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GLAMMONS: On commoning GLAMS and complementary finances in the GLAM sector

Workshop “Sustainable Financing for the Cultural and Creative
Sector”, December 5, 2024, Kristiansand



GLAMMONS Research project



- EU Horizon: Resilient, sustainable and participatory practices: TOWARD THE GLAMs OF THE COMMONS – GLAMMONS (2022-2025), <https://glammons.eu/>
- GLAMs = umbrella term for ‘collecting heritage organisations’ (Davis & Howard, 2013): galleries, libraries, archives, museums
- GLAMMONS = new neologism for GLAMs under commons (Avdikos et al., 2023)
- Aim of the research = **explore and assess practices** (concerning management, finance and participation) that emerge around small scale, community-led **GLAMs** and the possibility of transferring relevant knowledge to more “established” and traditional ones to provide more **sustainability** to the sector.
- My project: FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS IN GLAMs UNDER COMMONS

Our approach:

- Commons theory provides a novel conceptual framework for studying GLAMs as commons
- Follow the ‘practice turn’ in commons research: **“understanding of the commons as a social process of production rather than as a means of resource allocation”** (Fournier, 2013, pp. 442-443)
- **“... a commons arises whenever a given community decides that it wishes to manage a resource collectively, with an accent on fair access, use, and long-term sustainability.”** (Bollier, 2020, p. 355).

We identified three key principles that determine GLAMs’ potential to operate as commons: (a) governance, (b) autonomy and (c) accessibility



Avdikos V, Dragouni M, Michailidou M and Pettas D (2023) Rethinking GLAMs as commons: a conceptual framework Open Research Europe 3:157 (<https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.16473.1>).

Some Examples of GLAMMONS



Library in the park, Berlin run by an civic association provides free books, magazines and games to visitors



Schwules Museum, Berlin: museum, archive, run by members



Kunstraum Jetzt!, Bamberg: gallery run by a civic association with more than 100 members

→ ‘bottom-up’ activities of community-based organisations in which people have taken initiative and started archival or museum collections themselves in ways that often encapsulate the spirit of DIY → Connects to research on small organisations in the cultural sector (Chang 2010), micromuseums (Candlin, 2016), DIY heritage institutions (Cantillon & Baker, 2020), grassroots museums (Vella, 2022)

Research interest: Why financial practices?



1. **Financial resilience of GLAMS** is an important subject in today's cultural policy environments, but modes of income generation and how organisations "*find the resources, financial or otherwise, to create and sustain projects and programmes, companies and people.*" (Mullen, 2020: 49) is little discussed in the research literature.
2. Understand the **impacts of financial challenges** that GLAMs faced before the COVID-19 pandemic and after it, not just in terms of changes in the funding structure but also how different types of funding influence organisational changes (e.g., management and participation practices)
3. Our focus in GLAMMONS: understanding how funding mechanisms open up commoning practices in GLAMS and help create communities of commoners → **What financial practices support commoning and how?**

Challenge: Massive data and knowledge gaps

There are massive data gaps (EU/National/Regional/Local) in relation to:

- **GLAMs in general.** While museums and libraries are fairly well researched, galleries and archives are not. Most research covers big organisations; less is known about the situation of small and mid-sized organisations.
- **Funding situation of GLAMS within and across different GLAM sectors.** For example, on archives there is hardly any available data.
- **Spatial differences and inequalities between core and non-core regions** and the support of GLAM with capital regions most often getting most private contributions.
- **There is little knowledge on donations and civil society support of culture through voluntary work or donations on the local level.**

Shifting Funding Ecologies for Cultural Organisations



- More organisations are funded that are not run by public bodies → **more competition** for limited funds
- The **role of public finance is shifting** from direct support to intermediation and strategically channelling private investment (Loots et al., 2022)
- **Different directions:** Policy objectives and learnings towards market–orientation (not civil society) but organisations and their associations speak more of civil society
- **More mixed economy and multistakeholder approaches** for organisations critical in reducing dependency on public subsidy and for survival → **Partnerships and alliances** are at the core of the emergence of new financial ecosystems for culture → **More hybrid organisations** rely on both private and public finance which comes from different levels of government and/or public agencies. → **More complex cultural funding ecosystems in cultural sector** (Klamer et al., 2006, p. 3)
- Financial streams / funding ecosystems are **highly contextual** and strongly influenced by stage of development and relative wealth, the political and administrative division of responsibilities between nation state, region/province, city and local government and the wider political economy of the country (and in particular, by attitudes to the market). Example: World Cities Culture Finance Report

Mixed Funding Economy of GLAMs

	Self-finance	Public support	Private Support	Equity finance	Debt finance
Instrument	Personal resources Earned income Friends & members Crowdfunding Community shareholder and ownership models	Subsidies Grants Tax Incentives Match Funding Social Impact Investment Fund	Donation Sponsorship Patronage	Venture capital	Loans Micro-credit Overdraft Guarantees
	Public-Civic-Partnerships	Public-Private-Partnerships			
Who	Proprietor, family & friends, communities	Public authorities and agencies	People, companies, foundations, trusts	Business angels, Venture capital	Banks

Our focus: Community-based funding

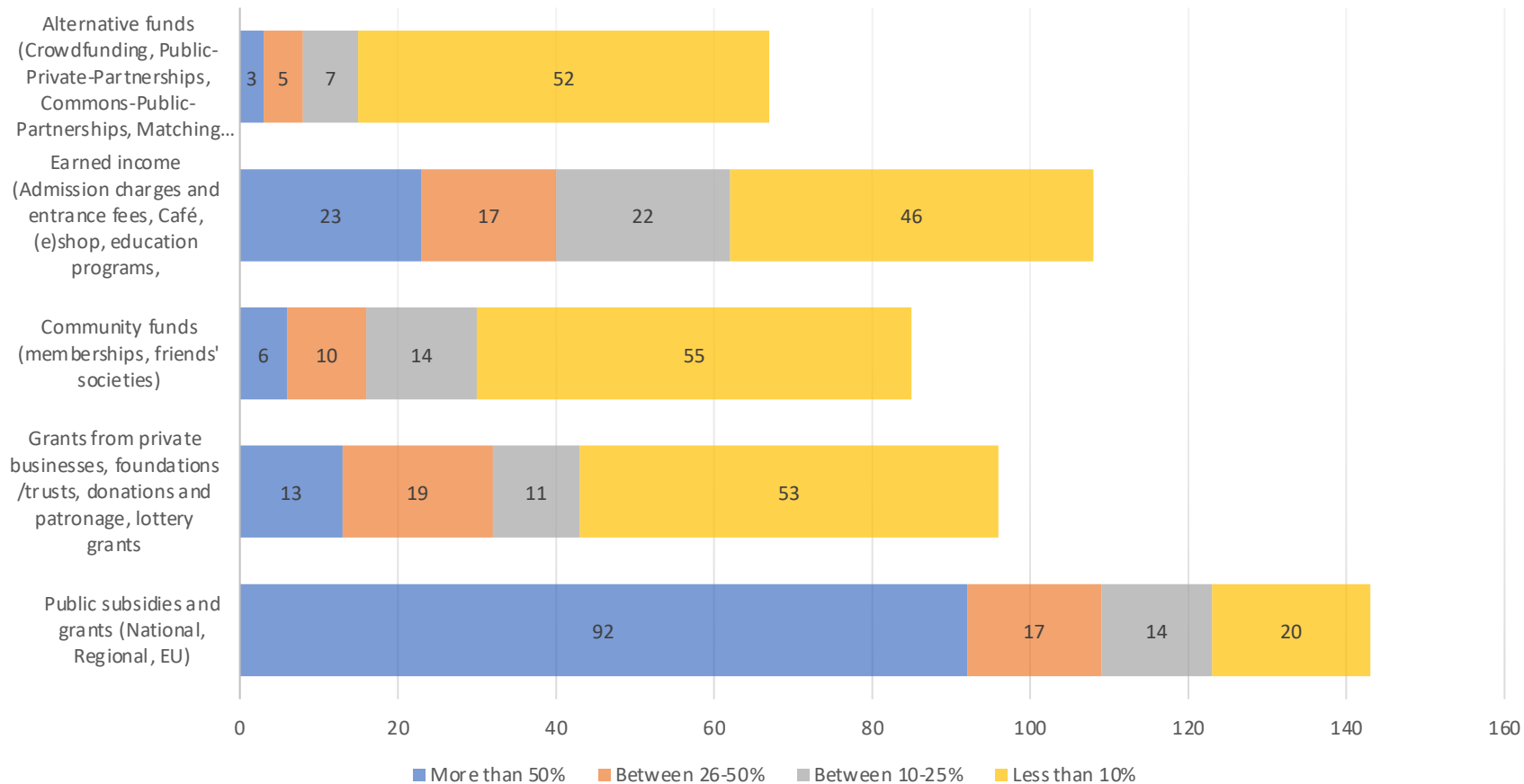
New foci of EU policy-making for CCI

1. **Desktop research:** Pan-European Mapping of 27 EU member states based on state-of-the-art, documents & experts
 - Aim = gather country specific information on 27 EU member states on: Cultural policy contexts, Public funding for galleries, libraries, archives and museums and finance models for galleries, libraries, archives and museums, differentiated for different spatial contexts

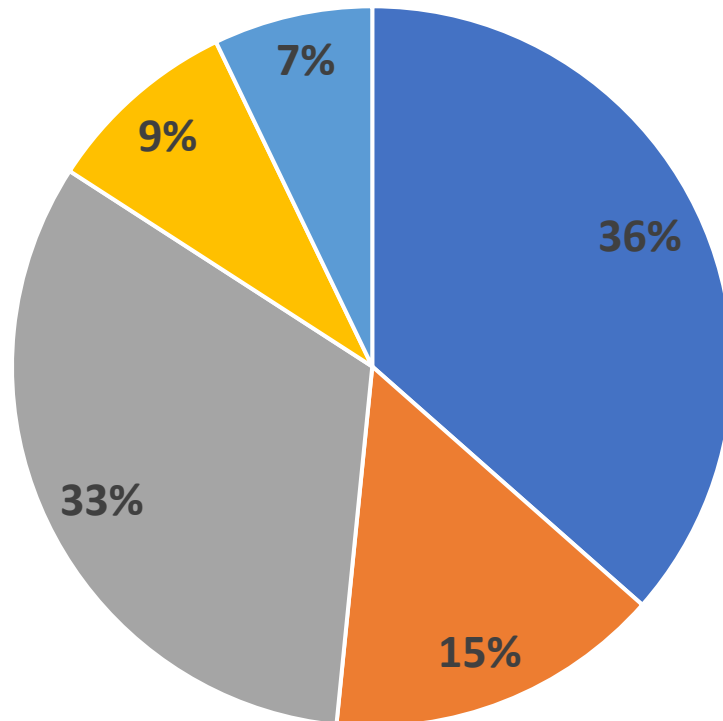
2. **Exploratory Survey:** to understand current practices, changes in funding since pandemic:
 - Out of the **223 responses in the survey**, most organisations were museums (96), libraries (64), archives (28) and galleries (13), while 22 respondents identified as others (e.g., as non-profit art organisation, art schools, projects, cultural centres).
 - **However, most skipped questions on finances!**

3. **Case Study approach with information-rich sampling strategy (ongoing)**
 - Desktop research with Internet sources and research literature:
 - I am building a database with examples for GLAMS under commons in the EU (because that is the core of our project), GLAMS under commons worldwide for inspiration and a wider net of interesting financial practices that are either in the GLAM sector or some other part of the cultural sector and inspirational (60 cases)
 - Expert interviews:
 - Expert interviews with organisations from my dataset

Findings GLAMMONS Survey: Sources of Income in 2019 (169 responses)

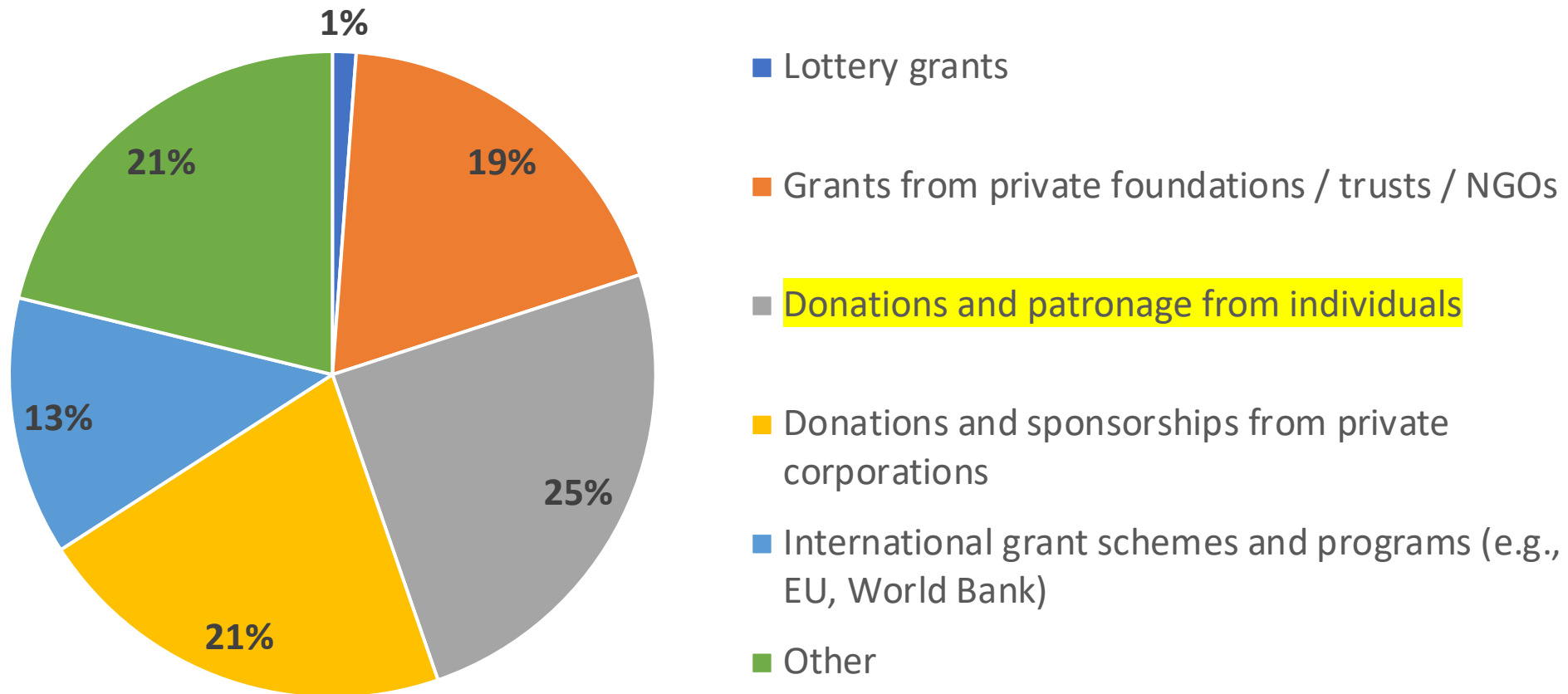


Findings GLAMMONS Survey: Sources of Public Funding (126 responses)

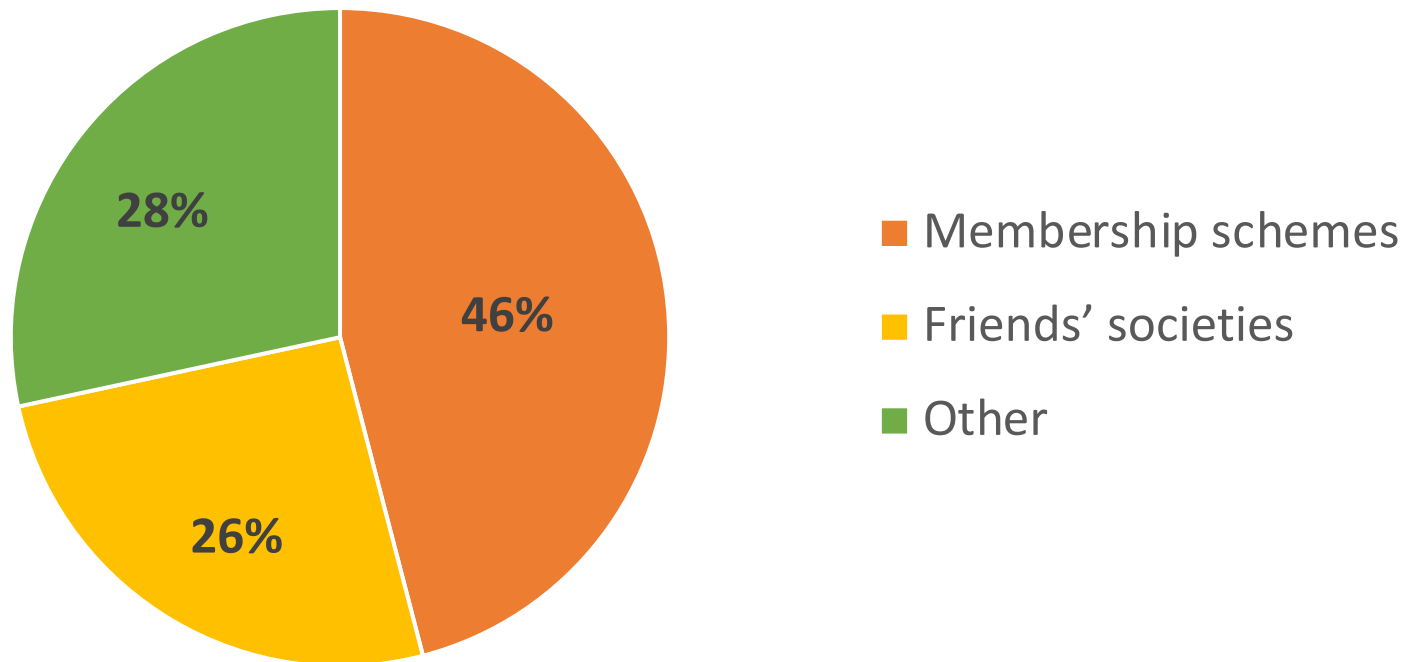


- Direct public subsidies from national government
- Direct public subsidies from regional government
- Direct public subsidies from local government
- Grants from public sources (including arts council, other public funding bodies, EU structural funds)
- Other

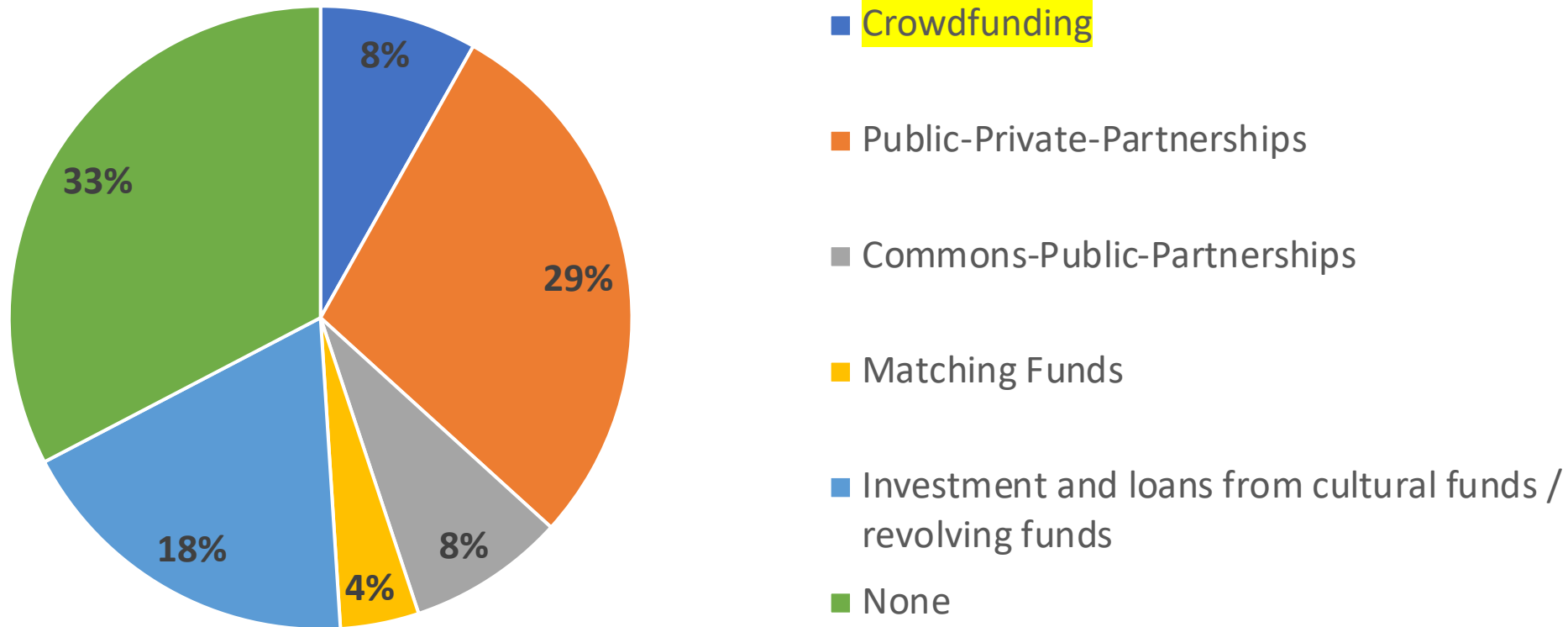
Findings GLAMMONS Survey: Sources of Private Funding (85 responses)



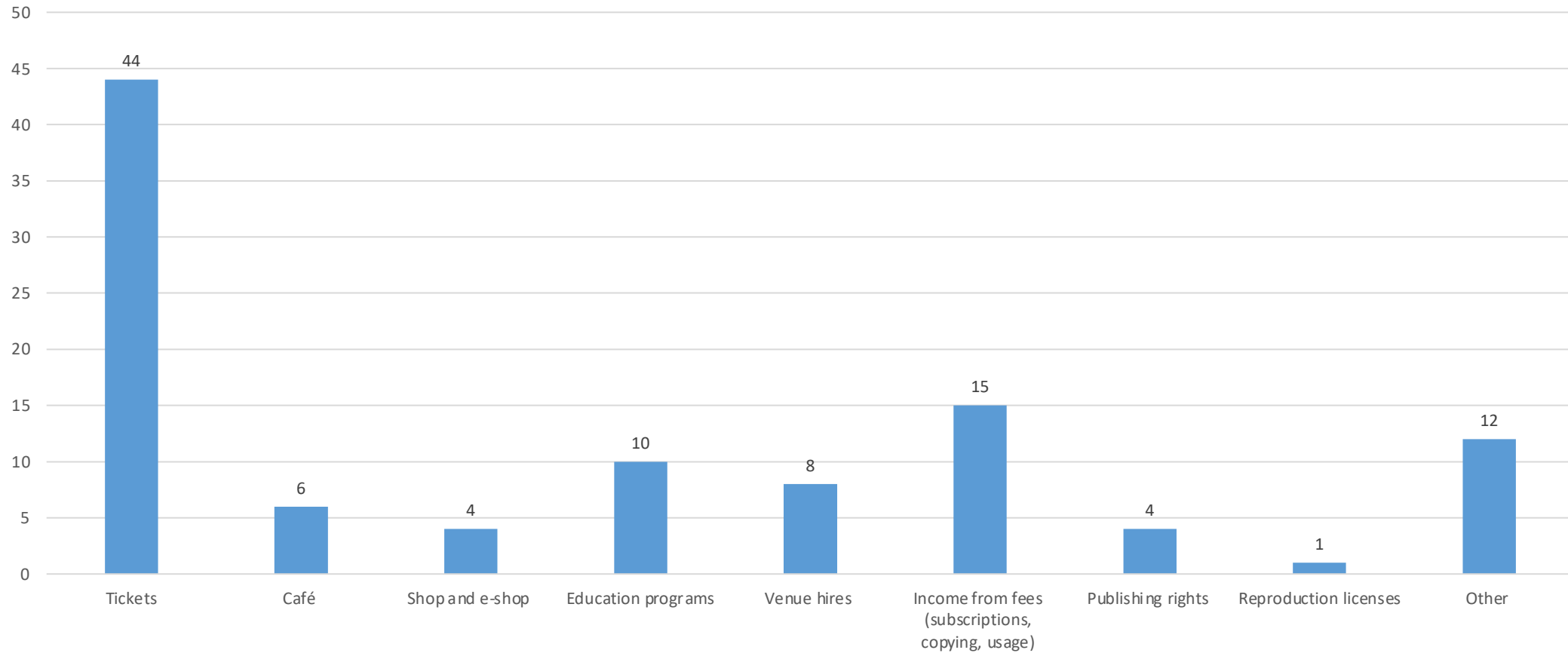
Findings GLAMMONS Survey: Community-based contributions (74 answers)



Findings GLAMMONS Survey: Alternative Funding (49 answers)



Findings: Earned income (104 answers)



Discussion:

- **More mixed economy and multistakeholder approaches** for organisations critical in reducing dependency on public subsidy and for survival → **Partnerships and alliances** are at the core of the emergence of new financial ecosystems for culture → **More hybrid organisations** rely on both private and public finance which comes from different levels of government and/or public agencies. → **More complex cultural funding ecosystems in cultural sector**
- **But public sector funding plays a significant role and still constitutes main funding source, especially during pandemic** → use of *complementantary funding* to underline financial practices that complement than replace ('not enough' public money)
- **Community-based funding plays as much a role as private funding**
- **Shifts during the pandemic:** decreased earned income, community-based funding, grants, and alternative funding; public funding remained the same and even increased → need for new relationship building, but with whom?
- **Lack of in-depth understanding** of the 'hybrid' funding models of cultural organizations that have developed over the last two decades
- **How can we develop more robust data sources as those are needed for better empirical data to enrich theoretical, conceptual but also policy debates on new financial sources for GLAMS?**

Case Studies of GLAMMONS: Preliminary Findings



Our research shows that for the investigated cases most important are financial practices that:

- keep the autonomy of the organisation,
- come with little demands in terms of auditing, reporting and deliverables,
- enable risk-sharing,
- participatory, horizontal governance and
- indirect social reciprocity.

Case Studies of GLAMMONS: Preliminary Findings



- The most critical funding instruments are **volunteer labour, membership contributions, crowd-funding (especially donation-based crowdfunding and crowd patronage) and in-kind-support**
 - Bollier and Helfrich (2019, p. 15) call this “money-lite commoning” whereby people “minimise their reliance on money and markets as much as possible through sharing, co-using, DIT (do-it-together) and other practices.”

- Commoning initiatives in my research:
 - Have no to very little public funding,
 - Are the work of a small group of volunteers, who often choose a voluntary association to constitute themselves and to keep their autonomy,
 - Do not belong to organised bodies (e.g., national museum associations or ICOM),
 - Represent a whole variety of commoning initiatives that perform GLAM functions but do not consider themselves as GLAMs.

Takeaways:

A commons framework with a focus on commoning practices helps to understand...

- **GLAMs as social organisations that are continuously produced and reproduced**
- **Diversity of practices seeking alternative economic narratives, models, practices, and metaphors to widen the realm of economic possibility in the field of GLAMs.**
- **How people provision their cultural “needs directly as self-governing communities working outside of the usual circuits of capitalist markets and state power. “ (Bollier, 2024, p. 289)**
- Non-extractive funding logic
- Dependencies of GLAMS on local contexts but also multi-scalarity at the same time
- **How GLAMS can produce useful, durable things that will have ongoing social importance to their ‘makers and users’.**
- **Prefigurative and transformative potentials of GLAMMONS**
- “Glammon-ing”, so many forms and processes of ‘doing Glams’, oriented toward an alternative relationship with the land and a commitment to the grounded politics of commoning.

Takeaways:

On alternative and complementary finances:

- In our research, crowdfunding is not used to create cultural products or services but to support organisations where there are lack of funds (e.g., in capital investments or for organisational development)
- **Volunteer labour, membership contributions, crowdfunding (especially donation-based crowdfunding and crowd patronage) and in-kind-support, all receive little attention in research → needs of small organisations play no role in research and cultural policy thinking**
- Considering that there are more than 500.000 archives and 65.000 libraries across the EU-27 member states, smaller organisations provide an underexplored research area that could contribute new ideas, understandings, and perspectives into the cultural heritage debates and challenge existing assumptions and narratives.



Source: [Ex Asilo Naples](#)

Thank you for your attention.

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Image on introductory slide: Source: Leser in Parkbücherei im Bürgerpark Pankow, 1967. SW-Foto © Kurt Schwarz, <https://nat.museum-digital.de/object/1083314>

Image Sources

Introductory slide: Source: Leser in Parkbücherei im Bürgerpark Pankow, 1967. SW-Foto © Kurt Schwarz, <https://nat.museum-digital.de/object/1083314>

Slide 4:

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