

4.4 Participation level: collaborative

A collaborative level of participation requires that participants be involved in developing the framework, the topics and the methods of the cultural mediation project. One example is the → [Antikulti Atelier](#) [The name Antikulti is referring to the term “Multikulti” which stands for a multicultural society. It could be translated as “Anti-cultural studio”] project, which resulted from collaboration between the cultural mediation department of Museum für Gestaltung Zürich [Zurich Museum of Design] and Autonome Schule Zürich [Zurich Autonomous School]. In that project, a group of people of uncertain residency status in Switzerland meet regularly with a cultural mediator. The project is led jointly by the mediator and a representative of the group and its sessions take place in the museum’s cultural mediation room. Exhibitions hosted by the museum can (but do not have to) form the starting point for discussions on topics of importance to the group. The project’s activities in connection with the exhibition “Global Design”, which looked at globalization’s impacts on design phenomena, resulted in the creation of “Bleibeführer” [Guide to Staying], which contains useful information for getting by in the city of Zurich. Activities relating to the design objects presented in the exhibition “Black and White – Designing Opposites” led to the idea to develop a shadow theatre. Although it was the cultural mediator who initially put forth the invitation to collaborate, the methods, work conditions and contents are all chosen collectively, and are discussed and modified regularly by the group.

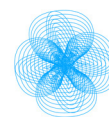
The allocation of resources for analyzing and managing power relationships and conflicts of interest is a prerequisite for projects with a collaborative level of participation, or an institution wishing to design one. This is particularly important when cultural institutions work with groups whose members possess lower levels of economic or symbolic → [capital](#). Frustration will set in unless everyone involved is there on equal footing. Moreover, good intentions on the part of institutions are often associated with → [paternalism](#) and its ilk, although these are sometimes manifested quite subtly. Making power relationships the subject matter and working together to deal with them is predicated upon a certain level of information and an awareness that extends beyond one’s own situation – as well as the willingness to actively redistribute resources and partially break down or modify power structures.

It is therefore far from easy to establish a collaborative level of participation in cultural mediation. When projects do succeed in using

→ [Antikulti Atelier Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen \(ifa\) et al. \(Pub.\) Kunstvermittlung in der Migrationsgesellschaft. Reflexionen einer Arbeitstagung: <http://antikultiatelier.blogspot.ch/p/blog-page.html> \[17.2.2012\]; \[http://iae.zhdk.ch/fileadmin/data/iae/documents/121001_0106-482_RZ_WEB_PublikationKunstvermittlung-Migrationsgesellschaft.pdf\]\(http://iae.zhdk.ch/fileadmin/data/iae/documents/121001_0106-482_RZ_WEB_PublikationKunstvermittlung-Migrationsgesellschaft.pdf\) \[22.2.2012\]; see Resource Pool MFE0404.pdf](#)

→ [capital](#) see Glossary entry on capital, forms of

→ [paternalism](#) see Glossary



the resulting tensions productively, though, interesting avenues for institutional development can be opened. Over the long term, an institution which has collaborative processes in place is more likely to acquire the so sought-after new audience groups, because such processes create genuine opportunities for the new groups to wield influence. If the offer of these opportunities is genuine, the institutions themselves will not emerge unchanged.