

ADDED
COMMUNITY VALUES



Example of good practice

**Latvian Centre of
Contemporary Art**

Active Citizenship

SUMMARY

Name	Latvian Centre of Contemporary Art
Summary description of idea and activities	Latvian Centre of Contemporary Art (LCCA) is a non-governmental organization founded in 2000. Its activities are based on the promotion of contemporary art processes in Latvia and beyond. LCCA's activities cover various topics, which are important for the members of the organization to talk about and inform the wider society, forming a circle of civically engaged persons.
Country observed	Latvia
Year observed	2023
Programme area (Social inclusion/ Active Citizenship/Environmental sustainability)	Active citizenship
Specific topic	Contemporary Art
Beneficiaries of the activities	Representatives of local governments and state institutions; Artists; Young people, seniors; People with functional and/or mental disabilities.
Can these activities be applied to other beneficiaries: yes/no	Yes
What type of beneficiaries: ALL, or specific ones?	ALL
If specific ones, which?	

Active citizenship & democracy with LCCA

Latvian Center of Contemporary Art (LCCA) is a non-governmental organization founded in 2000. Its activities are based on the promotion of contemporary art processes in Latvia and beyond. LCCA's activities cover various topics, which are important for the members of the organization to talk about and inform the wider society, forming a circle of civically engaged persons. Respectively, within the organization itself, through the works and projects, it is important to bring to light current developments, to talk about them with a wider audience, involving and including various artists, as well as those interested in the chosen subjects.

The organization's social networks mention that its "focus is on the contexts of Latvia, the Baltics, Eastern Europe and the broader post-socialist region, gender and minority issues, layers of individual and cultural memory; environmental and ecological perspectives are also highlighted." This is also confirmed by what was said in the interview with the representatives of the organization, that is, it is explained that all the projects and activities included in the organization can never be separated from social, civic activism, because socio-political processes will always be considered within their framework. LCCA representatives say that they are not interested in art for art's sake, or art as an aesthetic phenomenon. These civic activism activities work as a reaction to how Latvian society treats, for example, some minority groups.

"We are not actually interested in excellent works of art, we are interested in works of art that are able to provide some kind of resonance in society, that are able to communicate about topics that are important to us in society and also affect people's value system, actions."

Within the framework of LCCA, the following are held:

- Art festivals and exhibitions
- Discussions and seminars
- Creative participation workshops
- Master classes
- Lessons for people with functional and/or mental disorders, people with dementia
- And other activities that allow the participating artists and the audience to express their critical opinion on current topics and get involved.

Representatives of local governments and state institutions are often invited to participate in the implemented programs. In a way, these activities also allow the participant to learn how to be active citizens. In their framework, not only local but also international artists are involved, for whom it is important to show the wider public, how it is possible to promote and influence socio-political activities through artistic processes. It is important that the activities themselves are held in an appropriate and suitable environment, for example, at the museums, schools, libraries, empty buildings, and urban environments.

As one of the brightest recent examples of participation workshops is the LCCA action in support of Ukraine, which took place in the Paula Stradiņš Medical History Museum, next to the Ukrainian Embassy of Latvia. As part of it, anyone interested was invited to create posters supporting Ukraine, paint flowerpots and plant sunflowers together with artists. As part of the action, several artists and Latvian residents of different age groups have responded, who later jointly went to support events for Ukraine, protests at the Russian embassy, put up various visually recognizable signs, posters expressing their attitude towards the war caused by Russia in Ukraine.



Photo: LCCA, Participation workshop in a support for Ukraine

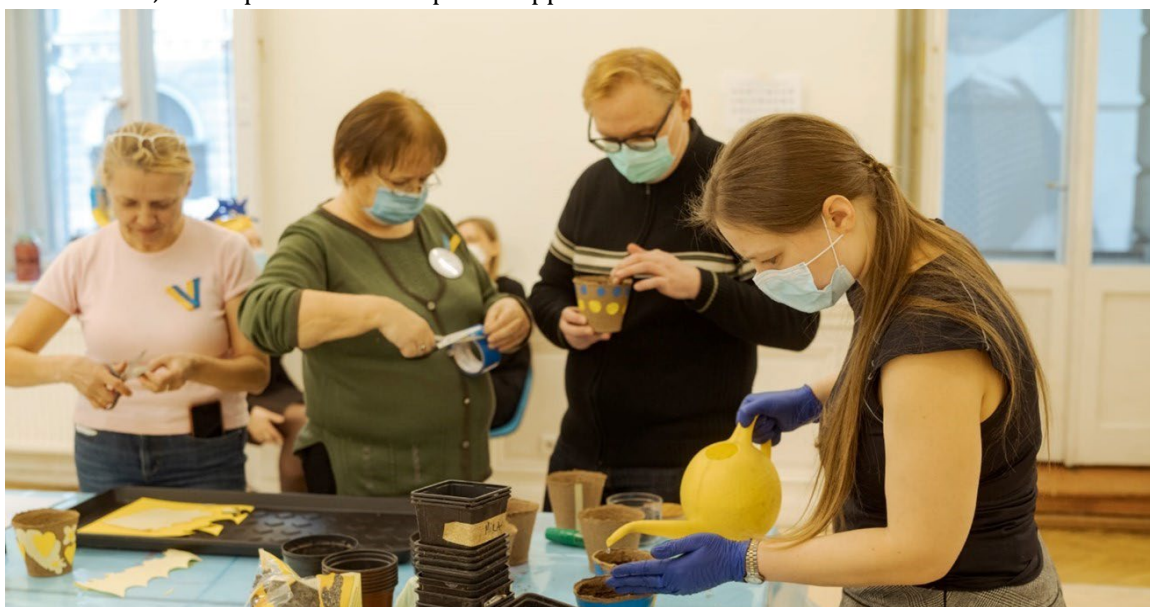


Photo: LCCA, Participation workshop in a support for Ukraine

It should be mentioned that a large part of the existing LCCA activities is implemented within the framework of various international projects. For example, LCCA in cooperation with the National Art Gallery in Vilnius, OFF-Biennale in Budapest, Lodz Art Museum and Malmö Art Museum is currently implementing the project "From Complicated Past Towards Shared Futures", which focuses on issues related to the complicated and uncomfortable past of the 20th century. As part of this project, the "Decolonial Ecologies" exhibition was opened at the end of 2022. Its focus was on post-socialism and post-colonialism, its impact on today's society and culture in the Baltics, incl. in Latvia. In parallel with the exhibition, active discussions were also held that highlighted the practices of civil activism in environmental and socio-political issues.



Photo: Madara Kuplā, Exhibition "Decolonial Ecologies"

It can be concluded that the focus of LCCA's activities is the involvement of various target groups, which results in a particularly responsive network of people supporting civic activism.

LCCA representatives explain it is observed that, for example, people with functional and/or mental disabilities, people who are of retirement age are perhaps a little afraid to be visitors to LCCA events, but with the active involvement of these groups, they also bring their friends, relatives, acquaintances to future events, thus expanding this circle of audience. In this case, the representatives of the organization note that in cases of addressing and reaching the audience, a particularly personal approach is required, because everything starts with an individual, who further forms the society as a whole.

Regarding personal and public benefits, LCCA representatives mention that, in their opinion, the audience in general gets both personally and in the wider societal context an idea of art, its processes and how the same audience can be not only a passive observer of the process from the outside, but also actively involved.

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