



Sustainable
Culture
Toolkit

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INTRODUCTION

Theatre activity, like that of other areas of culture and the arts, does not come without its impact on the environment. The global climate crisis is our shared challenge and responsibility. Theatres, like other similar institutions with a wide reach and impact, can become invaluable platforms for distributing knowledge and shaping sensitivities and attitudes – of the people who work in them, their partner institutions and their audiences. They can become leaders in practices of care and mindfulness of local ecosystems, as well as guides in education about the impact of the Anthropocene era on the climate. Incorporating pro-environmental priorities into a theatre's mission, programme and daily production processes is our common cause today.

The *Sustainable Culture Toolkit* online guide enables an exchange of experience and inspiration and extends the space for mutual learning between theatre practitioners. It is the result of a collaboration between European theatres as part of the project and is available in five languages: Polish, English, Greek, French and Flemish. The publication contains universal guidelines and examples of pro-environmental practices which can be successfully implemented in the life of a theatre or a theatre project irrespective of the context. What makes this publication stand out is its pragmatic and condensed nature, which may facilitate the creation of sustainable strategies for theatres. The guide contains, on the one hand, what is most interesting and recent, while on the other hand, the most accessible and affordable examples from theatres and theatre festivals in Europe. The visual aspect of the guide referring to the aesthetics of theatre bills aims to simplify interpretation of such complex processes into something easily comprehensible.

As the authors of this guide, we wish to draw particular attention to the ethical aspects of the changes – caring for the natural ecosystem should translate into caring for a sustainable work ecosystem. It is important that changes and activities breaking old habits are introduced gradually and strategically (increasingly larger steps), and take account of the resources (human, time, material). Systematic monitoring and evaluation of complex processes will make it possible to collect data and improve the planning of further activities, extending care to both the planet and the employees of the cultural and creative sectors.

Theatre for climate – together, we can do more and better!

GREEN TEAM

SHORT DEFINITION

a group of people in the institution/project responsible for green policy

Involve as wide a range of staff as possible.

Ensure support of the Board for the work of the green team.

Map the green measures taken so far.

Scale your plans – think big, but start with small steps.

Focus on what you can influence.

Plan working methods and project roles with the whole team.

Develop your team's competencies, design a training programme.

Communicate the goals and activities of the green team internally and externally.

Monitor the changes being made.

Build alliances with other institutions.

Appreciate yourself and others – you are part of an important change!

HOW TO PROCEED?

PLEASE NOTE!

Green teams often emerge as grassroots initiatives set up by the employees.

For the sake of the well-being of those involved, their activities should become part of their professional responsibilities agreed with the employer.

HELPFUL HINTS

It is useful to sometimes get away from documents and computers! Why not include exploration of surrounding nature in your team's activities? Remember that two hours a week spent in nature significantly improves our health and well-being.

EXAMPLES
OF
STRATEGIES

→

Conducting a test run is a great way to test ideas and gather initial data and if challenges appear, it does not reduce the enthusiasm!

→

It is worth identifying some of the main areas generating emissions within the theatre, and to begin with two or three initiatives which are easy to manage and translate into tackling major problems.

→

It is worth appointing leaders in particular areas (e.g. stagecraft, travel and transport, catering, etc.) so that responsibility for the processes of change does not rest with just one person.

GREEN TEAM

– EXAMPLES

Nowy Teatr (Warsaw, Poland)

Nowy Teatr is part of the nation-wide 'Culture for Climate' initiative. In 2021, it saw the emergence of 'The Green Team', made up of employees of the institution. The Green Team introduces environmentally-friendly changes through art tools or workshops for the audience and staff members. Some of the initiatives worth mentioning include: reusing materials and stage sets, using recycled paper, adoption of 'less waste' solutions by the make-up department, encouraging the audiences to use public transport or bikes when attending theatre events.

More: [Green Team at Nowy Teatr](#)

National Theatre of Scotland (Glasgow, United Kingdom)

At the National Theatre of Scotland sustainability is important at many levels: in working with artists, communities, or organisations. Green initiatives are being developed there based on the idea of shared responsibility. The green team is made up of Green Leaders hailing from various departments, including the Board. Green Leaders act across all areas: from programming, partnerships and production to infrastructural matters, procedures and environmental auditing. The team has also developed the *Green Action Plan* for their institution.

More: [Green Team at the National Theatre of Scotland](#)

Theatertreffen (Berlin, Germany)

The Theatertreffen festival has been expanding the network of Green Ambassadors in the theatre field since 2021, by developing the Forum for Ecological Sustainability in the Theatre. The forum's activities address representatives of theatres and production houses nominated for awards during the festival. They take part in networking events and workshops, discuss the challenges of sustainable theatre and work together to develop green projects and strategies.

More: [Green Ambassadors at Theatertreffen](#)

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

SHORT DEFINITION

Cradle-to-cradle design (or regenerative design) is an approach based on nature's processes, taking into account the re-use of materials and the optimal use of resources.

Map your infrastructural, material and human resources.

Plan the event production process and divide it into stages.

Reduce the amount of materials to build stage sets or exhibition infrastructure.

Choose materials and equipment with multipurpose application.

Avoid materials which will be difficult to recycle.

HOW TO PROCEED?

Choose products and services with environmental certificates.

Instead of buying electrical equipment – rent it from other organisations.

Let other organisations use your hardware resources.

Shorten supply chains and choose services and products from local manufacturers and suppliers.

EXAMPLES

OF

STRATEGIES

→ Make a list of the tasks which make up the event production process – minimising the environmental impact at each stage by applying the 3xR filter (*reduce, reuse, recycle*).

→ Invest time and energy in developing a catalogue of materials in the institution accessible to the whole organisation which is kept up-to-date. This will reduce the purchasing of unnecessary items.

→ Encourage theatre makers to implement the principles of sustainable design. By considering them at the concept stage, they will help make the project ecologically coherent.

HELPFUL HINTS

Sustainable design is also about economical design, which many underfunded cultural institutions have in their blood.

PLEASE NOTE!

Invest in people. Instead of costly stage productions, reallocate funds to decent pay for employees, especially those whose work is invisible to the audience. This will strengthen their motivation and be a meaningful gesture against the precarious conditions of work and pay in the cultural sector.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN – EXAMPLES

***Feral Monster*, National Theatre Wales (Cardiff, United Kingdom)**

The National Theatre Wales uses the example of *Feral Monster* production to describe how they were able to meet sustainability standards. They assumed that 50 percent of materials would have been used before and 65 percent would go on to have a future life. In fact, they managed to achieve much more – 66 percent of materials have been used before and 80 percent went on to have a future life. This would not have been possible without the engagement of the designer, Cara Evans, from the conceptual stage of the project. As they point out, one of the advantages of using second-hand props and materials is the fact that they come with a story – some of these are featured in the description.

[More](#)

***Your Palaces Are Empty*, Hans Otto Theater (Potsdam, Germany)**

The play tackles the climate crisis and its production has been regarded as climate neutral as part of the Zero Fund pilot project sponsored by the German government. As pointed out by the organisers: 'No aspect of the process of making a play has been left unturned. From the lighting (switching to LED bulbs) to reducing travel (rehearsals are longer but less frequent to cut down on journeys) – everything has come in for scrutiny'.

[More](#)

[More about the Zero Fund](#)

Festival d'Aix-en-Provence (Aix-en-Provence, France)

The festival has been committed to implementing a sustainable development plan for over ten years, particularly through green set design, recycling and reusing materials, energy auditing, measuring carbon footprint, introducing sustainable travel plans and raising environmental awareness within the team at meetings and workshops.

[More](#)

ECO-ETHICS OF WORK AND COOPERATION

Procedures, regulations and organisational policy aimed at reducing emissions and caring for the planet.

SHORT DEFINITION

Map your organisation's needs and challenges in the context of climate change.

Together with the employees, **set goals**, divide the process into **stages** and establish a **timeline**.

Sum up what has been done and **set directions for development** on that basis.

Focus on educating team members and ensure equal access to climate change knowledge.

HOW TO PROCEED?

Revise the institution's mission in the context of the climate emergency.

Inform partners **gradually** of the need for change.

Introduce pro-environmental regulations in contracts with partners.

Allocate time for consultation and review of the organisation's new procedures and strategic policies.

Nurture a sense of agency, do not set unattainable goals.

Share system solutions with other institutions, support each other.

Form coalitions and lobby for change.

EXAMPLES

OF

STRATEGIES

→

The work on your institution's pro-environmental policy does not have to wait until you have developed green programming and operational activities. These processes can – and even should – take place in parallel.

→

Before introducing work eco-ethics, ensure the employees undergo training and workshops, so that the values and content are convincing and understandable to all.

→

Take into account environmental and social factors in tenders and when choosing economic and business partners, support co-operatives.

PLEASE NOTE!

An institution's environmental strategy should be an open, public document, verifiable and responsive to dynamic changes.

HELPFUL HINTS

• Writing an ecostrategy document and making it public helps the organisation maintain its trajectory towards change and develops good habits within the team.

ECO-ETHICS OF WORK AND COOPERATION – EXAMPLES

Teatre Lliure (Barcelona, Spain)

In the spring of 2020, Teatre Lliure adopted an environmental policy, which included provisions such as creating a committee for sustainability in the theatre, carrying out an audit of the theatre's operations, preparing an analysis of staff attitudes, introducing training on sustainable cultural management for employees, and reviewing the supply chain for materials and services.

[More](#)

Home (Manchester, United Kingdom)

The institution has committed itself to reducing direct carbon dioxide emissions by 50 percent between 2020 and 2025 and encourages its audiences to do the same. Its Environmental and Sustainability Action Plan can be found on its website. It features nine aims of green transformation, including understanding and monitoring impacts, green initiatives, joint procurement and resource sharing, and sector collaboration. Each aim is broken down into actions and outcomes and is assigned a timescale as well as departments responsible for implementing the change.

[More](#)

[More](#)

Theatre Green Book (an international association)

A comprehensive handbook for creating and acting sustainably in the theatre field, prepared by theatre makers and experts. It includes useful toolkits, divided into three levels of involvement: basic, intermediate and advanced, templates of contracts with producers or technical riders taking into account environmental factors. Many European theatres quote the *Theatre Green Book* as something they adhere to.

[More](#)

SUSTAINABLE STAGE: MATERIALS

Principles related to the sustainable use of materials for building stage sets and using props and costumes.

SHORT DEFINITION

Check what you have in stock and plan your production process based on this data.

Limit the purchase of new components.

Re-use materials you already have – treat them as your first choice.

Make sure you source local, environmentally friendly products if you need to buy them.

HOW TO PROCEED?

Remember to use rental items or make second-hand purchases.

Choose materials which are durable and sustainable, e.g. give up spray foam or toxic adhesives and paints.

Design solutions which can be broken down into smaller components and re-used.

Share – make your resources available to other theatres and institutions in your vicinity, use their resources.

Create a space to store materials if there is no designated space for this and launch a digital resource platform.

EXAMPLES

OF

STRATEGIES

→

Providing designers with an inventory of available materials beforehand may help maximise the reuse of scenery resources.

→

It is worth setting a target – e.g. each new production will include a minimum of 50 % of materials held inhouse.

→

When sharing resources with other theatres or local partners, a digital resource platform would be an asset.

• HELPFUL HINTS •

PLEASE NOTE!

Planning the reuse of materials can sometimes be more time-consuming than making a quick purchase of a new item. For this reason, it is worth allocating extra time to look for sustainable solutions.

According to the Gotham 360 study, creating a stage set using only previously used materials may reduce the carbon footprint by 75 percent, while relying on new materials doubles the negative environmental impact of production.

SUSTAINABLE STAGE: MATERIALS

– EXAMPLES

National Theatre (London, United Kingdom)

Since January 2024, all productions at the theatre have been carried out in compliance with the *Theatre Green Book's* basic standard guidelines. The National Theatre tracks the use of materials in set design, props and costumes to determine what percentage of materials in each production have been reused and what percentage of materials have been given a new lease of life once the project has been completed.

[More](#)

Narodni Divadlo (Prague, Czechia)

The theatre bases its productions on the 3xR principle, closely cooperating with Re-Use Federace (The Re-Use Federation). It has created a materials bank and a digital catalogue listing all the furniture owned by the theatre. Similar catalogues are also planned for costumes and props. The theatre has also piloted a model of sustainable set design production for one of its plays.

[More](#)

Théâtre de Liège (Liège, Belgium)

The theater has more than 17,000 costumes. It does not lock them up in its warehouses, but puts them into circulation by renting or lending them to other theatres, various productions and individuals alike.

[More](#)

Collectif 17h25 (France–Belgium)

Collectif 17h25 is an initiative connecting five cultural institutions: Opéra de Lyon, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Opéra National de Paris, Théâtre du Châtelet and La Monnaie. Its aim is to develop a module for set construction which could be used in a variety of productions and institutions, simplifying logistics, reducing resource consumption and waste, while not restricting artistic freedom.

[More](#)

SUSTAINABLE STAGE: EQUIPMENT

SHORT DEFINITION

Principles related to lighting and AV equipment in theatre productions.

Prioritise reusing and upcycling equipment over buying new.

Create a detailed catalogue so that it is easier to find the equipment you need.

Rent the missing equipment from other theatres whenever possible.

Coordinate equipment deliveries in such a way that all equipment is shipped in one delivery.

When buying equipment, **pay attention** to the energy efficiency class and repairability.

Provide technicians with training in equipment operation, repair and maintenance to extend service life of your equipment.

Before disposing of an obsolete model, consider donating it to other institutions.

Use LED or low-power lamps wherever possible.

Use rechargeable batteries.

Use designated recycling facilities for electrical appliances, batteries, lamps, etc. when fully used.

HOW TO PROCEED?

EXAMPLES

OF

STRATEGIES

→

It is a good idea to establish energy-saving procedures for the use of equipment, e.g. switching off equipment after assembly and a safe time to switch it on before the show, fitting timer switches, switching off dimmers, power supplies and other technology overnight.

→

When assembling equipment, give up using disposable materials, such as PVC tape (instead, choose reusable cable ties or Velcro to organise cables, use chalk to mark locations on stage).

PLEASE NOTE!

Resist the temptation to chase the latest technologies. Frequent upgrades increase costs and contribute to the production of e-waste. Regular maintenance of equipment may extend its service life, which is more cost-effective and environmentally friendly.

Emissions associated with lighting and AV equipment are dependent on the energy efficiency of equipment and the type of fuel used. Find out if it is possible to utilise renewable energy.

● HELPFUL HINTS ●

SUSTAINABLE STAGE: EQUIPMENT

– EXAMPLES

Arcola Theatre (London, United Kingdom)

Sustainability is fundamental to the philosophy of Arcola Theatre which has been experimenting with energy-saving stage technology for nearly two decades, seeking pathways to carbon neutrality. For years the theatre worked closely with Arcola Energy, particularly on renewable energy projects. These explorations have earned it The Stage's Sustainability Award.

More: [Arcola Theatre sustainability](#)

Onassis Stegi (Athens, Greece)

It was some years ago that Onassis Stegi started work on gradually replacing the stage lighting with LED as part of an extensive sustainability strategy. One element of the green strategy is the operation of the Recycle Lab. Among its priorities is the systematic recycling of light bulbs and batteries. Each month, the theatre recycles around 40 kilograms of batteries.

More: [Onassis Stegi Recycle Lab](#)

A Play for the Living in a Time of Extinction (project STAGES)

This theatre production, directed by Katie Mitchell, was designed as part of the STAGES project and prepared for presentation on various theatre stages on the basis of a common script, with a sustainable approach. The script recommended namely using only local resources and reducing energy consumption by producing it directly on stage, in a way which makes its 'cost' visible to the audience.

More: [STAGES](#)

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

SHORT DEFINITION

Sustainable principles for transport, travel, touring and deliveries.

HOW TO PROCEED?

Theatre company, collaborators and audience

Encourage commuting by bicycle or public transport (publish maps of cycle paths and a list of nearby bus stops on your website), offer bike stands for the public and secure bicycle storage and look at installing shower facilities for employees available on site.

Introduce benefits for those using green transport options.

Implement internal rules – e.g. preferred train travel, no domestic flights, strict limits on the number of international flights per year, avoiding connecting flights.

Consider online meeting options rather than making travel arrangements.

Choose guest accommodation close by, and in case of a need to commute – offer public transport tickets.

PLEASE NOTE!

It is estimated that approximately 80 percent of emissions are generated by transport – performers, production teams, audience – all have to get to site, and equipment, food and other materials have to be delivered too.

Therefore, always choose the right means of transport.

HELPFUL HINTS

Carbon footprint generated by travel may be offset. However, carbon offset should not be used instead of action to reduce emissions, but as a complementary measure.

EXAMPLES

OF

STRATEGIES

→

When planning a tour, particularly in remote locations, coordinate and connect different points along the route, launch local partnerships, encourage organisers to recommend your project in other cities. Combining several locations on one tour is an environmental, logistical and economic win-win situation.

→

There are numerous online tools which can help you look for eco-friendly transport solutions. A list of useful links is provided by the *Theatre Green Book* toolkit.

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT – EXAMPLES

Festival d'Avignon (Avignon, France)

This is an example of how audiences can be encouraged to use sustainable transport. On its website, the festival first highlights the convenient cycling infrastructure around the city and provides information on rail access, including additional connections put in place for the festival. Next, it goes on to indicate the bus connections. Only then does it provide details on how to get there by car – at the same time, encouraging everyone to carpool. At the very end, air connections are indicated.

More: [Festival Avignon Prepare your trip](#)

STAGES (Sustainable Theatre Alliance for a Green Environmental Shift)

The 12 partner theatres taking part in the 'Sustainable Performances: Re-Stagings' project have developed an innovative co-production system making it possible to present new performances on the climate crisis in Europe, as well as in faraway Taiwan, without having to transport people or items. STAGES performances will be completely recreated using local resources (local director, local actors, local sets and choosing locally generated electricity).

More: [STAGES](#)

LIFT Festival (London, United Kingdom)

Concept touring is a commissioning programme for artists who seek to answer the question: How can we reconcile sustainability with the sharing of art from around the world? It seeks alternative ways of exchange, developing concepts for international collaborations which require minimum travel or eliminate it altogether.

More: [LIFT 2024](#)

SUSTAINABLE CUISINE

SHORT DEFINITION

Products and solutions offered in theatre restaurants, canteens and catering orders.

HOW TO PROCEED?

Make local, fresh produce your first choice, limit the supply chain.

Base your menu on plant-based products – vegan cuisine has the lowest carbon footprint and is the most universal, everyone can benefit.

Ensure that the coffees, teas and sugar you order have *Fair Trade* or *Rainforest Alliance* certification.

Provide access to free drinking water.

Opt for reusable, washable crockery, possibly compostable packaging.

Encourage people to come with their own mug – offer a discount in return.

Do not use disposable sachets of condiments.

Offer a shorter menu – this reduces the risk of food waste.

Donate surplus food to the nearest foodsharing point. If this is not possible, compost leftovers.

HELPFUL HINTS

To find out what impact your diet has on the climate, use free online tools, such as the calculator provided by the BBC: [Food calculator and climate change: What is the carbon footprint of your diet?](#)

PLEASE NOTE!

According to Greenpeace, it is essential to halve meat and dairy consumption by 2050. The greenhouse gas emissions associated with intensive livestock farming are equal to those generated by transport on a global scale.

SUSTAINABLE CUISINE – EXAMPLES

The Almeida Theatre (London, United Kingdom)

In the theatre's café and bar, two thirds of the items on the menu are plant-based, and during Veganuary, in January, 90 percent of the dishes on offer are vegan. Local, seasonal, fresh produce is promoted and special policies against food waste are in place. Those who bring their own mug receive a 20 percent discount.

More: [Almeida cafe and bar](#)

Viernulvier (Ghent, Belgium)

Viernulvier Café serves food and drinks which are LEF: local, ecological and/or fair trade. The café is committed to working with local suppliers to keep the supply chain as short as possible. Thanks to fair trade principles, each person in the supply chain receives a fair remuneration for their work. The menu is based on local, fresh produce which is processed as little as possible. The café's website features the profiles of the farms and producers which supply the kitchen.

More: [Viernulvier Cooking with LEF](#)

Zürcher Theater Spektakel (Zurich, Switzerland)

During the festival, guests are provided access to mobile water stations to reduce the use of PET bottles. Bars and restaurants use local Swiss products, and more than half of the dishes on offer are vegetarian. Cutlery, cups and plates are reusable or made of compostable materials. Beer glasses and mineral water cups are made of recyclable PET.

More: [TZS sustainability – what we do](#)

GREEN OFFICE

SHORT DEFINITION

People- and planet-friendly office space with minimal negative impact on the environment.

Switch off electronic appliances when you are not using them.

If possible, **drink tap water** or invest in filters.

Control the temperature in the office – don't overheat or overcool the space.

Try to use natural light when working in the office.

Keep printing to a minimum, print double-sided.

HOW TO PROCEED?

Search for information on your tablet or phone to reduce energy consumption.

For instant messaging use content encryption apps such as Signal.

Clear your email inbox of unnecessary newsletter subscriptions.

Find an email inbox provider outside of GAFAM (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft).

Use the 'cloud' instead of multiple physical servers.

Choose environmentally and socially responsible internet and digital service providers.

EXAMPLES

OF

STRATEGIES

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Conduct a training session with your team on digital ecology. This will help to organise the knowledge of the environmental footprint generated by the production and use of ICT.

→

Having recycling and waste bins in separate locations can be difficult – use multiple designated points for all types of recycling grouped together. This way staff will know where the points are and select the appropriate bins.

PLEASE NOTE!

Switching off your camera during a video call reduces the carbon footprint of the session by up to 96 percent. Remember, however, that sometimes, for the sake of a specific situation or out of respect for the other person, it is worth leaving it on.

HELPFUL HINTS

After experiencing the pandemic, remote working has become the norm for many. However, sometimes it is worth going to the office to nurture friendly relationships with your colleagues, which has a positive impact on motivation levels and job satisfaction.

GREEN OFFICE

– EXAMPLES

VIERNULVIER (Ghent, Belgium)

The arts centre has a well-developed sustainability action plan available on its website. In terms of digital ecology, recommendations include replacing physical servers with alternatives with a very small footprint and eco-certified (ISO 14001), choosing digital products and services from local markets, using alternative web browsers e.g. Ecosia, DuckDuckGo and developing an intranet rather than overusing email.

[More](#)

Nowy Teatr (Warsaw, Poland)

Outgoing emails from the institution bear a pro-environmental footer. This is to promote pro-environmental attitudes not only among the theatre's audience, but also among all those working with the institution.

Do you know how much an email weighs? Each message generates about 4g (graphic messages are up to 50g) of carbon footprint. In Poland, we send tens of millions of emails every day. Many contain unnecessary content that does not improve our work. That is why at Nowy Teatr we have dispensed with graphic attachments and try to communicate according to the following rules:

- *Check before sending that the email contains the necessary information and attachments*
- *Concise and short answers are not rude.*
- *Remember to title your email and to state your case clearly at the beginning.*
- *Try to ask specific questions to specific people. Do not send copies of emails to people who are not relevant to the subject of the email.*
- *You do not need to respond to emails that do not ask a question directly to you.*
- *If you feel the matter requires a longer discussion, try getting in touch by phone or IM. It may take less time!*

WELL-BEING PRACTICES

Creating work conditions which promote health, well-being and motivation.

SHORT DEFINITION

Foster open dialogue in theatre.

Create a working culture based on trust and collaboration.

Nurture opportunities for development.

Pay attention to fair forms of employment and transparent remuneration systems.

Introduce anti-bullying, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies.

Implement mechanisms supporting *work-life balance*.

Ensure project schedules include space for recovery.

Plan activities taking into account the resources at hand.

Do not allow exploitation of yourself or other employees.

Celebrate successes.

HOW TO
PROCEED?

PLEASE NOTE!

Job burnout is a state of crisis in professional activity. Working for passion (paying a 'passion tax') in the cultural sector can lead to overstepping the boundaries of one's own well-being and exhaustion.

EXAMPLES

OF

STRATEGIES

→ Examples of elements of a supportive organisational culture include: open communication, transparency of rules, inclusion in decision-making processes, appreciation.

→ The polycrises of recent years (pandemic, wars, climate crisis, economic crisis) have made mental disorders, excessive stress and burnout a global problem. It is worth using tools which support the creation of a culture of caring in organisations, such as [Care Inventory Check List \(OF/BY/FOR ALL\)](#)

HELPFUL HINTS

Following Tricia Hersey, we encourage mindful rest. The initiator of the Nap Ministry opposes the culture of exhaustion and overwork by organising group naps. She sees rest as a space of resistance to an exploitative system and a place for collective social change.

WELL-BEING PRACTICES – EXAMPLES

A List of Shortcomings (Warsaw, Poland)

A performance about culture as a working environment, prepared in 2023 by a team of social artists affiliated with the Association of Theatre Educators. The performance was based on interviews with employees of various cultural centres in Poland. The impetus for the piece came when, after returning from leave, one of the employees received a document with a number of allegations – the eponymous list of shortcomings. Instead of a conversation, she was presented with a remediation plan and threatened with consequences.

More: [Goout A List of Shortcomings](#)

Alkantara Festival (Lisbon, Portugal)

Conducting professional activity in the arts and culture sector presents challenges in terms of work-life balance. Due to systemic constraints, it is particularly difficult to reconcile artistic work with caring work, including parenting and motherhood.

More: [Forum Cultura: Work-life balance in the performing arts](#)

Viernulvier (Ghent, Belgium)

Viernulvier is introducing a horizontal organisational structure. The process is guided by a team which meets once a week. It consists of twelve permanent members, all others are participants in the process and can submit topics for discussion. The model is based on changing roles, allowing each person to take on a leadership role.

More: [Viernulvier organigram](#)

Zürcher Theater Spektakel (Zurich, Switzerland)

Codes of values and working principles are becoming increasingly common. The Zürcher Theater Spektakel has introduced their *Code of Cooperation*, which sets out key principles and guidelines to foster an inclusive environment for all participants, employees and collaborators involved in the festival. It points out that hatred, racism, anti-Semitism, hostility towards Muslims, hostility towards queer people, sexism, ableism or any other form of discrimination has no place in the festival.

More: [Zurcher Theater Spektakel statement](#)

GREEN NARRATIVES

SHORT DEFINITION

Ways of talking about the green change in theatre.

The medium is the message – your choice of materials or promotional channels should be consistent with the overall green message.

Minimise the number of prints in favour of collective project information.

Choose eco-friendly printing (eco-friendly paper, ink, glue).

Design ecologically – adjust the size to make maximum use of the print area.

Give up promotional gadgets.

Take into account the potential of your local network when communicating your projects.

Publicise your environmental activities and green initiatives.

Ensure the language of communication is clear and therefore inclusive.

Emphasise the importance of taking small steps, consider that the actions of individuals can be important and causal.

Design your website according to WCAG standards, generating a low carbon footprint (e.g. by limiting the number of photos, videos or animations).

HOW TO
PROCEED?

EXAMPLES

OF

STRATEGIES

→ Create a tab about ecology on your organisation's website. Provide information on green initiatives, projects or pro-environmental regulations of the institution. This will send a positive message to your audience.

→ Choose the narrative strategy you will use to tell the story of ecological change that is appropriate to the nature of your institution. It is not always necessary to talk about a disaster in catastrophic terms. Sometimes it is useful to inject a little humour and enjoyment into promoting pro-environmental attitudes.

PLEASE NOTE!

The greening of institutions is a process. Describing it at each stage along the road is worthwhile, such communication is more motivating – because it is authentic, rather than perfect.

HELPFUL HINTS

Programmes and practices for tolerance, fostering diversity and social inclusion are part of green thinking. Make sure that your institution's activities are friendly not just to the planet but to people with all their diverse needs.

GREEN NARRATIVES – EXAMPLES

We Hear You – A Climate Archive
Dramaten
(Stockholm, Sweden)

Inspired by Greta Thunberg's urgent question 'Can you hear me?', the project aims to amplify and record for future generations how today's young people experience changes in the Earth's fundamental forces. *We Hear You – A Climate Archive* is a two-year series of several international performances and the launch of a digital platform for climate storytelling. In addition to public programmes, the project included student engagement at Georgetown University.

[More](#)

National Theatre Wales,
(Cardiff, United Kingdom)

The National Theatre Wales without a permanent home is a theatre committed to and open to diversity, as evidenced by the productions, projects and events they present and the language they use to communicate with their audiences – direct and purposeful in breaking down the barrier between institution and viewers, e.g. 'It's a huge undertaking. We're not perfect. But we're trying.' or 'It doesn't matter who you are or where you're from, how long you've been here or how you speak. We're yours. Wales is queer, it's trans, it's Deaf, it's disabled, it's neurodivergent, it's working class, it's Global Majority. Wales is all of us.'

[More](#)

Neumarkt Theater
(Zurich, Switzerland)

From the 2020/2021 season, the Neumarkt – along with the Gessnerallee, Theater Winkelwiese, Tanzhaus Zürich and Fabriktheater Rote Fabrik – introduced a system of self-setting ticket prices by the audience. Short of cash this month? Undecided whether it's worth it or not? Neumarkt believes such a pricing model to be simpler, fairer and more transparent, because what is cheap for one person is expensive for another. None of the three prices correlate with the location of the venue, value or production costs – the optional price structure is an invitation to visitors to decide for themselves which price best suits their personal situation.

[More](#)

Fast Familiar
[formerly fanSHEN]
(United Kingdom)

The organisation invited spectators to promote one of its theatre productions, *Cheese*. They were tasked with exercising in gyms on special machines that converted muscle work into electrical energy that was transported in ultra-capacitors to the performance venue to provide electricity for the show. The participants received a discount on tickets determined by the amount of input energy expended.

[More](#)

BUILDING

SHORT DEFINITION

infrastructure solutions which reduce energy and water consumption and minimise negative impacts.

HOW TO PROCEED?

Replace lighting with LEDs and **install** motion sensors in stairwells, corridors, bathrooms.

Sign a contract with a renewable energy supplier.

Insulate (roofs, walls, windows) to reduce heat loss and/or protect the building from overheating.

Use programmable thermostats and building management systems.

Inspect your air conditioning system regularly so that it does not use too much energy.

Use energy-efficient equipment (A+++ rating, Energy Star).

Connect electronic appliances to power strips so they can be switched off collectively.

Invest in an energy-efficient server room.

Invest in RES (renewable energy sources).

Install aerators and/or motion sensors and water meters on taps and showers.

Install a rainwater or grey water recovery system.

Support biodiversity (green roofs, swift towers, green surroundings, etc.).

PLEASE NOTE!

Achieving zero emissions in a theatre is an ambitious goal, but one that is possible thanks to modern technology, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

HELPFUL HINTS

- The ecological aspects of buildings often require specialist knowledge, but small steps like saving energy used for lighting, water or separating waste also make a difference. Even without large investments, everyday measures are within your reach.

EXAMPLES
OF
STRATEGIES

→

Collect rainwater in special tanks. This can be used to water plants, create a rain garden that retains water, stabilises temperature and humidity and reduces the 'urban heat island' effect. The tanks can be combined with a filtration system which uses the water to flush toilets.

→

Heat pump installation. This system uses energy from the ground, outside air or hydrothermal energy. The heat pump reduces CO₂ emissions and produces no exhaust fumes.

– EXAMPLES

**Narodni Divadlo
(Prague, Czechia)**

Back in 2006, Narodni Divadlo embarked on an ambitious energy-saving project with ENESA, which included reducing gas, electricity and water consumption and using renewable energy from the sun and the Vltava River. The modernisation reduced energy costs by more than 50 percent and the details of the project have been described on a dedicated page.

More: [Narodni Divadlo – energy-saving technologies](#)

**The Royal Shakespeare
Company
(London, United Kingdom)**

Since 2021, the theatre has been using electricity from 100 percent renewable sources (solar, wind, biomass). Gas at the main locations is offset by the energy supplier. Solar panels located on some buildings send excess energy to the National Grid, preventing it from being wasted.

More: [RSC our environmental impact](#)

**The Juliusz Słowacki Theatre
(Cracow, Poland)**

Public buildings adhering to a low carbon standard are increasingly common. However, retrofitting historic buildings to this standard, without compromising their character, is difficult, and working on such an idea requires constant collaboration with a conservation officer. The concept of a historic building using zero energy developed by the Malopolska Centre for Energy-Efficient Construction can serve as a model for other historic buildings.

More: [Climate. Eco-Małopolska – A concept of a climate neutral historic building](#) (available in Polish)

NEIGHBOURHOOD

SHORT DEFINITION

Nurturing neighbourly relationships and caring for the welfare of plants and animals.

Get to know your neighbours: local communities, institutions, organisations, build local collaborations and coalitions.

Notice the plants and animals coexisting in your immediate surroundings and look after them.

Listen to the voice and needs of local communities (including non-human).

Make the surroundings a welcoming place, fit for leisure and recreation.

HOW TO
PROCEED?

Reduce parking spaces to increase space for recreation.

Stop (excessive) grass cutting, leaf and branch collection, tree cutting.

Take care of old trees and plant and nurture young trees.

Increase the permeability of the ground.

Initiate the creation of community and water gardens.

Initiate the establishment of composters and composting prisms.

Use the services of **local entrepreneurs**.

EXAMPLES

OF

STRATEGIES

→ If you have green space and there are people in your team who are interested in gardening, it is worth enabling them to pursue this passion at work and set up a community garden. Doing the gardening together integrates the employees. However, it is important that the responsibility for the garden is collective and does not overburden one person.

→ It is worth organising a meeting, workshop or nature walk for the team. This is an excellent way to integrate, but also to strengthen the environmental awareness of the employees.

PLEASE NOTE!

Local coalitions, partnerships and networks often set their ambitions high. Meanwhile, the very process of getting to know each other and being open to sharing knowledge and resources builds rewarding neighbourly relationships.

HELPFUL HINTS ●

● Looking after the natural environment around the institution is an act of caring not only for the flora and fauna, but also for the well-being of those who work at and visit the institution, as well as fostering a pro-environmental sensibility.

NEIGHBOURHOOD – EXAMPLES

Nowy Teatr (Warsaw, Poland)

In 2020, Nowy Teatr conducted an online vote among the neighbourhood community on how to develop the space around the theatre building. The idea of creating a flower meadow was the most popular, ahead of a proposal for a community vegetable garden and a refurbished children's playground. The New Square became the starting point for a public programme dedicated to biodiversity in the city. It consisted of meetings with naturalists, walks, workshops and sound regenerations.

More about the project: [New Square](#)

Narodni Divadlo (Prague, Czechia)

In 2015, Prague's National Theatre joined the ranks of institutions committed to urban beekeeping. The bees are looked after by a beekeeper employed by the theatre, who talks about the life of bees, demonstrates the beekeeping craft and offers tastings of honey produced by the 'national bees' at special meetings.

[More](#)

Biennial of Contemporary Arts (BoCA) (Lisbon, Portugal)

BoCA is an organisation which carries out transdisciplinary art projects, including actively involving the public and local communities. For the past 10 years, it has been implementing The Defense of Nature project, directly inspired by Joseph Beuys' work 7000 Oaks, realised in 1982 in Kassel. The model of this project involves the collaboration of local communities as well as the artistic and academic community around new artistic and conceptual creations (projects, exhibitions, debates, events) and new tree plantings.

[More](#)

MEASURING CARBON FOOTPRINT

SHORT DEFINITION

uncomplicated calculations concerning the energy and resource consumption of the institution in order to reduce its carbon footprint.

Identify all sources of CO₂ emissions in the institution.

Analyse meters and bills for water, electricity consumption and current supply chains.

Set limits on resource consumption i.e. energy, water (e.g. over one or two years).

Set limits on material consumption: for office supplies, for production of projects and events.

Check out the range of carbon footprint calculators available free of charge [online](#).

HOW TO PROCEED?

Analyse the results to understand which areas of the organisation's operations have the greatest impact on emissions and where changes can be made.

Develop an action plan to reduce your carbon footprint.

Develop a mechanism to monitor and update data to track progress in reducing emissions.

Involve as many staff members as possible in the process.

Liaise with organisations and experts specialising in carbon footprint calculations.

EXAMPLES

OF

STRATEGIES

→

Before using carbon footprint calculators, reinforce competences on the environmental impact of the institution within the team. Sometimes a meeting and discussion is enough, sometimes you will need a workshop led by experts.

PLEASE NOTE!

Not all activities can be measured using the calculator, which is not to say that they do not exploit the time, resources and energy of those performing them. Let us remember the emotional and psychological dimension of work and reproductive labour.

HELPFUL HINTS

Mathematical data visualise the physical footprint of human labour, support the imagination and ground environmental education in facts. The results of a carbon footprint analysis can help to develop strategies.

MEASURING CARBON FOOTPRINT

– EXAMPLES

Arviva Association (Paris, France)

The Arviva Association has produced a free carbon footprint calculator – Seeds – available [here](#). The calculator is tailored to the specifics of performing arts and, in its full version (a simplified version is also available), takes into account indicators such as electricity consumption, maintenance costs, environmental impact, staff and audience mobility, including, among other things, distance and type of transport, freight, catering for staff and audience, costumes and scenery costs, and the digital footprint (i.e. the quality and audience size of video transmissions).

Julie's Bicycle (London, United Kingdom)

CC Tools is a free carbon calculator designed to help cultural organisations record, measure and understand the environmental impact of their venue, office, project, event or festival. The tool tracks data on the consumption of energy, water and materials, environmental costs of travel and transport, or waste generated. New features have also recently been added: a forecasting tool, a return on investment calculator, a carbon budget setting function and the opportunity to create your own custom footprint.

More: [Creative Climate Tools](#)

Creative Carbon Scotland (Edinburgh, United Kingdom)

Creative Carbon Scotland has developed a range of tools to measure, monitor and reduce an organisation's environmental impact, including a carbon budgeting tool to use an organisation's current carbon footprint to forecast and budget carbon emissions in line with climate neutrality guidelines.

[More](#)

