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THE ROLE OF THE ARTIST IN A COMMUNAL ART PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

Art Project Management is a limited time process and a specific way of thinking that ensures that all the project stages are carried out in a planned and structured manner, that the project is finished with successful implementation of the aim of the project (MPSI, 2016, p. 71). When analysing art projects, Dovydaitytė emphasises they are often characteristic of a process, interdisciplinarity and multi-directional relations with a wider social context (Dovydaitytė, 2014). When carrying out a communal art project in a community, an artist can perform the following different functions: facilitator, interpreter, trainer, animator, mentor, consultant, project manager. Scientists attribute functions to artists differently in communal art projects. Often, communal art projects include a professional artist who comes with one of the roles that s/he has, curates the entire process and is responsible for management and, of course, engages the community. Moreover, an artist can be not only the creator, but also the manager of the whole project. The main role of a project manager is to unite members of the community, help them collaborate, and ensure as well as evaluate the final results of the art project.

KEYWORDS: communal art project, role of the artist, management, art project, project management, community, community art project.

Problem research level

Literature review on community art, its goals and characteristics have been analysed by Lawton (2019), Carpenter II (2019), Kirakosyan and Stephenson (2019), Raarup and White (2020), Žukienė et al. (2007), Cohen-Cruz (2005), Dovydaitytė (2014), Jannsen (2014). Project management has been analysed by Radujkovića and Sjekavica (2017), Pielitchaty et al. (2017), Nevarauskas et al. (2010), Byrnes (2015), Pieltachy et al. (2017), MAPSI (2016), Jannsen (2014).

In the Western culture countries, especially USA and Great Britain, community arts to support communities have been the centre of not only culture, but also cultural politics for almost three decades. However, only in the 2000s of the 21st century these forms of expression were looked at from a theoretical point of view, especially looking for evaluation aspects and naming methodological access points (Vitkienė, 2015). In Lithuania, the practice of art began spreading into territories of communities only at the beginning of the 21st century; thus, we can claim that this is a new direction of contemporary art or movement in the field of art and culture.

Community arts are usually project-related; thus, the article presents an analysis from this point of view. Engagement of communities and various social groups into contemporary art projects is becoming a more and more frequent creative practice. Community art is a target project activity that must be managed and based on a management model that has not been developed yet. In order to successfully manage artistic activities for them to focus communities and make them active, it is important to determine the relation between the community art management means or form and community's willingness to engage into one or another activity because this determines the entire result of community art. Therefore, in order to encourage a community to engage into artistic activities more actively, it is not enough to organise art, cultural activities; their management needs to be thought out as well. If community art activities are not clearly and carefully considered, then art may have no impact on the activeness of a community. Therefore, it is relevant to analyse the community art process, i.e., community art project management and the cooperation process that analyse how an artist or a social activist organises activities in a community and what methods they use to achieve their goals and high level of activity of the community. The analysis of the process of community art management in communities will help to find out how cooperation is carried out between the community and an artist in order to implement community art projects.

The aim of the article is to determine the role of the artist in community art projects.

The methods employed in the research are comparative analysis of scientific literature, synthesis and abstraction.

1. Art project management

Art project management is a time-limited process, a specific way of thinking that ensures planned and structured implementation of all the project stages in order for the project to be finished after successful implementation of the project goal (MPSI, 2016,

p. 71). In her analysis of art projects, Dovydaitytė emphasises that they are mostly characteristic of a process, interdisciplinarity and multi-directional relations with a wider social context (Dovydaitytė, 2014). Community art projects do not analyse the role of the artist.

In community art projects, the role of the artist in a community can differ (Fig. 1).

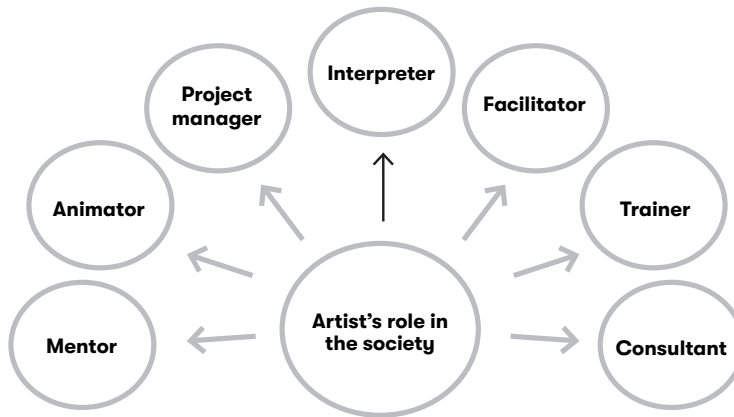


Fig. 1. **Artist's role in the society**

Source: based on Janssen M. B. (2011). *Making Art with Communities – A Work Guide*. Arts Victoria, p. 40

As the Figure shows, an artist can carry out the following different functions during the community art project implementation in a community:

Facilitator – a person who enables, assists or helps others to create art. An artist can make the idea and skill development process as well as the cooperation process easier in order to develop an art project.

Interpreter – when an artist implements the idea collection process and helps to create artwork from community story-telling.

Trainer – teacher of skills and knowledge.

Animator – an artist (actor, organiser) who acts inside a community and helps its members to create and nurture their own culture (Žukienė et al., 2007, p. 10).

Mentor – art practitioner who has knowledge and experience, who wants to share his/her ideas, experience and advice. Mentor works with members of a community who are less experienced in the art practice.

Consultant – an artist who controls the conception, development and implementation of an art project.

Project manager – an artist who administers the entire implementation of the project including all project processes and stages from planning to completion (Janssen, 2014, p. 40).

Janssen (2011) notes that an artist can come into a community as a mentor who would act in the community as a practitioner and could share ideas and advice, whereas Žukienė et al. (2007) claim that in community art projects, the artist usually acts as an animator who is the organiser of a project and acts inside the community mediating between the artist and the community. However, Bomfield and Lanette (2018) and Carpenter II (2019) point out that the artist in community art projects usually acts as a project manager who is responsible for not only art ideas, but also management of the entire project. Thus, all of the aforementioned researchers emphasise the importance and necessity of the artist's role in a community.

Janssen (2011) points out that many artists do not want to take on the role of a project manager because it might distract them from their main function, i.e., creation of art. However, community art projects often include a professional artist who comes with one of his/her roles, curates the entire process and is responsible for management and, of course, engages the community. It does not matter what is the type of the project activities carried out, there must be a systematic way that would allow people's convenient participation during the entire process (Janssen, 2014, pp. 40-41).

An artist can help to implement a project and be a helping hand or implement a process and be not only the creator, but also the entire project manager. The main task of the project manager is to focus these different actors, make their cooperative interaction easier, as well as ensure and assess the final results of the art project.

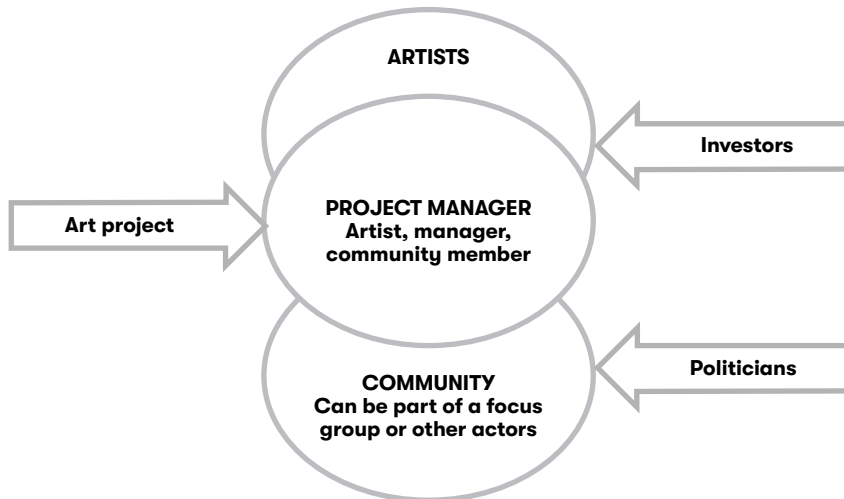


Fig. 2. **The role of a project manager in an art project management**

Source: MAPSI (2016). *Managing Art Projects with Societal Impact*. Helsinki. p. 74

This Figure shows that the main task of the project manager is to focus these different actors such as the artist and community, and make their cooperative interaction easier, ensure and assess the final results and a wider impact when implementing a community art project.

The life cycle of a community art project includes the five main project management process stages; however, sometimes not all the stages become emphasised and follow one after the other, yet the community art project management stages coincide with traditional project management stages, and this depends on the extent and type of a project (MAPSI, 2016, p. 78).

The initiation stage: this stage can be attributed to the researcher or the ethnographer; during this stage, project managers (artists) study values and practices of different communities and actively search for the project idea, study its field in order to determine a respective community and its main actors. In this stage, project managers aim at getting to know the community and create relations with it. When initiating a community art project, project managers should pay attention to artists (if they are not artists themselves), organisers, audience and other interested parties. Good understanding of the needs, goals, threats, risks, desires, possibilities and environment increases opportunities to carry out a successful project (MAPSI, 2016, p. 79).

The planning stage: the second stage encompasses several mediation roles and tasks. The role of the project manager in this stage shows that it is necessary to create a project team by creating relationships between the artist and the community. They should pay attention to the norms and values of the community. In order to ensure emergence of the general practice, project managers must create a sense of trust for the participants. This stage requires the managers to understand and nurture empathy in terms of others' opinions and motivation. However, in this early stage, general practice usually manifests in the form of cooperation because artists get to know the project and respective participants. Project managers, together with the project team, should be able to define what they are planning to achieve, and point out general goals (Jannsen, 2014, p. 93).

In art projects, the manager cannot be the only source of ideas. On the contrary, focus on one person's point of view might prevent the remaining members of the team from implementing their ideas and thus diminish creativity. Instead of aiming for his/her idea and goals, the manager's objective is to help the project team to form a general vision and goal. Moreover, other contributors join during this stage, for instance, cultural and art organisations, business groups and clients or other interested parties can be invited to participate in the planning of the community art project. In art projects, very strict planning and relaxed management have a tendency to diminish appearance of the participants. Thus, planning should be more focused on the structure, time and goals of the project (MAPSI, 2016, p. 79).

This stage encompasses financial planning of art projects because all projects need resources, i.e., people, equipment, material, money, etc. A financial plan shows why resources are needed, their anticipated costs, where they would come from and how and when they would be used. This information is clearly shown in the budget, which is a tool of financial planning for the duration of a particular project (Jannsen, 2014, p. 64).

Time planning in art projects: reasonable time planning and management is important for any participant of a project; however, it is also important for the project manager or a representative who takes on this role. If project managers miss an important deadline, the project might face complications, which would create stress, guilt, anxiety and disappointment. Thus, in the planning stage, time management is essential; usually, it is pointed out by using deadlines in the margins of a project. It is also important to remember that not everything always goes according to the plan; therefore, time limits should be realistically evaluated and project managers should anticipate the fact that unexpected events might emerge, be ready with backup plans and a certain flexibility in the time schedule of the project (MAPSI, 2016, p. 82).

Evaluation planning in art projects: evaluation shows what has been successful and what has failed while implementing a project. This is an opportunity to show one's achievements and see what was less successful. Here, cooperation is very important because successful evaluation encompasses the input of all the participants of the project: artists, community, other employees, organisations, partners, other members. It is essential to plan who will carry out evaluation, what will be evaluated, when and how. Resources including time and personnel should also be included into the plan, information should be compared and analysed. If a project is financed, the investor will ask for a report; therefore, this aspect itself is a good start to evaluate planning when it is necessary to find out what is to be evaluated. Evaluation encompasses quantitative and qualitative collection of information using a thorough evaluation of both together (Jannsen, 2014, p. 67).

The implementation stage: the third stage can be seen as time during which project managers have to become activists, supporters of identity creation and nurturers of care. Managers create a sense of trust and enable true general activities. The process of learning to cooperate occurs between the community and the artist when members of the team try to understand different points of view and support one another. During this stage, the role of community's identity creation and the role of the artist as an activist become very important. Sometimes, during this stage, the need for new actors and resources to be included into the project emerges. Moreover, project managers must create contacts from the beginning to the end of the project with the community participants in the project respectively and outside of the community, with other audiences (MAPSI, 2016, p. 85).

Monitoring and control stage: The term *control* is often compared to the concept of government; however, project management practice control does not have much in

common with people's orders what to do when dictating actions or thoughts, or trying to make people act in certain ways. This means that the concept of *control* in project management is closer to the idea of "sailing a ship" by constantly altering and paying attention to the goals. In this sense, control stands for the role of the project manager as being invisible and who tries to reduce the distance between the end of the project and the place where the project should end according to the plan. An important task of the project manager is to focus on that where s/he thinks the project will end and, if necessary, give a nudge to the project in the right direction. For instance, in community art project this means that the project manager should constantly communicate with art managers (if s/he is not the artist him/herself or there are more artists involved) and other employees on the content of the project in order to be able to evaluate general understanding of project goals. Meetings once a week or once a fortnight can be a good start for discussions about the project. There are the following main aspects where the project manager should focus his/her attention and control:

1. Schedule: Will the project be implemented on time?
2. Cost: Does the project stay within the budget?
3. Quality: Will the anticipated results be as good as promised?
4. Impact: Will the project have as much influence as promised?

The first two aspects of control, i.e., schedule and cost, are traditionally attributed to the project manager and art employees, even though project managers focus more on quality control and impact of art projects. Sometimes, art project managers avoid engaging into art-related decision-making; however, the project manager should also participate in decision-making processes because they are also responsible for a project (MAPSI, 2016, p. 86).

The completion stage: the fifth project management stage is dedicated to close the project as well as evaluate and announce its results and impact to various interested parties and those who are interested in these results. The project manager becomes the evaluator of impact. The role of the project evaluator is not only to evaluate the project mechanically, but also regard ways how the community views the results. The project manager must ensure that the results will be presented for not only the community as a participant, but also interested parties that participated in the project as well as the wider audience. Of course, the project manager does not have to be the only evaluator of impact; this role can be taken on by another person who has equal understanding and knowledge (Janssen, 2014, p. 99).

When analysing the process of community art project management, the role of the artist, his duties and responsibilities stand out clearly if s/he is the project manager. One can see when the relationship and engagement of the community is carried out; however, what exactly the community and its members do has not been analysed in detail in scientific literature. Moreover, this process can include the art manager who mediates

between the professional artist and the community in order to create a mutual meeting. The creative urge, leadership and ability to focus a group of people to follow a shared goal remains the basis on which management of all arts is built (Byrnes, 2015).

If something is not clear or there are questions during the implementation, it is essential to communicate and display respectful, fair and ethical behaviour. In order for community art projects to be successful, they must engage people, provide them with purposeful things, acknowledge them appropriately and respect them from the very initial process. It is very important that the dialogue is clear among all the participants from the beginning (Janssen, 2014, pp. 15-17).

Community art projects are innovative and creative; they study the aspect of cooperation between the artist and the community by finding balance between both sides in order to implement the goal of the project. Community art projects are one of the ways to activate communities, and a project is the form when the artist works with the community in order to facilitate the creative process that allows the participants to express their opinion, needs, objectives, inspiration, identity, sense and place (Lawton, 2019, pp. 207-208).

Creation of art by engaging people is like fair exchange and safe space where people can experiment without fear, be heard, share ideas and dispute them, gain new skills, express their opinion, be respected by one another or even become the leader of the community. Furthermore, there are no two identical projects, just like every community is different, just like artists work in different ways; therefore, goals and results are different from other art projects. There is a general basis that develops into mutual belief in all people's creativity, their intrinsic right to express themselves and what is important, relevant and interesting to them (Janssen, 2011, p. 3).

The exclusivity of community art projects is the fact that a professional artist is involved, and s/he activates the community's creativity, provides it with experience, and creates an artistic style for the project. This result provides the community with emotional experience and sense, which strengthens the community itself; one can see emerging cooperation, communication, friendship and a closer connection between community members (Lawton, 2019).

The best-known community art project implemented in Lithuania is Šančiai – A Friendly Zone whose initiators are artists Gelūnienė and Carrollo. The results of the project are as follows: thanks to the created relations between the organisers of the project Gelūnienė and Carrollo, in December 2013, an official community of Lower Šančiai was established. With the effort of the participant of this project activist Gediminas Banaitis, the issues of this district are becoming more and more evident in the activities of the Kaunas City municipality administration. The following changes that the participants mentioned are not so evident yet “sensed” in the lives of the district: more active local community, increased trust among local residents in artists, the participants' willingness and new plans to continue activities (Dovydaitytė, 2014, p. 139). When implementing

this project, the artist and the leader of the local community together with the entire Šančiai community created *The Cabbage Patch* where they started community art activities in 2014. This space became known in not only the close environment, but also entire Kaunas city; the space still operates and aims at focusing and developing the community, creating a space for meetings and nurturing culture.

All implemented community art projects should promote and include the following aspects: social equality, active participation, creative cooperation community and collective control, transparency, clear processes and fairness, clear expectations, understanding of the project being implemented, respect and trust; they should enable all participants, educate abilities, provide knowledge and opportunity, and, most importantly, it should create a shared understanding that everyone has rights, duties and responsibility for the project being carried out (Kirakosyan and Stephenson, 2019). Successful participation processes ensure safety and respect for people, and create a space where one can share ideas, analyse, listen to others, share, discuss, support and develop further mutual activities, pay attention to all opinions, even those that one does not agree with, encourage people to contribute and participate in their own way and not necessarily throughout the duration of the entire project. It is very important to ensure that members of a community know their input and acknowledge it as a successful part of the work (Janssen, 2014).

The community art project management system aims at finding solutions for the community's social problems, creating the community's energy and identifying general identity. Art projects can reach other socially relevant areas such as education, health, community focus, creation and its unity. A community develops a stronger mutual connection, higher potential in cultural activities and social development through community art activeness. Because social activities emerge the most in the context of community art, then such aspects as cooperation, relationship development with others, sharing, creation of a public space emerge through the activeness of a community (Carpenter II, 2019).

Therefore, a clear community art project management system as a process enables a community to actively participate in all project stages from the initial meeting to completion of the project. Cooperation in contemporary art projects is like a good discussion where the participants base their view of everyone else's remarks, i.e., artists and community create art together, people's different skills and knowledge, assign them different roles during the entire project management process; however, cooperation does not mean that the result is the art created by the community; artistic solutions must be united because the role of the artist is to provide the community with artistic leadership (Bomfield and Lanette, 2018). The role of the artist in the project participation process promotes and challenges a community to analyse new experiences of sense, implementation and thought. The artist works in the community's environment and aims for art

to be a socially, intellectually, emotionally, culturally, politically and even personally engaging process. Artists want to change something in the community where the artistic activities are carried out. A professional artist also aims at providing understanding about contemporary art practices and tries to ensure high quality of artistic results as well as responsibility (Jannsen, 2014, pp. 40-41).

Community art project management encompasses five management process stages from project initiation to project completion. The community art project management process includes two main actors that work together in order to create a general artistic result, i.e., the community and the professional artist. However, in order to create a co-operation relation, the role of project manager emerges; the project manager controls the entire process of the project from beginning to end. It is important to note that the project manager can be a complete outsider, an art manager, a person from the community or the artist him/herself. A community art project is used to create a stronger connection within the community among its member, and successful control of the community art process can help to achieve high results in such areas as social change in the community when the community acquires certain meanings after project completion.

2. Theoretical model of community art project management

There is no community art project management model; however, there are community art project model constituents, according to Cohen-Cruz (2005) (Figure 3).

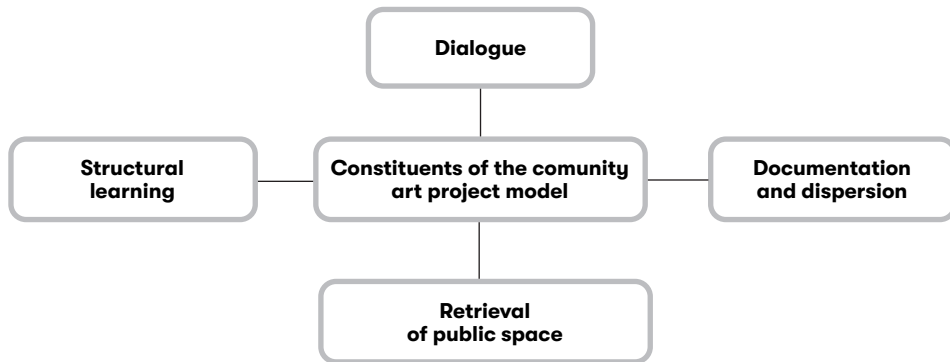


Fig. 3. **Constituents of the community art project model**

Source: based on Cohen-Cruz, J. (2005). *Local Acts: Community-based Performance in the United States*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press pp. 62-66.

Dialogue. Often, when implementing an art project in a local community, the goal is to create a dialogue with the member of the community; however, it sometimes happens that a project is carried out in a conflict environment, and then one starts to look

for ways to initiate a dialogue between the opposing members of the community. For this purpose, various means are used, for instance, interview with the opposing sides, then a scenario is created on the basis of the interview which allows creating mural art and organising a round table discussion. Project participants in this case act as mediators to create an opportunity for dialogue rather than resolve a conflict (Janssen, 2014).

Documentation and dispersion. Carrying out community arts, the aim is usually to document, reveal and present the unofficial story of a community's life and its reality. Project participants share personal stories and various objects (e.g., personal belongings) and visual (e.g., photos, video) material that can be presented in various ways, i.e., as mural art, exhibition, play, feature film or documentary, website. In this way, the aim for the community is to represent and express themselves rather than be represented by someone from outside.

Retrieval of public space. One of the most important methods of community art projects is public space creation. Often a community lack the means to express themselves and do not have certain access to artistic, cultural and communication tools. Community art projects are often implemented by establishing cultural activity or artistic education centres, theatre premises (Goldbard, 2006, pp. 61-69).

Structural learning. Many of the community art projects are based on the structural learning idea whose goal is to gain artistic expression and critical thinking skills, and to join these to actions is the most important aspect. Structural learning is often related to deeper knowledge of own community and environment. Cognition occurs in the following two ways:

- by means of introspection when art participants share their own experiences on life in the community;
- collection of information when participants record and collect stories from other members of the community.
- While collecting information, community members use various means and tools to attract the attention of respondents and interest them in the project being carried out:
 - they use multimedia presentations;
 - they film and take photos;
 - they wear various specially created costumes.

However, the goal of structural learning is equally important to collection of information; the goal is to create an opportunity for members of the community to express the reality of community life themselves (Žukienė et al., 2007, p. 169).

When creating the theoretical community art project management model, the factors of community involve artist's collaboration, the role of the artist as well as the following project management process stages: initiation, planning, implementation, monitoring and control, and completion.

Thus, when analysing the model, community art emerges first; it occurs based on the principle of the cooperation between the artist and community, and the community art project is implemented. Cooperation factors (relation, closeness, coordination, responsibility, encouragement, conflict) are included into the project management process. Then, the stages of community art project management processes are distinguished in the centre and two scenarios are provided: A and B that show different ways of how a process can occur when in the case of Scenario A, the artist is the initiator, and the community is a participant, and in the case of Scenario B when the community is the initiator but the manager/curator helps to manage the process, and the artist is included into the process later as a contributor. As it has been mentioned, the activities of community art manifest through project activities; thus, there are the following five main stages of project management:

Initiation. First of all, this is the initial moment of the project life cycle when the artist and the community initiate the definition of the project, share ideas, carry out brainstorming, an analysis of the community and find out what goals the community members intend to achieve, what problems they want to solve during the community art project.

Planning. The planning stage most frequently includes organisations of tasks; both the artist and the community take on responsibilities for their assigned tasks thus forming teams and leaders. Also, this stage aims at finding the best order of actions that would reflect the situation in the project environment; it is necessary to determine resources and budget. In general, management methods emphasise such process knowledge areas as project value, time, quality, content, risk, supply, contracts. The most important is the fact that this stage encompasses the entire project, which means that the process starts from the initiation of the community art project to its completion.

Implementation. This stage focuses everyone who wants to contribute to the implementation of the project. These are not only the members of the community and the artist, but also various art or cultural organisations, business organisations, activists who come together and help to work together and achieve a mutual goal. It is important to note that this stage gives rise to dialogue as a form of communication as well as activeness of the community; it can also show leadership, aim to collect, use and spread information; thus, this stage can also show transitional differences.

Monitoring and control. In this stage, it is very important to monitor the process and whether everything is going according to the plan, what changes have emerged, whether the content of the project is changing, etc. Also, there is a necessity to control changes, observe, analyse and modify them. It is important for the community to understand their expectations and accept changes that can determine the change of the final result.

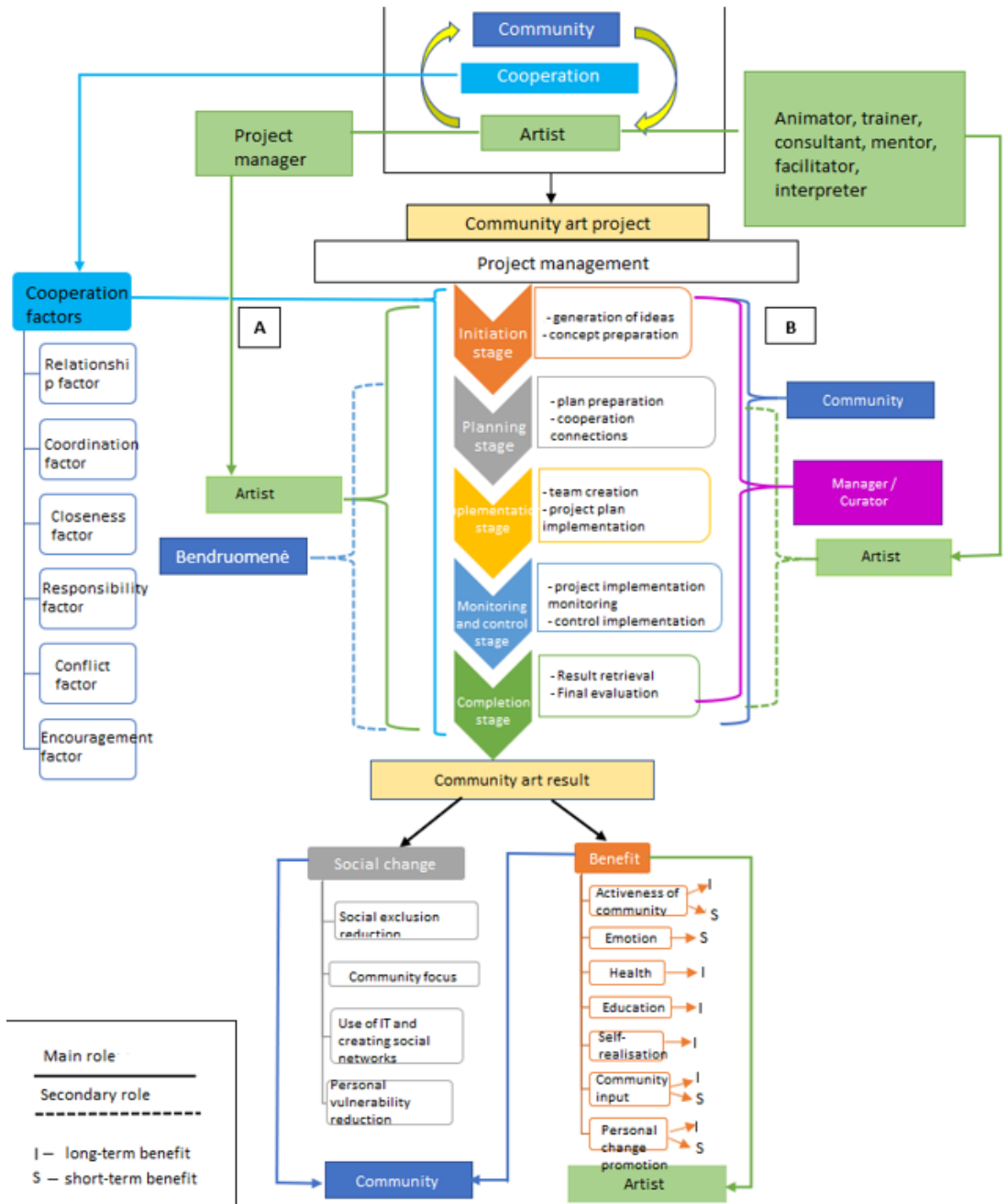


Fig. 4 **Community art project management model**
Source: Created by the authors.

Completion. In the last stage, when finishing the project, project inspection is carried out. This is not a usual report on the project process, i.e., this stage encompasses more aspects. First of all, it is important to evaluate the benefit of activities, i.e., what input does each member create, whether the activities satisfy the expectations, how the community feels after project implementation; it is very important to notice and inform the community about their input and what results have been achieved. Of course, traditional completion processes are carried out during this stage, such as process completion administration, formal reception of the results and general final evaluation.

This community art project management model can be adapted to other artistic initiatives because today community art is compared with other types of activism; altering the management process of this model would allow adapting the model practically (see Figure 4, p. 87).

Conclusions

Community art is an artistic activity carried out based on the principle of an art project. This is a creative form of community engagement that is characteristic of not only the process of project management, but also the cooperation process between the artist and the community that is carried out during the project in order to achieve a mutual goal. Community does not have a unified definition and this concept can be defined differently. In most cases, community is a group of people living in a certain place that are related by mutual goals and interests, various problems or aspects that unify a community. The artist is a creator of art who has traits of the creator, is not afraid to create, is sensitive to the environment, sees it differently and aims at showing this through art.

Community art project management encompasses the following five stages: initiation stage (studying a community, generalisation of ideas, preparation of the concept of a project); planning stage (preparation of a plan, making cooperation relations, time planning, finance planning, evaluation planning); implementation stage (creation of a team, implementation of the project plan); monitoring and control stage (monitoring of the project implementation process and control development); the completion stage (acquiring the results, final assessment). A clear community art project management process aims at enabling both the artist and the community to participate in all of the project stages from generation of ideas to acquiring the results of a project.

The model of cooperation between community and artist when managing community art projects includes the main roles of the community and the artist that cooperate. Project management encompasses five stages, and community art project implementation emphasises two scenarios, i.e., A and B. Scenario A shows that the artist is the initiator and project manager and carries out the main role while the community plays a secondary role. Scenario B shows that the community is the initiator; however, like the artist, it still plays a secondary role because the primary role is played by the community art project manager/curator. Both Scenario A and Scenario B yield a community art result that is characteristic of a social change and incoming benefits for the community, and the artist usually only gains benefit.

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