



# HOPE HIVE

**THINKING PEACE EDITION**

**FINAL  
REPORT**



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**ABOUT**

**HOPE**

**HIVE**



# WHAT IS HOPE HIVE?

'Hope Hive' brings people together to address human rights and social justice issues through the arts. It connects artists and thinking partners from around the world to build their capacity, expand their knowledge, and share their creative practice and experience, at festivals and in their communities. The model focuses on fostering solidarity between participants and engagement with communities, creating a nurturing space for learning and exchange, and following a process based on care and healing.

**COLLECTIVE  
SOLIDARITY**

**NURTURING  
SPACE**

**HEALING  
PROCESS**

# VALUES AND IMPACT

'Hope Hive' aims to:

- Create a community of practice and thought on human rights and social justice through arts and culture
- Generate new capacity for artists, thinking partners, and festivals
- Develop effective communication through a dialogue-based and accessible 'Hope Hive' methodology
- Nurture a system of sharing and care within the project process, and for the communities and festivals involved
- Engage with wider public on issues related to human rights and social justice, and the role of arts and culture

## HOW DOES IT WORK?



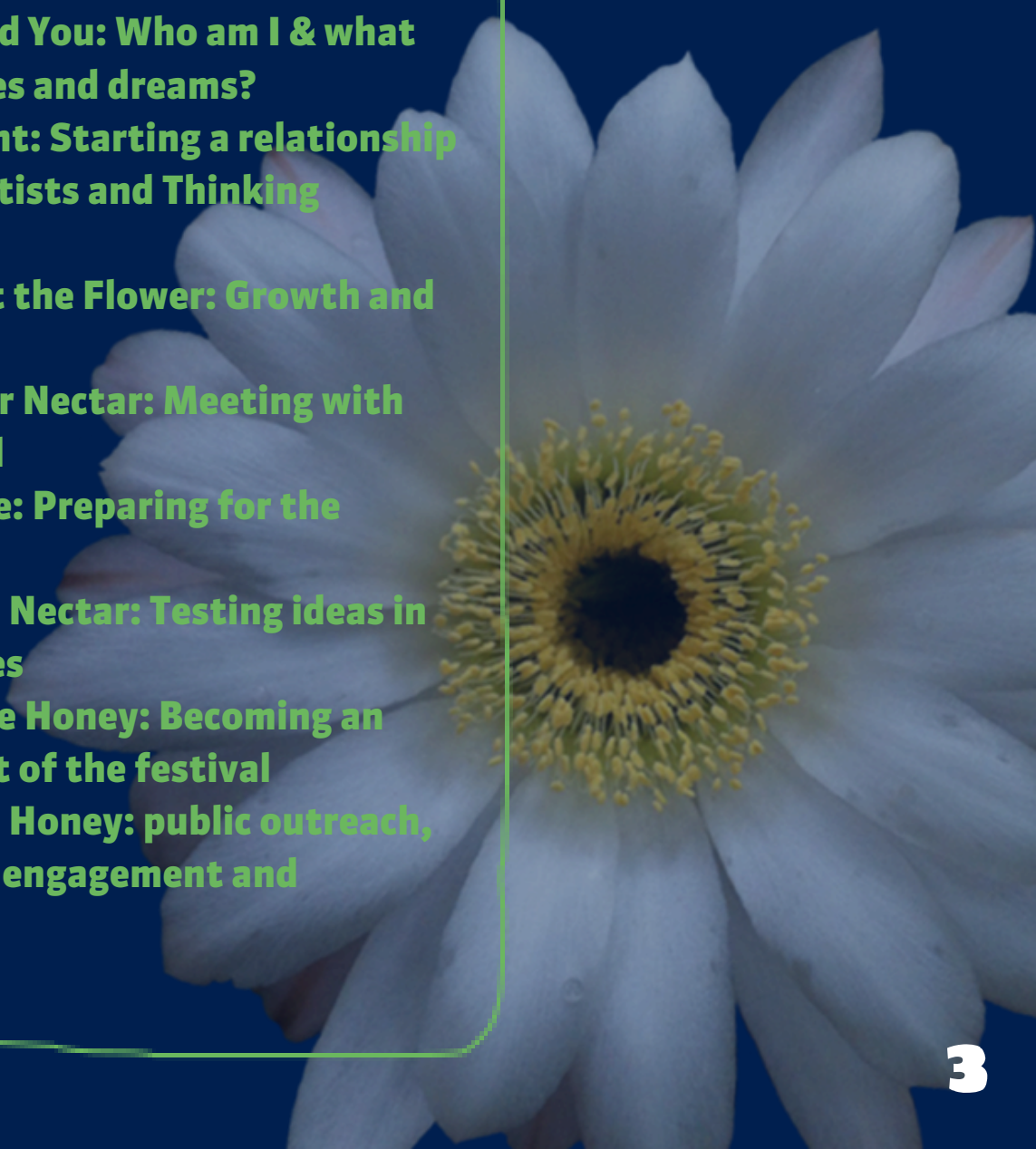
Festival artists are selected and paired with Thinking Partners from IMPACT's global community. Together, they join an initial online gathering to meet each other and learn about Hope Hive methodology. They are then paired up, and take part in online exchanges every two weeks following the Hope Hive methodology, before participating in the festival and a final gathering. Community engagement is embedded throughout, with additional expert sessions.

The **bee** is a symbol for the artists and thinking partners. The **flower** symbolises their Hope Hive journey, and where they will extract the pollen and nectar. The **hive** is the festival, where they will bring back the fruits of their labour and create honey together. The **honey pot** is to be shared with wider communities through online and direct engagement.

# HOPE HIVE METHODOLOGY

Artists and Thinking Partners follow the Hope Hive methodology, which has been designed in a modular way with 8 stages, including guiding questions to explore together and creative tasks to complete. The methodology uses the visual concept of bees, flowers and a hive to take participants on a metaphorical journey.

Additional optional webinars are on offer, organised by IMPACT.

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- 1. The Hive and You: Who am I & what are my hopes and dreams?**
  - 2. Taking Flight: Starting a relationship between Artists and Thinking Partners**
  - 3. Scoping out the Flower: Growth and enrichment**
  - 4. Foraging for Nectar: Meeting with the Festival**
  - 5. Flight Home: Preparing for the festival**
  - 6. Sharing the Nectar: Testing ideas in communities**
  - 7. Creating the Honey: Becoming an organic part of the festival**
  - 8. Sharing the Honey: public outreach, community engagement and reflection**

# MATCHING OF ARTISTS AND THINKING PARTNERS

Artists are selected by the participating festival, based on a set of criteria:

- their performance or installation is in development
- they are addressing a human rights or social justice issue
- they have an appetite to develop their thinking and creative practice
- they have an interest in connecting internationally

Artists are invited to fill in an online survey to gauge their needs and interests and help pair them with a Thinking Partner.

Thinking partners are selected from IMPACT's global community. They could be an artist, cultural professional, community worker, human rights activist and/or academic from another part of the world.

Ideally, the artists and thinking partners do not know each other personally, so that they can learn from each other and develop a bond throughout their 'Hope Hive' journey.



**HOPE HIVE**

**THINKING**

**PEACE**



# HOPE HIVE

## ‘THINKING PEACE’ EDITION

In 2025 IMPACT piloted the Hope Hive on the theme ‘Thinking Peace’, in partnership with DAH Theatre and The Festival Academy. This edition took place January to June 2025, culminating in the Arts and Human Rights Festival, 10-13 June 2025 in Belgrade, Serbia.

Three artists have been selected by DAH Theatre to take part in the Hope Hive. They came from different artistic disciplines and personal backgrounds, and addressed issues related to gender equality, societal resilience, and post-conflict healing.

They have been paired with three Thinking Partners from IMPACT’s global community, from the USA, Cyprus and the Philippines. They each brought a wealth of experience as talented creatives and deep thinkers.



## **IVANA MILENOVIĆ POPOVIĆ (ARTIST)**

Ivana is an actress, performer and manager in culture from Belgrade, Serbia. She is in the final year of her Ph.D. in Performing Arts at the Belgrade Dance Institute. She holds a Master's degree from the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policy and Management (2013) at the University of Arts in Belgrade and Lyon. She is a member of DAH Theatre since 2008.

Ivana has participated, performed, and held theatre workshops in numerous local, regional, and international festivals, and conferences in the fields of contemporary theatre, cultural management, intercultural dialogue, politics of memory, and peacebuilding through art.

Her research dives into contemporary theatre, theatre for social change, transdisciplinary theory of performing arts (focusing on acting), peacebuilding through theatre, women's rights, and gender equality. As a dedicated advocate for human rights through art, she is searching for new opportunities to connect, network, exchange, and explore how art can serve as a powerful tool for transformation.



## **ELLADA EVANGELOU (THINKING PARTNER)**

Born and raised in Cyprus, Ellada is an interdisciplinary scholar and arts practitioner. She has studied in Cyprus and the United States (BA in English, MFA in Dramaturgy, PhD in Theatre Studies / Cultural Studies)

She is interested in the relationship between theatre/dramaturgy and identity, and works in the intersection of activism and scholarship in post-colonial, post-conflict communities. She is co-founder of Rooftop Theatre in Cyprus, collaborates with IMPACT and Lemesos 2030, and a 2020-21 Global Fellow of the International Society for the Performing Arts. She was the Global Faculty in Residency at Gallatin, NYU and the Artistic and Executive Director of the Buffer Fringe Performing Arts Festival 2019-22.



## OLGA MURASHOVA (ARTIST)

"I am Olga Murashova, a choreographer and movement researcher. I was born and raised in Pomorye, a northern region of Russia by the White Sea. My dance journey began with classical training, but in my twenties, I discovered contemporary dance and movement as a way of exploring the world.

For years, I worked in theater and taught dance at an arts college, yet I often felt constrained by institutional structures that left little room for true creative exploration. Then, in 2022, the war changed everything. Driven by my anti-war stance and a deep longing for freedom—not just political, but the freedom to think, speak, and move—I left Russia. My journey took me through several countries before I settled in Belgrade, Serbia, where I am now pursuing a master's degree.

I see movement as a language—a means to express and process the questions that history has placed before me. Through dance, I am searching for my voice and a new way of belonging in the world."



## GERMAINE INGRAM (THINKING PARTNER)

Germaine Ingram is a Philadelphia PA-based jazz percussive dancer, choreographer, song writer, vocal/dance improviser, oral historian, and cultural strategist and archivist. She creates evening-length pieces that explore themes related to history, collective memory and social justice, and designs and directs arts/culture projects that explore and illuminate community cultural history. She collaborates with artists from diverse cultural traditions and artistic disciplines, including jazz/experimental music composers, site-specific/informed choreographers, dance and vocal improvisers, African Diasporic culture specialists, and visual/media artists. Her recent writing is represented by a chapter she co-authored with Dr. Toni Shapiro-Phim for an international academic publication on the arts and human rights. She collaborated with musician/composer/curator Alex B. Shaw and filmmaker Aidan Un on a media installation for the 2023/2024 group exhibition Bahia Reverb, sponsored by the California African American Museum. She is part of an international cohort of improvisational vocalists and movers in Murmuration, a new performance ensemble led by improvisational vocalist Rhiannon and Canadian dancer/choreographer Margie Gillis.

Germaine's work has been recognized with fellowships, project grants and residencies from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, Leeway Foundation, Independence Foundation, Lomax Family and Wyncote Foundations, the Sacatar Institute in Itaparica Brazil, the Robert Rauschenberg Residency, and in 2024 with a Philadelphia Cultural Treasures Fellowship.



## KATARINA DRENJANIN (ARTIST)

"I was born in Belgrade, Serbia, in 2001, and spent my childhood with my family in the nearby city of Obrenovac. I later moved to Belgrade to attend the Philological High School, where I studied in the French department. After graduating, I completed my Bachelor's degree in Painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade. I am currently pursuing my Master's studies in the same department at the same faculty. Over the past year, I have dedicated myself to creating art objects, installations, video performances, and drawings as part of a series titled Home. This body of work explores my emotional, physical, and psychological experiences of home, family, and personal relationships, transforming them into artistic expression.

Beyond my academic studies, I have actively participated in events, workshops, and projects related to performance and visual arts. These experiences have allowed me to explore body memory, shared knowledge, and our collective perception of the world. I am particularly drawn to working within communities, seeing art as a way to foster dialogue and reflection. Whether through objects, installations, or performances, my goal is to create spaces for collective engagement—where we can reconsider our ways of living together in society."



## DESSA QUESADA-PALM (THINKING PARTNER)

Dessa is a performer, teacher, organizer, director, and playwright. Living in Dumaguete, she co-creates with members of her co-founded Youth Advocates Through Theater Arts (YATTA). Dessa joined the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) at age 13 and spent many years with the PETA. She has conducted arts and peacebuilding trainings for the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute and as well as other workshops all over the Philippines and around the world. Dessa has served as Head of the Committee on Dramatic Arts of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and is currently a faculty member at Silliman University College of Performing and Visual Arts. She is the Vice President of the Women Playwrights International – Philippines.



## PARTNERS

**DAH Theatre is a professional theatre troupe and research center in Serbia. Working at the crossroads between theatre, dance, and the visual arts, for 33 years DAH creates daring artistic forms that inspire personal and social transformation.**



**The Festival Academy (TFA) builds capacity and leadership among emerging festival leaders globally, with a focus on supporting under-served regions and conflict areas. TFA believes festivals are catalysts for social change, that foster collaboration between artists, cultural managers, and the broader civil society.**

**THE  
FESTIVAL  
ACADEMY**



# HOPE HIVE AT THE ARTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS FESTIVAL

Between June 10-13, Hope Hive took center stage at the *Thinking Peace* edition of Arts and Human Rights Festival in Belgrade. The festival spotlighted bold new works by participating artists— Ivana Milenović Popović, Olga Murashova, and Katarina Drenjanin —each shaped through months of creative exchange and exploration with their Thinking Partners.

Through performances and installations, the artworks reflected deeply personal and political explorations of memory, identity, and resilience, with a focus on the role of women in society and displacement.



# HERITAGE

IVANA MILENOVIĆ POPOVIĆ



Heritage examines the myth of female helplessness and the patriarchy mechanisms embedded in social and personal narratives. It deconstructs the inner conflict of a woman torn between acquiescence and resistance. This psychological and generational journey reflects the collective experience of women who have struggled with the same dilemmas: what do women inherit from their ancestors – to what extent does it empower us, or holds us back, both personally and collectively? Can a woman really inherit what rightfully belongs to her without judgment? Is tradition stronger than law, and to what extent does it shape women's identity and choices? And perhaps the most important question: what do we leave as a legacy to future generations?

# RUSSIAN BRIDE.COM

OLGA MURASHOVA



RussianBride.com is a dance performance exploring the fragile balance between desire and expectation, tradition, and self-determination. Through movement, it navigates the duality of longing for connection while resisting imposed roles, the inner fight between staying rooted and moving forward. Inspired by themes of migration, stereotypes, and personal agency, the piece does not offer answers but keeps questioning—where do we belong, and who decides that? In a world of shifting identities and uncertain ground, RussianBride.com searches for balance not by erasing contradictions, but by moving through them, staying present, and holding ground for complexity.



# MEMORY

**KATARINA DRENJANIN**



Memory is a spatial installation composed of old family belongings—objects from an abandoned house, personal keepsakes preserved by relatives, and the memories and reflections gathered through conversation. Using these personal narratives, the work reflects on how social and historical circumstances shape the life of a family.

# HOPE HIVE SESSION AT THE FESTIVAL



This Hope Hive session, presented as part of the Festival, offered a deep dive into the Hope Hive methodology and the experiences of those involved in its pilot phase. The session opened with a background on why the initiative was created, how artists and Thinking Partners were selected, and how the eight-stage methodology—grounded in creative exercises and guiding questions—unfolded in practice. Participating artists, Thinking Partners, and festival organizers, shared reflections on how the process shaped their creative practice, community engagement, and understanding of art’s role in conflict transformation.

# HOPE HIVE SESSION AT THE FESTIVAL

**Olga Murashova spoke of art as survival—how Hope Hive helped her rediscover purpose while rebuilding life in exile from Russia.**



**Ivana Milenović Popović explored the resilience of women in Serbia, finding strength in reflective questioning with her Thinking Partner amid protests in Serbia and scarcity of resources for arts and culture.**



**Katarina Drenjanin shared how deep companionship opened space to process fear and trauma, reminding us that human rights are rooted in what we feel, not just what we declare.**



**Germaine Ingram described witnessing “small dances” of resistance in Olga’s work—intimate acts of care and creativity within the storm of displacement.**



**Ellada Evangelou reflected on navigating multiple roles with Ivana—artist, activist, curator—and how their dialogue became a mirror for working through turmoil while holding on to truth.**



**Dijana Milošević, festival co-director, called the experience “a victory of art over the insanity of politics,” and celebrated the festival as a space where artists think peace—together.**

# LEARNING

Following the festival in Belgrade, a series of semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with participating artists, thinking partners, and festival organizers involved in the Hope Hive pilot, with the aim of learning from their experiences and applying those insights to future editions of the program. The conversations explored personal experiences, collaborative dynamics, creative development, and reflections on the program's methodology and structure. Rather than following a rigid format, the interviews allowed for emergent themes to surface organically, offering a nuanced understanding of the emotional, relational, and artistic dimensions of the Hope Hive process. The following synthesis highlights key patterns that emerged across participants, illustrated by selected quotes.





# KEY INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

## 1. ON THE NATURE OF THE THINKING PARTNERSHIP

- Thinking Partnership was most powerful when rooted in active, mindful presence rather than expertise. It worked best as a space of companionship—where listening, reflection, and witnessing were more important than offering solutions or advice.
- Trust developed organically through ease, humor, patience, and curiosity. These relationships often became sources of clarity and motivation, offering artists the confidence to take risks or pause when needed.
- The partnerships were impactful because they were based on reciprocity, not hierarchy. Rather than instructing, Thinking Partners, by asking timely questions, created space for artists to rediscover their voice, direction, and sense of artistic self.

***“Sometimes I didn’t need help. I needed someone to walk with me.”***

Katarina Drenjanin  
Artist

***“It was a presence practice... an intuitive, emotional practice of being with.”***

Dessa Quesada-Palm  
Thinking Partner

***“She didn’t need me to say something new. She needed space to hear herself more clearly.”***

Ellada Evangelou  
Thinking Partner

***“She let me go step by step. We adjusted everything together.”***

Olga Murashova  
Artist

# KEY INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

## 2. ON EMOTIONAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE PROCESS

- Emotional support, affirmation, and safety were as important as technical or artistic input. Several artists described the transformation they experienced as rooted not in training but in being seen and held with care.
- Slowness, silence, and presence were cited as powerful ethical and creative practices. The ability to step back, to reflect without pressure, and to share grief or uncertainty was itself a form of deep engagement.
- The program's most healing and motivating moments emerged from non-judgmental conversation and story-sharing—where outcomes were secondary to connection and reflection.

***“The process reminded me that the work is not only about what we do, but how we do it.”***

***“Sometimes it’s just about sitting with the grief, the rage, the resistance...”***

Germaine Ingram  
Thinking Partner

***“I could not expect such assistance and hope in what I do... I’m usually taught that what I’m doing, nobody needs.”***

Olga Murashova  
Artist

# KEY INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

## 3. ON ARTISTIC PRACTICES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE/HUMAN RIGHTS CONTEXT

- Artists working in politically unstable or emotionally intense environments spoke to the immense labor of creation under duress. For them, their engagement with Thinking Partners was a vital buffer—helping them move at their own pace, regain focus, or simply feel understood.
- Participants emphasized that emotional and political contexts must be part of the design. The most helpful support acknowledged the full complexity of their lived experience.
- The program offered a rare sense of creative legitimacy and belonging, especially for those working outside of institutional networks or traditional models of success.

***“It’s about motivation and empowerment... someone you feel responsible to.”***

Ivana Milenovic-Popovic  
Artist

***“I was scared... but the whole atmosphere helped me feel calm, even when I didn’t know what to do.”***

Olga Murashova  
Artist

***“It helped ease the emotional burden. There was no pressure to perform, only to be.”***

Katarina Drenjanin  
Artist

***“We know what it means to create in contexts of fear... That’s part of what we shared.”***

Dessa Quesada-Palm  
Thinking Partner

# KEY INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

## 4. ON METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

- Participants valued the availability of structured tools but stressed that these were most effective when offered as flexible prompts.
- The methodology served best as a “scaffold”—supporting organic dialogue. Intuitive and adaptive use of reflection tools enhanced the sense of autonomy and relevance.
- Some participants advocated for co-creation, and the use of culturally grounded, practice-based frameworks from diverse knowledge systems.

**“We can offer some of these frameworks... it’s about relationships, and how these processes translate.”**

**“The coherence emerged from trust and careful conversations.”**

Dessa Quesada-Palm  
Thinking Partner

**“The questions were helpful. But they shouldn’t feel like checkboxes.”**

Ellada Evangelou  
Thinking Partner

**“We had so much fun with those questions... good talks.”**

Ivana Milenovic-Popovic  
Artist



# KEY INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

## 5. ON HOPE HIVE AS A SYSTEM / ECOSYSTEM

- The strength of the initiative lay in its ability to care for the whole creative ecosystem— people, relationships, projects, and the conditions they work in.
- Structural flexibility was repeatedly named as a form of respect. The program’s openness to pacing, scheduling, and process allowed participants to engage fully—even amidst competing demands and limited bandwidth.
- Participants recognized the evolution of Hope Hive from a thematic pilot into a more intentional practice. They encouraged continued iteration, with increased attention to co-creation, pluralism, and collective closure—such as a ritual or final gathering to reflect together.

**“Hope Hive has evolved. It’s no longer an experiment—it’s a practice.”**

Germaine Ingram  
Thinking Partner

**“This wasn’t just support—it was intellectual and emotional companionship.”**

**“The trust came from not feeling judged, just understood.”**

Ivana Milenovic-Popovic  
Artist

**“We allowed it to breathe when needed. We picked it up when there was space again.”**

Ellada Evangelou  
Thinking Partner

# KEY INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

## 6. FROM THE FESTIVAL'S PERSPECTIVE

- Hope Hive fosters emotional and intellectual safety that is rare in high-pressure artistic festival settings. The space it created allowed for authentic connection, reflection, and vulnerability that extended beyond individual pairings.
- Thinking Partnerships allow artists to feel seen, valued, and more confident in presenting their work. This confidence was visibly reflected in how artists spoke about and embodied their creative choices on stage.
- Enriched Programming: Hope Hive added a thoughtful, dialogical layer to the festival.
- Hope Hive benefited both the artists and the festival as a whole. This kind of deeper engagement, raises the profile and emotional resonance of the event.
- Even modest but intentional grants carry symbolic weight. Financial support—however limited—signals belief in the artist's vision and contributes to their sense of legitimacy and commitment.
- Culture of care should also make space for honest reflection. While safety and affirmation are core, so too is the space to engage discomfort, tension, and critique in a generative way.

***“It’s not just about performance—it became a space of reflection.”***

***“I saw the shift. It was visible in their bodies, in their voices, in how they spoke about the work.”***

Dijana Milošević  
Festival Organizer

***“Support systems must consider artists’ full realities—including production schedules, emotional labor, and dual roles.”***

Ivana Milenovic-Popovic  
Artist

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. THOUGHT PARTNERSHIP FRAMING

- Stressing the framing of artist - TP relationships as mutual companionship, as opposed to mentorship—emphasizing curiosity, presence, and co-reflection.
- Support continuity in relationships, allowing space for longer-term relational work.

## 2. ECOSYSTEM & SUPPORT

- Increase investment in production support, including dedicated personnel (e.g., local production managers) and financial resources.
- Associate / connect Hope Hive to international networks in a robust way, e.g. Festival Academy and/or Community Arts Network.
- Integrate the thought partnership model into arts education and academic programs, where the “thinking together” structure could deepen reflective, process-based learning.

## 3. STRUCTURE & SCHEDULING

- Build in longer periods of time for artist-TP exchanges in the leadup to the festival, especially for artist-organizers balancing multiple roles.
- Clarify expectations around pacing, meeting frequency, and overall rhythm while preserving adaptability.
- Resources allowing, consider offering optional in-person gatherings to deepen trust, connection, and creative synergy.
- Hold a closing event in the form of a shared ritual as a way to honor the relational and communal aspects of the Hope Hive journey.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## 4. METHODOLOGY & CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

- Use suggested tools and exercises as flexible prompts.
- Encourage methodologies that emerge from practice-based, culturally grounded frameworks.
- Integrate story-based and embodied pedagogies, such as community case studies, rituals, and reflective dialogue.
- Draw inspiration from models that blend conceptual grounding with local relevance.

## 5. DOCUMENTATION

- Introduce a lightweight, optional process for sharing session notes—either during or immediately after each interaction—to capture reflections and track evolution.
- Documentation by embedded observers or reflective writers could enhance the impact and visibility of Hope Hive. A dedicated writer could capture the unfolding experience from within, offering valuable insight to future practitioners and audiences.

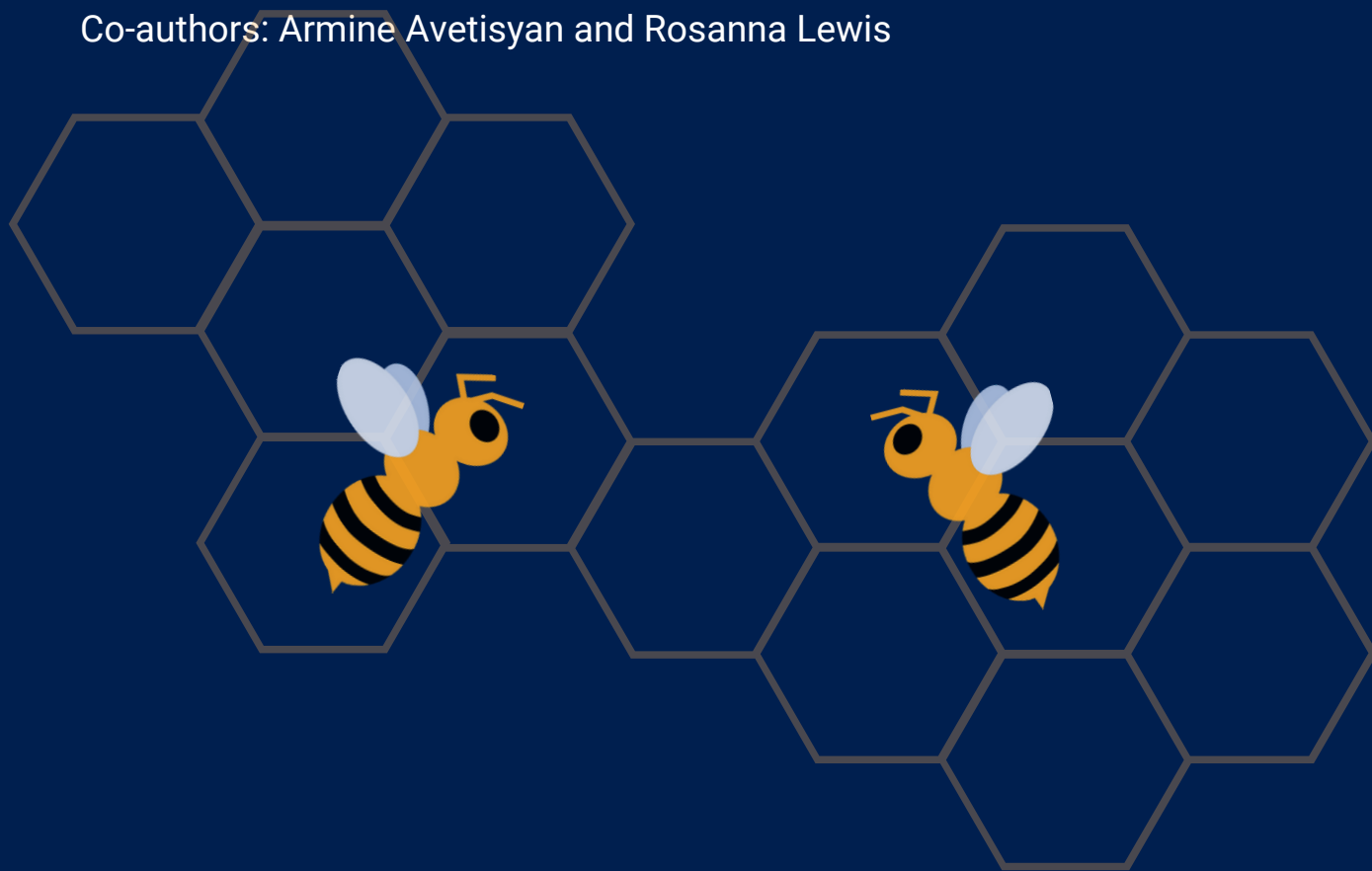
# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Ellada Evangelou and Rosanna Lewis for developing 'Hope Hive' together for IMPACT. The model and 'Thinking Peace' pilot have been made possible thanks to core funding from Humanity United, with support from our partners and global network.

'Hope Hive' is inspired by the Thinking Partners program, that ran from 2020 to 2022 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally a partnership between IMPACT and the Buffer Fringe Performing Arts Festival in Cyprus on the theme of 'Displacement', the program was funded by Porticus Community Art Lab.

Our thanks go out to the original thinking partners and artists, as well as the new Hope Hive participants and partners who enrich our own thinking and approaches, as we continue to learn and improve the Hope Hive in an organic way.

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