysis of the interview data was enhanced by the use of Atlas.ti and ChatGPT-4 tools, which facilitated the organization, coding, and interpretation of the qualitative data, ensuring a robust and systematic approach to thematic analysis.
- **Workshop Engagement:** Building upon the insights gained from the interviews, a workshop was conducted with nine participants (none of them involved in the interviews), primarily composed of researchers with expertise in the pertinent fields. This workshop served as a dynamic platform to discuss, challenge, and enrich the findings from the interviews. The engagement was structured to foster an open and critical dialogue, encouraging participants to contribute their diverse perspectives and critique the preliminary outcomes.

Through the synthesis of these methodological approaches, the research captures a nuanced understanding of the cultural policy landscape as influenced by digitalization and gender considerations. The combination of individual insights from semi-structured interviews and the collective wisdom of the workshop has culminated in a rich, multidimensional analysis that informs the outcomes presented in this report.

### 4. Interviews Result Analysis

Building on the 'Star of Democratic Qualities of Digital Platforms' framework (Fuster & Espelt, 2019), this section explores the primary challenges faced by cultural public policies promoting inclusive digital platformization in Berlin and Barcelona.



## 4.1. Berlin

This section presents an in-depth analysis of Berlin's evolving cultural landscape, particularly focusing on the integration of digitalization and its implications for governance, economic models, data management, digital infrastructures, social responsibility, and a gender perspective.

### *Governance*

In Berlin's cultural sector, the Senate Department of Berlin is spearheading public policies that emphasize digital progress and inclusivity. Initiatives like *Förderprogramm Digitale Entwicklung im Kulturbereich* are pivotal in advancing digital skills among cultural practitioners, underscoring the value of open-source contributions to foster community-led innovation (INTVW 1). Alongside this, the department supports partnerships that extend beyond funding, offering knowledge exchange and networking through initiatives like *Kulturbild Digital* (INTVW 10). Another key program, *Fairstage*, champions the elimination of discriminatory practices and the improvement of working conditions, reflecting a broader commitment to structural changes within the sector (INTVW 1).

*Diversity Arts Culture* is instrumental in shaping inclusive policies by providing consultancy and diversity training, which aligns with efforts like *Der Infopunkt* that enhance digital empowerment (INTVW 7). However, the sector grapples with challenges, particularly in addressing the specific needs of women in cultural jobs. The German *Me Too* movement has galvanized women to form a self-organizing response to these issues, a testament to the need for more effective governance structures (INTVW 9).

Collaborative governance is essential, necessitating the fusion of synergistic partners to guide policy decisions adeptly (INTVW 2). Yet, the inconsistency of funding, exemplified by the financial struggles of initiatives like the *Goldrausch Künstlerinnenprojekt*, limits the breadth of inclusivity, particularly for young cultural workers of colour or those with disabilities (INTVW 3). Furthermore, keeping pace with the rapid evolution of technology remains a significant challenge for public administrations (INTVW 2).

Despite these obstacles, there is an acknowledgment of the persistent initiatives aimed at empowering artists through education and networking (INTVW 7). Cross-disciplinary collaboration is also a focus, with cultural sectors like dance seeking more collective representation, potentially influencing governance to provide targeted support (INTVW 7).

Lastly, there is an acknowledgment of the existing governance framework that backs digital projects, coupled with a call for policy reform to consistently integrate digitalization within cultural funding models. A more unified approach to the arts by public administration could foster equitable support across both physical and digital realms (INTVW 10).

### *Economic model*

Public funding is increasingly geared towards inclusivity and gender considerations in resource distribution, shaping strategies to embed these aspects meaningfully within the cultural sector (INTVW 7). This shift is crucial, especially given the notable precariousness women encounter in cultural professions (INTVW 9). Digital platforms, now essential to artists' business models, provide visibility and support international collaboration, illustrating the critical role of public initiatives in assisting artists within the digital economy (INTVW 7). Therefore, the quest for consistent funding for digital cultural

projects becomes apparent. A structured funding model for digital initiatives is needed, underscoring the vital support role of public administration beyond short-term solutions (INTVW 10).

Conversely, while digital platforms are lauded as catalysts for economic advancement, they raise concerns about worker safety and security. The influence of financially robust tech companies looms large, potentially marginalizing smaller NGOs in policy shaping (INTVW 2). Economic limitations also challenge the replication of successful pilot projects (INTVW 3). It is thus imperative to ensure equitable distribution of digital advancements' benefits among cultural workers (INTVW 7).

### *Data Management*

Online programs run by cultural organizations have exposed a deficiency in data gathering for digital productions, where anonymity prevails, and sociodemographic details are scant compared to traditional in-house productions (INTVW 10). This shortfall hampers a comprehensive understanding of the digital audience, which is vital for crafting bespoke strategies for audience development and engagement. Data utilization, akin to handling a double-edged sword, can both mitigate issues like violence on digital platforms and risk misuse in surveillance activities. Stringent monitoring of algorithmic data processing is essential to prevent perpetuating societal issues such as discrimination or gender-based violence (INTVW 2). Additionally, the cultural sector's precarious nature, especially highlighted by movements like *Me Too*, underscores the necessity for robust data management to track harassment, inequality, and the effectiveness of advocacy efforts (INTVW 9). Yet, the reliance on basic tools such as Excel for data management persists, often due to resource limitations and outdated administrative systems within the Senate, making technological upgrades both financially and logistically challenging. It is crucial that employed methodologies maintain data integrity and reliability, which are foundational to research credibility (INTVW 3). Ultimately, empowering artists with digital tools demands a data-driven strategic approach to devise supportive programs and assist artists effectively (INTVW 7).

### *Digital Infrastructures*

Digital platforms have proven to be a valuable asset for artists, especially amid the pandemic, by offering new methods for content delivery and community engagement (INTVW 7, INTVW 10). These platforms are crucial in crafting immersive experiences that captivate global audiences, highlighting the necessity for strong and flexible digital infrastructures (INTVW 10). They have also become instrumental in elevating movements like *Me Too*, which confront violence against women (INTVW 9). However, the digitization process, despite its potential, also poses the risk of intensifying gender-based violence, necessitating more substantial and effective support for women in technology-driven fields such as AI (INTVW 2). It is vital, too, that technological innovations, particularly algorithms, avoid reinforcing gender prejudices. Yet, there is a significant deficit in research methods that successfully integrate anti-discrimination protocols, as evidenced by projects like *Kulmon*, which often overlook the complexities of non-binary and marginalized gender identities due to insufficient societal dialogue (INTVW 3). While anti-discrimination and audience development are common topics, there is a lack of detailed evaluation regarding inclusion metrics and methodologies (INTVW 3). In addition, the common use of rudimentary tools like Excel for data management underscores the lack of sophisticated digital tools for data analysis and processing (INTVW 3). The call for dependable digital infrastructures extends beyond the reliance on private servers (e.g., Amazon) and proprietary digital tools. Cultural organizations are actively seeking alternatives, as evidenced by workshops aimed at investigating digital tools that resonate with their ethos and the specific requirements of their projects (INTVW 10).

### *Social Responsibility and Impact*

Digital platforms have been transformative in the cultural sector, serving as bridges for cross-cultural knowledge exchange and bolstering public programs that cultivate community among artists, thereby augmenting the sector's societal impact (INTVW 7). They also facilitate the global expansion of cultural dialogues and enhance inclusivity by making cultural events more accessible online (INTVW 10). Women in Berlin's cultural scene are utilizing these platforms for mobilization and organization, demonstrating a heightened sense of social responsibility and underscoring the platforms' role in societal change as they support movements and advocacy (INTVW 9). In addition, cultural organizations are increasingly scrutinizing gender stereotypes within AI through their productions and exploring the capacity of digital realms to redefine identity (INTVW 10). Their proactive engagement with diverse community groups, including those centred on gender issues, indicates a strategic commitment to incorporating gender perspectives into their work. This commitment is amplified by partnerships with civil society groups that champion gender equality, highlighting a concerted effort to integrate these themes into public programming (INTVW 10).

Additionally, the increasing dependence on algorithmic systems has surfaced critical concerns, particularly regarding the ethical treatment and mental well-being of content moderators, who play a crucial role in training these AI models (Rowe, 2023). This situation highlights the significant global implications and underscores the need for prompt intervention (INTVW 2). Civil society organizations are integral in bringing these issues to light and proposing solutions to authorities, helping to close the gap between fast-paced technological innovation and public understanding (INTVW 2).

Initiatives like *Vielfalt entscheidet* underscore the enduring need for anti-discrimination measures (INTVW 3). Yet, limited feedback on the outcomes of such projects suggests possible deficiencies in their effectiveness, with the additional challenge of maintaining organizational knowledge continuity in the face of staff turnover (INTVW 3).

## 4.2. Barcelona

This section delves into the dynamic cultural landscape of Barcelona, a city at the forefront of integrating digital innovation into its cultural fabric. We explore various aspects of this transformation, focusing on governance, economic models, data management, digital infrastructures, social responsibility and impact, and the integration of a gender perspective.

### *Governance*

In a city where the feminist movement is thriving, the City Council has become a proactive champion of cultural programs, notably *Cultura Viva*. This initiative is designed to encourage grassroots participation from civil society, highlighting the council's commitment to fostering change, even in the face of opposition from tradition-bound individuals. These traditionalists, often coupled with the industry's habit of supporting established talents, present significant hurdles for newcomers. However, the persistent support from the government, as exemplified by the City Council, demonstrates that these barriers are not insurmountable (INTVW 4).

A notable issue is the underappreciation of community-based cultural activities by public administrations, reflecting a disconnect between bureaucratic perceptions and the actual value of these activities. To address this, steps are being taken to bridge the gap. The City Council's implementation of

the *Cultural Rights Plan* is a prime example of such efforts. This plan, adopted in Barcelona, transcends policy: it embodies the city's dedication to recognizing and upholding cultural rights, ensuring that community contributions are fully valued, beyond traditional bureaucratic confines (INTVW 5).

Collaborating across various public administration departments, especially when incorporating a gender perspective, presents complex challenges. This necessitates a unified approach, which the City Council fosters through its equality<sup>4</sup> and feminism<sup>5</sup> departments. Their role is crucial in providing the necessary education and resources, facilitating streamlined communication essential for decision-making and effective collaboration among diverse stakeholders (INTVW 6).

In Barcelona, civil society organizations play a significant role in promoting collective governance in cultural activities, particularly evident during the pandemic. Groups such as musicians' unions and cultural entities united to support alternative platforms, aiming to circumvent traditional, extractive capitalist models. Their focus was on ensuring fair compensation and data privacy, rooted in cooperative principles. This movement showcases a strong, community-oriented approach to cultural development (INTVW 8).

### *Economic model*

Navigating the balance between non-profit values and traditional startup economic models is challenging, particularly when striving for inclusivity and avoiding expenses such as technology fees (INTVW 4). Moreover, artists and cultural communities often find themselves unaware of the myriad tools and grants accessible to them. The complexity of application and justification processes further adds to these barriers (INTVW 4). Despite these challenges, initiatives like the *Cultura Viva* public cultural policy program are providing essential financial support to grassroots organizations.

In addition, the *MatchImpulsa* entrepreneurship project has introduced an innovative approach to funding. It utilizes matchfunding campaigns, a unique method combining crowdfunding with both community and government contributions. Yet, despite these progressive programs, cultural organizations frequently struggle with the support from public policies. The intricate bureaucratic procedures involved in applying for grants can divert their focus from cultural activities to an exhaustive pursuit of funding (INTVW 5). This situation underscores the necessity for a more streamlined, transparent, and equitable approach to funding. Public administration contracts, in particular, should emphasize transparency, fairness, and gender balance. They should also encourage the inclusion of smaller businesses, especially in technology sectors (INTVW 6).

Emerging alongside these challenges are new models that leverage digital platforms. These are becoming significant reference points for reimagining the communication and economic dimensions of cultural projects. Examples like *Decidim Cultura* and *Decidim PlataformESS* are at the forefront of efforts to create economic models integrating community deliberation in digital tools into cultural production. There is a growing feasibility for a cooperative and sustainable economic approach within the cultural sector. This approach opens up possibilities such as co-financing and pooling resources for digital projects, indicating a shift towards more collaborative and resource-efficient strategies in cultural endeavours (INTVW 8).

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<sup>4</sup> Direcció de Serveis de Gènere i Polítiques del Temps department.

<sup>5</sup> Drets Socials, Justícia Global, Feminismes i LGTBI department.

### *Data Management*

The widespread availability of online platforms does not automatically translate into effective participation, particularly among women. This is due to various factors, including digital fatigue and unfamiliarity (INTVW 4). Additionally, as municipalities engage in data-driven analysis to address issues like the digital divide, managing, storing, and interpreting sensitive data, such as those highlighting gender disparities, presents considerable challenges (INTVW 6).

Effective participation in digital spaces comes with unique challenges, often related to digital literacy and gender disparities. A crucial element in addressing these challenges lies in the ethical and inclusive management of data within the realm of cultural digital rights. This necessitates the creation of participatory projects tailored to meet community needs. These projects should employ a data-driven methodology, focusing on understanding and serving their audience effectively (INTVW 8).

Central to these efforts is the cooperative's<sup>6</sup> commitment to open knowledge and the sharing of digital content. This commitment underlines a strategic approach to data management, one that emphasizes accessibility and communal benefits. Such an approach ensures that digital participation in the cultural sector transcends mere access, fostering value creation and inclusivity (INTVW 8).

### *Digital infrastructures*

The Decidim civic tech platform, widely supported by activists and researchers in Barcelona, plays a key role in engaging cultural stakeholders through participatory processes. It has been effectively utilized in projects such as the Barcelona *Biennial of Thought* and *Cultura Viva*. However, the rapid shift to digital platforms during the pandemic brought a mix of opportunities and challenges. This transition led to the emergence of various programs and trends, even as many found the integration process overwhelming (INTVW 4). This shift also highlighted educational disparities, particularly affecting smaller entities and individual artists. Compared to larger organizations, these smaller groups often face disadvantages in mastering digital tools and navigating complex grant applications (INTVW 4).

In addition, there is a growing necessity to ensure digital infrastructures, such as those used in Barcelona projects like *Connectem* and *Prometeus*, are widely accessible. This is especially crucial in regions with historically limited technological engagement (INTVW 6).

Complementing these efforts, the cooperative's strategy focuses on leveraging digital infrastructures for content transmission, exemplified by their use of a server hosted by *Guifi.net/eXO*. The adoption of a variety of open-source tools, including *Decidim* and *Nextcloud*, demonstrates a commitment to infrastructure that values openness and community accessibility. The cooperative's promotion of the *La Guixeta* platform further highlights their innovation in digital infrastructure development. *La Guixeta* offers content creators a system to monetize and manage their work, reflecting the cooperative's commitment to supporting digital creativity (INTVW 8).

### *Social Responsibility and Impact*

In the digital domain, while established professionals navigate with ease, many women and non-binary individuals encounter significant challenges. They are often overshadowed by renowned talents in a system that predominantly favours well-established entities (INTVW 4). This entrenched structure contributes to perpetuating inequalities, consequently limiting opportunities for emerging talents. To address these disparities, initiatives like *Cultura Viva* focus on embedding diverse voices in urban

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<sup>6</sup> INTVW 8 is a member of a cooperative in the cultural sector

culture, thereby ensuring equal participation in cultural events and upholding citizens' cultural rights (INTVW 5).

Projects such as *Connectem*, which target demographics predominantly composed of women (71%), play a crucial role in combating these deep-rooted disparities. However, the success of such initiatives hinges on addressing the fundamental causes of these disparities, not just their symptoms (INTVW 6).

In this context, the cooperative's initiative to develop a digital space is a reflection of their commitment to mutual aid, fair remuneration, and a positive social impact. Key projects like *Decidim Cultura* and *La Guixeta* are at the forefront of this mission. Their aim is to democratize cultural production and access, utilizing digital tools to enhance community engagement and participation. Through these efforts, the cooperative is dedicated to fostering a fair and inclusive cultural landscape (INTVW 8).

A prime example of the cooperative's social impact is the development of platforms like *La Guixeta*. These platforms present an ethical alternative to mainstream digital distribution channels, challenging the status quo. This approach is not only socially responsible, but also focuses on establishing fair remuneration for creators. It represents a conscious departure from the exploitative practices commonly associated with larger, profit-centric capitalist platforms (INTVW 8).

The music industry is currently facing significant challenges in integrating a gender perspective as it transitions towards a more inclusive model (INTVW 4). Although there are steps in the right direction, such as the Barcelona City Council's initiatives advocating for gender parity in street music, broader issues persist, especially in the tech and cultural sectors (INTVW 5). In the tech industry, the focus needs to extend beyond mere gender representation to achieve true equality. This involves confronting inherent biases and ensuring that training programs, like those for aspiring female programmers, lead to genuine and sustained employment opportunities (INTVW 6).

In the cultural sector, cooperative activities are making notable strides. For instance, certain projects programmed exclusively with women reflect a deliberate effort to incorporate gender considerations into both cultural and digital strategies. These innovative practices of the cooperative could serve as a model for other cultural organizations aiming to navigate digitalization in a way that is equitable, community-focused, and sustainability-oriented (INTVW 8).

### 4.3 Comparative Analysis of Berlin and Barcelona

In the realm of cultural public policies promoting inclusive digital platformization, Berlin and Barcelona present distinct yet complementary approaches, as revealed in stakeholder interviews conducted between July and October 2023. This comparative analysis, framed within the 'Star of Democratic Qualities of Digital Platforms' by Fuster & Espelt (2019), elucidates the primary challenges and innovations each city encounters in the digital transformation of their cultural sectors.

In Berlin, the Senate Department takes the lead in spearheading public policies that emphasize digital progress and inclusivity. Central to their strategy is the advancement of digital skills among cultural practitioners through initiatives like *Förderprogramm Digitale Entwicklung im Kulturbereich*. This approach not only underscores the value of open-source contributions for community-led innovation but also reflects a commitment to collaborative governance. However, the Berlin cultural sector contends with significant challenges, notably in addressing the specific needs of women and ensuring consistency in funding, particularly for minority cultural workers. The sector's response to these

challenges, including the self-organizing initiatives galvanized by movements like *Me Too*, signifies the evolving nature of governance structures and the need for a more inclusive approach.

Conversely, Barcelona's City Council actively champions grassroots cultural programs, such as *Cultura Viva*, that encourage broad participation from civil society. This initiative underscores the city council's commitment to fostering change, even in the face of resistance from the more industrialized cultural sectors, including large producers, auditoriums, and promoters. The implementation of the *Cultural Rights Plan* in Barcelona exemplifies efforts to bridge the gap between bureaucratic perceptions and the real value of community-based cultural activities. Moreover, the city's approach to integrating a gender perspective across various public administration departments further emphasizes the necessity of a unified and inclusive approach to governance.

The economic models of both cities reveal a shared emphasis on digitalization's role in cultural sectors but with different focal points. Berlin's cultural sector is marked by a precarious work environment, with digital platforms now essential for artists' visibility and collaboration. This situation underscores the need for a structured funding model for digital initiatives, a theme echoed in Barcelona. However, Barcelona also grapples with balancing non-profit values against traditional startup economic models, while simultaneously navigating bureaucratic complexities in public policy support and grant applications.

Data management in both cities highlights the challenges of adapting to digital transformations. Berlin faces deficiencies in data gathering for digital productions, whereas Barcelona contends with issues of digital literacy and gender disparities. Both cities recognize the necessity of ethical data management, although Berlin's reliance on basic tools such as Excel due to resource constraints contrasts with Barcelona's strategic commitment to open knowledge and communal benefits through open-source tools.

Digital infrastructures in both cities have proven vital, especially during the pandemic, for content delivery and community engagement. However, the need for upgraded infrastructures in Berlin to ensure user safety and algorithmic fairness contrasts with Barcelona's efforts in promoting platforms that resonate with cooperative principles, such as *Decidim* and *La Guixeta*.

Regarding social responsibility and impact, both Berlin and Barcelona have harnessed digital platforms to augment their cultural sectors' societal impact. Berlin's focus on facilitating global cultural dialogues and enhancing inclusivity through digital means is paralleled by Barcelona's initiatives aimed at reducing inequalities and ensuring equal participation in cultural events.

In conclusion, Berlin and Barcelona are both making strides towards integrating gender considerations in their cultural sectors. Berlin's public funding increasingly focuses on inclusivity and gender considerations, especially in technology-driven fields. Barcelona, meanwhile, demonstrates a conscious effort to incorporate gender perspectives into both cultural and digital strategies through initiatives like the City Council's advocacy for gender parity in street music. Thus, both cities' strategic approaches illustrate the complex and multifaceted nature of integrating digital innovation into cultural public policies. While Berlin focuses on individual empowerment and addressing societal issues within its cultural sector, Barcelona emphasizes community engagement and overcoming traditional resistance. Both cities, however, share a common commitment to inclusivity, empowerment, and the transformative potential of digitalization in the cultural realm.

## 5. Workshop results analysis



Figure 2. Pictures from the workshop session at HIIG (28.9.2023)

Departing from the analyses performed in Berlin and Barcelona, this section synthesizes the outcomes of a multifaceted workshop titled 'Digital Platforms, Gender & Cultural Policy: The Berlin-Barcelona Nexus'.<sup>7</sup> The workshop, featuring researchers and cultural stakeholders, focused on cross-sector exchanges, policy collaboration, inspirational models with gender perspective, technological advancements, online outreach, and audience engagement strategies (Figure 2).

### 5.1 Cross-Sector Residencies and Exchanges

- **Residencies for Policymakers:** The workshop recommended formal programs where policymakers would embed within cultural institutions to grasp digitalization's impact first-hand.
- **Reverse Exchange:** A mirrored initiative was suggested for cultural workers to integrate into public institutions to understand the bureaucratic challenges, fostering collaboration.

<sup>7</sup> Workshop: Digital Platforms, Gender & Cultural Policy  
<https://www.hiig.de/en/events/workshop-digital-platforms-gender-cultural-policy/>



- **Discovery Tours for Civil Servants:** A lighter approach where civil servants use professional development days to visit cultural organizations, enhancing their exposure to innovative cultural work.

## 5.2 Policy and Collaboration

- **Policy Discussions:** The dialogue was less about crafting specific policies and more about creating a conceptual framework for collaboration between the cultural sector and policymakers.
- **Legislative Involvement:** The discussions led to the consensus that cultural professionals should be deeply involved in legislative processes, shaping policies as co-producers rather than occasional advisors.

## 5.3 Inspirational Models and Gender Perspectives

- **Prototype Fund & Follow-Up Programs:** These programs, especially the *Prototype Fund* backed by the Ministry of Education and Research, were cited as models for funding projects with a focus on open-source technology and gender inclusivity.
- **Sovereign Tech Fund & MIZ:** The *Sovereign Tech Fund*, supporting data security projects, and the *Media Innovation Center Babelsberg (MIZ)* were recognized for their contributions to the technological and creative landscapes.
- **WTF Cooperative & Silent Green:** *WTF Cooperative* was noted for its alternative economic model for tech workers, while *Silent Green* was commended for facilitating an ecosystem conducive to cross-sector dialogue.
- **Club Commission & Chaos Computer Club – Hexen Subgroup:** These entities were acknowledged for supporting Berlin's electronic clubs and for advocating gender diversity in the tech field, respectively.
- **Open Knowledge Foundation & OpenGLAM:** Praised for their events that synergize cultural institutions with tech and creative professionals, fostering the reinvigoration of archival materials.

## 5.4 Tech, Online Outreach, and Content Moderation

- **Online Theatre Production:** Shared experiences regarding online theatre demonstrated potential for more inclusive creative processes and diverse outreach strategies.
- **Content Moderation:** Examined community-led moderation with Twitch and Reddit as benchmarks, highlighting the emblematic "community protecting the diamond" concept for maintaining content integrity.

## 5.5 Data Collection and Audience Engagement

- **Cultural Inclusivity Surveys:** The workshop addressed the use of surveys, like the *Kulmon*<sup>8</sup> survey, to gather audience data to ensure inclusivity, sparking a debate over the ethics and effectiveness of such data-collection methods.

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<sup>8</sup> KulturMonitoring <https://www.iktf.berlin/en/kulmon-kulturmonitoring/>

- **Balanced Engagement:** There was a call for a balanced approach, integrating both data-driven knowledge and personal interactions to truly understand and respect audience preferences.

## 5.6 Funding Sources and Ethical Considerations

- **Uber Space:** Differentiated from the ride-sharing company, *Uber Space* was mentioned as a potential source of learning for cultural collaboration and technology integration.
- **Ethical Funding:** A political economy lecturer's statement about money sparked discussion on the ethics of funding sources, emphasizing the moral complexities in funding for cultural and social responsibility projects.

The workshop's overarching theme was the bridging of the divide between cultural sectors and policymakers. Through the discussion of innovative practices, the workshop illuminated the need for a cultural sector that is more deeply connected, technologically adept, and inclusively structured. Funding models, economic considerations, and policy development were seen as crucial to sustaining this vision. The emphasis on gender diversity and ethical considerations in technology and funding sources demonstrated a forward-thinking approach to cultural innovation. The insights from the workshop painted a picture of a proactive cultural sector, empowered by policy and innovation, and committed to an inclusive, well-rounded approach to cultural engagement and technological development.

## 6. Conclusions

This research vividly illustrates the integration of digitalization in cultural policy in Berlin and Barcelona, with a specific focus on gender perspectives. Both cities demonstrate proactive stances towards leveraging digital tools for cultural enhancement, each facing unique challenges and opportunities.

Berlin's initiatives, like the *Förderprogramm Digitale Entwicklung im Kulturbereich* and *Fairstage*, show a commitment to advancing digital skills among cultural practitioners and emphasizing open-source contributions for community-led innovation. These initiatives, alongside the *Goldrausch Kuenstlerinnenprojekt* and the *360° – Fund for New City Cultures* program, are vital in addressing the specific needs of women and ensuring consistent funding for minority cultural workers.

Barcelona, on the other hand, shines in championing grassroots cultural programs like *Cultura Viva* and integrating a gender perspective across public administration domains. Projects like *ImpulsorESS: Decidim.Cultura* and the development of *La Guixeta* highlight the city's innovative approaches to funding and digital platform development, despite the complexities of traditional startup economic models and bureaucratic processes.

Both cities rely on digitalization, but their economic models differ. Berlin faces a precarious work environment, especially for women, whereas Barcelona is exploring new funding methods, such as matchfunding. The shared challenge lies in ensuring equitable distribution of digital advancements' benefits among all cultural workers.

Data management and ethical considerations, pivotal in both contexts, are underscored by initiatives and legislative reforms like the *Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (AGG)* and the *Berliner Landesantidiskriminierungsgesetz (LADG)*. These highlight the need for a nuanced approach to data in cultural policy. Digital infrastructures are vital in both cities, with Berlin focusing on upgrading platforms

for safety and algorithmic fairness, contrasting with Barcelona's emphasis on cooperative principles and community accessibility.

The social responsibility and impacts of digital platforms in the cultural sector are significant. Initiatives like *Reset! Network* and *Female:pressure* underscore the importance of leveraging these platforms to augment societal impact, with Berlin focusing on global cultural dialogues and Barcelona on reducing inequalities and ensuring equal participation.

The gender perspective is crucial in both cities' cultural policies, with Berlin's increasing focus on inclusivity and gender considerations in technology fields, complemented by Barcelona's efforts to incorporate gender perspectives into cultural and digital strategies.

This study, while comprehensive, acknowledges its limitations. Firstly, although it includes some of the main cases, it does not delve into specific instances in detail. Future research would benefit from a focused examination of individual cases. Secondly, this research is geographically limited to just two cities. Future studies could expand geographically, encompassing more diverse cities and incorporating quantitative methods to offer a more comprehensive view of cultural policy innovation in the digital age. Additionally, future research in the digitalization of the cultural sector should prominently feature the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI), as it presents transformative opportunities and unique challenges. AI has immense potential in enhancing creative processes, audience engagement, and personalized cultural experiences. Future studies could explore how AI algorithms might support creative ideation, automate administrative tasks, and provide insights into audience preferences and trends. Such research should also critically assess the ethical implications of AI, focusing on preserving artistic integrity, ensuring diversity, and avoiding biases in content creation and curation. Furthermore, the intersection of AI and gender in cultural policies warrants attention, examining how AI-driven tools can promote inclusivity and equitable representation in the cultural sector. Investigations into how AI can aid in data-driven decision-making, while respecting privacy and cultural sensitivities, would be invaluable.

In conclusion, this study serves as a foundational exploration of the complex interplay between cultural policy, digitalization, and gender, offering valuable insights and suggesting pathways for future research.

## 7. Annex

### 7.1 Inspirational Programs to Promote Cultural Digitalization and Inclusion

- **Keychange:** Endorsed by the Creative Europe Programme, [Keychange](#) stands as a beacon for transformative change, envisioning a music industry anchored in gender equality. This global endeavour is not a solitary cry for reform, but a chorus of voices from partners spanning 12 nations. Three of them are in Germany (Soundcloud, Gema and Reeperbahn Festival) and two in Spain (SGAE and Bime). Together, they labour not only for an ephemeral shift but for the establishment of a sustainably inclusive music industry. At the heart of Keychange's advocacy is its commitment to championing underrepresented artists, acting as their stalwart supporter. Beyond mere encouragement, the movement challenges organizations to make a tangible commitment: a pledge to gender equality. This dedication to change is not hollow; it is substantiated with the roster of talented individuals, notable achievements, and influential allies

and leaders who bolster Keychange's vision. But Keychange doesn't stop at identifying the challenges. In 2018, it crafted a tangible path forward: The Keychange Manifesto. Presented with gravity at the European Parliament, the manifesto unfurled a roadmap, delineating four pivotal arenas of action: acknowledgement, investment, research and education.

- **Förderprogramm Digitale Entwicklung im Kulturbereich:** The Senate Department of Berlin introduced the "[Förderprogramm Digitale Entwicklung im Kulturbereich](#)" in 2020. This annual program seeks to enhance the digital capabilities of Berlin's cultural sector. It emphasizes empowering cultural creators with skills in digital production, networking, communication, and new technologies. Eligible participants include local cultural institutions, representatives of the independent scene, and groups or individuals based in Berlin. The program supports specific digital projects that not only showcase the potential of digital transformation in culture but also emphasize beneficiary self-empowerment and knowledge acquisition. Projects receiving funding should produce outcomes available on open-source platforms, emphasizing community collaboration and continuous development.
- **Fairstage:** Launched on May 14, 2021, the [Fairstage](#) initiative addresses the recent reports by artists in Germany about various forms of misconduct at cultural institutions, including sexual remarks, racial discrimination, verbal violence, intimidation, and sexual assaults. This initiative is a collaborative effort by Diversity Arts Culture (DAC), ensemble-netzwerk, and LAFT Berlin, initiated and supported by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe. Fairstage's objective is to consolidate existing ideas and develop further recommendations to bring about substantial and structural changes in cultural institutions in Berlin. The Senator for Culture and Europe, Klaus Lederer, emphasized the importance of discussing these structural challenges with various stakeholders from the theater scene to foster mutual understanding and respect. Initially, the Fairstage process is focusing on institutionally funded structures in the theatrical sector, but findings will be used as a basis for considerations in other areas and funding forms.
- **Goldrausch Künstlerinnenprojekt:** [Goldrausch Künstlerinnenprojekt](#) is an intensive, one-year postgraduate course aimed at fostering the professional development of women in the arts. Designed for female artists with prior professional experience, the program equips them with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of an independent artistic career. Emphasis is placed on helping artists gain specific knowledge, showcase their work effectively, and engage in networking. Despite the prevalence of women in arts education, they remain underrepresented in leading exhibitions, awards, and academic roles. Goldrausch addresses this gap, focusing on vital career aspects, from understanding tax and copyright laws to mastering public relations and multimedia skills. Each year, 15 artists are selected by a rotating jury based on their artistic calibre and the potential benefits the program can offer to their career. The program culminates in a public exhibition, enhancing visibility for the participants' work. Throughout, there is an emphasis on collaboration, with participants often maintaining connections long after the course concludes. Operated by Goldrausch Frauennetzwerk Berlin e.V. since 1989, the initiative champions women's rights and entrepreneurship. The course content is tailored to individual participant needs, blending theoretical insights with practical exercises and introducing tools from outside the arts realm. Attendees develop various presentations, from websites to printed materials, benefitting from expert-led seminars. The program receives funding from the European Union (European Social Fund Plus) and the Federal State of Berlin.

- **360° Bundeskulturstiftung:** The "[360° – Fund for New City Cultures](#)" program by the Federal Cultural Foundation aims to foster an all-inclusive societal perspective, integrating the multifaceted issues of immigration and cultural variance. By backing diverse strategies and approaches, the initiative envisions diminishing cultural sector exclusion. The Foundation aids 39 institutions, allocating €17.3 million, encompassing museums, theatres, libraries, and musical establishments.
- **Prototype Fund:** The [Prototype Fund](#), a pioneering initiative by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), is meticulously supported and evaluated by the Open Knowledge Foundation Germany. This unique funding program is specifically designed to empower individuals and small teams, including freelance coders, hackers, UX designers, and other tech innovators. The fund provides crucial financial support to these individuals and teams, enabling them to explore, test, and develop open-source applications across various fields such as Civic Tech, Data Literacy, IT Security, and Software Infrastructure. At the heart of the Prototype Fund's philosophy is the belief that software aimed at the common good deserves public funding and support. The program advocates for open-source practices as a means to make technology more sustainable and accessible. Its goal is to enable freelance developers, who possess a diverse set of skills, to contribute significantly to the field of digital social innovation. The Prototype Fund is distinguished by its dynamic and evolving nature. From its inception to its ongoing operations, the program is driven by a team that collaborates regularly with various communities in technology, security, and design. This approach ensures that the Prototype Fund remains agile and responsive to the changing needs of the digital landscape, effectively making the fund itself a living prototype.
- **Cultura Viva:** [Cultura Viva](#) is an open programme of research and project development aimed at recognising and promoting participation, circulation and cultural co-production spaces in Barcelona. It is a comprehensive programme coordinated by Institut de Cultura de Barcelona in collaboration with other departments of the Barcelona City Council, alongside social and cultural projects and entities from the city. With the support of the Equality Unit and Time Policies of the City Council, it has incorporated a feminist perspective in its design and development.
- **MatchImpulsa:** The [MatchImpulsa](#) program is an innovative public-policy action-research initiative designed to foster digital platformization within the Social Economy. Sponsored by the Barcelona City Council, Barcelona Activa (Barcelona's local economic development agency), and the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, this program represents a groundbreaking approach to social and economic development. Launched in Barcelona in 2021, MatchImpulsa aims to conceptualize alternative models within the platform economy, grounding its strategies in empirical research. The program has engaged approximately 150 Social Economy enterprises, providing a vibrant collaborative space for growth and innovation. MatchImpulsa focuses on several key areas including governance, economic models, data and technological policies, and social responsibility, all approached from a gender-inclusive perspective. Its goal is to develop sustainable and equitable models for the digital economy that prioritize social values and community needs. The program's approach is multifaceted, blending theoretical frameworks with practical applications. It offers participants opportunities for networking, skill development, and access to new technologies, all while fostering a culture of mutual support and cooperation. MatchImpulsa stands as a model for other cities and regions, demonstrating

how digital platformization can be harnessed to promote a more inclusive, equitable, and socially-oriented economy. Its commitment to gender equality and inclusivity further enhances its role as a catalyst for positive change in the digital and social economies.

## 7.2 Inspirational Organizations Focused on Promoting Inclusivity and Gender Equality in the Cultural Sector

- **Diversity Culture Arts:** [Diversity Arts Culture](#) is a design and consultation office dedicated to promoting diversity within Berlin's cultural sector. Established in April 2017 by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe, it aims to mirror the city's diverse nature more accurately within its cultural realm. Initially under the aegis of Kulturprojekte Berlin, it shifted to the Foundation for Cultural Education and Cultural Consultation in 2019. The organization was initiated following calls from various cultural bodies, including a 2010 appeal by the Rat für die Künste for a cultural diversity fund. Diversity Arts Culture provides consultancy to cultural institutions, designs diversity training for art practitioners, supports artists with limited access, offers anti-discrimination consultations, and commissions equity data collection in Berlin's cultural sector.
- **Algorithm Watch:** [Algorithm Watch](#) is a visionary organization dedicated to ensuring that technology, particularly algorithmic systems, is harnessed to protect, benefit, and uplift human beings. The organization envisions a world where these systems contribute to making societies more just, democratic, inclusive, and sustainable across various social dimensions including race, gender, sexual orientation, and more. Their mission is to advocate for the use of algorithmic systems in ways that benefit the many, not just the few. They focus on promoting systems that uphold democracy and human rights, favouring freedom and autonomy over surveillance and dehumanization. Algorithm Watch is committed to justice, equality, and sustainable living, opposing any form of favouritism, discrimination, or exploitative practices.
- **Themis:** [Themis](#) is an independent organization that provides a secure environment for individuals to address experiences of sexual harassment and violence within the culture and media sectors. Acting as a mediator between the affected person and their employer, Themis offers various services, from legal counsel and psychological advice to merely providing a space for survivors to share their experiences. Their work revolves around advising victims on incidents of sexual harassment or violence they have encountered within their professional settings in the culture or media industries. Together with the victims, they work to address and clarify the incidents and assist in determining protective measures both the victims and their employers can take. Themis also provides resources and materials to educate and support various stakeholders, including guidelines for employers in the culture and media sectors and studies on power dynamics and sexual harassment within the film, television, and stage industries.
- **Femnoise:** Founded in 2017, [femnoise](#) is an international non-profit organization fervently dedicated to amplifying the roles of women and dissidents in the arenas of culture, education, technology, and creative industries. Through its expansive, independent network, femnoise is unwavering in its mission to launch technological initiatives that create lucrative opportunities specifically tailored for women, trans, and non-binary individuals, with a keen focus on career enhancement, the stimulation of global connections, and the genesis of new role models.

Besides advocating for rights against gender violence, fostering gender equality, and eliminating discrimination, femnoise has aligned its vision with specific Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations. Their digital endeavours are made possible by the support from the Spanish Ministry of Culture and an association with Barcelona Activa's pre-incubation programme. The platform itself offers an array of tools: a global search engine aiding in locating music professionals, a dynamic social network fostering global collaboration, and a "Collaborative Nano Learning" system allowing users to both impart knowledge and generate income from it. The beauty of femnoise lies in its commitment to inclusivity and empowerment, providing resources at no cost to its users.

- **Bitlab:** [Bit Lab](#) in Barcelona stands as a beacon of cultural innovation and social impact. Established as a non-profit organization, Bit Lab is dedicated to spearheading projects that not only invigorate the local cultural landscape but also yield significant social returns. Since its inception in early 2017, Bit Lab has been driven by a team of seasoned professionals, each bringing over a decade of expertise in diverse yet interconnected fields. This team comprises specialists from cultural and social innovation, the audiovisual and cinema industry, the music sector, design, and communication. Their collective experience forms the bedrock of Bit Lab's innovative approach to cultural development. The association's objectives are multifaceted and community-centric. Central to its mission is the endeavour to bridge the gap between culture and society through cutting-edge innovation projects. Bit Lab is committed to implementing interdisciplinary cultural initiatives that actively involve citizen participation, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. Collaboration lies at the heart of Bit Lab's philosophy. The association strives to catalyse partnerships among social organizations, cultural groups, public-private entities, universities, and artistic collectives. By doing so, it aims to create a synergistic environment where diverse ideas and resources converge for the greater good of the cultural sector. Education and accessibility are also key components of Bit Lab's vision. The association endeavours to integrate cultural experiences into local schools and community facilities, with a particular emphasis on connecting with grassroots social groups. This approach ensures that the joys and benefits of culture are accessible to all, enriching the community's fabric. Moreover, Bit Lab leverages digital technology and the Internet to forge new communication pathways, thereby amplifying local cultural narratives. By embracing these modern tools, the association not only preserves and promotes regional culture but also ensures that it resonates with a broader, digitally connected audience.
- **HAU Hebbel am Ufer:** [HAU Hebbel am Ufer](#), encompassing its three venues HAU1, HAU2, and HAU3, along with the digital stage HAU4, stands as a vanguard of contemporary artistic expression at the crossroads of theatre, dance, and performance. Situated in the heart of Berlin's vibrant cultural scene, HAU also integrates music, visual art, and theoretical debates, offering a diverse and expansive program that resonates with a wide audience. Under the leadership of Annemie Vanackere since 2012, HAU has emerged as one of the most esteemed and internationally connected production houses. It has become a hub for both co-productions and touring productions, showcasing renowned artists and groups from across the globe. HAU's commitment to promoting innovative and cutting-edge art extends to supporting projects from the German and Berlin independent theatre and dance scenes, providing them with production and touring management. HAU is renowned for its pioneering formats, consistently garnering attention and acclaim well beyond Berlin's borders. The institution serves as a source

of impulse and inspiration for other art and culture producers, setting trends and pushing the boundaries of creative expression. A significant part of HAU's programming includes festivals and thematic focal points, which add depth and context to its artistic offerings. HAU also actively engages with younger audiences through its Houseclub, a unique initiative that encourages collaboration between artists and students. This approach not only fosters creativity but also builds bridges between generations of artists and art enthusiasts. The institution's commitment to accessibility and community engagement is evident in its array of artist talks, group introductions, and cooperative projects under the banner of 'HAU to connect,' which facilitates a myriad of connections between artists, audiences, and the wider community.

- **Chaos Computer Club:** The [Chaos Computer Club](#) e. V. (CCC) is Europe's largest association of hackers. For more than thirty years they have been providing information about technical and societal issues, such as surveillance, privacy, freedom of information, hacktivism, data security and many other interesting things around technology and hacking issues. As the most influential hacker collective in Europe, they organize campaigns, events, lobbying and publications as well as anonymizing services and communication infrastructure. There are many hackerspaces in and around Germany which belong to or share a common bond to the CCC as stated in their hacker ethics.
- **Open Knowledge Foundation:** Central to the Foundation's mission is the creation of digital tools that are not just technologically advanced, but also accessible and user-friendly. Recognizing the transformative impact of digital literacy, the Foundation invests in equipping individuals and communities with the necessary skills to navigate and leverage the digital landscape effectively. In doing so, they build and expand networks that are not only digitally proficient, but also deeply understand and appreciate the value of open knowledge. In an era marked by complex global challenges, the [Open Knowledge Foundation](#) is committed to ensuring that open knowledge principles are integral to the design of future infrastructures and organizations. The Foundation works tirelessly to ensure that these principles guide and inspire those who are poised to transform both our digital and physical worlds. Their vision is centred on the creation of a future that is free, sustainable, and inclusive. Through its multifaceted approach, the Open Knowledge Foundation aims to empower and guide individuals and communities, instilling in them the values of openness and collaboration. Their work contributes significantly to building a world where information is not just accessible, but also used responsibly and ethically to benefit society as a whole. The Foundation stands as a beacon in the pursuit of a more open, transparent, and equitable world.

### 7.3 Inspirational Platforms to Promote Inclusivity and Gender Equality in the Cultural Sector

- **Decidim:** [Decidim.org](#) is an open-source digital platform launched in 2017 to foster citizen participation, with its decisions guided by its supporting community. Initially a City of Barcelona initiative, its code was revamped in 2017, transforming it into a versatile platform usable by any organization. In 2019, the Decidim Association was established to ensure its democratic integrity and project quality. Although initially funded by Barcelona City Council, by 2021, additional funding partners, including the Government of Catalonia, began supporting it. This



funding facilitated the hiring of coordinators and the development of new features like an installer. While its primary revenue comes from member fees, there are plans to introduce consultancy services. As an open-source project, Decidim operates under the Affero GPL 3 licence, emphasizing community contributions to the codebase. The Decidim community, known as MetaDecidim, is diverse, consisting of universities, developers, and participation experts. Although global, it retains a European focus, with an evident gender gap, motivating initiatives like DecidimFemDev to boost female participation in coding. Decidim's future ambitions involve establishing long-term financial sustainability and scaling its platform to accommodate its growing international user base.

- **ImpulsorESS: Decidim.Cultura:** The '[ImpulsorESS: Decidim.Cultura](#)' project proposes that, through the development of a series of participatory processes, participants can jointly design and launch a virtual platform based on Decidim to design and activate a collaborative cultural network for mutual support. They work together to identify, mutualise, and share the needs and functionalities to be developed, pooling resources among different spaces, fairs, exhibitions, and entities of culture and the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE). The project proposes the development of an open-source virtual platform, based on Decidim (the digital participation platform of the Barcelona City Council), for the creation and production of cultural actions as well as the sharing of resources. The platform will aggregate video transmission services using open-source technologies (for example, video-conferencing such as Jitsi and BigBlueButton), as well as other modules to facilitate resource sharing (crowdsourcing and resource bank), project management and ticketing (crowd-ticketing), as well as facilitating environments for collective fundraising (crowdfunding).
- **La Guixeta:** [La Guixeta](#) (The Ticket Office) is a digital platform under construction for Catalan audiovisual and cultural content. It is a new reference space from which to build new relationships of access and ethical sharing where content producers and creators will find solutions to their needs for publication, sharing, distribution, communication, financing, and community building. La Guixeta, promoted by Bit Lab, Platoniq Foundation, and Quesoni, connects the needs for media reproduction and techno-ethical streaming service - based on Peertube - with the tools and strategies of collective funding through Goteo.org. It represents a new way of understanding both the creation and production of content as well as access to and consumption of audiovisual and cultural media through the Social and Solidarity Economy and mutual support. La Guixeta operates in a horizontal and democratic manner, generating fair relationships between creation and consumption that dignify the work of cultural workers without intermediaries, placing the community and consumer cooperativism at the centre. La Guixeta is a digital space with easy access to a cultural repository of entertainment, arts, performances, social documentaries, and critical cinema that will enrich the cultural network of Catalan-speaking territories.
- **Vielfalt entscheidet - Equality Data:** The "[Vielfalt entscheidet - Equality Data](#)" project, led by Citizens for Europe, emphasizes enhancing diversity in leadership roles and promoting an inclusive society. Recognizing the under-representation of people of colour and black individuals in leadership, the project conducts extensive research to gather data pinpointing areas of discrimination and suggesting pathways for greater inclusivity. This data helps institutions identify areas needing reform, facilitating their journey toward genuine inclusivity. The team has crafted a unique survey tool that delves deep into experiences of discrimination,

striving beyond superficial inclusivity measures. Their pilot study, presented in 2018, was Germany's first comprehensive survey that considered racial discrimination beyond just migration background. This project has since grown, branching into sectors like film, politics, and public administration. Collaborations, such as "Vielfalt im Film" and "#AFROZENSUS", further underscore the project's commitment to mapping and enhancing diversity across different spheres of German society.

#### 7.4 Inspirational legislative initiatives to ensure gender equality in the cultural field (and beyond)

- **Berliner Landesgleichstellungsgesetz:** The [Berliner Landesgleichstellungsgesetz](#), introduced in 1991, aims at ensuring gender equality within Berlin's state services. Since its inception, there has been a noticeable rise in the proportion of women in leadership positions, although top roles are still predominantly male-dominated. The legislation mandates state institutions in Berlin to actively promote gender equality. Tools to achieve this include gender promotion plans and prioritizing qualified female candidates when there is under-representation. The law also dictates that the proportion of women should at least be maintained, even during workforce reductions. Periodic reports on the law's implementation show that, while there is progress, women remain underrepresented in leadership and decision-making bodies. A key focus of subsequent revisions to the legislation is to address this gap. A significant amendment was made to the Landesgleichstellungsgesetz on 18th November 2010. This revision requires public announcements for planned appointments in board and management roles in public administration. It also empowers women's representatives to participate in such appointment processes. The updated law extends the requirement for gender promotion into the private sector, especially concerning public contract awards. The threshold for considering gender promotion in public contract allocation has been reduced from €50,000 to €25,000, and construction services starting from a contract value of €200,000 are also included. Furthermore, state-owned enterprises are mandated to undertake gender promotion measures. The legislation also strengthens women's rights by revising the process for electing female representatives, introducing appointment processes, and enabling the appointment of both a primary and deputy female representative in more institutions. Specifics are detailed in the ordinance dated 10th May 2011.
- **Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (AGG):** [The Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz](#) (AGG) is Germany's primary anti-discrimination law, enacted in 2006. It seeks to prevent and eliminate discrimination on various grounds, including race, ethnic origin, gender, religion or belief, disability, age, and sexual orientation. The AGG applies to both public and private sectors, particularly in areas such as employment, vocational training, and access to goods and services. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against under the criteria set by the AGG have the right to seek legal remedies. Employers and service providers are obligated to take active measures to prevent discrimination in their operations. The act promotes a more inclusive and equal society by ensuring equal opportunities and rights for all, regardless of their background or personal characteristics.
- **Berliner Landesantidiskriminierungsgesetz (LADG):** The [Berliner Landesantidiskriminierungsgesetz](#) (LADG) is a state-level anti-discrimination law specific to

Berlin, enacted in 2020. It aims to protect individuals from discrimination by public authorities in the state of Berlin on the grounds of race, gender, religion, disabilities, age, and sexual orientation, among other criteria. This law shifts the burden of proof in discrimination cases, meaning that public authorities must prove they did not discriminate, rather than the individual proving they were discriminated against. Additionally, the LADG allows individuals to claim compensation or damages if they have faced discrimination from public bodies. The enactment of the LADG represents Berlin's commitment to ensuring equality and reducing institutional discrimination within its public services.

## 7.5 Inspirational Cultural Networks with Gender Perspective

- **Reset! Network:** [Reset!](#) is a European initiative committed to supporting and unifying independent cultural, media, and creative entities across 25 countries. Born out of a recognition of their vulnerability and fragmentation, the network seeks to amplify their collective voice, championing values of pluralism, diversity, equality, and sustainability. By fostering collaboration and gathering insights through surveys, journalism, and workshops, Reset! aims to redefine Europe's cultural and media landscape, building resilience and recovery strategies for sectors impacted by recent crises, all while ensuring their vital contributions gain the transnational visibility they deserve.
- **Female:pressure:** Conceived by Vienna's Electric Indigo in 1998, [female:pressure](#) stands as a dynamic online database and network, championing women, non-binary, transgender, and other gender-diverse individuals in the electronic music and visual arts domain. Challenging the notion of a cis-male dominated field, the platform, initially a basic HTML list, has now grown to include over 3,000 members from 86 countries as of August 2023. Beyond its core function, female:pressure counters the frequent question about the dearth of women in electronic music, advocating for greater visibility by spotlighting often overlooked contributions. Its inclusive and anti-racist ethos has extended its reach, emphasizing intersectionality and fostering robust dialogues via a mailing list since 2004. This collaborative spirit has birthed initiatives like the FACTS Surveys, the #female:pressure call for diversity, the Berlin-based Perspectives Festival, and their podcast series, highlighting the network's dedication to reshaping perceptions and championing underrepresented voices in the arts.
- **OpenGLAM:** [OpenGLAM](#) network, an initiative rooted in the principles of open access and collaboration, stands as a pivotal movement in the cultural heritage sector. Its name, derived from "Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums," reflects its focus on these key cultural institutions. The initiative advocates for the open sharing of cultural heritage, championing the idea that knowledge and resources related to cultural heritage should be freely accessible to everyone. At its core, OpenGLAM is dedicated to encouraging cultural institutions to adopt open-access policies. This involves facilitating the release of digital versions of their collections into the public domain or under open licences. By doing so, OpenGLAM seeks to democratize access to cultural heritage, allowing the public, researchers, educators, and artists to freely use, remix, and repurpose these valuable resources. The initiative operates under the belief that open access to cultural heritage enriches society, fosters creativity, and promotes a deeper understanding of history and culture. OpenGLAM collaborates with a wide network of institutions, policymakers, and enthusiasts to create a more inclusive and accessible cultural

landscape. Through workshops, collaborations, and advocacy, OpenGLAM works tirelessly to break down barriers to access and share the richness of cultural heritage with the world. It stands as a testament to the power of open access in transforming how cultural heritage is preserved, accessed, and enjoyed.

- **BCNFemTech:** [BCNFemTech](#) is a dynamic women's network in Barcelona dedicated to combating the digital gender divide in the city. This initiative highlights the under-representation of women in the ICT sector, where they hold only about a quarter of the jobs and less than 10% of technical positions. The network consists of fifty expert women from diverse tech backgrounds, including organizations like STEM Women Congress, Viquidones, and All Women Tech. Their primary goal is to advocate for gender equity in technology, challenge the digital gender divide, and enhance women's participation in the ICT market. The group actively supports the Government Measure "BcnFemTech 2021-2023," which was launched in March 2021 to promote gender equity in technological fields. This measure involves actions to bridge the gender gap in digital spheres and is monitored through the digital participation platform Decidim. BCNFemTech also focuses on acknowledging and supporting women-led tech initiatives in Barcelona through the 'Gender Equity Awards for the ICT Sector.' These awards, each worth 8,000 euros, are distributed across four categories to encourage and assist tech projects led by women. Additionally, the City Council is addressing the digital gender divide within its own ranks, commissioning a study titled 'Analysis of the Digital Gender Divide in Barcelona City Council.' This study aims to understand and address gender disparities within the corporation. The network's initiatives are diverse and feminist-focused, including projects for safer digital spaces, promoting connections among women researchers and artists, highlighting gender-related data, encouraging girls' participation in tech and business, and supporting women in the video game development industry. All these efforts are part of a concerted move towards a more equitable, inclusive, and diverse technological landscape in Barcelona.

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