

# Module 1: From Event to Ecosystem

## Understanding Your Real Impact

Training Course on Sustainable & Inclusive Cultural Events

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CASE STUDY

# Opening Scenario – A Real Story

## Anna's Festival — The Facts

Anna organises a small three-day cultural festival in a town of 12,000 inhabitants. The event hosts local musicians, workshops, and food stands.

€28K

Budget

14

Volunteers

800

Visitors/day

She considers her event "small" and "low impact".

## After the Event

- 1.2 tons of mixed waste are collected
- Diesel generators ran 9 hours per day
- No public transport connections were coordinated
- The website was not screen-reader compatible
- Two families left early because there was no quiet area for children with sensory sensitivity
- Tickets were €15 flat rate

❑ Anna did not intend to exclude anyone. She did not intend to generate unnecessary waste. But **intention is not impact.**

# Events as Temporary Ecosystems

Cultural events — even small ones — function as temporary ecosystems. For a few days, they reorganise energy, mobility, consumption, and social participation.

What kind of ecosystem does your event create?

## A cultural event is not just programming. It is:



An energy system



A mobility system



A food supply chain



A communication system



A public space



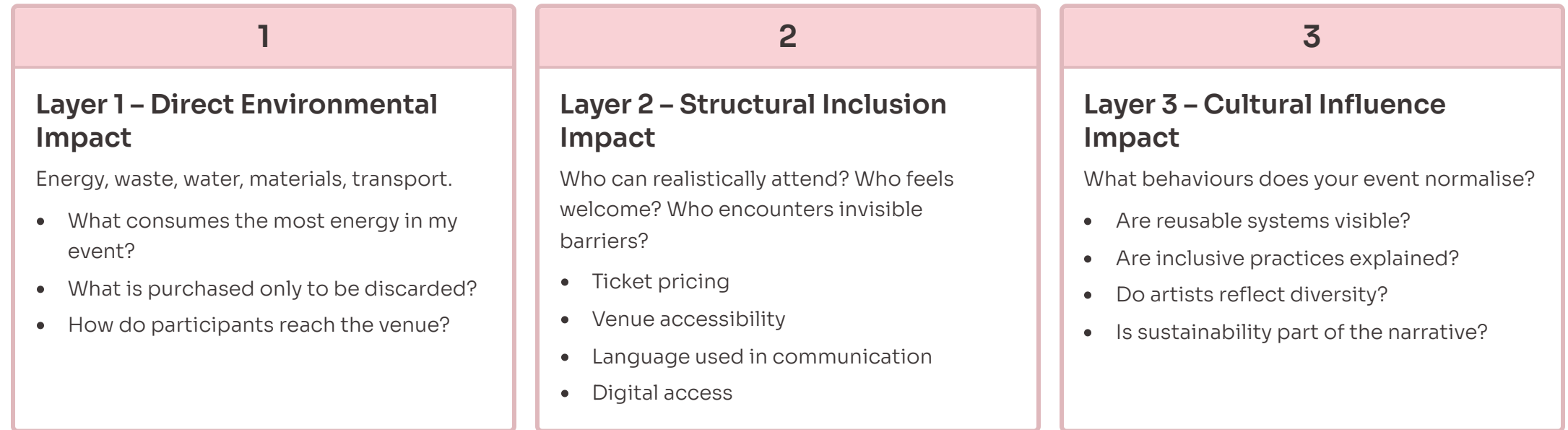
A social filter

When the European Green Deal calls for climate neutrality by 2050 ([European Green Deal](#)) it does not exclude cultural actors. When the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030 calls for full participation in cultural life ([EU Disability Strategy 2021–2030](#)) events become part of the implementation chain.

The question is not: **"Are we big enough to matter?"** The question is: **"Where in this system do we generate impact?"**

# The Three Layers of Impact

To make this practical, we break impact into three layers.



 **Your event is not neutral. It teaches something.**

This aligns with the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026, which recognises culture as a driver for sustainable development: [EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026](#)

EXERCISE

# Guided Self-Assessment Exercise

Deep Version — Take 20 Minutes and  
Answer in Writing



EXERCISE — STEP 1

# Environmental Reality

Describe concretely — **not what you would like to do. What you actually do.**

## Energy

How is electricity produced?

## Waste

How is waste separated?

## Supply Chain

What percentage of suppliers are local?

## Mobility

Is there a mobility strategy?

EXERCISE — STEP 2

# Inclusion Reality

Imagine three people. Describe their **full journey**: buying ticket → arriving → using facilities → participating → leaving. **Where might friction occur?**

<p><b>Person 1</b> A wheelchair user</p>	<p><b>Person 2</b> A parent with a neurodivergent child</p>	<p><b>Person 3</b> A low-income young adult</p>
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Map each of the three people through every stage. Note where friction occurs.

EXERCISE — STEP 3

# Decision Mapping

Identify the decisions with the highest impact. Often these are simple.

## Identify

- One decision that has the **highest environmental impact**
- One decision that has the **highest inclusion impact**

## Common Examples

Lower Impact	Higher Impact
Generator	Grid electricity
Flat ticket price	Tiered pricing
Plastic cups	Deposit system
No quiet area	Small designated zone

# The Responsibility Shift

In many funding frameworks, sustainability and inclusion appear as **horizontal priorities**.

In Erasmus+, they are not thematic extras; they are **structural principles**.

The Programme Guide states that projects must integrate environmental sustainability and inclusion across activities.

1

## Isolated Good Practices

Sustainability and inclusion as optional add-ons

2

## Systemic Integration

Sustainability and inclusion embedded across all activities

❑ Cultural organisers are not expected to be perfect. But they are expected to be **intentional**.

Erasmus+ Programme Guide – Horizontal Priorities: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-a/priorities-of-the-erasmus-programme>

# Reflection: From Event Manager to Ecosystem Designer

Consider this shift:

## Event Manager

"How do I deliver a successful event?"

Focus on logistics, programming, and delivery. The event is the output.

## Ecosystem Designer

"What systems does my event activate?"

Focus on energy, mobility, inclusion, and cultural influence. The event is a system.

📌 This is the conceptual transition of **KULTinclusion**.

EXERCISE

# Final Exercise – Your Responsibility Statement

Write **5–7 sentences** answering the following questions:

## 1 Current Impact

What impact does my event currently generate?

## 2 Strengths


Where am I strongest?

## 3 Structural Weaknesses

Where am I structurally weak?

## 4 Responsibility

What is one responsibility I can no longer ignore?

 **Keep this document.** In Module 6, you will turn it into an Action Plan.

## Closing Thought

# Small events do not have small impact.

They have **concentrated** impact.

### Accidental Impact

Acting without awareness of the systems your event activates

### Intentional Impact

Conscious design of the ecosystem your event creates

The difference between accidental impact and intentional impact is **awareness**.

This course is not about perfection. It is about **conscious design**.

# Module 1 – Key Policy References

The following EU policy frameworks underpin the content of this module. Cultural event organisers are part of the implementation chain for each of these.

## European Green Deal

Climate neutrality by 2050. Cultural actors are not excluded from this obligation.

[https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

## EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030

Full participation in cultural life. Events become part of the implementation chain.

[https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/disability-rights/strategy-rights-persons-disabilities-2021-2030\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/disability-rights/strategy-rights-persons-disabilities-2021-2030_en)

## EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026

Culture recognised as a driver for sustainable development.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/publications/eu-work-plan-for-culture-2023-2026/>

## Erasmus+ Programme Guide – Horizontal Priorities

Environmental sustainability and inclusion must be integrated across all project activities — not treated as thematic extras.

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-a/priorities-of-the-erasmus-programme>



# Layer 1 in Depth – Direct Environmental Impact

Energy, waste, water, materials, and transport are the most measurable dimensions of your event's environmental footprint.

## Key Questions to Ask

- What consumes the most energy in my event?
- What is purchased only to be discarded?
- How do participants reach the venue?

## Anna's Case — Direct Environmental Data

- 1.2 tons of mixed waste collected
- Diesel generators ran 9 hours per day
- No public transport connections coordinated

# Layer 2 in Depth – Structural Inclusion Impact

Who can realistically attend? Who feels welcome? Who encounters invisible barriers?



## Ticket Pricing

A flat rate of €15 excludes low-income participants. Tiered pricing creates genuine access.



## Venue Accessibility

Physical access for wheelchair users, families with pushchairs, and people with mobility impairments.



## Language in Communication

Is your website screen-reader compatible? Is information available in plain language or multiple languages?



## Digital Access

Can people without smartphones or reliable internet access still participate fully?

- In Anna's case: the website was not screen-reader compatible, and two families left early because there was no quiet area for children with sensory sensitivity.

# Layer 3 in Depth – Cultural Influence Impact

What behaviours does your event normalise? Your event is not neutral. It teaches something.

## Questions to Consider

- Are reusable systems visible?
- Are inclusive practices explained?
- Do artists reflect diversity?
- Is sustainability part of the narrative?

## Why This Layer Matters

Cultural events shape norms. When reusable cups are visible and explained, attendees carry that behaviour beyond the event. When diverse artists perform, representation becomes normalised.

This is the layer most often overlooked — and the one with the longest-lasting impact.

EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026 recognises culture as a driver for sustainable development: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/publications/eu-work-plan-for-culture-2023-2026/>

# The Three Layers – Summary Overview

Layer	Focus Area	Key Questions
<b>Layer 1 – Direct Environmental</b>	Energy, waste, water, materials, transport	What consumes the most energy? What is discarded? How do participants travel?
<b>Layer 2 – Structural Inclusion</b>	Who can attend, who feels welcome, invisible barriers	Is pricing accessible? Is the venue accessible? Is communication inclusive?
<b>Layer 3 – Cultural Influence</b>	Behaviours normalised, narratives communicated	Are reusable systems visible? Do artists reflect diversity? Is sustainability in the narrative?

❏ These three layers are not separate checklists. They are interconnected dimensions of the same ecosystem. A decision in one layer always affects the others.

# Erasmus+ and Horizontal Priorities

## What the Programme Guide States

Projects must integrate **environmental sustainability** and **inclusion** across activities.

These are not thematic extras. They are **structural principles**.

This reflects a broader European policy shift:

- 1 Isolated good practices
- 2 Systemic integration

## What This Means for Cultural Organisers

Cultural organisers are not expected to be perfect.

But they are expected to be **intentional**.

Sustainability and inclusion must be embedded in how you plan, budget, communicate, and evaluate — not added at the end.

Erasmus+ Programme Guide – Horizontal Priorities: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-a/priorities-of-the-erasmus-programme>



# The Conceptual Transition of KULTinclusion

## Event Manager → Ecosystem Designer

### Event Manager Asks

"How do I deliver a successful event?"

- Focus on logistics and programming
- The event is the output
- Success = delivery



### Ecosystem Designer Asks

"What systems does my event activate?"

- Focus on energy, mobility, inclusion, cultural influence
- The event is a system
- Success = conscious design

This is the conceptual transition of KULTinclusion. It begins with awareness and ends with intentional action.

MODULE 1 COMPLETE

# Your Responsibility Statement

## Final Exercise — Write 5–7 Sentences

01

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What impact does my event currently generate?

02

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Where am I strongest?

03


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Where am I structurally weak?

04

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What is one responsibility I can no longer ignore?

 **Keep this document.** In Module 6, you will turn it into an Action Plan.

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**Small events do not have small impact. They have concentrated impact.**

This course is not about perfection. It is about **conscious design**.