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**INSPIRING
PRACTICES
IN GLAMMS**



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SOCIAL**

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**BSB
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Nova Iskra

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This project has received funding from the Horizon Europe Research and innovation on cultural heritage and CCIs Programme of the European Commission grant agreement No 101060774.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Six inspiring practices of GLAMs as commons have been examined in this document. These cases were chosen as they highlight the importance of community engagement, volunteerism, and the preservation of cultural and historical resources. They represent efforts to create and maintain accessible spaces for knowledge-sharing and cultural enrichment, often adapting to changing circumstances and needs within their respective communities.

The Oral History Groups (OHGs) in Greece represent a network of self-organized initiatives focused on collecting and disseminating oral history archives. With horizontal governance and content creation, these groups aim to preserve personal stories, both historical and contemporary, through collective effort.

The Contemporary Social History Archives (ASKI) in Athens, Greece, serves as a repository of left-wing political and social movements' history, with an extensive collection open to the public. ASKI also actively engages in educational activities, publications, and public events to share this valuable knowledge.

The Schwules Museum in Berlin, Germany, stands as a unique institution that combines political expression, scientific archival work, exhibitions, and workshops, all organized under an association structure. It emphasizes LGBTQ+ history and culture, adapting to changing demands while maintaining a strong volunteer presence.

The Ekatarina Pavlovic Library, part of the Rural Cultural Center Markovac in Serbia, promotes culture, education, and social services in an underprivileged region. Based on feminist pedagogy, it encourages critical thinking, creativity, and civic awareness.

Ostavinska Gallery in Belgrade, Serbia, operates within the Magacin cultural center, offering free access to spatial and technical resources for various art and social activities. It promotes cultural exchange, social cohesion, and community organizing.



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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose and Scope

Presenting inspiring practices of commonly-managed resources holds significant advantages for various stakeholders and the broader community. These advantages can be seen as key drivers behind the effort to highlight and share these stories. By examining these success stories, valuable insights and best practices can be gleaned, offering practical guidance for those looking to embark on similar initiatives. Showcasing inspiring practices serves as a *valuable educational tool*. It allows individuals and organizations to learn from the experiences of others who have effectively managed shared resources. This knowledge-sharing not only accelerates the learning curve but also promotes the adoption of proven methods and strategies. Moreover, these inspiring practices offer solutions to common challenges encountered in the management of shared resources. Whether it's overcoming financial constraints, addressing community engagement issues, or finding innovative ways to ensure sustainability, success stories provide real-world examples of how these obstacles can be surmounted. This, in turn, empowers other initiatives to tackle similar hurdles more effectively and efficiently.

Inspiring practices also play a vital role in motivation and inspiration. When communities and organisations see tangible evidence of successful ventures, they are more likely to be inspired and motivated to take action themselves. The sharing of inspiring practices fosters community building among those involved in the management of shared resources. It creates a network of like-minded individuals and organisations who can connect, collaborate, and learn from one another. This sense of community not only strengthens the collective knowledge base but also provides a support system for those engaged in similar endeavours.

From a policy and advocacy perspective, showcasing inspiring practices can have a significant impact. Success stories provide concrete evidence of the benefits of commonly-managed resources, which can influence policy decisions and attract support from government bodies, funders, and other stakeholders. This, in turn, can lead to increased resources, recognition, and opportunities for further expansion and development.

Innovation and continuous improvement are also integral aspects of inspiring practices. These success stories often involve creative and forward-thinking approaches to resource management. By sharing these innovative methods, the entire field can be stimulated to embrace new ideas, experiment with fresh approaches, and continuously strive for



improvement. Presenting inspiring practices contributes to the overall sustainability of commonly-managed resources. By highlighting effective strategies and successful outcomes, these practices help ensure that shared resources are managed responsibly and preserved for future generations to enjoy and benefit from.

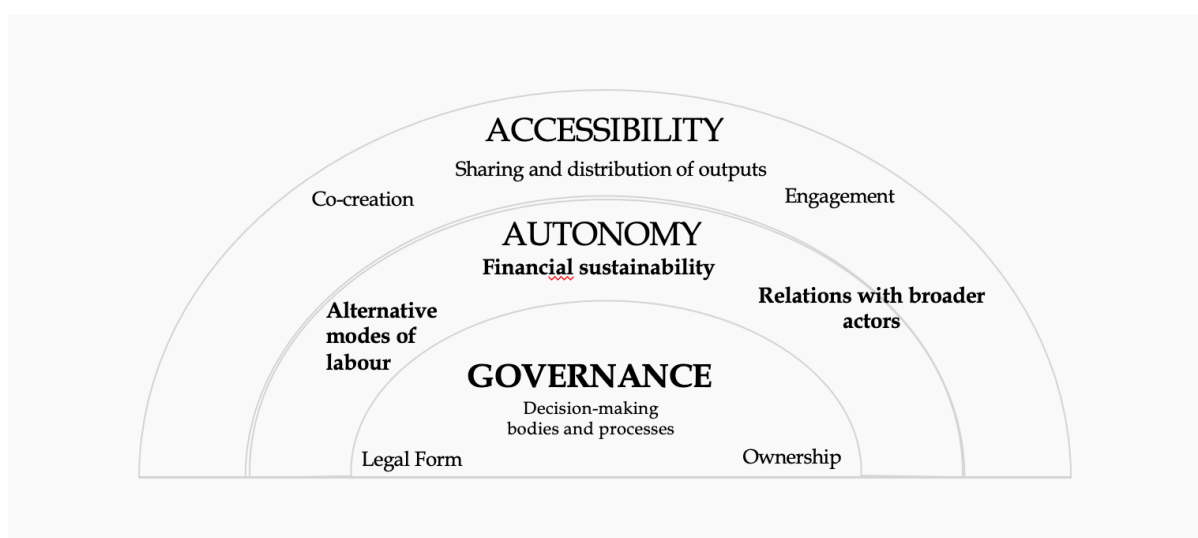
1.2. Contribution to other Deliverables

This deliverable is interconnected with others by offering practical examples of various theoretical approaches (mainly from D1.6). It contributes to other deliverables and work packages through exploratory research aimed at discovering best practices and emerging informal trends, which have not yet been documented in the existing literature. Additionally, it seeks to uncover common patterns within the European context.

1.3. Structure of the Document

In the following sections, we delve into various aspects of the GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums) cases that have been primarily elaborated in Deliverable 1.6 and stem from a further analysis of figure 1, which presents the basic principles of commons-oriented GLAMs, that is governance, autonomy and accessibility. These three principles are further analysed below in table 1. Moreover, the analysis of these aspects in each case provides an understanding of what makes them inspiring practices.

Figure 1. The principles of commons-oriented GLAMs



As such, each case is structured in the following way:



Table 1.Aspects of analysis

<p><i>History and short description:</i> This section provides a historical overview and a detailed description of the GLAM.</p>
<p><i>Basic Information:</i> In this section, we will identify the commonly-shared resource and delve into the community that utilizes it, exploring whether any products or outputs result from this sharing.</p>
<p><i>Ownership and Structure:</i> We discuss the ownership of the GLAM and its legal structure. Additionally, we outline the different departments and actor groups involved, specifying their roles, permanence, and relationships within the organization.</p>
<p><i>Values:</i> Here, we explore the expressed values that drive both the community and the GLAM, when they exist.</p>
<p><i>Space:</i> This section investigates the use of space, e.g. the presence of permanent premises, their utilization, and the ownership of these spaces.</p>
<p><i>Governance:</i> This section identifies the decision-making bodies within the GLAM, describes their composition, and mentions any external actors represented. We also explore the involvement of volunteers and the processes, frequency, and platforms used for decision-making.</p>
<p><i>Finances:</i> We explain how the GLAM ensures financial sustainability, outlining the main income streams, any dependencies, significant expenses, and the extent to which volunteering contributes to the organization's indirect funding.</p>
<p><i>Collaboration and Dissemination:</i> This section examines the GLAM's connections beyond its organizational boundaries and how it disseminates information, including outreach programs and strategies for maintaining openness. Any alliances the organization has in the city and beyond are also discussed.</p>



Knowledge-Production: We assess whether co-creation processes are in place, whether there is a digital strategy, and how outputs are managed.

Pandemic: This section analyzes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the GLAM, describe the strategies used to address the challenges posed, and discusses any lasting effects.

Challenges: Here, we outline the primary challenges currently faced by the GLAM and those anticipated in the future. We also explore the approaches employed to address these challenges.

Best Practice: We examine what distinguishes this case as an example of best practice and highlight its unique characteristics. This information is presented in a separate frame.



2. Inspiring practices

2.1. Oral History Groups – Greece

Location	Greece, 19 different locations (approx.)
Sector	Archive
Year of establishment	2011
Visitors/ participants/members /beneficiaries	Approximately 300 members in OHG
Paid FTE	0

History and short description

The oral history group constitutes a unique case of bottom-up, self-organised initiatives' network around the creation and dissemination of oral history archives. The first oral history group was created in 2011, followed by five more in 2013 and 2014, in the midst of the multileveled crisis in Greece, aspiring to provide self-organised, grassroots groups of non-professional historians, yet highly educated, with essential methods, skills and tools in order to collect oral testimonies, mainly from everyday people, and create relevant archives. The oral history group (OHG) network positions itself in the landscape of the large-scale mobilisations that emerged in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis, as expressed nationally – through the “squares’ movement”, as well as internationally, through the “Occupy” and the “Arab spring” movements. While the first groups developed in central Athens, during the following years, relevant groups also operated in smaller cities and islands around Greece. The OHG network is now (2023) comprising approximately 19 distinct groups, three of which developed around specific themes (e.g., the feminist OHG), while the remaining 16 have a specific geographical focus, extending from neighbourhoods to cities and islands.

Basic information

OHGs create and disseminate historical archives, concerning both precedent historic periods (e.g., the WWII) and contemporary events and developments (e.g., the outburst of the COVID-19 pandemic). It is mentioned that, in Greece, there is no other institution or initiative – either official or informal – that collects oral testimonies. The aforementioned archives are produced from scratch, through the recording and processing of oral testimonies which are mainly



focusing on everyday people and their personal stories. The archive and the final outputs comprise of audio-visual material, the transcripts of the interviews and calendar entries by the persons who conducted the interviews. Each archive entry is initially presented by the interviewer, followed by a collective discussion and analysis in the frame of the OHG assembly.

Ownership and structure

The total of the OHGs, as well as the coordinating body are informal, meaning that they do not have a legal status/ form and ownership. Alongside that, there is no official membership status for participants. Nevertheless, OHGs are created, operate and design/ implement their activities under specific rules which are collectively decided upon. Moreover, there is a common methodology employed concerning the collection of oral testimonies, as well as the creation and maintenance of historical archives. As for the structure, there is no fixed organisation chart that includes sub-groups or a specific allocation of roles and duties. On the contrary, all members participate in the total of necessary tasks, varying on the time each one can devote to the group.

Values

The OHGs are motivated by and have clearly stated political and societal values, including the development of alternative narratives about history which could be employed in attempts to confront ongoing social, political and economic challenges, the juxtaposing of collective memory to the “faceless markets and oblivion”, the promoting of alternative modes of bottom-up (self)organisation and collectivity, the co-production of archives building upon cooperative principles. As we find in their website: “oral testimonies have a particular weight in a society in which painful memories are “hidden from history”, such as the Greek civil war trauma. People’s suffering because of the crisis has incited demands for a truth that is more “truthful” than history, the truth of personal experience and individual memory. And, last but not least, there is a remarkable analogy with the “acceleration” and the “democratization” of history. That’s why, in this time of crisis, oral history has become a “people’s project””.

Spaces

The OHGs do not have permanent, privately owned spaces. Each group arranges its meetings independently, in a variety of spaces, including private (members’ houses and workspaces) and public ones. As for the events organised by either independent groups or the coordinating body, they take place again in a variety of spaces and venues. Up to now, these have included



among others: venues of cultural associations, municipal venues, university premises, chambers, labour unions' offices, facilities of private cultural institutions, the National Library, school libraries, public spaces (squares, open markets, streets in the frame of 'historical walks'), movie theatres etc. Moreover, besides physical spaces, digital ones are also employed in the frame of both organisational processes (assemblies, meetings etc.) and dissemination actions of the OHGs and the coordinating body.

Governance

There are two governing bodies in the network, namely the assembly of each group and the assembly of the coordinating body. The first are composed by all participants of each group and the latter by at least one representative of each group. The independent groups arrange their assemblies and meetings according to the availability of the members, while the assembly of the coordinating body is taking place once every three months. As for decision-making, the assemblies set us a priority to take decisions through consensus, however in case this is not possible the assembly participants decide through voting, under the principle one member-one vote. It is mentioned that the total of OHGs members have no financial benefit from the engagement, participating on a volunteer basis.

Finances

OHGs have limited operational expenses, which mainly concern the necessary equipment for creating and maintaining the archives (recorders, hard drives etc.). Members burden with these expenses themselves, while the volunteer engagement and provision of labour on behalf of the members significantly contributes to the financial sustainability of the groups. Moreover, they also rely on external actors, mostly for the provision of spaces and venues for the organisation of events. This mode of financing plays a key role in providing the groups with independence and autonomy but, on the downside, the lack of legal status prevents OHGs from applying for external funding through the acquisition of grants, participation in research projects, public funding etc.

Collaboration and dissemination

As mentioned earlier, OHGs build upon extended networks towards both gaining support and disseminating their operational model and archives. These networks include educational institutions (from primary schools and high schools to university departments), libraries and archives, social movements, professional and residents' associations, local authorities etc. Concerning the aforementioned actors, collaboration can undertake various forms, from the



provision of spaces and venues to presentations, walk tours and seminars. Due to the informal character of the OHGs and the lack of a legal status that would enable their 'official' involvement in institutional actors' processes, collaboration is also informal, often building upon the extent of the interpersonal and professional networks of the members.

Knowledge production

The OHG network welcomes any group that wishes to undertake the creation, maintenance and dissemination of a historical archive. Upon informing the coordinating body, the members of the new group undergo an 18-hour seminar concerning the principles and methods of oral history and archiving. Having also equipped with all necessary tools for conducting the interviews, storing the data and maintaining the archive, the OHGs operate through co-creation principles: the members collectively decide upon the topic of their research, while co-creation processes are also entailed in the analysis and dissemination of the oral testimonies. In this frame, digital means are of key importance in the process, while several OHGs are currently experimenting with the creation of online platforms for the dissemination of their archives. Finally, besides the archives, OHGs have also produced educational material, through the publishing of handbooks (e.g., "Oral history in schools").

Pandemic

The pandemic posed several challenges upon the organisational and dissemination activities of the OHGs. While the assemblies were still taking place through digital platforms, the collection of oral testimonies, as well as dissemination actions in the form of presentations and workshops slowed down.

Challenges

The main challenge for OHGs concern the obstacles posed upon the possible acquisition of resources (venues, advanced equipment and infrastructure, digital platforms for the dissemination of the archives) due to their exclusion from financial support streams as a result of the lack of a legal status, which overall undermine their long-term financial sustainability.



Inspiring practice

The OHGs unique attributes which are contributing to their commons-oriented character lie in i) their overall horizontal governance and management concerning each distinct group, as well as the “umbrella”, coordinating body, which operate and take decisions through assemblies that take place every three months, ii) the inclusive and horizontal content creation, as the groups collectively decide on the content of the archives and design/ implement the data-collection process, iii) the ties and relations of mutual support between OHGs’ members with actors and networks, extending from social movements and residents’ associations to local authorities and academic institutions, iv) the clearly stated claim on behalf of the OHGs to operate as progressive political actors and v) their cooperative and open organisational structure.



2.2. Contemporary Social History Archives (ASKI) - Greece

Location	Athens, Greece (3 locations)
Sector	Archives
Year of establishment	1992
Visitors (yearly or monthly)/ or participants/members/beneficiaries?	70 members; Between 2010-2020, a total of 6,000 individuals visited the archives/reading rooms of ASKI.
How many paid FTE?	7 experts/scientists

History and short description

The Contemporary Social History Archives (Αρχείο Σύγχρονης Κοινωνικής Ιστορίας – henceforth, ASKI) was established in 1992 as a non-profit organisation based in Athens, to preserve the history and memory of the Greek leftist political and social movements. It brings together a community of experts, who share an interest in the genealogy and biography of the Greek New Left.

Basic information

ASKI holds a rich collection of archives (about 5 million files), which are open to the public. These include, among others, the records of political parties of the Greek Left, official reports documenting significant ‘chapters’ of recent national history (e.g. Resistance to Axis Occupation during WWII, Civil War 1946-49), personal archives and a collection that chronicles social movements, grassroots organisations and ethnic minorities in Greece in the post-WWII era (through oral testaments, photographs etc.). Around these archival collections, ASKI designs and delivers a rich programme of activities for the general public and audiences, including publications (books, periodicals), radio shows, historic walking tours, conferences and public talks. ASKI has 70 permanent members that make up a community of historians and other experts (political scientists, sociologists, philologists, archivists and other), who share an interest in the New Left (ανανεωτική αριστερά). Its community members are academics and professionals working at the university or at national research institutions. ASKI membership is not open to non-experts; the general public can join the ‘Friends of ASKI’ association.



Ownership and structure

Legally, ASKI is a civic non-for-profit entity. It has about 70 permanent members, a Board of Directors and a small team of expert staff. All members of the organisation and those taking part in the Board of Directors participate voluntarily and receive no monetary compensation.

Values

ASKI cherishes openness and citizens' access to history as a public good . Its work promotes historical awareness and the collective memories of marginalised social, political and ethnic groups (in a way, contributing to social justice and diversity). ASKI is also tied to the New Left and its values/beliefs.

Space

ASKI's premises are located at the heart of the Athenian metropolis; its offices and main reading room are hosted at the headquarters of SYRIZA (left-wing) political party. Since 2020, ASKI incorporates the collection and reading room of the former Association for the Study of the History of the Left Youth (Εταιρεία Μελέτης της Ιστορίας της Αριστερής Νεολαίας - EMIAN).

Governance

ASKI is governed by a General Assembly that is made up of all its members equally. The General Assembly elects an executive Board of Directors on an annual basis (all members have equal vote). Strategic decisions are taken by the Board of Directors, in consultation with members of staff.

Finances

ASKI provides free access to its archives and library. No attendance charges apply to its public engagement activities (e.g. walking tours) and other public events, with the exception of ASKI's periodical sold at a small fee. ASKI receives no direct state funding (e.g. through the Ministry of Culture). ASKI's operation costs (i.e. staff salaries and buildings' maintenance) are covered through party funds that are channelled to ASKI by the opposition (leftist) party, SYRIZA.

Collaboration and dissemination



ASKI is a member of the International Council on Archives (ICA) and the International Association of Labor History Institutions (IALHI). ASKI also collaborates with various scientific and academic institutions in Greece.

Knowledge-production

ASKI preserves, organizes and provides public access to a rich collection of archives. It also promotes engagement with history and knowledge-exchange through its public events and activities (e.g. publications, conferences). In 2017, ASKI initiated the 'digital museum of Makronisos' (a former colony of political exiles in Attica, Athens). The project welcomes contributions by the general public, such as family members of political exiles.

Pandemic

Commonly to other GLAMs, the pandemic caused a temporary disruption to ASKI's work.

Challenges

A key challenge for ASKI is its future financial resilience given its economic dependence on funding by the Opposition party.

Inspiring practice

ASKI brings together and preserves a (historically/socially) significant part of collective memory and 'radical' history, providing open and free access to knowledge to researchers, scholars and the general public. ASKI's team of experts shape and move forward good professional practices in Greece, for the organization and management of archival collections and historical materials.



2.3. Schwules Museum, Berlin (SMU) - Germany

Location	Berlin, Germany
Sector	Museum, Library, Archive, Gallery
Year of establishment	1985
Visitors/participants/members/beneficiaries?	Members: approx. 300
Paid FTE	12

History and short description

The Gay Museum (in German: Schwules Museum* [with gender asterisk]) in Berlin was founded on December 6, 1985. It deals with lesbian, gay, transsexual, bisexual and queer life stories, themes and concepts in history, art and culture through exhibitions, events and archival work. The museum space was located on Mehringdamm in Kreuzberg from 1989 until March 2013, when it moved to Lützowstrasse 73 in the Tiergarten district in May 2013.

In 1984, the exhibition "Eldorado - Homosexual Women and Men in Berlin 1850-1950" was held at the West Berlin Berlin Museum (which later merged with the East Berlin Märkisches Museum) on the initiative of student museum supervisors - Andreas Sternweiler, Wolfgang Theis and Manfred Baumgardt. It was curated by the initiators in cooperation with a group of lesbian activists. After their great success - over 40,000 people visited the exhibition - the exhibition organizers had the idea to continue this kind of work in their own museum. Therefore, on December 6, 1985, the "Verein der Freunde eines Schwulen Museums in Berlin e. V." was founded. In the rooms of the Allgemeine Homosexuelle Arbeitsgemeinschaft AHA (General Homosexual Working Group) at Friedrichstraße 12, the foundation was laid for a museum library and archive, and it was here that the first exhibition took place in 1986: "Yuck - 90 Years of the Homo Press". On the occasion of the 750th anniversary of the founding of Berlin, which took place one year later, the Gay Museum showed the exhibition "750 warm Berliners".

In 1988, the museum moved to the museum rooms at Mehringdamm 61, where more than 130 exhibitions were realized until 2013, then a move to the building at Lützowstraße 73 in Berlin-Tiergarten. There, the Gay Museum has four exhibition rooms, a café, a reference library with research stations for users, office space and a workshop, as well as an air-conditioned archive.



Since 2008, a reorientation of content has taken place, which, in addition to male homosexuality as the subject of collection, research and exhibition activities, also includes other sexual orientations and gender identities, primarily those of lesbians and transgenders. This is to be expressed by the addition of the gender asterisk (*) to the name Gay Museum *. It represents a diversity of sexual and gender identities.

Basic Information

In the archive of the Gay Museum, research can be done on the culture, history and movement of homosexual and transgender people from all times. Periodicals from Germany from 1896 onwards, from Europe and the world are collected, cataloged and continuously supplemented here. In addition to the written material, the archive includes a collection of photos, videos, films, posters, autographs, works of art, and bequests.

The international reference library contains around 19,000 titles - largely "gray literature" and university theses - from all areas relating to male homosexuality, with a major focus on art. In addition, the holdings of the Gay Museum Library include around 3,000 international journal titles, around 4,000 films and other media such as records, cassettes, tapes, CDs and digital copies. Literature on female homosexuality and standard literature on trans and intersex lifestyles and queer issues is also collected. The archive is used by scholars from all over the world. There are also cooperative relationships with universities and research institutes.

The sponsor of the Gay Museum is the non-profit "Verein der Freundinnen und Freunde des Schwulen Museums in Berlin e. V." (Association of Friends of the Gay Museum in Berlin), founded on December 6, 1985. In addition to institutional funding from the State of Berlin, membership fees and donations form an indispensable source of income.

In addition to the board of directors, 17 full-time employees work at the Gay Museum. A large part of the ongoing operation is ensured by almost 60 volunteers.

Ownership and structure

The sponsor of the Gay Museum is the non-profit "Verein der Freundinnen und Freunde des Schwulen Museums in Berlin e. V." (Association of Friends of the Gay Museum in Berlin), founded on December 6, 1985. In addition to institutional funding by the State of Berlin, membership fees and donations form an indispensable source of income. In addition to the board of directors, 17 full-time employees work at the Gay Museum. A large part of the ongoing operation is ensured by almost 60 volunteers.



Values

The core values are a distinct search for a secure space to express needs of each sexual identity, protection from political oppression, anti-LGTBQ+-expression as well as facism, racism, and practices of socio-spatial exclusion. The museum's staff, its volunteers and members transfer and express these values not only within the institution (e.g. in meetings, exhibitions, gatherings) but also in public venues such as at parades, political, academic, and cultural venues.

Space

The Schwules Museum rents a 4-story house in Lützowstraße 73, district of Schöneberg. Basement is used for archives, Ground floor is used for exhibitions, café, lounges, and a bar. First floor is a library and working spaces for staff.

Governance

The association is run by a board of executives that are volunteers and that are elected for 2 years by the members of the association. The board is in charge for the financial stability, employees, and the thematic principles of the association. Appr. 60 volunteers secure many daily activities.

Finances

The association receives annual public funding to offer a thematic oriented program to the public. Entrees fees, member fees and occasional donations provide additional income. Exhibition and other temporal events have to be funded by extra fundings, depending on the topic.

Collaboration and dissemination

The Schwules Museum hosts a range of collaborations in different thematic fields and on different scales. Starting from worldwide academic and research oriented collaboration to joint political activities in Berlin as well as educational offers for local to international students, guests, and tourists.

Knowledge-production



Internal co-creation processes are at the core of an updated organizational development procedure since 2018. It is aimed at installing a more horizontal, transparent mode of exchange between employees, volunteers, and members. For a few months a new digital tool has been installed to organize monthly duties within the staff.

Pandemic

Informality, social events, parties, and the Museum as an everyday place to meet, greet, and chit chat among members, staff, and volunteers, has been missed. It has had a severe influence on the ability to handle conflicts, discontents, and different interests. As in many similar associations, the phase of social distancing within the Schwules Museum is reported retrospectively as a severe threat to the role's museum to provide an everyday place for a queer community in Berlin. Recent interviews in 2023 indicated that the post-pandemic effects of social distancing play a significant role till today, especially when in-between spaces apart the everyday professional routines have fallen away and cannot simply be replaced afterwards.

Challenges

In 2023, an expanded thematic scope of "queer culture", the need to digitize its archive and library are expressions of thematic growth with expanded responsibilities for volunteers and staff. In addition to that, generational diversity, internationalization, and increasing demands to outreach to other interest groups pose challenges to fulfill these new challenges. Internal supervision and organizational support are in place to calibrate the overall architecture of the Museum to the future demands.



Inspiring practice

The Schwules museum is worldwide unique because it combines political expressions with scientific archival work, exhibitions for the public and workshops. This broad portfolio is organized on the grounds and principles of an association. The board of executives is held by volunteers that are in charge of more than 15 employees that run the library, archive, exhibition programs and workshops. Without the help of volunteers, members of the association run the everyday duties such as providing office hours, supervision of the exhibitions, and running the entry office. Since the Schwules Museum is growing, in charge of a more than million Euro budget per year, and an expanded thematic scope (as a queer GLAM), the internal mechanism to run such an institution had to be adapted to new internal and external circumstances. As a reaction, a fine graded internal evolutionary participation process has been set up to meet the increasing internal and external demands: Internal demands are more transparent and dialogue based participation principles for the volunteers involved in the operational daily business of the institution's program. Aspects of horizontal involvement in meetings, communication duties are regarded as essential and have been updated. Updating internal learning, communication, and technical skills are matters of constant negotiation to meet the new demands of an expanded worldwide known institution, that is no longer rooted to a large extent into the Berlin scenes anymore.



2.4. Library Ekatarina Pavlovic - Serbia

Location	Velika Plana, Serbia
Sector	Library
Year of establishment	2020
Visitors/participants/members/beneficiaries?	408 library members *by September 2023
Paid FTE	none

History and short description

Library Ekatarina Pavlovic is part of a Rural Cultural Center Markovac, which was established in 2020 by the artist group Hop.la! with the main goal of renewing the cultural and social life in villages surrounding Velika Plana, a city in eastern Serbia. This region is among the poorest when it comes to funding in the cultural sector. As an answer to this challenge, RCCM strives to provide culture, education and social service for all social groups regardless of gender, ethnicity, residency and/or economic status. Due to efforts, both from the local people who are running the library and art professionals who are coming to Markovac to hold activities, the Center significantly enhances decentralisation of culture, one of the biggest challenges and priorities of Serbian cultural policy.

Basic information

Artists and pedagogues work together while implementing multidisciplinary approaches. Through activities of the library, they imply critical reading of literature that fosters nationalism, colonialism, xenophobia, and any other form of discrimination. Membership is voluntary and free of charge. Besides the book fund in the main reading rooms, there are also shelves for sharing books and textbooks which citizens use as a self service.

Ownership and Structure

The legal form of RCCM is a non profit civil society organisation.

Values

Activities in Ekatarina Pavlovic Library are based on feminist pedagogy principles, which affirms freedom of thought and speech, critical spirit and equality in the processes of learning and development. Creativity, civic awareness and environmental activism are highly valued in pedagogical processes of RCCM.



Space

Besides two main reading rooms in Markovac, since this year there are more places to read and borrow books. In order to popularise reading, as well as regular visits to the doctor, they filled the shelf in the waiting room of the Markovac Health Center with classic and popular literature titles from the collection. Books can be read while waiting for an examination, as well as borrowed and returned during the next visit to the doctor. This section of the "Ekatarina Pavlović" reading room is open during the working hours of the Health Center. Second one is placed in a green portable container, donated by one of the families from the surrounding village. There are books for children of all ages and adults, and membership is free as well. They have made a special district of self service book usage in Primary School in village Rankovac.

Governance

Management is splitted between director and vice director- Aleksandra Milosavljevic, psychotherapist and Andjelka Nikolic, theatre director who runs artist group *Hop.la!* . In total, there are 7 librarians who are local women aged between 14 and 65 years. Teams of external associates are included as well- website editors, library catalogue editors, designers etc. Depending on the responsibilities and share of work, positions are either honorary or voluntary.

Finances

Besides donations of books and spatial assets, as well as voluntary work, sustainability of the Center is maintained through project funding and support from various resources. When it comes to public funding in the past three years they got funded by the Serbian Ministry of culture, surrounding municipalities and the National coalition for decentralisation. The most significant domestic foundations for society and culture have also recognized the importance of financially supporting the Centre, such as Reconstruction Women's Fund, Trag Foundation, Jelena Santic Foundation etc.

Collaboration and dissemination

The Center tends to connect with similar initiatives and contribute to the public campaign of culture decentralisation, which was widely recognized and resulted in: Belgrade Open School Recognition Award for cultural decentralisation and fight for equal rights, BeFem's Recognition Award for cultural mobility, Jelena Šantić Award for special contribution to community's development through art. RCCM also supports performing and visual arts, with special focus



on community art, ambient and eco-friendly art, as well as preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Knowledge production

Culture Therapy has arisen out of the need to alleviate the negative consequences of the pandemic on mental health. It was initiated by Aleksandra Miladinovic, psychologist and director of organisation, implemented in cooperation with other members of RCCM. Center also fights mental illness and psychological difficulties stigma, which are often present in patriarchal communities. Through sessions of Bibliotherapy, they wish to promote the influence of literary works on psychological well-being. By reading and analysing literary works, guided by a bibliotherapist, the participants get to know themselves better, discuss their feelings and get an insight into their own actions. By listening to the experiences of others, users discuss common difficulties, but also possible solutions to problems. Sessions are meant for children and adults, up to 15 participants. Workshops of the Children's Club are also being held in the spaces of the library. This initiative was preceded by youth work projects that were designed and performed by the *Hop.La!* art group. At least twice a week, a group of children of preschool and school age meets for practising drama arts, reading, environmental, musical and other activities. There are 6 mentors, art professionals who create and hold the workshops. Membership in the Children's club has a symbolic price of 4 euros per month, with an option to be free of charge for those who can not afford it. Due to representing good practise of participatory theatre, productions of the Club are often being invited to various children festivals throughout Serbia, contributing to the visibility and sustainability of the Centre in general.

Pandemic

Foundation of the Center was highly inspired by the events that occurred in the pandemic. Organisers recognized the need to systemize their activities in a form of a rural Center, which would provide support to the wellbeing of the society and dealing with the consequences of Coronavirus, while enriching the cultural offer of the area. On the other hand, they realised that their initiative has a lot of potential in means of eco-sustainability and long term benefits.

Challenges

All of the mentioned funding is project-based, resulting in non-permanent finances of the Center. Unpredictable cooperation with local self-government of Markovac is also a great challenge, because it functions only formally, while the municipality of Velika Plana does not



have a transparent policy of cooperation with CSOs, nor ambitions when it comes to decentralisation of culture.

Inspiring practice

The foundation of the Ekatarina Pavlovic library was one the most important actions undertaken under this Center. Firstly, it was set up in an old wine cellar at one household property of citizens of village Markovac. By time they managed to gather more and more individuals who recognized the importance of contributing to this action as volunteers and donors, as well as public and private funds. After just three years, thanks to donations from publishing houses, organisations and individuals, the fund of the library counts more than 4500 copies and gathers more than 400 members in several locations. By treating spatial resources, books and knowledge as a common good, they continue to contribute to the wellbeing of the community and their cultural needs through specialised activities- bibliotherapy sessions and Children's Club workshops.



2.5. Ostavinska Gallery - Serbia

Location	Belgrade, Serbia
Sector	Gallery
Year of establishment	2016
Visitors/participants/ members/ beneficiaries?	in 2022, there was 241 appointment/ event organised at Ostavinska
Paid FTE	none

History and description

Ostavinska is a gallery placed at former warehouse space in public property, running as a part of Magacin, self-organised and self-managed cultural centre in Belgrade (Serbia) since 2016. Opening of the centre was initiated by artistic and cultural collectives and non-profit organisations in 2007. Gallery is located in one out of three buildings operating under Magacin. Together with Ostavinska, all the available spaces are being used for practice and productions of users' activities, supporting the diversity of needs for different aspects of art and social groups that are in need of spatial resources. A crucial component of Magacin is cultural exchange, social cohesion and community organising – prioritising creation of an ecosystem that upholds democratic principles, fair use of commons resources, solidarity, social and cultural diversity.

Values

Values of Magacin are equality and justness, professionalism, participation, cooperation, availability, financial transparency, respect and social change.

Space

By now, organisational structure, capacities and purposes of Magacin have been remodelled several times- mostly depending on the status of negotiations with city and cultural policy authorities. The Belgrade Youth Centre, on behalf of the owner of the property – the City, has been appointed as the legal administrator of the space. By means of a public competition, it has selected six organisations that would use the Magacin Cultural Centre in the next two years. However, the contracts with the selected organisations were never signed. Despite that, Magacin continued its activity, while the role of the Youth Centre was becoming completely invisible and lacked any type of support. Truly inconvenient infrastructural condition of all the buildings limited in a great deal of usage of space. This has significantly changed in 2018



thankfully to donation of FundAction, which enabled resources for renovation, implemented by joint work of users. New capacities were created, fully adapted to the needs of preparing and realising artistic events. However, after 16 years of running, status of Magacin remains unregulated due to the unfulfilled promises of the city authorities that this space would be completely left to the independent scene.

Ownership and Structure

Since its foundation in 2007 all of the members of Management and Operational bodies are working voluntarily, driven by the passion of benefiting artists and the community. The Magacin Users' Assembly is the managing main body of Magacin and it consists of all regular users (individuals/collectives/NGOs) of the premises. The Assembly manages the space and makes decisions regarding activities, its development, maintenance, conditions of use, joint actions, etc. The decision-making is highly participatory and horizontal and it takes place at monthly assemblies as well through offline and online communication. Ostavinska is run by one out of five working groups of Magacin, which are formed by the Users' Assembly-Coordinator, the Technical maintenance team, the PR team and the Photo documentation team. Coordinator provides support to new users, regulates users' activities, and coordinates regular monthly sessions of the Assembly. It is a rotating function with a mandate of one month. New person for this position is selected from the users who have applied, at a regular meeting of the Assembly. The PR Team is responsible for a series of activities related to the overall communication of Magacin with the audience-communication through social networks, website maintenance; gathering materials from users, etc. The Photo Documentation Team includes all users who have experience in photographing events and who wish to develop their skills. Technical maintenance implies the planning and execution or coordination of work on the maintenance of the space (electricity, water, internet, mobiliary, equipment, locks, interior partitions and removals, ventilation, heating, etc.). The Coordinator and Photo team receive symbolic financial compensation for their work, which amount depends on the current financial capacities of Magacin.

Governance

The Association of Independent Culture Scene of Serbia represents Magacin and advocates for the status of the Centre as a space for independent culture and a social space. Until the legal status of Magacin is resolved, the Association ICSS will represent and participate in projects on behalf of them, as well as ensuring their visibility and presence in other networks and initiatives together with the Assembly of regular users.



Finances

The financial model is based on donations from users, friends of Magacin and citizens. The amount of donations doesn't affect the management or usage of Magacin's resources. All users of the space are advised to include a certain sum for the maintenance of Magacin in their budget of project proposals. This amount is solely on the possibilities of users and their estimation. Project fundraising, as well as public advocacy is done by the Magacin Coordinating Body in collaboration with Magacin Users' Assembly.

Collaboration and dissemination

By years of hosting activities with international character, as well as art residencies Magacin has become widely known across Europe for its outstanding self-sustainability. Enjoying respect from various relevant actors, it has managed to get prestigious prizes, grants and memberships in spheres of culture and activism. One of the most important ones are support by European Endowment for Democracy, membership in Trans Europe Halles, a network of 140 initiatives that are being devoted to repurposing abandoned buildings for arts and prize. Since opening the doors, Ostavinska has welcomed various parties- from local independent artists to art faculties and international festivals. Aforementioned Association ICSS, represents the main partner, with 104 organisations that it consists of.

Pandemic

Period of Covid 19 didn't leave any significant consequences for the centre. They have stopped with the activities only in the period of spring 2020. During quarantine, space was used by the Solidary kitchen, an organisation which prepares and provides food for the homeless and immigrants living in Belgrade. Users of Magacin used that break to rethink the existing model of organisation, map challenges and write project proposals for the future.

Challenges

One of the main challenges that Magacin has been facing since the beginning is the unsolved question of legalisation of space. There were many attempts by different ruling parties and cultural policies actors to take over the space of Magacin, change its purpose or set an ultimate agreement which doesn't correlate with values of the users.



Inspiring practice

Ostavinska is a unique example of a gallery that provides spatial and technical resources free of charge, without imposing juries, open calls or any aesthetical standards as a condition for placing an exhibition or art performance. The main characteristic of this gallery, and the cultural centre itself, is implementation of all activities through the “Open calendar model”. The model accommodates usage of all the resources to interested organisations, collectives and individuals, who are active in fields of art, culture and social activism. The only obligation that interested parties must fulfil is not to charge entrance fee to the audience and to organise events respecting values that Magacin promotes. Beneficiaries of Ostavinska are mostly the ones that need these resources the most - non-governmental organisations and emerging young artists. Besides exhibitions, the gallery hosts various types of events-performances, projections, debates etc. The space can be booked for a maximum of a week. If users decide to organise an exhibition, they are obliged to ensure that the space will be open for at least 4 hours a day (most commonly between 5 and 9pm). Since the implementation of the “open calendar” model, the number of users and variety of usages of Ostavinska has grown.



3. Take-aways and concluding remarks

a. Resources

Every practice centres around a specific category of *resources* it oversees and nurtures. Some, like ASKI, Oral History Groups, and the Schwules Museum, dedicate themselves to archival preservation, cherishing the narratives and histories ingrained within their collections. On the other hand, entities like the Ekaterina Pavlovic Library and Ostavinska Gallery prioritize youth culture materials, art spaces, and printed materials, highlighting different facets of cultural expression. What unites these diverse resources is their dynamic nature – they're not stagnant entities but rather continuously evolving and growing, nurtured, and enriched by the active involvement of the commoners. This active participation ensures that these resources remain vivid, vibrant and relevant for the present time. Moreover, this collaborative engagement results in an ongoing expansion of the resource base, broadening its scope as it's shared, influenced and used by a wider audience. This cyclical process of sharing, contributing, and engaging not only enriches the resource but also fosters a sense of collective ownership and responsibility among the community members.

b. Community and governance

All of the showcased practices ground on *active community engagement*. They involve community members, volunteers, or like-minded individuals in the preservation, curation, and utilisation of resources mentioned above. This reflects a shared commitment to involving the broader community in resource management. What's crucial to note is that these communities aren't predefined former entities as we know them from traditional organizations; instead, they take shape through their association with the common resource, its inception, administration, and sustained participation. Thus, conceptually understanding the community necessitates moving away from an essentialist viewpoint and embracing the concept of a *community of practice* – a dynamic assembly formed around shared and practiced endeavours. Take, for example, the Oral History Groups in Greece. Within this framework, formal membership structures are absent. Instead, anyone contributing to the archive automatically assumes the role of a stakeholder in the collective endeavour. Naturally, this approach implies that the community is ever-evolving, adapting with changes in participatory approaches and encountering new hurdles along the way. As practices evolve, so does the community, continually responding to emerging challenges and transformations.



A common thread among the cases is a form of collective *governance or decision-making*. Whether through horizontal governance, open organisation structures, or community-driven initiatives, they share an emphasis on collaborative decision processes. However, their organizational structures differ significantly, showcasing a diverse spectrum of approaches. For instance, the Schwules Museum in Berlin exhibits a more hierarchical and structured model, characterized by formalized decision-making procedures. In contrast, the Oral History Groups in Greece embody a more open and adaptable structure, fostering flexibility in their decision-making processes. This wide array of approaches reflects not only the nature of the resources being managed but also mirrors the geographical and cultural nuances inherent in these communities. These variations underline the dynamic interplay between open organizational structures and the unique contexts in which these initiatives operate as a flexible collective. The divergence in decision-making approaches signifies the nature of managing resources within different cultural and geographic landscapes, emphasizing the importance of tailoring governance models to suit the specific needs and characteristics of each community and its resources.

c. Legal status and decision-making

Within the shared commitment to openness and community involvement, the cases diverge significantly in their *organizational frameworks*. While all uphold principles of inclusivity, their structural setups vary considerably. Some function as associations, others as non-profit organizations, and a few are driven purely by community initiatives. These differences in structure aren't arbitrary; rather, they stem from and mirror the distinctive local contexts and objectives of each practice. The level of formalization directly influences their decision-making processes. For instance, entities like the Schwules Museum in Berlin, operating as formal member-based organizations, adhere to more structured decision-making procedures, partly dictated by governing laws. This formalization sets a clear path for decision-making but can also create rigidity within the system. Conversely, the Oral History Archives adopt a flexible organizational structure. Here, the essence of the "organization" emerges solely from the active participation of commoners in commoning practices. In simpler terms, the "organization" exists in a fluid state, solely because individuals engage in these communal endeavours. This loose structure emphasizes the organic formation of the organization through the very act of participating in commoning practices. The crux lies in how these structures are not just administrative frameworks but also living embodiments of the community's ethos and *modus operandi*. The diverse organizational architectures reflect the ethos and values of the communities they serve, showcasing a spectrum of formalization that directly impacts decision-making processes and the overall functioning of each practice.

d. Funding



These various structures exhibit distinct *funding* methods that directly correlate with their organizational frameworks. Broadly speaking, we can categorize these funding approaches into two main types, each encompassing several subtypes, although not all are present across every structure: Monetary funding involves financial resources such as (a) Member fees (i.e. Contributions from individuals affiliated with the organization); (b) State funding: (i.e. financial support provided by government entities, municipalities or government agencies); (c) Third-party funding (i.e. grants or sponsorships from external organizations or businesses); (d) Donations (i.e. contributions made by individuals or groups motivated by philanthropy or support); (e) Crowdfunding (i.e. gathering funds through online platforms by engaging a larger community for financial backing). Non-monetary funding involves resources beyond direct finances: (f) Voluntary work (contributions of time, expertise, or labour offered freely by community members or volunteers); (g) Rent-free premises (i.e. provision of spaces or facilities without monetary charges, often through partnerships or community support)

Each structure's approach to funding represents a deliberate alignment with its core values and operational framework. For instance, entities relying on member fees might prioritize community engagement and ownership, while those dependent on state funding might adhere to specific regulations or objectives set by governmental bodies. Meanwhile, organizations supported by voluntary work might emphasize collaboration and shared efforts, while those benefiting from rent-free premises might prioritize community partnerships and resource-sharing.

This diversity in funding methods not only sustains these structures but also reflects their adaptability and resourcefulness in meeting their financial needs within their unique contexts and organizational frameworks.

e. *Values*

Inclusivity and "practicing belonging" is a recurring theme, as the practices aim to include diverse voices and perspectives in their resource management efforts. This inclusivity extends to both the contributors and users of the resources. A compelling example of this tension arises within the context of the Schwules Museum, where the commitment to inclusivity becomes a balancing act. The museum strives to incorporate the diverse and evolving facets within the LGBTQ+ community. However, this aspiration can lead to conflicts stemming from the myriad sub-identities within the community. The dynamic and multifaceted nature of these sub-identities can create tensions around representation, narratives, and the prioritization of various perspectives within the broader community. What's apparent is that while inclusivity is



a fundamental goal, its pursuit can sometimes pose challenges, especially when faced with the complexities inherent in diverse and evolving communities.

f. Accessibility and participation

Accessibility is a core principle across all cases. Each practice seeks to make valuable resources readily accessible to the public. Whether it's oral history archives, LGBTQ+ history, youth culture materials, or books, the emphasis on access is evident. However, the means by which this access is facilitated vary significantly. For instance, entities like ASKI and the Oral History Group in Greece, along with the Schwules Museum in Berlin, perceive themselves as active custodians of history. Their mission revolves around safeguarding a shared heritage and disseminating it to wider audiences. Conversely, the Ekaterina Pavlovic Library and the Ostavinska Gallery in Serbia offer access to a more expansive array of resources. Here, the focus isn't solely on constructing identities for the community members but rather on providing access to a diverse range of materials that might not necessarily play a direct role in shaping individual or collective identities. These resources serve a broader purpose, enriching the community's intellectual landscape beyond identity formation.

The practices exhibit a degree of *flexibility and adaptability* to changing circumstances and community needs. They adjust their operations, services, or collections to remain relevant and responsive, highlighting the importance of staying dynamic. Participatory practices in commons evolve together with the communities that constitute them and which they constitute. However, as the community may evolve in a different pace or a different pace from the common resource, it is possible, as the case of the Schwules Museum clearly demonstrates, that conflicts arise in this non-synchronous development.

g. Cultural-geographical variation

The *historical* underpinnings and context surrounding each initiative profoundly shape their core mission and objectives. Examining these historical foundations provides crucial insight into the specific goals and focuses of each practice. For instance, in the case of the Schwules Museum, the emphasis on LGBTQ+ history is deeply rooted in the historical struggles faced by the LGBTQ+ community. Situated in a city renowned for its pivotal role in various social and civil rights movements throughout the 20th century, the museum's mission is intrinsically tied to preserving and showcasing the rich history of this marginalized community. In Serbia, the Ekaterina Pavlovic Library and the Ostavinska Gallery are products of a changing political landscape marked by significant legal gaps and property issues stemming from the country's transition through different political systems. This historical backdrop has shaped these



institutions, reflecting the challenges and changes within the nation's legal and property spheres over time. Similarly, in Greece, ASKI and Oral History Groups hold a poignant connection to the country's historical narrative, particularly related to political conflicts and forced migrations that left an indelible mark on Greece during the 20th century. Their missions are deeply intertwined with preserving the memory and experiences of these turbulent times, emphasizing the significance of these historical events in shaping the nation's identity. By aligning their missions with the historical struggles, developments, and cultural shifts specific to their respective contexts, each practice not only honors its heritage but also contributes to the broader narrative and understanding of societal transformations. These initiatives serve as repositories of historical knowledge, reflecting the intricate connections between past events and present-day realities.

The cases span different *geographic locations*, including Greece, Germany, and Serbia. Geographic context plays a role in shaping the challenges and opportunities each practice faces. Each location brings its own unique set of challenges and opportunities that deeply influence the nature and dynamics of these practices. This geographical variation unfolds along two distinct dimensions, each significantly impacting the operations and ethos of these initiatives.

Firstly, it revolves around the existing legal frameworks governing structures, funding, volunteerism, governance, membership, and more. These legal contexts shape the boundaries within which these initiatives function. Regulations in Germany, for instance, may guide the formalization and hierarchical structure of entities like the Schwules Museum, impacting their operations and sometimes leading to heightened conflicts due to the rigid structure. Conversely, the Oral History Archives, operating within a more flexible framework, might experience fewer legal constraints, allowing for a looser, more adaptable structure.

Secondly, the geographic context extends beyond legal frameworks, delving into local values and participatory practices ingrained within social norms. This includes aspects like a prevalent sharing culture, approaches to dialogue and conflict resolution, and community engagement practices. These cultural nuances significantly influence how these initiatives function. For example, in a place like Greece, where sharing culture and communal engagement hold deep roots, practices like the Oral History Archives might find a more natural fit due to their loose organizational structure, aligning well with the local participatory ethos. At one end of this spectrum stands the highly formalized yet occasionally conflictual Schwules Museum in Berlin, functioning within a more regulated legal landscape. At the opposite end lies the Oral History Archives, embracing a more fluid and adaptable framework that resonates



with the cultural and participatory practices of its local context. This range demonstrates how geographic context, encompassing both legal frameworks and cultural norms, significantly shapes the organizational structures and approaches of these practices.