

Volume 3
Case Studies

CHAPTER 12

A Comparative
Analysis of the Ukraine
Solidarity Residencies
Programme (Finland)
and TEJA, Network
of Cultural Spaces in
Support of Emergency
Situations (Spain)



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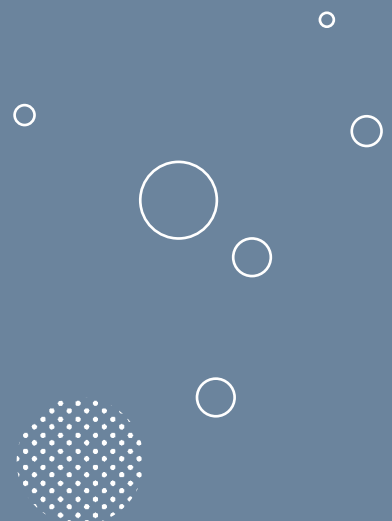
CHAPTER 12

A Comparative Analysis of the Ukraine Solidarity Residencies Programme (Finland) and TEJA, Network of Cultural Spaces in Support of Emergency Situations (Spain)

by Houari Bouchenak

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In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Finnish organisations launched the Ukraine Solidarity Residencies in March 2022. This programme began modestly, pooling resources to host displaced Ukrainian artists and their families. It has since grown into a collaborative network, balancing flexibility with sustainability. In parallel, Spanish cultural actors established TEJA in May 2022 as a gesture of solidarity. Initially focused on Ukraine, TEJA soon extended its support to artists in Palestine and Iraq. Unlike Finland's residency model, TEJA functions as a dynamic network of institutions across Spain. Both initiatives aim to safeguard artistic practice while addressing urgent humanitarian needs. They highlight the role of cultural institutions in offering safe havens and fostering continuity. This comparative analysis explores their objectives, structures, challenges, and potential trajectories.

Background

Following the mobilisation of a group of Finnish arts organisations with a desire to create momentum to support and assist Ukrainian artists during the early stages of the large-scale invasion of Ukraine, the [Ukrainian Solidarity Residencies Programme](#) for Ukrainian artists was launched in March 2022. When the residency programme was launched, it was modest, starting with five organisations that simply pooled their resources. In the first year, all the residencies involved provided free residency spaces. Everyone in the cultural network in Finland did everything they could to support the artists they were able to host. The current partners of the programme are: Archipelago Art Residency in Korpo ([AARK](#)), [Art Center Salmela](#), [Fairres](#), [Goethe-Institut Finland](#), Helsinki International Artist Programme ([HIAP](#)), [Nelimarkka Museum](#), [Pro Artibus Foundation](#), Shaulis Art House (SAH), The Finnish Illustration Association [Kuvittajat](#), the

Finnish [Ministry of Education and Culture](#) and the [Nordic Culture Point](#).

With very similar goals, the TEJA programme was initiated by three independent spaces in Madrid: [Nave Oporto](#), [Paisanaje](#), and Planta Alta ([hablarenarte](#)). It began as a gesture of solidarity from the artistic and cultural sector in response to the emergency triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and has since continued working with people and organisations in other emergency contexts, such as in Palestine and Iraq, forging new alliances and incorporating public and private organisations into the network. Today, the Network of Cultural Spaces in Support of Emergency Situations is made up of 15 public and private institutions and independent organisations from the cultural sector in Madrid, Barcelona, and Bilbao.

Objectives

Ukraine Solidarity Residencies Programme offers residencies and accommodation for Ukrainian and Ukraine-based artists and art professionals that have been affected by the war in Ukraine. The aspirations of the collaboration are to

promote solidarity by establishing sustainable support networks and finding the means for Ukrainian artists to continue their practices. From the outset, the main objectives set by the network that was formed for this programme

were flexibility, longevity, and sustainability. They took as their model organisations that supported artists from conflict zones, but whose residencies were very short-term. The flexibility of the Ukraine Solidarity Residencies Programme can be seen in the way in which the residences welcomed the artists, offering them, for example, the opportunity to bring their families with them without setting a time limit on their stay at the start of the programme. In the second year of the programme, they set a limit of 12 months for support for each artist. This is partly because once this period is over, social services take over. This allows artists to benefit more from social services and fully integrate into Finnish society. This programme brings together around 12 different organisations. There are six residency organisations, and the others are funding bodies or associations that support artists.

TEJA offers a residency programme in Spain for artists and cultural professionals from conflict zones. During their stay in Spain, residents receive accommodation, legal and psychological support, and access to a network of organisations and professionals with whom they can share, grow, and move forward with their creative projects. Their goal is to provide a safe and stimulating environment where artists can continue their work despite adverse circumstances, while also creating spaces for dialogue that ensure freedom of expression through collaborative activities, both in Spain and with international partners. Currently, one of the main focuses of the TEJA programme is the support provided to Palestinian artists by the staff of the host institutions, offering them the opportunity to be supported during their stay, both personally and artistically, so that they can regain stability and balance in their lives.

Funding and resources

The Finnish network of organisations receives funding for the residency programme for Ukrainian artists from the Ministry of Arts and Culture, as well as various sources of private funding over the years. Currently, they are also funded by Nordic Culture Point, the Ministry of Arts and Culture, as well as small funds from certain artists' associations and the Goethe-Institut Finland. At the beginning of the programme, they received funds from private foundations, but they no longer have any private donors at this time.

TEJA has been sustained through the shared financial efforts of all the public and private institutions and independent organisations that make up the network. Since its founding, different fundraising methods have been implemented, ranging from specific donations from some of the participating institutions to solidarity sales of artworks donated by a group of artists. Currently, TEJA also receives essential support from the Spanish [Ministry of Culture](#).

Target groups and conditions

One of the priorities of the members of the Ukraine Solidarity Residencies Programme network is to take into account the living conditions of artists, without taking expertise for granted and without imposing requirements regarding the nature or quality of artistic practice. Priority is given to artists belonging to minority groups, with no requirements in terms of production of public

sharing. The selection and allocation process for residencies is based on the suitability of the residency for the artist, as well as other factors, in order to place the artist in the residency that will be most beneficial to them.

TEJA currently targets Palestinian artists and cultural practitioners. Applicants can apply

to an open call launched by the programme, which is simplified in terms of procedure and documentation required and which offers them a three-month residency. Applicants can be selected in different ways, depending on the quality of their work, the risk involved, or their first visa application. They may also be selected directly by the Ministry of Culture if there has been previous collaboration between the Spanish

Ministry and the Palestinian artist. There is also a third possibility for Palestinian artists to be selected, namely by an appointed Situated Agent who is detached from the network of Spanish associations and who is based in Palestine itself (in order to be as close as possible to the realities of the artists and to propose lists of participants to the TEJA network). These residencies are located in Barcelona, Madrid, and Bilbao.

Types of support provided

The Ukraine Solidarity Residence programme offers residents accommodation and studios that vary depending on location and capacity, and the programme can host several artists at once to form a kind of integrated community. Other forms of support offered by the programme include networking events, artist talks, workshops, and events at HIAP and other venues in Helsinki and the surrounding areas, so that local communities can also get involved in the programme. Additionally, HIAP organises other events with these artists, such as open studios at least once a year. The organisations in the Ukraine Solidarity Residence programme network provide Ukrainian artists with a list of information resources and places where they can access mental health support and care services. Well-being workshops with group sessions are organised, with a focus on mental well-

being. These workshops are highly appreciated by participants.

Concerned about the mental health of Palestinian artists, TEJA also offers psychological support to its residents, but few request these therapeutic sessions. At the same time, TEJA offers Palestinian residents several forms of support, ranging from accommodation and a place for artistic creation, connections with the network of institutions and professionals in the art sector at the national and international level, and support from local agents to help artists find their bearings in Spain. It can be noted that TEJA's support begins with involvement in the evacuation process for Palestinian artists in emergency situations, and that the two programmes established in Spain and Finland provide artists with legal and financial assistance.

Monitoring and evaluation

Once a year, the various organisations that are part of the Ukrainian Solidarity Residencies Programme network send a feedback form to Ukrainian artists in residence in order to gather information about their specific needs and areas for improvement, which the organisations then make available the following year. The form includes questions about the support provided by the residency programme and the programme coordinator, as well as open-

ended questions. This is a way of evaluating and adapting the programme to the context. Feedback is also gathered at events that are more accessible to a wider audience, which are organised in order to obtain in-depth information that would not otherwise be available, as well as allowing artists to get to know the different members of the community individually, which also has an impact on the nature of the feedback.

During the residencies organised by TEJA, the cultural managers accompanying the Palestinian artists continuously collect feedback from the artists at various stages of the residency process, taking into account the context and needs of each artist. This process requires the agents to

be more involved and attentive on a daily basis in order to gather and collect information relating to the artists' feedback. The TEJA organisations are keen to set up an evaluation process with the artists after the end of the residencies, so they can better meet the needs of artists in future editions.

Challenges and limitations

For both programmes, resources are a constant challenge. In Finland, funding for the programme is significantly lower than it was after the first two years, but it has been maintained after the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the Nordic Cultural Point continued this programme for Ukrainian artists and artists from conflict zones. The organisations participating in the solidarity programme are keen to obtain additional funding to ensure the long-term viability of the project, but also to enable artists from other conflict zones to benefit from these residencies. Meetings between the heads of the organisations participating in the Finnish network have been organised for this purpose, and a request has been made to Nordic Culture Point to support other artists and to continue supporting former artists¹. There is a limit to what these organisations in the Finnish network can plan in advance, as they do not have regular funding to rely on. The workload on staff is also heavy, as the programme has suffered budget cuts that have led to the suspension of 60% of jobs.

This workload is also evident in the small organisations that are part of the Spanish network. TEJA is made up of 15 organisations, including large institutions such as the [Reina Sofia Museum](#), [Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona \(MACBA\)](#) and [Casa de Velázquez](#), which enjoy high visibility, salaried staff and even a marketing team. However, the smaller associations or organisations—such as [Moving Artists](#), which has only two people, one

of whom is a volunteer—who take care of the association's activities, as well as setting up and monitoring some of the TEJA residencies, are under more pressure. There is an imbalance in terms of the size and profile of institutions, where the way in which these residences are managed and controlled inevitably differs.

TEJA operates with a small team of just two employees: a coordinator and a field agent. The coordinator faces a substantial workload, managing relationships and operations among the member organisations—a challenge similarly experienced by the coordinator of The Solidarity Programme for Ukrainian Artists. The field agent, currently an artist with firsthand experience of the programme's operational context, plays a crucial role on the ground. In Palestine, the field agent is an artist who previously worked for the Spanish Ministry of Culture for two years, fulfilling monitoring and mentoring roles. His deep familiarity with the local context in Palestine is invaluable. Beyond managing the call for applications, he also contributes to recommending artists for the TEJA residency programme. Both the coordinator and the local agent are subjected to significant emotional demands, which has led to a high level of emotional exhaustion—a challenge already evident in their roles.

It has been noted that there is also a gap between the time when funds are received, which is marked by delays, and the implementation and launch of TEJA programme residencies. The

1 Many of the artists the network worked with for 12 months also received funding in Finland for one, two or even three years after their residency.

project sometimes starts before certain structures are properly in place or protocols are properly defined. This makes the project somewhat precarious, as it needs time to get organised before welcoming artists. Projects such as TEJA

are difficult to defend to the Spanish government, donors and founders. These projects are marked by the urgency of the context, so they require institutions to react quickly.

Potential developments

The solidarity programme for Ukrainian artists, supported by the Finnish network, stands out for its flexibility, longevity and sustainability, according to Project Manager Dana Neilson, who believes these are the most important elements for the project's development and continuity. The network also ensures that they take the time to reassess and modify the programme according to the artists' needs. The maximum length of stay for Ukrainian artists in residence is still 12 months, but the situation is changing for several reasons, including: because far fewer people are applying for the residency programme; because many more people have left Ukraine and are living elsewhere; or because other artists are in Ukraine and wish to remain there. The length of the residency was previously quite long, but has now been reduced to three or six months, depending on the situation. There are currently six different residency hosts, located in different parts of Finland.

As part of the development and monitoring of this programme, monthly meetings are held between all organisations in the Finnish network. During the first two years, these meetings took place weekly, as the programme was new and the organisations needed to support each other due to their lack of experience working with artists in these circumstances. All decisions relating to the programme are taken by the entire network and not by a single person. This has also helped to build the project in a collaborative way. These meetings are a place of learning and sharing for the representatives of the organisations, which has been very beneficial for them both at the project level and on a personal level. This space creates closeness between people and organisations and helps to facilitate progress

through the different phases of the programme, thus ensuring the growth and continuation of the project. One development which is of particular interest is the sharing knowledge with different territories in order to promote learning and practice, which happened with the Swedish Artistic Residency Network ([SWAN](#)), the Estonian Artists' Association ([EAA](#)) and small organisations in six different countries, all of which have some experience of collaborating with Ukrainian artists, particularly during this period of conflict. HIAP also wishes to open up broader opportunities for collaboration outside Finland.

TEJA organisations are already considering how to maintain this momentum in the long term, with a desire to establish international collaborations with other organisations in multiple territories, particularly those territories that have artists considered to be at risk. However, some of the current challenges facing the institutions in the TEJA network, which is also linked to the geopolitical context in Palestine, is to ensure the evacuation of Palestinian artists and the smooth running of residencies and support for artists. This urgent action must be achieved while maintaining stability in terms of participation in network meetings and ensuring the visibility of actions, all with a very small team, many of whom are volunteers (in the case of the smaller organisations in the network).

It is still necessary for the organisations in the Finnish and Spanish networks to generate interest in these types of programmes, which remains a significant challenge, especially as general and media attention shifts elsewhere, making it difficult to maintain the interest of governments.

Finland and Spain provide significant support to people of Ukraine and Palestine respectively, which has prompted governments to fund the Ukrainian Solidarity Residencies Programme, TEJA, and other initiatives. However, the challenge remains to ensure the sustainability of such programmes once the political context has changed. TEJA and the Ukrainian Solidarity Residencies Programme were created with high expectations, in the sense that urgent action was needed to offer an alternative to evacuated artists, but this evacuation and residency process required significant funding. The alternative for sustaining this type of programme would be to increase collaboration with several organisations in different territories, resizing the scope and scale of projects, taking into account the time required.

In order to alleviate the emotional burden of the TEJA programme on its staff, Ixone Sádaba, Director and co-Founder of Moving Artists, suggests setting up a task rotation system, in which, every six or 12 months those involved in the project change positions. In her view, being part of a large network can be negative in some respects, as it can be more difficult to reach a consensus. Hence the rotation proposal, so that everyone can conserve their energy and maintain a clear view of the situation. Medical assistance and financial support for their staff is also essential in order to carry out the programme. Working for free for a long period of time has a negative impact on the stability of the lives and health of the staff of small associations. Residences are one thing, international protection and evacuations are another, and trying to manage all three at once is very difficult, says Sádaba.

In a programme such as TEJA, it is essential to consider having profiles of people specialising in administration, but also others with artistic experience, so that they can provide a clearer vision of the expectations of the Palestinian creatives being hosted. It would also be beneficial

to have a lawyer included in the team so that they can provide a legal perspective when dealing with various situations involving artists or institutions.

Ixone Sádaba says: 'Experience is a legacy in itself. And we defend artistic practice without thinking about the object with the practice itself. It's true, we consider that the legacy itself is something that is also very important to us. Art and culture in general can serve as a bridge, as an escape, and generally, people tend to see this in a negative light, but we think it's a positive tool, that art can be used ... also as a tool for mobility, because once a person gets their first visa, it's easier to get the second one.'

For Dana Neilson, the success of the Finnish residencies programme can be measured in tangible, concrete terms: the settlement of several Ukrainian families in the country. This demonstrates the current stability of these individuals and the possibility for artists to regain balance in their lives, and has been made possible mainly thanks to the longevity of the residency, which has played an important, even decisive, role. The fact that they offer not only a living and working space, but also a work grant or a means of subsistence. Another important factor in the success of this programme, as well as that of TEJA, is the open-mindedness of the community where the residency is located, which has welcomed and helped Ukrainian and Palestinian artists and their families in Finland and Spain. These programmes also enable the community to evolve and open up, as the residency is not seen as something fixed and closed, but rather as an integral part of the community, which gets involved by supporting the residents and offering them opportunities for integration. The community is not only linked to the people who are part of a territory, but also to the important role of the artistic community in the programmes, which stimulates sharing between the artist and the programme, thus contributing greatly to the latter's success.

About the author

Houari BOUCHENAK is a curator and researcher. A member and co-founder of Collective 220 (Algeria) and founder and coordinator of La Maison de La Photo (Tlemcen, Algeria), he has been collaborating since 2007 with several cultural institutions in the Mediterranean basin on the development and coordination of artistic and cultural projects, including currently Jiser in Barcelona. After obtaining a degree in industrial chemistry from the University of Tlemcen, he continued his studies in applied cultural and intercultural projects (IPCI), then in research and creation in fine arts at the University of Bordeaux-Montaigne (France). He currently devotes part of his time to research, questioning the notions of 'reality' and 'hospitality' through images and text, while pursuing doctoral studies at the University of Barcelona. His work focuses primarily on what constitutes the human condition through temporal spaces marked by memory, displacement, and traces.

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To fully appreciate the breadth of the research on The Situation of At-Risk and Displaced Artists and Culture Professionals, please do consider reading the [other chapters](#) gathered in this third report, as well as the first two reports available for download: [Intersecting Temporalities: At-Risk and Displaced Artists in Transition – Volume 1 Scoping Review](#) and [Policy and Practice in the EU: Pathways, Impediments, and Patchwork Solutions – Volume 2 Cultural Policy Analysis](#).

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