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A Martin Roth-Initiative Publication

An Exercise in Sitting with Discomfort

Towards more equitable support for international relocation in North-South Contexts

Rana Yazaji and Marion Schmidt

Martin Roth Initiative

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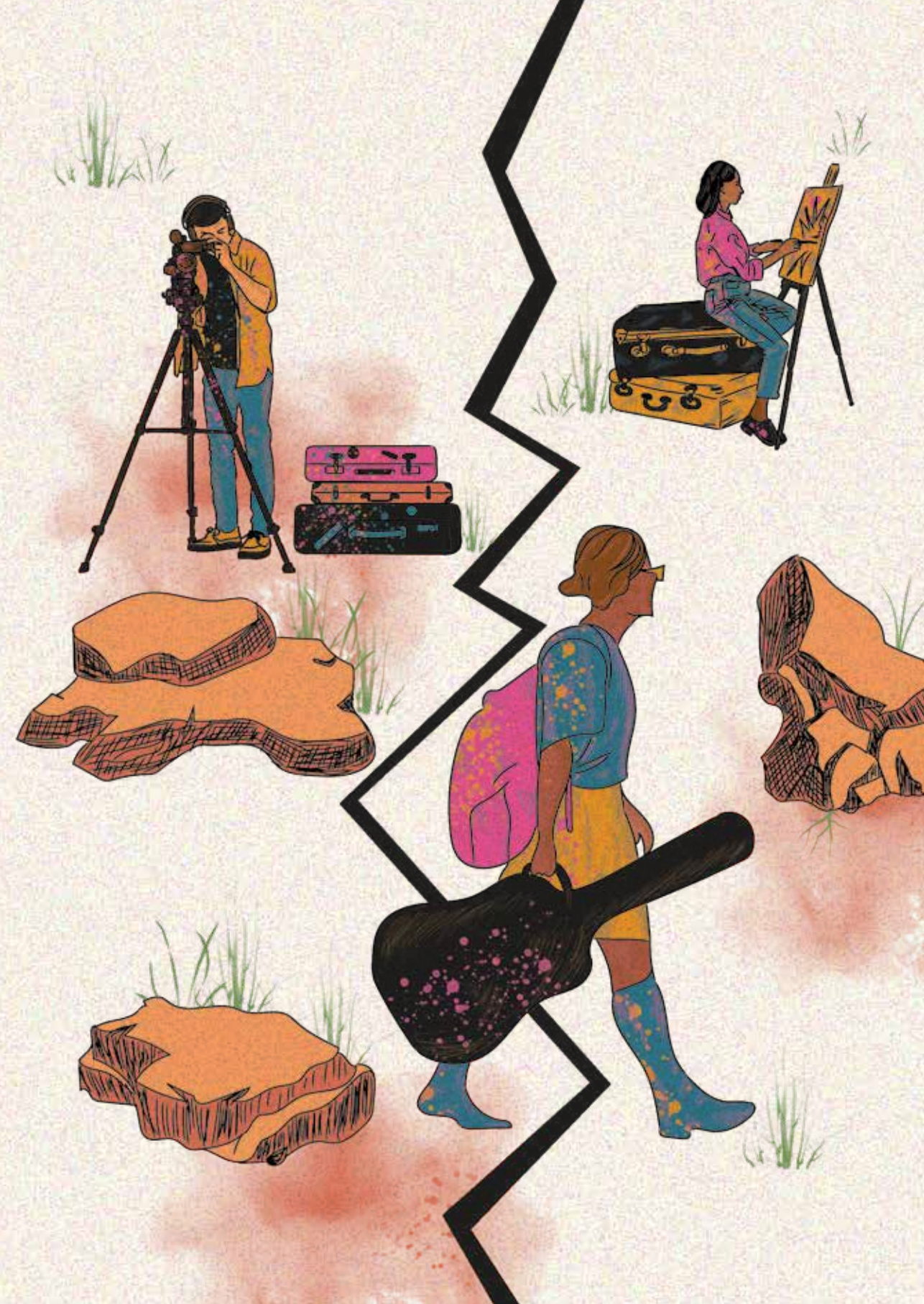
Content



Abstract

Temporary international relocation initiatives (TIRIs) for artists and cultural workers as a form of international solidarity are embedded in a complex context shaped by colonial history and global North-South power dynamics. Money, safety, power and decision-making are on one side – primarily consolidated within the institutions of the Global North – while on the other is an individual asking for protection and support. Given this reality, a just equilibrium based on reciprocity is almost inconceivable. In this report, the authors examine the manifestations of structural inequality, racism, discrimination and injustice in the TIRI ecosystem. They draw on the experiences of relocated artists as well as those of team members within TIRIs and host organisations to examine if TIRIs are currently equipped to identify power asymmetries, injustice, discrimination and racism at individual, institutional and structural levels and to effectively mitigate them. Finally, they develop holistic practical recommendations for greater equity and justice as well as an anti-racist approach for TIRIs and host organisations. This report is designed for decision-makers and teams in TIRIs and host organisations, arts institutions, funders and policymakers, and maintains its focus on the experiences and needs of relocated artists. Both recognising the existence of structural, systemic and individual injustice, racism and discrimination, and contributing to their eradication requires discomfort and constant self-reflection. Therefore, this report is an exercise in sitting with discomfort. We see this discomfort as a catalyst for change processes – an engine to sustain pressure to enact this change that cannot simply be dissolved by individual action.

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Illustration by Amal Hamed, instagram: amalartworks, behance: AmalHamed, 2022 © MRI.

Foreword by ifa's Research Programme "Culture and Foreign Policy"

Article 15.3 of the UNESCO International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights affirms the necessity of states to respect "the freedom indispensable for scientific research and creative activity". It is within the context of Human Rights protection, that Temporary International Relocation Initiatives operate. However, actors in this field, although situated in this universal normative framework, operate within power asymmetries, very often still shaped by colonial legacies. It requires a long process to build more balance; it even takes a long process to learn sensitivity and skills for non-harmful relationships – within relocation programmes as well as in the entire field of international cultural cooperation.

It is along this understanding and insight, that EUNIC (EU National Institutes for Culture) developed the "Not a toolkit! Fair collaboration in cultural relations: a reflAction" as a constant self-reflection and debating method. Additionally, the ifa study "Diversity and Inclusion in International Cultural Relations: Basic Principles and Recommendations for a Practical Implementation" by Kathrin Tietze was commissioned in order to provide knowledge about power asymmetries and skills to foster diversity and broader participation within institutions.

ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) is committed to peaceful and enriching coexistence between people and cultures worldwide. We promote art and cultural exchange through exhibitions, dialogue, and conference programmes. As a competence centre for international cultural relations, ifa connects civil societies, cultural practices, art, media, and science.

The following study commissioned by the Martin Roth-Initiative forms part of the research at ifa and the ifa Edition Culture and Foreign Policy, in which experts address relevant issues relating to culture and foreign policy with the aim to provide expert advice for practitioners and policy-makers. We highly appreciate the work of the authors on how power asymmetries within Temporary International Relocation Initiatives can lead to hurtful reminders of the colonial legacy. Some discomforting findings can and shall be a point of departure to change.

Dr Odila Triebel
Head of Dialogue and Research
"Culture and Foreign Policy", ifa

Foreword by the Martin Roth-Initiative (MRI)

For civil society actors who are persecuted, censored or threatened, leaving their home countries is often their last resort. Relocation programmes can facilitate spaces for artists, activists, human rights defenders, journalists or others to go abroad for a limited time. Based in international solidarity, these programmes are meant to support participants in terms of their physical safety, their personal wellbeing, or even the continuation of their valuable work. Programme staff not only believe in the work of the relocated individuals, but also in the certainty that their own work helps to promote freedom of expression.

However, such programmes do not function outside of global and historically shaped power asymmetries and patterns of inequality. This is especially reflected in the fact that many participants come from countries in the Global South and that many relocation programmes are state-funded and thus subject to strict administrative requirements. Programme staff is confronted with the question of how to offer support that is rooted in solidarity while effectively avoiding paternalism, victimization and other patterns that may – unintentionally – reproduce participants' experience of discrimination.

How can the work and design of mobility, shelter and relocation programmes be more sensitive to these challenges, and make support as empowering and equitable as possible? With this report, the Martin Roth-Initiative (MRI) aims to provide impetus for future learning and action towards making relocation better. The authors had only a short period of time to complete their research. With this in mind, it is evident that further in-depth analysis and interviews are required to achieve a balanced perspective on relocation programmes. It's clear that putting this topic on the agenda is only the first step – as is provoking a debate within the relocation community that has long been addressing development cooperation, the museum sector and other realms affected by colonial history.

In Chapter 5, on practical implementation (see p. 59), the authors rightly remind us that we should be open to feedback and try not to be personally offended when confronted with criticism, even though our work may be based on best intentions. The topic of power imbalance might be uncomfortable. But, as the authors put it, discomfort is often the only way to foster learning and change.

This is precisely the purpose of MRI's research programme: to contribute to debates and stimulate exchange within communities of practice. It aims to identify which positive impacts of temporary relocation should be reinforced and which negative effects should be reduced, always keeping in mind the limitations imposed by the structures in which we work, such as racist border and visa regimes that systematically deprivilege people from the South. To make the key results and recommendations more accessible, this report is accompanied by a summary report, which is available here: doi.org/10.17901/akbp1.23.2022.

Previous MRI publications examined, inter alia, lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic with a focus on Turkey (Çakır 2022); regional relocation for at-risk artists in Latin America (Cuny 2021) and on the African continent (Blackmore 2021); as well as the impact of relocation programmes on human rights defenders' home communities in the case of Kenya (Mutahi/Nduta 2020). MRI also published a comic on the question of what follows a funded relocation period (Atukunda/Bwengye 2021) as well as a collection of good practices (Bartley 2020) and an animated video on psychosocial wellbeing. For an overview of all publications, see: martin-roth-initiative.de/en/publikationenevents.

We'd like to express our gratitude to all artists, staff of TIRIs and host organizations who took the time to contribute to the research process through the questionnaires, the interviews, the online working session or otherwise. We also thank our colleagues from ICORN for cooperating towards those ends. We are delighted that Fadi Abdelnour designed this report and that Amal Hamed and Francisco Llinas Casas contributed further images. I would also like to thank Dr Odila Triebel and Emily Pollak for their contributions to this project, and especially my colleague Yvette Falk for her support with this publication and with the MRI comic published in 2021.

Dr Lisa Bogerts
MRI Research Coordinator

From the authors

We, the two authors of this publication, have two very different careers that have briefly overlapped at some points in our professional lives; this report is our first collaboration. The decision to bring together two complementary perspectives to tackle and attempt to do justice to this complex and multi-faceted topic was both a conscious and practical one.

The professional and life experience of the co-authors is reflected in this publication. As such, it is important to us to approach the topics at hand with transparency, and to **share our own positioning with the reader.**

One of us has experienced several successive relocations within the South, and subsequently from the South to the North, while the other has voluntarily lived in the South as a so-called "expat", benefiting from and being simultaneously confronted by her privilege(s) for the first time. Professionally, we share extensive experience in cultural management, organisational development, international cooperation, curation and mediation and have worked in the South, the North and between the two. This publication is the result of a long exchange between the two of us, our experiences and our engagement with the topic.

Sitting with discomfort does not equate to paralysis. Discomfort is a catalyst for achieving change.

In our different roles and geographical locations, we have witnessed and participated in the ever-changing, complex context of civil society – its needs, funding logics, limitations and shortcomings. Out of this experience comes a **deeper awareness of the structural injustice that limits the ability of civil society actors**, including individuals and institutions, to work and create a humane and equitable environment, whether in their respective countries or when they choose or are unable to avoid temporary or permanent relocation.

Questioning ourselves, our privileges and our unconscious biases, unlearning what we have learned and acknowledging that good intentions can lead to negative and harmful practices/outcomes – especially when the lives, safety and wellbeing of others are at stake – is not a sprint, a box to tick in a funding application or a diversity hire. Rather, it is a marathon.

Questioning ourselves, our privileges and our unconscious biases is not a sprint. Rather, it is a marathon.

How to read this publication

Always centring the experiences and needs of relocated artists, this publication is aimed at decision-makers in temporary relocation organisations, in arts institutions and, not least, funders and policymakers. It is an invitation to sit with discomfort and to rethink how and by whom programmes are designed to support artists and cultural practitioners in difficult living conditions. This report is an invitation to take a closer look at the teams who implement such programmes in terms of their constellation; to think beyond tokenism when in discussions of diversity and inclusion efforts; to acknowledge paternalism, postcolonial legacies and the existence of institutional racism without perpetuating white fragility; and to **take responsibility to contribute to their eradication**. Likewise, it is an invitation to not shy away from questioning – without taboo – how things are currently being done. We invite you to listen carefully and to act accordingly. This publication is rooted in theory and its practical application draws from lived experiences. This hybrid approach is intentional and is reflected accordingly in the language and design of this publication.

Sitting with discomfort does not equate to paralysis – quite the opposite. We understand this discomfort as a catalyst for achieving change, a motor to sustain pressure that cannot be dissolved by singular actions. To achieve structural change requires perseverance, hard work and courageous, long-term decisions.

In this spirit, we invite you to sit with us in discomfort.
Rana Yazaji & Marion Schmidt

Francisco Llinas Casas, Crossing a Line Series 3 (2018), franciscollinas.com, distancedassemblage.com, © Francisco Llinas Casas.

Many TIRIs based in the Global North are part of development cooperation or strategies of foreign cultural politics and thus linked to a political agenda and subject to a set of rigid rules and regulations.

1 INTRODUCTION

Temporary International Relocation Initiatives (TIRIs) aim to provide threatened or oppressed human rights defenders, journalists, artists and other civil society actors with a temporary safe space outside their countries as **an act of international solidarity**. TIRIs are thus part of a complex international context shaped by the historical North-South power dynamic that has its roots in colonialism, which manifests itself in all areas of our daily and professional lives.

Many TIRIs based in the Global North are funded through state resources, usually linked to a political agenda and subject to a set of rigid rules and regulations. They are part of development cooperation, international collaboration or strategies of foreign cultural politics. Such programmes are therefore undeniably embedded in power relations that have been reinforced over decades, and there is still a long way to go before these **asymmetries in the distribution of power, money and privilege**, as well as institutional injustice and racism, are eliminated or even recognised.

Moreover, the majority of TIRIs in Europe are run by teams that are mostly white, able-bodied academics with careers in cultural management or international development, and who have little to no experience of forced relocation themselves. Money, safety, power and decision-making are consolidated on one side – mostly within institutions in the Global North – while on the other is an individual applying for protection and support. Given this reality, a fair balance based on reciprocity seems virtually unimaginable.

TIRIs for artists & cultural workers in focus

TIRIs have become known primarily for offering support to human rights defenders and journalists, and, to a lesser extent, to artists and cultural workers. We are aware that these designations are not static. For example, an artist or cultural worker may see themselves as a human rights defender or be labelled as such by others. However, this research focuses explicitly on temporary (i.e., one year or longer) relocation initiatives for artists and cultural workers. More specifically, **our focus is on relocated artists from the Global South**, though many TIRIs support the relocation of individuals from Northern countries as well.

During their temporary relocation period, artists receive a stipend and other forms of support and remuneration (e.g. for travel, training, psychological support, etc.), which vary according to the programme. In some cases, TIRIs themselves host the artists, but often hosting is implemented through external structures, which may be other cultural organisations or cities, municipalities or informal communities. In this research, we focus mainly on the **programmes that partner with host organisations** and consider the representatives of these organisations important actors in a triangular relationship between relocated artists, TIRIs and host organisations.

How to promote a more equitable model that incorporates anti-discriminatory approaches without forgetting the realities in which these programmes are implemented?

Reasons for this research

The aim of this research is to dismantle and rethink structural inequalities and injustice, and to propose strategies for the design, management and implementation of international relocation programmes. Therefore, our research conclusions focus on how to promote a more equitable and sensitive model that fosters awareness of power dynamics and incorporates anti-discriminatory approaches without forgetting the realities in which these programmes are implemented.

We seek to **foreground the experiences of TIRI participants** in our research and develop a framework that allows us to examine current realities and propose needs-based recommendations. Data obtained through a series of surveys with staff of TIRIs and of hosting organisations, as well as with relocated artists, makes up the backbone of this framework that is fleshed out by in-depth interviews and an online working session with representatives from these three groups. More details about our research methodology and approach are outlined in Chapter 6.

We have identified five interconnected **guiding research questions** as a basis for this publication:

- How do historical North-South inequalities and a colonialist heritage manifest in the implementation of TIRIs?
- What factors create and sustain problems regarding relationship building, power dynamics and discrimination in the context of such programmes?
- What common practices – if any – have been adopted by TIRIs that aim to dismantle and rethink structural inequalities and injustice?
- Which mechanisms can support relocation programmes to acknowledge this system and contribute to changing it?
- How can relocation programmes appropriately and sensitively support relocated artists when they experience discrimination, and particularly racial discrimination?

Question 1 investigates complex concepts and is the focus of Chapter 2, where we outline the theoretical concepts framing the inquiries of the research. The more practical questions (2 to 5), are answered in different chapters by analysing primary data, eventually leading to practical implementation recommendations for TIRIs and host organisations.

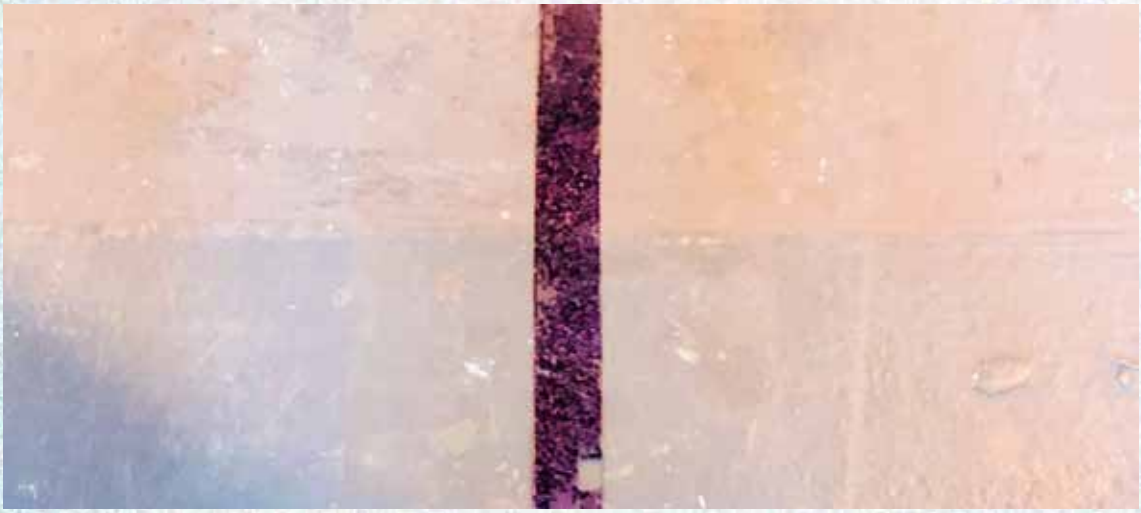
Limitations

There are some obvious limitations to such a complex yet short-term research project. First, we had only limited access to formerly/currently relocated artists within TIRIs and host organisations due to the high level of data protection measures required by such initiatives. We were thus dependent on the latter's efforts to facilitate communication and reach out to target groups. Moreover, being contacted by the TIRIs (as opposed to the researchers themselves), might also have had a deterrent effect on the willingness of artists and cultural workers to participate.

Second, while we engaged with around 90 relocated artists and team members of TIRIs and host organisations, **this is by no means a comprehensive representation of the whole sector**. However, by involving the three interrelated groups, we attempted to mitigate the risk of presenting only limited perspectives. By combining quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the research and in-depth interviews with relocated artists and team members of TIRIs and host organisations, some clear patterns and key issues emerged.

Third, the **limited duration of the research period** did not allow us to cast a wider net, in that we were unable to include the perspectives of relocated artists that participated in initiatives based in the South, or to talk to additional host organisations. We have tried to cover different perspectives by involving a variety of actors based in different locations and with a range of trajectories to make up for this.

How do historical North-South inequalities and a colonialist heritage manifest in the implementation of TIRIs?



Francisco Llinas Casas, Crossing a Line Series 3 (2018), franciscollinas.com, distancedassemblage.com, © Francisco Llinas Casas.

2

SETTING THE SCENE

Theoretical framework

Our research focuses primarily on the practices and strategies employed by temporary relocation initiatives, and emphasises the wide variety of experiences and perspectives of relocated artists. Nevertheless, it is important to consider different theoretical concepts that inform the field in which international temporary relocation takes place. Accordingly, we pose the following question: How do historical North-South inequalities and a colonialist heritage manifest in the implementation of TIRIs?

An investigation of the following set of concepts aim to situate TIRIs in a more comprehensive ecology of international cooperation, public funding and the asymmetries in North-South power relations. Borrowing from these concepts allows us to broaden our core questions beyond actual practices undertaken by existing programmes. This opens a space for inspiration and analysis of the dynamics prevalent in the domain of international relations and, by extension, foreign affairs. Based on this, the conceptual foundation and positioning of this research is situated within three frameworks:

The terms "Global North" and "Global South" constitute a shortcut as a means to express a complex reality.

Global North and Global South narratives: The focus of this research is on international initiatives based in the Global North that offer temporary relocation to artists and cultural workers from the Global South. Therefore, an understanding of the prevailing definitions of these narratives are helpful in interpreting current practices and patterns of support.

We consider that the terms "Global North" and "Global South" constitute a shortcut – and are once again a Western concept – as a means to express a complex reality. The use of these terms in this publication is not based on simple agreement with the narrative that these terms uphold. We critically discussed the terms with each other and with key contributors to this research, highlighting two aspects: first, the linearity implied by these terms does not do justice to the highly complex international and transnational system. Second, the literature on the Global North and South in academia and in practice may overshadow the narrative of colonialism and neo-colonialism, a trend we wish to avoid reproducing here and we will be discussing in the next sub-chapter.

Injustice: Injustice manifests itself in different forms, including racism, discrimination, inequality, poverty and abuse. As part of this research, dismantling embodied injustices is at the core of the learning process towards more equity and an understanding of how to create power symmetries.

Institutional and individual discrimination and racism: As part of this research, we are trying to propose tactics and adjustments that contribute to less racist and more anti-discriminatory support for international relocation. Discrimination and racism are forms of injustice, however, as they are critical to the research topic, we approach them as concepts in their own right. We look at the different levels at which discrimination takes place in the personal and institutional realm and render them transparent.

Negotiations with the term "Global North – Global South"

To trace the evolution of the terms "Global North – Global South" we have to start in the 1970s, when "first, second and third world" was the most common way to cluster countries on predominantly economic criteria. Over the years, nations that are part of what has been conventionally referred to as the Global South, the non-Western world, the poor world, developing countries, underdeveloped countries, etc., have been grouped in many ways. In this tradition, the term "Global South'' is commonly used to mean *"countries that are faced with social, political and economic challenges, for instance, poverty, environmental degradation, human and civil rights*

abuse, ethnic and regional conflicts, mass displacements of refugees, hunger and disease" (Lamech Mogambi Ming'ate 2015: 8).

We introduce these different understandings of Global North and Global South not only because we need to define the most important terms in this research but also because the interpretation of these terms significantly affects **how we understand the overarching system within which TIRIs function**. Whether they describe what they do as global processes – including North-South, South-South and North-North relocation – or explicitly as North-based processes to support "victims" in the South has a significant impact on how they are conceived and implemented.

Stakeholders should establish their own position with regard to historical narratives that influence their engagement in international cooperation.

In the issue of Voices from Around the World, "Concept from the Global South" (Hollington et al. 2015), different understandings, critical perspectives and anthropological and sociological approaches to the term open up a **broad debate on how accurate the term is** on the one hand and how conducive it is to greater equality and global justice on the other. "*The Global South and the Global North represent an updated perspective on the post-1991-World, which distinguishes not between political systems or degrees of poverty, but between the victims and the benefactors of global capitalism*" (Hylland Eriksen 2015: 4).

For Jonathan Rigg (in the same issue of Voices) the question is, "*Why The Global South rather than just The South? The reasoning here [...] is that the addition of the word global makes it clear that this is not a strict geographical categorization of the world but one based on economic inequalities [...]. It also emphasises that both North and South are, together, drawn into global processes rather than existing as separate slices of the world*" (Rigg 2015: 7).

The role of history in contemporary practices

Colonial history undoubtedly wields tremendous influence on contemporary practices of solidarity, political stances, social discourses and on creating consensus around what is conventional or unconventional in institutional and international relations. History obviously manifests in the empowerment of certain narratives as well as in the inheritance of power or the lack thereof. Historical narratives thus influence stakeholders' engagement in and their views of international cooperation. Stakeholders should therefore establish their own position with regard to this important aspect of international cooperation.

Many white, Global-North based development professionals have a hard time acknowledging power dynamics and white - centring in the institutions and systems they uphold.

"[...] in an increasingly polarised world characterised by inequality, colonial history and practices often have residual resentments that play themselves out in international liaisons. It is important to understand the context in which you seek to do your project. What is the history of colonialism and of the relationship between your country and that of your partner/s? What is its contemporary political discourse? How could these impact on the project and the way it is received? ***Are there ways in which the project could help to address negative historical legacies?"*** (Van Graan 2018: 11).

The role of colonial history in contemporary practice, especially in the North-South context, has been addressed many times in the literature and is widely accepted. Nevertheless, an understanding of the continuing impact of this history requires ongoing conscious exchange, teaching and action. The focus here is on decolonisation, or, more precisely, decolonising practices in international solidarity projects and TIRIs, which requires the dismantling and acknowledgement of inequalities that are attached to assumptions, motivations and values.

The White Gaze (of development)

Many actors prefer to believe that the international development, aid and cultural sectors are devoid of racism and discrimination; in particular, those who benefit the most from the existence and income generated by this sector, namely, **the international (vs. local), mostly white and mostly economically privileged workforce**. TIRIs may not always be part of development policy or funded from development budgets, but a similar dynamic is reproduced when such initiatives are funded from such other sources as foreign or cultural budgets.

Even though power dynamics and white-centring is blatantly obvious in the ways that development work and institutions are structured, many white, Global-North based development professionals have a hard time acknowledging the system they serve and uphold. According to scholar Robtel Neajai Pailey, international development suffers from a "white-gaze" problem that makes this perspective the norm:

> *"The white gaze of development is measuring Black, brown and non-white people against the standard of northern whiteness, and taking their political, economic and social*

processes as a norm [...] Development uses that standard of northern whiteness to measure economic, political and social processes of people in the so-called global South" (Pailey 2020).[1]

If that is the case, then **Eurocentric international development endeavours** are connected to ideologies such as racism, patriarchy and paternalism, and reproduce them. Thus, those working in development organisations and programmes are responsible for consciously addressing those ideologies and contributing to their dismantlement through acknowledgement and action.

It is problematic to consider injustice as inevitable. Forms of injustice are not isolated in the ways they are practised. The work towards justice should reflect this.

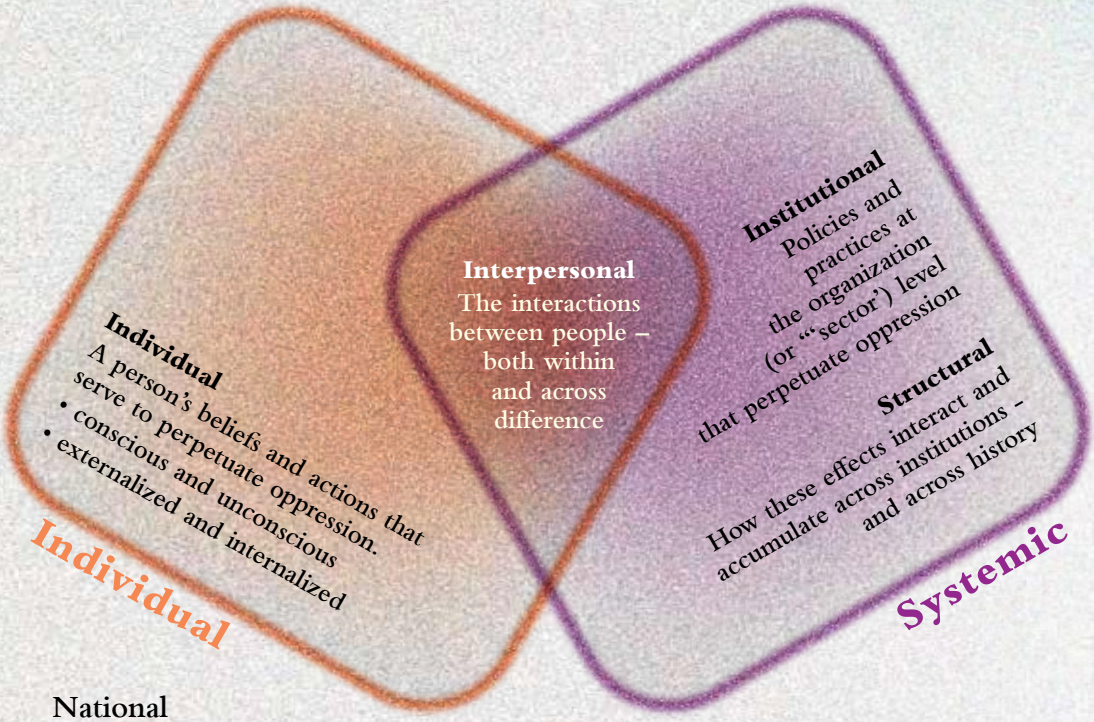
Injustice

Injustice is a crucial concept within these narratives. It has different interrelated aspects, including those that are social, economic, legal and epistemic in nature. But here, our focus is on the *"influence of normative ideas about injustice being inevitable. Inevitability is a problematic assumption, but one that has a powerful influence over the way that injustice is rationalised"* (Watts/Hodgson 2019: 11).

Seven forms of injustice were identified by Watts and Hodgson in their book "Social Justice Theory and Practice for Social Work" (2019). Injustice is the result of a complex system. It is not the direct result of a phenomenon or a specific situation. Forms of injustice are not isolated in the ways they are practised, and the work towards justice should reflect this. These forms include **four main concepts that are of particular interest in light of this research**: inequality; injustice related to refuge, asylum and displacement; discrimination and stigma; and racism. They are evident in international collaboration and therefore also influence the dynamics of temporary international relocation programmes.

- **Inequality**: As noted in a report by Oxfam, *"a widening gap between the haves and have-nots is a breeding ground for conflict, crime, fear, disillusionment and the rise of racism and alt-right political groups capitalising on people's hardship and disenfranchisement"* (Oxfam 2017). This situation may be seen as an "artefact of the shifting forms of Western imperialism and colonisation which entails 'systematic administrative control'" (Nayar 2015: 30), as well as the *"imposition of 'religion, education, language', and the establishment of racial binaries of superiority (said to be the colonisers) and inferiority (said to be the colonised)"* (Nayar 2015: 31).

1 Podcast "Power in the Pandemic" by Oxfam: Episode "Featured Voice Robtel Neajai Pailey on racism in development", June 2020, open.spotify.com/episode/4B5KVY53g0lV3aJRO3wt5a (last accessed: 24.08.2022)



National Equity Project. The Lens of Systemic Oppression.
Courtesy of National Equity Project, source: www.nationalequityproject.org/frameworks/lens-of-systemic-oppression (last accessed: 30.08.2022).

- **Injustice related to refuge, asylum and displacement:** As noted by Watts and Hodgson *"most people seeking asylum have experienced significant discrimination and oppression"* (Watts/Hodgson 2019:5).
- **Discrimination and stigma:** Discrimination is *"the differential treatment of groups or individuals on the basis of their group membership"*, while stigma concerns a *"stereotypical view of certain groups of people"* (Watts/Hodgson 2019: 5).
- **Racism:** Racism was the theoretical and ideological backbone of colonialism and is here defined as *"differentiating people and their traditions in ranked orders and placing value on those beliefs that emanate from the West to the detriment of those who do not share those beliefs and behaviours"* (Young/Zubrzycki 2011: 161, cited in Watts/Hodgson 2019: 7-8).

We list these forms here to recognise their existence and return to them to analyse their dynamics in the following sub-chapters as well as in Chapter 5, where we also explore how to counteract them.

Institutional and individual discrimination and racism

Reducing racism to individual interpersonal actions prevents us from seeing the systemic level in which racism is present.

It is important to recognise that oppression, discriminatory practices and racism exist on many levels, and are systemic. We often use "racism" and "discrimination" to refer to individual interpersonal actions that are linked to personal prejudice and deliberate bias against different races and/or against ethnic groups or cultural minorities. However, this is a myopic perspective that prevents us from seeing the whole picture and the different levels in which racism is present. A common definition lays out **four levels of racism: internalised, interpersonal, institutional and structural/systemic**, as illustrated in the graphic (page 26) provided by the National Equity Project.

Relocated artists become "the others" in their temporary relocation location, which affects how they are perceived by their host community as well as the nature of their encounters with individuals and institutions. The individual's experience also depends on the **stereotypes prevalent in the host society**.

In his interview with John Pilger in "The Outsiders", Salman Rushdie explains: "*I never left India until I came to England [...] I never left the sub-continent; the idea of myself as a foreigner was completely alien to me. I have never thought of myself as a foreigner, I was me, and suddenly I was a foreigner, not only a foreigner but a racially inferior foreigner.*" This reflection was shared by Rushdie as a commentary on a racist incident he experienced in his school. The transformation of identity into "*a racially inferior foreigner*" was only possible as a result of discriminatory and racial perception from the "outside".[2]

Examining the testimonies of artists and cultural workers who have experienced "forced" relocation allows for an exploration of how their identities are affected when they become relocated artists. These testimonies support the fact that the identities of relocated artists are re-imagined by the host community and often **reduced to their "history of persecution that they carry with them"**, as one coordinator of the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN) stated at its 2022 General Assembly.

White supremacy and institutional racism

After the murder of George Floyd by a police officer in June 2020, the scale of global protests that occurred was unprecedented. Many organisations, companies and institutions released strong statements against institutional racism and discrimination. It is easy to make such statements, particularly as they become more and more present in popular discourse. It is much

[2] Video: John Pilger interviews British-Indian author Salman Rushdie (1983): johnpilger.com/videos/the-outsiders-salman-rushdie (last accessed 30.08.2022).

more **difficult to confront one's own racism** and the racism that is deeply ingrained in institutions and other professional and personal structures in which white people in the North operate, not least because it requires them

> "[...] to sit in discomfort with unsettling thoughts and failure and work through these things. It is important to resist the imperative to reproduce and resolve complex problems with uncomplicated solutions. Instead, we need to sit with and learn from this discomfort. That is the only way to move forward and reflect on our own role in collaboration and investment in these systems."[3]

In a white ideology, the phenomenon that Robin DiAngelo describes as the "good-bad binary" (DiAngelo 2018: 72) – the belief that being a good person and complicit in racism are mutually exclusive – is often the default understanding of racism. Thus, there still exists the widespread conviction that racist acts are intentional and malicious acts based in extreme prejudice that only bad people commit. Consequently, unless a person commits such acts, they are exempt from engaging with racism. In Robin DiAngelo's words:

> *"If, as a white person, I conceptualise racism as a binary and I place myself on the not racist side, what further action is required of me? No action is required, because I am not a racist. Therefore, racism is not my problem; it doesn't concern me and there is nothing further I need to do."* (DiAngelo 2018: 72)

If racism and discrimination are reduced to individual acts, then we separate these acts from "us" as well as the value systems that we base our lives in, and, as Shereen Daniels puts it, in doing so *"trivialise racism's reality and the fact that we live in racialised societies"* (Daniels 2022: 27). In fact, racism and white supremacy are so entrenched in societies and habitual patterns, that **nobody can claim to be able to escape participating in them**. This suggests that *"White people, intentionally or unintentionally, do benefit from racism"* (Tatum 2017: 90), and are thus influenced by it,

3 Video: Dr Althea-Maria Rivas (2020): How much do Black Lives Matter in global development, cited by Goris/ Magendane (2020).

even if in different ways than racialized people. Racism gives white people powerful, multiple privileges based on a concept of white supremacy that was produced intentionally over 500 years ago by men who wanted to design the *"ideal society for men like them to be and stay ahead"* (Daniels 2022: 28). Thus, according to Beverly Daniel Tatum, *"the question is not if all white people are bad, or if someone is a racist, but what white people are doing individually to interrupt racism"* (Tatum 2017: 19).

The belief that being a good person and complicit in racism are mutually exclusive is often the default understanding of racism.

The reaction of white people to this reality is often white fragility, which the Cambridge Dictionary describes as "*the feelings of discomfort a white person may experience when they are confronted with discussions around racial inequality and injustice*".[4] Another common reaction among progressive or woke people is guilt and the "It is me"/"It is all my fault" mantra.

In his article "The Trouble with White Fragility Discourse" (2022), Anthony Conwright argues that the impulse behind this mantra *"comes in good faith, but it reflects a larger problem: the need among white people to centre themselves in public discussions of race"* (Conwright 2022).

For organisations who acknowledge that they lack equity and want to (or have to) do something about it, diversity and inclusion (D&I) departments and programmes, including **training courses designed to raise awareness of unconscious bias**, have become the weapon of choice. In her recent book "The Anti-Racist Organization: Dismantling Systemic Racism in the Workplace" (2022), Shereen Daniels argues that such efforts and training courses are all too often performative acts to serve the consciousness of those – mostly white leaders – in decision-making roles that fail to contribute to the deconstruction of discrimination, and that such courses are *"watered down to an extent that D&I training carry no transformative meaning for any minioritised community that it aims to support [...] You can not command or control racial (or other) bias through rules and an annual day of reeducation [...]. This format cannot change the way people think [...] and therefore cannot change organizational systems"* (Daniels 2022: 41-42).

While such training is an important tool by which to raise awareness, it runs the risk of becoming merely performative if seen to be a solution in and of itself. In contrast, committed anti-racist leadership is defined by accountability throughout all decision-making and ongoing leadership practice, with equity being one of the core and actively pursued goals of the organisation on all its levels. According to Shereen Daniels, such leaders are characterised by three main traits: **humility, moral courage and tenacity** (Daniels 2022: 54).

4 dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/white-fragility (last accessed: 21.09.2022).

Striving towards equity is more fitting than striving towards equality to achieve justice.

Intersectionality

It is important to take a systemic look at inequality based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, class and other forms of discrimination, through an intersectional lens. Intersectionality – a term coined by Dr Kimberlé Crenshaw – is based on the assumption that *"all forms of inequality are mutually reinforcing and must therefore be analysed and addressed simultaneously to prevent one form of inequality from reinforcing another."* In an interview with Crenshaw in 2017, 28 years after her first article featuring the term "intersectionality" to explain the oppression of African-American women, she said:

> *"Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LBGTQ problem there. Many times that framework erases what happens to people who are subject to all of these things." (Crenshaw 2017)*

If we look at injustice's intersectionality we will understand why striving towards "equity" is more fitting than striving towards "equality" to achieve justice. **Equality** means that every person or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities, whereas **equity** has to do with acknowledging that each person has different circumstances, and allocating exactly the resources and opportunities needed to achieve an equitable outcome.

Finally, understanding intersectionality and equity provides tools for a deeper examination of the multiple relationships within TIRIs and between the many shifting identities that often interact by chance and not by choice in a complex world in constant flux.

Impact on the ecosystem of TIRIs

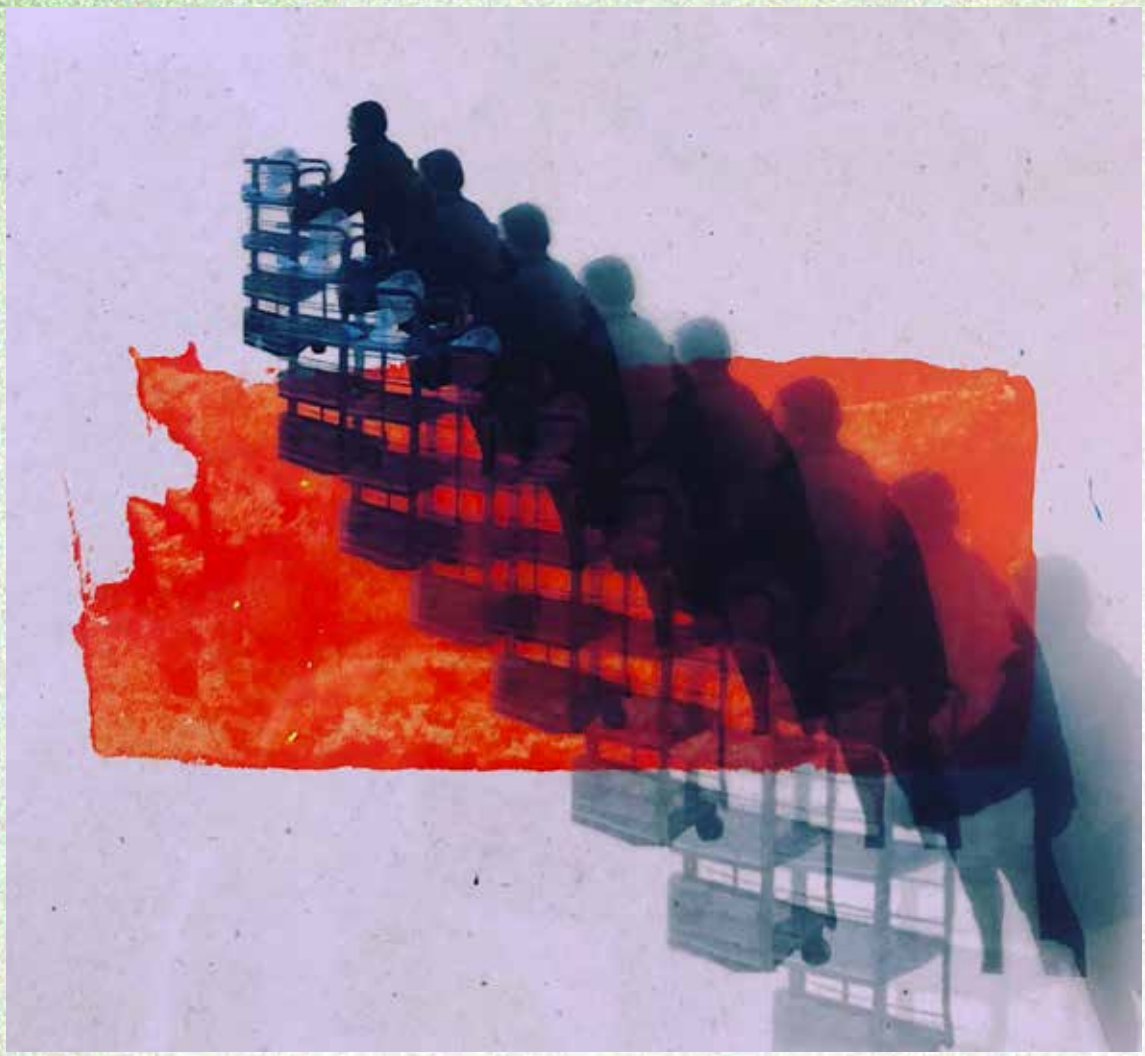
For our theoretical framework, we have drawn on and explored various concepts that we consider relevant to the TIRI context. We have used them to contextualise the power dynamics between TIRIs, host organisations and relocated artists. In addition, we have reflected on equality, discrimination and representation within the institutions directly involved as well as the broader context in which they operate.

Committed anti-racist leadership is defined by accountability throughout all decision-making, with equity being one of the core goals of the organisation.

TIRIs operate within the context of international development, foreign affairs and – in the case of shelter programmes for artists and cultural workers – **international cultural politics** as well. They are thus subject to North-South power dynamics, the logic of public funding and prevailing postcolonialism that influence the space that international relations have historically occupied.

The identity of artists is affected by their (forced) relocation, the abrupt, often uprooting disruption of their personal and professional lives, and their host society's perception of them. Such disruptions become determinants of artists' and cultural practitioners' experiences as they participate in TIRI's programmes, or even beforehand, when they make the decision to apply and thus define themselves as "artists at risk".

TIRIs are designed by institutions embedded in an inherited **value system suffering from institutional racism, discrimination and white supremacy**, which applies to both TIRIs and host organisations. We recognise that organisations have implemented activities to dismantle institutional inequality and discrimination. However, as we understand such patterns to be systemic and structural, rather than the result of individual intentions, these must be addressed holistically and become an integral part of leadership, so that they can be **tackled sustainably and effectively**.



Francisco Llinas Casas, *Crossing a Line Series 1* (2017), franciscollinas.com, distancedassemblage.com, © Francisco Llinas Casas.

3

EXAMINING THE STATE OF AFFAIRS

Overview

We have established the theoretical lens through which we examine the position of TIRIs in the broader context of international cultural policy, public funding flows and North-South relations. From this, we now turn to reality to explore existing dynamics and examine the current state of affairs.

Our analysis is based on the participation in our research of 92 professionals involved in TIRIs in different capacities, through questionnaires (62 respondents), an online working session (19 participants) and in-depth interviews (11 individuals) (see chapter on methodology for further details).

We were able to critically observe current dynamics due to the fact that the actors we spoke to were deeply engaged with the central research questions – not only theoretically but practically as well. However, despite the presence of these discourses in interpersonal relationships within institutions, the

results of the questionnaire indicate that this critical process is seldom a priority for TIRI team members within a **complex funding and operational setup that deals with the uncertainties of international politics and funding decisions**. Instead, the focus is often on daily operations and on satisfying donor requirements. Therefore, it is important for us to emphasise that the data collected proves that, while there is individual awareness of and critical reflection on power imbalances, formal processes to prevent such patterns are still few to none.

We designed and disseminated **three different questionnaires** with interrelated questions to reflect the three-way relationship between TIRI staff, artists and host organisations. In order to take into account the complexity of the TIRI ecosystem and the systemic approach to racism that we addressed in the previous chapter, we avoided the simple linear good/bad answer approach and tried to acknowledge gradations in between. Some close-ended questions produced clear responses that illustrate a one-sided relationship or transparent communication, for example. However, for many questions, there were no simple good or bad outcomes; rather, they helped us to interpret the current state and diversity of perspectives.

International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN)

ICORN, based in Norway, is an independent organisation of cities and regions offering shelter to writers and artists at risk, advancing freedom of expression, defending democratic values and promoting international solidarity. Member cities offer two-year relocation, including a stipend, housing, administrative support and networking opportunities to participating artists.

www.icorn.org

Martin Roth-Initiative (MRI)

MRI, based in Germany, supports artists at risk in close cooperation with a network of national and international cultural institutions. Through its two different programme lines, MRI's financial support enables cultural organisations in Germany (line 1) or the artists' home region (line 2), to temporarily host artists and cultural workers by offering them a one to two-year stipend, other support measures and a safe space to continue their creative work and professional development.

www.martin-roth-initiative.de/en

The questionnaires were disseminated among relocated artists, host organisations and staff associated with two TIRIs: the Martin Roth-Initiative (MRI) and the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN).

The main aim of these questionnaires was to allow us to reflect on existing institutional and individual perspectives and practices that relate to power structures and inequalities in the current system. We tried to explore not only "what happened" but also "how" and "what should" or "should not have happened".

While there is individual awareness of and critical reflection on power imbalances, formal processes to prevent such patterns are still few to none.

The **number of respondents** is not high enough to be considered statistically significant or representative of the relocated artists' perspectives at large. However, these quantitative data form a sound basis for a more in-depth analysis of the qualitative data we collected through interviews. At the same time, we can derive indications from the data obtained in some clear cases and relate them to the broader group; e.g., in terms of the number of artists who returned to their country after completing their temporary relocation.

Overview of the respondents to the questionnaires

In total, 36 **artists**, 12 **TIRI staff members**, and 14 **staff members from host organisations** working in 11 different institutions (one respondent did not provide information), responded to the questionnaire (see graphic on p. 36).

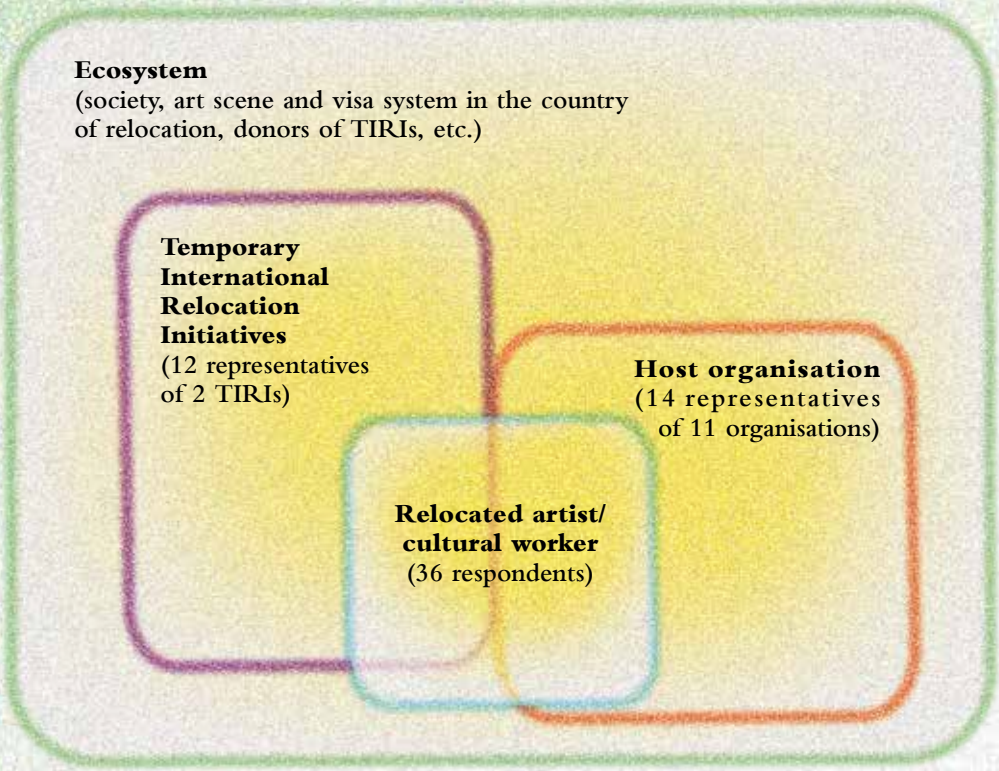
Artists & cultural workers

24 of the 36 artists and cultural workers who responded to the questionnaire were previous participants, having completed the relocation cycle. The other 12 were still in their funded relocation period.

Only two of the previously relocated artists could return to their home country, and only two of the current participants are willing, at least for the time being, to do so after they finish their relocation period.

The **countries in which relocation took place** are very diverse: besides Germany (6 artists), Norway (8) and Sweden (7), other countries mentioned were Switzerland (2), France (2), the United Kingdom (1), Denmark (1),

Respondents to the questionnaire: three interrelated groups



the Netherlands (1), the USA (1), Iceland (1), Italy (1), Slovenia (1), Ethiopia (1), and India (1).[5]

The same level of diversity can be observed in **countries of origin**. The 35 relocated artists (one did not specify) come from 19 different countries: Turkey (2 artists), Bangladesh (2), Brazil (1), Iraq (2), Cuba (1), Egypt (3), Venezuela (1), Nigeria (2), Zimbabwe (1), Yemen (4), Iran (4), Syria (2), Eritrea (3), Bahrain (1), Palestine (1), Sudan (1), Cameroon (1), Uganda (1) and Norway (1).[6]

Staff of TIRIs

Nine of the twelve TIRIs' team members who responded to the questionnaire identify as European/Caucasian, two as Black/African and one as Middle Eastern/North African. The option to identify as "having multiple ethnical identities" was added to the list at a slightly later stage; however, at that point only three responses had been received. All 12 have completed formal education; seven have a master's degree, two a doctorate and three a bachelor's degree.

5 Some of the respondents have relocated inside of their home region, facilitated by TIRIs based in the North.

6 We assume that the artist was indicating the country of relocation – not country of origin – as, when asked about the country of relocation, they identified a city in Norway.

Half of them stated that they had never experienced racism or discrimination. Furthermore, they did not describe themselves as belonging to a marginalised group. Of the six people who said they had experienced racism or discrimination, three referred to gender discrimination, two to racial discrimination and one person did not give any further details.

Representatives of host organisations

13 of the 14 team members from host organisations who responded to the questionnaire identify as European/ Caucasian, and only one stated that they had multiple ethnic identities.

Eight of the 14 are holders of a master's degree; four hold a bachelor's degree; one a high school diploma and one a PhD.

Ten of them stated that they had never experienced racism or discrimination; they do not identify as belonging to a marginalised group. Two of the four others described gender-based discrimination; one experienced discrimination as a child on the basis of having red hair, and the fourth person did not elaborate on their experience.

In the TIRI system, hosting happens in different ways; some TIRIs also take on this role themselves. However, the two TIRIs we have focused on in this research have established a network of hosts with whom they regularly work. In the case of MRI, host organisations comprise **cultural and arts organisations of all disciplines and sizes** in and outside of Germany. These organisations apply to the TIRI on behalf of the artist, who contributes a personal statement.

ICORN works with a variety of hosts across Europe as well as in the United States and in Brazil, ranging from **city municipalities**, public libraries and human rights non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to large pan-European institutions and organisations.

This diversity of host organisations is largely represented by the questionnaire respondents in terms of the type of organisations they represent. However, in terms of their geographical location in Europe, the diversity is less represented, as the majority of organisations from Germany are based in Berlin (4 out of 5). Likewise, the majority of organisations outside Germany are in Northern and Central Europe (Belgium, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and Iceland).

It is ironic that artists who claim agency in their countries through free creative expression find themselves caught up in a situation that limits this agency when being relocated.

Replaced agency, overshadowed power

In our conversations, it was repeatedly described as ironic that artists who claim agency in their countries through free creative expression or activism find themselves, from the moment they participate in relocation programmes, caught up in a situation that limits or even takes away this agency.

Power imbalance is rooted in institutions and processes that are highly hierarchical, including visa regulations and border arrangements that together create an unjust set of constraints.

A rounded relocation experience starts before the actual implementation begins, namely, with the **application, visa issuance and departure**, which can sometimes take years. Therefore, building a relationship of trust between the artist, TIRI staff and representatives of the host organisation starts prior to the arrival of the artist to the relocation city, as does the transformation in their life and career prospects.

17 of the 36 relocated artists indicated that they had **all the information they required** during the application process and later, during their preparation for their relocation.

When asked if they had a say in decisions regarding their destination and programme, and if they felt they had agency, only 11 respondents were positive. Seven of them answered, "Yes" and four, "No, but it was the right thing to do at the time."

Of the remaining 25 artists who responded, 15 stated that they had no agency, while 10 stated that their agency was reduced by choosing the answer option, "Yes, to a certain extent but not enough", when asked if they had a say in the design of their relocation.

In their presentation during our online working session, one of the independent experts whom we had invited to speak to the group, and who had collaborated with around 20 artists throughout their preparation for relocation, stated:

> *"My agency replaces the agency of the person I am working alongside: however, much I may aim to work equally, side-by-side, to find a suitable place to go, my power will always overshadow theirs. I have 'power-to' – power to find a place and a grant. They may have power also, but in this situation it is merely 'power-with'. They are reduced to silence – while trying to leave, while in hiding, keeping a low profile or waiting for a residency, which can take years. It is a relationship of dependency."*

Artists describe their relationship with the TIRI or host organisation with words ranging from "healthy and respectful" to "highly stressful".

The power dynamic and the realisation of the loss of agency are not static. It is a **process that relies on extreme life-changing events** that may be expected or unforeseen; equally, they may be gradual, but in most cases, they are abrupt.

Moreover, this power imbalance is rooted in programmatic aspects embedded in institutions and processes that are highly hierarchical. This includes funders, decision-making processes within institutions and political pressures that are reflected, for example, in visa regulations and border arrangements that together create an unjust set of constraints.

The interconnected layers of inequality, when not acknowledged and openly addressed, leave all sides of the temporary relocation system with realisations that are difficult to process and which lead to powerful emotions and reactions, as stated by one relocated artist in an interview:

> ***"My idea of solidarity is to be perceived as a resource, as someone capable of contributing something relevant**, not as a problem. [...] I am not a problem, I am a writer and a professor, and I am capable. And maybe, maybe I can help you more than you can help me. But this was not the song they wanted to hear. They wanted me to shut up and take the money, and to leave when the two years are over."*

Interpersonal relationships

By analysing the responses to questions about the interpersonal relationships between relocated artists, host organisations and TIRI staff, we can find out a lot about power dynamics within those relationships.

Therefore, we asked respondents in all three questionnaires to describe their relationships with the respective stakeholders from the other groups (relocated artists, host organisations, TIRIs) from their point of view. In the cases of relocated artists and TIRI team members, this was a close-ended question with predefined answer options that included strong guiding keywords to describe their relationship, such as peer, knowledgeable individual, powerful individual, donor, and beneficiary. In contrast, this was an open-ended question in the host organisations' questionnaire.

Most of the **artists (19) described their relationship to their contact person in the relocation programme** to be "Dealing with a knowledgeable person

Most TIRI staff are motivated by their committment to freedom of expression, human rights, and international solidarity; while mentioning the words "help", "support", "save", and "offering safety".

with whom you could build a trust relationship". In contrast, only four, and thus the smallest number, selected "Dealing with a peer professional in an international cooperation situation" from the answer options. Equally, four stated that the relationship was similar to "Dealing with a donor", and five chose "Dealing with a powerful individual who was trying to support your wellbeing".

The remaining four artists chose the option "Other", indicating that none of the available options reflected their experience, and formulated their own statements. All of them described a negative connection to their contact person in the TIRI, stating their lack of knowledge, experience and willingness to support and understand.

To go deeper into the dynamics of these relationships, we asked the artists **if and how these relationships evolved over time**. 12 of the 36 artists indicated that the relationship (to their contact person in TIRIs) evolved profoundly and positively into friendship, family, long-term collaboration partners and described them as intimate, respectful, organic and healthy. Only a few of the respondents selected, "No changes at all" or "Neither positive nor negative" as answer options.

On the other side, regarding their **relationship to the host organisations**, 12 artists perceived it as "highly stressful", and one of them even as "humiliating". In these cases, the hosts were judged as "gatekeepers, trying to prevent them from getting in contact with the TIRI", and evoked feelings of lack of safety, living in a hostile environment, loneliness or being detached or alienated, stressed, or very bad feelings.

Even in the three cases in which the artists described the relationship with the host organisation as friendly and well-intended, the capacity of the contact person influenced the way this relationship was established, especially if the person was perceived as stressed, very busy or unprepared for the task. As one artist stated:

> *"[The relationship with the host organisation] became stressful because I felt like I didn't want to put extra work on that [contact] person. They were already very occupied and overwhelmed with their work at the host institution."*

Before examining responses about **relationships with artists from the perspective of TIRI staff members**, it was necessary for us to pause in order to inquire about their personal and professional motivation to do their work.

Interestingly, only two out of 12 TIRI staff members stated motivations connected to their professional or institutional development. The other ten were very explicit about their commitment to freedom of expression and the universality of human rights, in addition to their belief in international solidarity. Through this discourse, the words "help", "support", "save", and "offering safety" were explicitly mentioned in different responses. Moreover, the position of temporary relocation efforts within broader global discriminatory contexts was strongly highlighted in one response:

> *"To be able to work with creative and inspiring people, both in art and activism. Solidarity with people who contribute to political and artistic freedom and are active across borders against all odds and despite the international border regime that unfairly deprivileges them. And the hope that our programme can make a tiny contribution for them to keep doing so, although we are part of that international regime, too, and benefit from it."*

As in the case of artists' responses, staff members in TIRIs also tend to see the artist as "a knowledgeable person with whom it is possible to create a trusting relationship." Although only five out of the 12 team members chose this option, it is still by far the most agreed upon type of relationship they perceived. Even though we are not attempting to treat the responses as a representative segment of the group under analysis, it is very reassuring to see that none of the managers chose the statement, "Dealing with a beneficiary".

Two of the respondents selected, "Dealing with a peer professional in an international cooperation situation". Two others looked at these statements more critically: one of them altered the statement to, "...but the reality shows unequal power relations", and the second one combined it with, "seeing the artist as a knowledgeable individual with whom building trust is part of the process" (rather than "possible").

In the questionnaire addressed to **host organisations**, a comparable question remained open-ended, as it was necessary to accommodate the high level of diversity of how host organisations operate. The question was formulated to inquire about their expectations as follows: "How would you describe your expectation toward the **relationship you will establish with the person you are hosting in your organisation**?". In the responses, the words used most to describe the relationship were "respectful" and "friendly". "Colleague" came next with different focuses, including "sustainable exchange" and "equal basis".

Host organisations expect their relationship with the hosted artist to be "respectful", "friendly" and collegial".

Conversations about power dynamics can foster trust-building and a greater understanding of the role of the host organisation or TIRI, their limitations and ways of functioning.

The term "colleague" has a professional and mostly positive connotation. However, the possibility exists that the use of this term also unconsciously carries with it the expectation of reciprocal exchange between the host organisations and the relocated artists, which, in turn, raises the question of how exactly these expectations can be for a relationship that is determined by power asymmetries from the outset. "Openness" and "trust" were also among the expectations of host organisations, as were "empathy", "patience", "realistic expectations", "honesty", "cooperation from the side of the artist" and "care and safety from the side of the host".

Host organisations were also asked to describe their **relationship to the TIRI**. For this question, the majority of responses were highly positive, showing a high appreciation for what the initiatives are offering, for trust and support during a crisis, and for openness. The dynamic of this relationship was, for instance, described by a representative of a host organisation as follows:

> *"Very friendly and open. We established a quite trustful base for our discussions and decisions. We could always count on their understanding – even in crisis. […] as we went through a joint learning process".*

Openly addressed power dynamics and dependencies

All three questionnaires similarly asked whether open and transparent conversations about dependencies and power dynamics had taken place.

Seven of the 12 **TIRI team members** said that they had already had such conversations with relocated artists. Only five of the 14 host organisations' team members and 10 of the 36 artists stated that they had been part of such conversations. It is clearly challenging to extract any quantitative conclusions from these numbers; still, it could be articulated, without risk, that such conversations are not a common practice within temporary relocation operations and programmes. More important is an examination of the responses to the question of how these conversations went.

Seven out of the 10 **artists who stated that they have had such a conversation** responded to the non-mandatory question, "What was the experience like?" For three of them, the conversation had a negative impact. It is disturbing to read the response, even if only once, "They lied to me" or "Very badly". The comparison with other responses makes it clear, however, that

such a conversation can be very stimulating and trust-building, and is crucial in raising awareness and understanding of how programme design affects artists. For example, a conversation between a relocated artist and a TIRI staff member allows us to decode the power dynamics influenced by the programme design, as one TIRI staff member shared in the following statement in an open-ended, non-mandatory question:

> *"One important point here was the relationship to the person within the host organisation who was responsible for the relocation project; sometimes the participant felt this person was patronising them. Another point brought up several times was the dependency on the host organisation, as, without a host, the relocation project could not take place. 'Leaving' the host organisation to continue the temporary relocation project without them was therefore not an option for the participants, leaving the participant with the feeling there was (no choice)".*

Four of the artists stated that these conversations can foster a greater understanding of the role of the host organisation or TIRI, their limitations and ways of functioning. TIRI staff members have expressed their position in these conversations as deeply listening to an enriching and insightful discourse around the circumstances and culture of the artist.

However, it seems that **the majority of these conversations are part of the informal development of the relationships** between the people interacting within the temporary relocation process. Thus, when a TIRI staff member stated in the questionnaire that the conversation with a relocated artist, "*gave me some really important feedback for my work that I'm trying to consider now, meaning: I'm trying to do things better now that I know their perspectives,"* this person indicated the impact such interaction has had on their work and individual behaviours.

Almost all TIRI and host organisation staff confirmed that anti-racist training would be valuable to their work.

The results of our interviews and questionnaires, however, suggest that such individual lessons learned are neither sufficiently documented nor shared between teams to be translated into systemic tools. Thus, challenging power dynamics remains the subject of "reactionary actions" rather than part of a purposeful, long-term strategy.

Formalised institutional practices

We tried, through different questions in the questionnaires, to inquire about the formalised institutional practices in TIRIs and host organisations as part of the relocation process or as part of programme evaluation or development processes.

External advice and anti-racist learning in TIRIs and host organisations

Only two out of 12 TIRI staff members and six out of 14 staff members of host organisations confirmed that they have sought **paid advice or consultation** from individuals or groups that have embodied experience of (forced) relocation, belong to racialised groups or have identities that are not considered part of the mainstream.

Still, 12 respondents (seven TIRI and five host organisation staff members) indicated that they had **engaged in anti-racist learning or participated in awareness-raising sessions** on subjects such as white supremacy, implicit bias and anti-discriminatory conversations. Furthermore, almost all confirmed that participating in such training would be valuable to their work (23 respondents, including 11 TIRI staff members and 12 host organisations teams). When we asked in the questionnaires why such trainings are important (or not), several respondents stated that continuous engagement is important even if team members already have knowledge or experience in dealing with anti-discrimination and anti-racist approaches. In doing so, they confirmed that continuous sensitivity training is needed.

Nevertheless, very few expressed interest in such measures, unless they were to be carried out by the relocated artists themselves and focus on exchange, storytelling and lived experiences.

> *"I appreciate hearing their experiences most. I think I have enough theory under my belt, and I continue to be engaged in the topic through other means."*

Team members need better support from their organisations for doing their challenging work.

The reflections that were shared with us by the 12 TIRI team members who had already undertaken such actions were all very positive. They not only described knowledge acquired or intellectual or cognitive aspects, but also focused on **self-positioning and the questioning of privilege(s) and behaviours.**

"I had to learn that – as a person living, acting and working in an environment which largely normalizes

racism – I have and continually am contributing to structures upholding racism and discrimination. It was challenging for me to accept that – despite the intention to 'not discriminate or act racist' – I have and am still applying patterns of thought and actions which are discriminatory and racist. The experience has shown that, through my privilege, it is easy to overlook and forget patterns of my own actions which have a discriminatory effect or are perceived as racism. I learned that it is therefore crucial to constantly confront myself with the reality of my privilege."

Team support and acknowledgement in TIRIs

We also asked what support TIRI team members receive from their organisation to do their work. The answers we received from the 12 team members of two TIRIs are very diverse and therefore do not allow for generalisation. According to the questionnaire, most of them feel acknowledged for their work, especially by their colleagues. However, some indicated that they were fully supported by their colleagues, but feel a lack of support from the larger organisational level and leadership. There seems to be a big difference between their relationship with the core team and the feeling of solidarity on an interpersonal level, and the institutional support they receive. This suggests that greater awareness is needed among decision-makers to establish better support and communication mechanisms in organisations.

Discrimination, racism and feeling unsafe during temporary relocation

Half of the 36 relocated artists stated that they did not face any discrimination or racism during their temporary relocation period. Eight experienced everyday racism and discrimination in such situations as when renting an apartment, administrative procedures like residency permits, from neighbours, etc. A quarter (9) of the artists confirmed that they had been discriminated against by either the TIRI or the hosting organisation, or both.

It is challenging to maintain distance while reviewing stories of discrimination and racism lived by artists during their relocation periods. It is necessary to share some of the quotes here to show to which extent the language used

While half of the artists did not face any discrimination during their relocation period, a quarter faced everyday racism and another quarter faced discrimination by the TIRI or the host organisation.

articulated the **loss of dignity that certain relocated artists experience(d)**. In different statements, terms like "humiliated", "verbal abuse", and "corrupted" were used to describe how they felt or were treated by the TIRI or the host organisation.

> *"What I felt was the rush of the organisation to make me leave the day the two years of the programme expired."*
>
> *"She told me once that you should be grateful to us for being alive."*
>
> *"...So he has threatened me...".*
>
> *"Also, I have been told to show more gratitude in a way that I felt that my human dignity has been hurting."*

Approximately two-thirds of the 36 relocated artists who participated in the questionnaire expressed that they felt safe during their temporary relocation period. Those artists who did not feel safe stated reasons including publicity – either around the relocation itself or around their temporary "home"; e.g., if the building carried historical significance for the organisation or the host city. A Black artist shared in the questionnaire that they felt unaccepted and even threatened in the small, conservative and predominantly white town where they were living during their relocation. These examples suggest that the immediate environment and social, formal or informal networks surrounding the relocating artist are significant factors in **creating a sense of safety and acceptance** during temporary relocation.

Many artists who have migrated from the South to the North feel reduced to one-dimensional labels based on stereotypes by their new artistic community.

In the responses, geographic proximity to the country of origin also played a role in the feeling of security, especially when authoritarian governments or authorities from state institutions in that country continued to persecute, interrogate, and harass family members and colleagues of the relocated artist. On the other hand, respondents indicated that an **uncertain or unclear legal status in the host country** (e.g., in relation to a long-term residence and work permit, or stable health insurance) increases feelings of insecurity and vulnerability. We continuously observed in the responses and the interviews with relocated artists that acquiring legal status in the host country played a significant role in establishing or decreasing the level of safety, depending on how complicated those processes were.

Labelling and streamlining aesthetics

Though the artists' questionnaire did not include direct questions regarding the impact of relocation on artistic practices and aesthetics, several artists suggested that they felt **"reduced" to their persecution story** or to being presented within pre-identified expectations.

The same was reported by interviewees and participants in the online working session, during which a cultural manager stated that "*the quality of the artistic work is very much streamlined; often the art world is not even aware of being affected by colonial influence.*"

This is not only true for temporarily relocated artists. Looking at the careers of artists who have migrated from the South to the North and thus changed their professional context, it is evident that they and their work are often reduced to one-dimensional labels based on stereotypes by their new artistic community. In the workshop "From 'Help' to Solidarity: Fair Support for International Shelter and Relocation in the North-South Context", organised by MRI during the ICORN General Assembly 2022, an artist who had previously participated in a temporary relocation programme, stated:

> *"The value and the meaning of your work is often not realised. What remains of your work/your career is your story. What matters is what you've been subjected to and this makes you small. What counts is the horror story, not least because the actual content of the work is not understood in the new place. Explaining this content can sometimes be impossible."*

The same reflections were shared in the report on the relocation of Egyptian musician Ramy Essam to the city of Malmö, Sweden, entitled, "Report on the implementation of Malmö's first Safe Haven programme for musicians":

> *"As an Egyptian musician in Sweden, he is often easily placed in the folk and world music slot, which is something that bothered him at first, but which he has learned to handle." (Lind 2015: 21)*

In short, introducing such **labels as "artist in exile"**, "relocated artist", or Syrian or Ukrainian or Black artist, is a necessity for the mainstream narrative to be able to consume or absorb the "newcomer". Thus, it is an attempt to simplify a complex situation, a modern instrument to control an aesthetic that the audience understands, tolerates and knows how to handle.

"We are hurting ourselves because we actively prevent our audiences from being confronted with a multitude of visions".

> ***"We function in a space that pushes us toward a single narrative, a dominant vision of what is politically acceptable;*** *we are hurting ourselves because we actively prevent our audiences from being confronted with a multitude of visions", the aforementioned cultural manager elaborated in our online working session.*

Perspectives of TIRIs based in the Global South

While this research does not focus on temporary relocation initiatives founded by actors from and based in the Global South, there is a need to include them to complete the picture, and to explore how they interact with Global North initiatives.

We conducted **interviews with team members from two initiatives**. To free our interviewees from the pressures of Global-North-dominated funding logics and possible professional dependencies, we assured them and their organisations anonymity to create a safe space for exchange and expression. One of the organisations provides support and temporary relocation for artists of all disciplines. The other organisation focuses on supporting human rights defenders, including artists, in its programme. In the two interviews we conducted with representatives from the two TIRIs that are based in the Global South, the interviewees **shared their experience of trying to collaborate with Global North initiatives**. In summation, two main reflections emerged: Global North and Global South initiatives have different expectations when it comes to artistic practices. In the latter's experience, Global North TIRIs base their selection process on the quality and merit of artists. Moreover, the timeframes for selection procedures and onset of relocation is generally more demanding and is often mismatched with the needs of concerned artists. One interviewee stated:

> *"We tried to collaborate and to relocate artists in partnership with organisations like [name of the TIRI], but what happened is that it's a bit complicated when it comes to relocating artists from [name of the region] to Europe [...] for example, they need to even apply for a scholarship, or to a programme, which necessitates having a host organisation [...]. What is very important to say [...] is that we do not look at the merits of the artist's work."*

One of the South-based programmes is planning to build a network of like-minded organisations, artist residencies and cultural spaces inside and

Host organisations create networks and need capacity building to be better prepared for their role.

outside their region that are able to host artists and cultural practitioners for a period of six months or longer. After joining the network, each of the organisations will receive training to be better prepared for the role of host organisation. The European initiatives that they approach to be part of this network are, by intention, predominantly migrant-led organisations in different cultural fields.

Offering training to host organisations is also featured as an important element of the second initiative, where all host organisations are human rights organisations, and **receive specific preparatory training and follow-up supervision**.

> *"Yes, so when we enter into these agreements with the host organisations, we put a big focus on capacity building, because we think this is one of the biggest elements in strengthening the implementation of the initiative. So this capacity building includes not only case management, but ranges to psychosocial support, to partnership building, to fundraising. So we put a big focus on capacity building of the host organisation."*

Interestingly, both organisations have continuously **supported Global North TIRIs as intermediaries and interim hosts** when artists currently participating in one of their programmes or moving between two different programmes have had to leave their host country due to their migration status, visas, delayed paperwork or other administrative issues. This practice seems to be widespread, as confirmed by one of the artists we interviewed, who had been relocated from a northern European country to a Latin American country for a few months before moving on to their new destination of relocation in southern Europe. One of the interviewed representatives of a TIRI on the continent of Africa outlined the practice:

> *"The asylum process of one of the fellows [of the Global-North TIRI] that was relocated [...] was not successful, so they had to have the human rights defender leave [...] for a few months, as they work on an appeal, and then have them brought back once the appeal has been successful. There's definitely better ways to do it, but at the moment, when there's not really many options, then you really just have to take what's available."*

In theory, this practice offers a viable solution to situations in which relocation periods are interrupted due to administrative problems and delays. However, the physiological and personal impact that such continuous forced relocation has on the relocated artists is hardly imaginable.

Francisco
Llinas Casas,
At a Distance (2017),
franciscollinas.com,
distancedassemblage.com,
© Francisco
Llinas Casas.

4

TEMPORARY RELOCATION INITIATIVES IN A NORTH-SOUTH CONTEXT – A SYSTEM UNDER PRESSURE?

There are lots of good insights and intentions, but not enough sustained, strategic action.

We have exchanged through different forms with around 90 individuals involved in the temporary relocation sector in one way or another. This exchange aimed to explore the five guiding questions we had formulated at the beginning of the research process.

While one of them is strongly connected to theory – "How do historical North-South inequalities and a colonialist heritage manifest in the implementation of temporary relocation initiatives?" – the other four focus more on practice, and allowed our conversations with professionals from the field to **decipher areas of tension or stress within the system of temporary relocation.**

In this and the next chapter we revisit the questions. We draw conclusions and generate approaches to practical implementation from our conversations with and reflections by professionals who participated in the research. In doing so, we provide a basis for recommendations that address concerns that have proven to be important in the context of TIRIs for artists.

- What factors create and sustain the problems regarding relationship building, power dynamics and discrimination in the context of temporary relocation programmes?
- What common practices – if any – have been adopted by temporary relocation initiatives that aim to dismantle and rethink structural inequalities and injustice?
- Which mechanisms can support relocation programmes to acknowledge this system and to contribute to changing it?
- How can relocation programmes appropriately and sensitively support relocated artists when they experience discrimination, and particularly racist discrimination?

So where do we go from here? How do we tackle these questions and what are possible answers?

We listened to and read responses from relocated artists and cultural workers who have experienced discrimination, paternalism, disinterest and administrative hurdles. Some of them felt their identity was reduced to artists "with a persecution story" who should be grateful to be in "safety". We have encountered statements from representatives of host organisations who felt overwhelmed, unprepared, untrained, understaffed and underfinanced to rise to the challenge of hosting, both on an administrative and on a personal, psychological level.

Lastly, the manoeuvring space for TIRIs is restricted by public funding regulations which prevent flexibility and lead to frustration among staff members.

Many TIRI team members are aware of their privileged position, however, power imbalances and paternalistic patterns are still rarely addressed strategically, often because their critical consideration and deconstruction are not endorsed from within the sector itself. For many years, we have observed in professional settings an explicit desire to ensure mutual exchange between relocated artists and the host community, instead of one side "helping" the other. In some ways, the fact that this is still being discussed as a goal highlights what is currently wrong: **lots of good insights and intentions, but not enough sustained, strategic action.**

TIRIs play an important role in the support for artists and cultural workers at risk: The majority would take the option of relocation again.

Despite these problems, our conversations also confirm the important role these TIRIs play in the relocation and support of artists and cultural workers at risk. Indeed, the majority of relocated artists we met stated that they would take the option again and referred to broadened networks and positive encounters they have had along the way. We have also encountered former participants who are now coordinators or paid consultants for TIRIs. This is proof that **organisations are indeed able to listen and to implement adjustments** on how they – in this case – recruit. Moreover, coordinators of host organisations have, despite the challenges they face, continuously mentioned how much they enjoyed the experience and indicated that they are willing to engage in anti-racist and anti-discriminatory learning, to raise their awareness of their privileged position, or are, in fact, already doing so through training, their own reading or other kinds of support groups.

Nonetheless, the findings of our research clearly show that there are **several serious, deep-seated issues that need to be addressed** in order to create a more balanced, equal, safe and less discriminatory environment, first and foremost for the artists, but also for all those who are part of the ecosystem. The commissioning of this research by a TIRI is a clear indication of the awareness of existing inequalities, power imbalances and discrimination in the space these organisations occupy. Still, continuous efforts are required from decision-makers to sustainably address and to implement processes that contribute to their awareness and their abilities to deconstruct and reduce such inequalities.

Before attempting to outline the main areas where such efforts are needed to move towards more equity, we pause to offer a **series of provocative questions** posed by an independent expert in our online working session who has been working on temporary relocation for artists for two decades:

> *"Can we conceive of programmes that allow for giving on both sides? Can we see that the artist impacted by displacement*

has as much to give to us and our community as we have to give to them? That, despite their state of mind, which may be quite delicate, they are valued witnesses, observers and actors in what we now can call a permanently disrupted global environment? Can we mutually support one another to see through the others' eyes and deepen our understanding of the breadth of human experience, or must we oblige our guest to adapt to our context?"

As mentioned at several points in this publication, there are no shortcuts, but it is **important that we do not despair or fall into inertia** simply because the challenges seem too big to overcome. This is a gradual process and some of the underlying issues will not be resolved in our lifetime, but as stated in a Zoom chat between two participants during our working session:

> *— "We need to keep demanding utopia; like this, there can be shifts throughout time of different new generations. I feel it's a symptom of capitalism. We've prioritised productivity over progress. [...]"*
>
> *— "And we fail to trust the process and are focused on outcomes and outputs – in particular in the sector(s) we work in."*

To move closer towards this utopia we, who are part of this sector in the North, need to apply tactics that are the result of a deep understanding of one's own position and the position of others in a complex of interconnected relationships that are **influenced by broader political and socio-economic realities**. This is not unique to temporary relocation initiatives, but it occurs in all places and institutions, particularly if they are international, as they are more likely to foster interaction between people of all different backgrounds.

The first step towards a better system would be to ensure that all concerned actors receive the support they need to assume the role they are supposed to fulfil. This includes fostering an understanding on the side of TIRIs and host organisations that what they do is part of a salaried job and not a reciprocal relationship or friendship. It is a relationship that is inevitably based on power imbalances. Instead of either denying this fact, or trying to eradicate something that cannot be entirely eliminated, why not use the power and privilege that come with such a position in a way that empowers others and contributes to awareness and better practices?

"Can we see that the artist impacted by displacement has as much to give to us and our community as we have to give to them?"

In our day-to-day practice, such actions can be small steps, such as behavioural changes and self-reflection, challenging

leadership and decision-making processes, standing up for colleagues from marginalised groups, or contributing to changing procurement practices in organisations, for example.

To these ends, host organisations should be provided with sufficient training, supervision and monetary resources and, in turn, should be expected to deliver real engagement, awareness, the willingness to learn and to look at their "white privilege".

Why not use the power and privilege that come with our positions in a way that empowers others and contributes to better practices?

Furthermore, **regular evaluation, a set of clear principles and feedback conversations should be the norm**. If the contact persons in the host organisations are not trained to deal with the needs and requests of relocated artists, if they feel overwhelmed or do not have the stamina and skill set to be a host, it is almost inevitable that the relocation experience of the hosted artists will be negatively affected. As one team member of a host organisation shared in an interview:

> *"I felt pretty helpless in helping her [the relocated artist] but I didn't want to see her as a victim or make her feel more victimised. Even though it felt like I am the person who is in a position of more power because I'm the coordinator and I have resources, but at the same time, I didn't know at all what to do. And I didn't experience something like that before."*

In such situations, many **artists will withdraw, take matters into their own hands, or feel isolated and neglected**, in particular if they do not have a network in the country of relocation. As one artist shared:

> *"You know, I just moved to the city. They ask me to fill out a form in [local language]. So this kind of, I would say, superior behaviour towards the guest. Like, we're hosting you, you should be grateful. You know, we don't have time for this. When I asked for a meeting, it was like, oh, I don't have time. Maybe next month, really? They don't have time for half an hour for someone who has left their country. They don't know anything. They, I mean, I know a lot, they were just lucky that I'm someone who found their way out, but it's not necessarily like everyone else does."*

As TIRIs are the coordinators of the whole relocation process, their **function as knowledge banks** for host organisations and artists is crucial. Learning systems must be put into place to ensure that mistakes are not repeated, experience and knowledge are passed on and expectations are managed.

Several host organisations and artists mentioned that they and the TIRI were learning in tandem, or TIRI staff themselves stated "a learning on the job" approach. Indeed, not everything can be planned or known in advance. However, because of the crucial position of the TIRI in the whole process, it is indispensable that the TIRI be the expert – especially when it comes to administrative and legal matters such as visas, residence permits, health insurance etc. We acknowledge the limited influence that TIRI team members have to adjust administrative processes and regulations. However, they should know how these systems work and how to work with them, as well as the limits of their influence. They should likewise build a network of contacts and support that they can call upon if a (prospective) relocated artist requires them. The organisation of such procedures should not be left to host organisations. They often do not have the means or connections required, start from scratch and run into the same challenges over and over again.

Restricted mobility due to discriminatory visa and border regulations is one of the strongest factors driving power imbalances. If the latter are to be reduced in the temporary relocation system, it is crucial that programme design takes this factor seriously from the outset and focuses on trying every means possible to support all related processes in a planned manner. Raising false hopes and expectations is worse than timely and transparent communication of boundaries, timelines and challenges. Again, this calls for sufficient experienced and trained staff members who are aware of their power and responsibility and have the resources they need.

Learning systems and networks must be created to ensure that knowledge is passed on and expectations are managed.

The application and selection process is also in the hands of the TIRI, as they are the organisers of the temporary relocation. By default, **selection procedures can never be completely equitable and objective**, as they are designed and run by individuals and follow a certain institutional logic that is not free of barriers and exclusion (e.g., regarding language, literacy, access to training etc.). However, they could be (re) designed to be flexible and to prioritise artists' needs over organisations' procedures; e.g., allowing applications to be submitted in different languages and different formats (e.g., a video statement), not forcing artists to explicitly recount traumatic experiences that are the reasons for which they are at risk, or lowering the eligibility threshold.

TIRI leadership has to be on board with this, as they must **convince funders to allow for higher levels of flexibility.** These communications can be challenging and might not always be successful, however, if broader hierarchical structures are not challenged, they will not change.

Living with the fear of expiring visas leads to high stress levels for many artists who are temporarily relocated.

The involvement of artists as advisors was mentioned by several of our interviewees. In general, it is positive when the knowledge in a team comes from people who have had the experience of relocation, whether as part of a programme or otherwise. However, it should not be assumed that artists in such programmes are eager to make themselves available as experts to TIRIs. It would be better in the long run to ensure that such people who wish to do so either end up in paid positions of employment or **share their expertise as paid consultants**.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the temporary nature of international relocation programmes. Such programmes follow predetermined schedules and procedures for a fixed duration, and artists' lives have to fit into these, despite the high degree of freedom most of them have within the programmes. One of the participants stated that they **constantly felt like a guest with a departure date** with the looming threat of "becoming illegal". Living with such fear leads to high stress levels for many artists who are temporarily relocated. Again, recognising these challenges is the first step and an ongoing priority in negotiating between the "correct measure" and the particular needs of each artist. Perhaps the temporality cannot and should not be lifted, but its consequences must be transparently spelled out from the outset, including the communication of possible options for longer or even permanent residency, or the impossibility of this option.

Illustration by Amal Hamed, instagram: amalartworks, behance: AmalHamed, 2022 © MRI.

Do not accept the inevitability of injustice!

5 PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

"It is important to resist the imperative to reproduce and solve complex problems with uncomplicated solutions".[7]

How do we weave together the findings, insights and inspirations we have gained through this report to combine them into possible actions that resist the temptation to find simple solutions to complex problems? To address this challenging, multi-faceted task, we need to develop proposals that reflect and respond to the **intersectionality of the systems of inequality at play** within the temporary international relocation system. Therefore, we avoid the linear logic of simple, singular recommendations, and propose a concept that is based on a holistic approach to addressing colonial power imbalances, injustice, discrimination and racism.

We invite our readers to consider our proposal from the different positions they occupy in life: personally, professionally, as part of an institution, a particular class, a society, a value system and/or a continent. We are aware of how challenging this process is and how difficult it will be to turn some of the recommendations into reality. Though it may seem to be a Sisyphean task to reach and influence overarching institutional structures,

7 Video: Dr Althea-Maria Rivas (2020): How much do Black Lives Matter in global development, cited by Goris/ Magendane (2020).

this process starts within ourselves. The big and small acts we can take as individuals, teams or organisations are important, especially if they are part of a holistic strategy.

The need for a holistic concept of change

The concept of change we propose is based on a multi-level holistic approach to overcoming the power imbalance present in the TIRI system. Change is not a singular act, but a combination of various long and short-term measures that are incorporated into and derived from a holistic **strategy and vision rooted in personal and institutional value systems**. A holistic approach also means resisting the tendency to prioritise actions according to what is possible. One must start from a comprehensive understanding of what is needed and have realistic expectations of what is possible to avoid frustration.

The four pillars of change

We have identified four interconnected pillars that offer proposals for actions and process changes with different approaches and at different levels. They are the result of lessons we have learned from other sectors; for example, international development activities and organisational development and leadership strategies in the corporate world. In addition, they are informed by our critical observations which we deem relevant to temporary international relocation activities, based on the findings of this research.

In each of the four pillars, **we bring together key findings from the previous chapter to translate them into practice**. We establish principles, give concrete examples of what could be done to move towards them, and, lastly, supplement them with suggestions for further reading or listening, where possible. These recommendations are directed at teams and individuals working in TIRIs and host organisations based in the Global North, as well as at representatives of the wider ecosystem. We deliberately do not distinguish between host organisations, TIRI teams and others in our recommendations, yet a few may be more relevant to one of the groups than to the other.

These recommendations are directed at teams working in TIRIs and host organisations in the Global North, as well as funders and policymakers.

The four pillars are: 1) individual engagement & positioning, 2) relationships & networks, 3) institutional practices and 4) resources.

I – Individual engagement & positioning

By individuals, we don't only refer to paid employees within institutions and organisations but also to people from neighbourhoods in host cities, professional circles in the arts fields and hosting volunteers.

1. **Educate yourself.** Read, ask critical questions, interrupt injustice when it happens, and educate your peers. Don't make the artist your confidant who must bear your (white) fragility, or make them your anti-racist coach. This is not their job!

2. **Listen and be open to feedback and criticism.** Try your best not to be offended when you are confronted with your own institutional or systemic racism or "white privilege".

3. **Don't question or relativise any racist or discriminating experience** that relocated artists bring to your attention. Take them seriously, be empathetic, ask the person if and how they want your support, and take each such incident as an opportunity to evaluate your practices.

4. **Focus on your position and presence in the workplace**. Ask yourself how you can use your privilege and power to a) contribute to anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practice and b) be a good ally to relocated artists and others when they are faced with expressions of individual and institutional discrimination and racism.

5. **Reflect on your motivation.** Find a balance between individual political commitment and the fact that these are paid positions and not political or activist movements, in spite of the highly political content of the work.

6. **Acknowledge your power and the privilege(s) that come with it.** Use it as best as you can to the benefit of relocated artists. Never speak on their behalf unless they specifically ask you to do so. Give them the opportunity to retain control over their personal and professional lives. Otherwise, the power – in the forms of knowledge, decision-making, resources – of the team members will overshadow that of the artists.

7. **Speak up and denounce injustice in the system.** Acknowledge that, while you are inevitably part of hierarchical structures, you are more likely to challenge hierarchies from a more secure space than that which the artist occupies. Don't let the artist do the heavy lifting!

8. **Engage in self-care.** Make sure you get the emotional support you need to deal with the stress, frustration and other effects of your work. Also, do not underestimate the effect your active engagement

with injustice can have on you. Make sure you are not alone when you do this work and that you don't get stuck in a feeling of guilt over the privilege you hold.

II – Relationships & networks

Formal and informal relationships matter between individuals within the same initiative as much as between initiatives, institutions and networks. These relationships play out both between individuals and institutions, as well as contextually between the Global South and the Global North.

1. **Avoid confusion in relationships.** Interpersonal connections are less emotionally charged when they are kept professional. This does not mean that you should fight the human nature of relationships, but always consider the impact on yourself and others involved.
2. **Manage expectations.** The best way to do this is to communicate in a transparent and timely manner and to provide all information possible, thereby giving the artist the option to make an informed choice.
3. **Don't base your relationship on reciprocity.** Never expect gratitude from relocated artists for what you do as part of your paid job, engage in (inner) dialogue about whether they deserve what they receive as part of their scholarship, or compare your position to them. It is not comparable!
4. **Use language consciously.** Pay attention to the language you use in writing and speaking; language reveals hidden layers of unconscious biases or assumptions.
5. **Invest in the power of networks and be creative with it.** Investing in professional networks as a support system allows for a better understanding of the professional needs of the artist. This can lead to a safety net, both for the host and for the artist.
6. **Build and nurture structured mechanisms for feedback and exchange** with artists, and between host organisations and TIRIs. Make this a leading practice to enhance nonlinear and indirect learning techniques.

III – Institutional practices

We consider this pillar on two different levels:

In the long term, we must ask to what extent existing institutional hierarchies are suitable for the complexity of TIRIs. Perhaps holacratic or community-led approaches to management are better suited to develop a less programmatic and more agile working model that benefits all stakeholders.

In the short term, people are initiating effective action and processes within existing institutions that contribute to awareness, adjustments and institutional change, but drastic steps towards new institutional and non-hierarchical models have yet to be taken.

The following recommendations focus on what can be done in the short term, as long-term recommendations would require a report in and of itself.

1. **Take accountability throughout all decision-making** and ongoing leadership practice. Make equity one of the core and actively pursued goals of the organisations on all levels.
2. **Offer ongoing training, awareness raising and space for mutual** support among team members, including psychological support and wellbeing practices.
3. **Pay professionals with lived experience of forced relocation** for the design and leadership of TIRIs.
4. **Consider migrant-led organisations as potential hosts**, where sensitivity of the situations experienced by artists are, most probably, part of the embedded experience of the organisation's team members.
5. **Ensure higher levels of diversity among staff and leadership teams** through strategic recruiting that is part of a conscious, shared understanding of values across the organisation, and not a performative act to achieve higher diversity scores.
6. **Establish a constructive positive error culture** based on openness, courage, transparency and, of course, respect. This includes admitting mistakes and changing course when they are reported by artists – including your own mistakes, misconceptions, discriminatory practices, etc.
7. **Provide, develop and continuously update tools and strategies**, especially for the application process, preparation for relocation and the initial period following arrival in the host city:

- Provide clear and accurate information about **visa processes**, delays (depending on the country of departure and arrival), and communicate this transparently to the artist.
- Attach great importance to the **welcome package** and ensure that it contains all necessary information in different languages.
- Prioritise assistance with **administrative processes** in the host city, including the acquisition of residence permits, health insurance and accommodation.
- In these three processes, many artists face discrimination and feel "lost", especially because they take place immediately upon arrival and there is no space left to deal with the pressure that artists have experienced in their countries.

8. **Critically consider the role of the host organisations**, most specifically regarding:
    - the adequate preparation of organisations and the artists' contact persons;
    - constant communication with and evaluation of host organisations;
    - training opportunities, other support and room for exchange;
    - networking efforts that could benefit them and support them in their work.
9. **Review the application process and its language with an anti-discriminatory lens**. This includes three critical areas on the side of the TIRI (and host organisation):
    - comprehension of emergency situations;
    - questions of merit in selection processes, i.e., who is able to apply for the relocation programmes, languages skills, international networks;
    - and retraumatisation.
10. **Allow for agile planning that maintains a balance** between all focus areas of relocation; namely, safety, professional development, psychological support and wellbeing.
11. **See the artists as valuable resources** for the host organisation, neighbourhood, community and city. Don't take this for granted,

but rather, make a conscious part of the agreement between you, your organisation and the artists how, where and if they want to be involved and make themselves available.

IV – Resources

Most financial resources in relocations are found on one side of the relationship, namely, the TIRI and their donors. This fact needs to be acknowledged yet prevented from being the most important part of the relocation relationship. The fourth pillar, resources, actually intersects with the first three. Still, looking at the distribution of resources separately is crucial to the detection of inequities and the identification of the parts of an interconnected ecosystem that lack resources to adequately fulfil their intended purpose. We have identified the six main resources available for international relocation processes to be:

1. **Financial resources:** TIRIs and their donors are the main providers and allocators of financial means. Yet, both the host organisation and the artist bring other resources to the relocation schemes. These need to be not only acknowledged but also planned for and nurtured. Moreover, regulating access and distribution of financial and other resources should not be the sole responsibility of TIRIs. Joint discussions should facilitate both their availability and opportunities to maximise available monetary and non-monetary resources for everyone involved.
2. **Knowledge, skills and experience are unnegotiable resources** in the case of international relocation processes: "Blind spots" in planning and implementation will not only lead to administrative or organisational problems; they may endanger the whole process, and thus the lives of artists engaged in it.
3. **Networks and connections:** Maximising the utilisation of available resources in the host city and its art sector (see above, "Relationship & networks") is a great support for the host organisation and the artist.
4. **Institutional power:** Being a member of an institution means having access not only to financial resources, but also to more influence and other resources (e.g., education, connections, influence, etc.), than as an individual. There are also co-workers and a team that, in the best-case scenario, support each other. These resources should be optimised and exploited towards the relocation process.

5. **Political power itself is an essential resource** in temporary relocation initiatives. As many of the major donors of these initiatives are state institutions, political pressure and advocacy are crucial for long-term influence.

6. **Content and discourse** are important resources created and shared by all involved in the relocation process in different ways. In the arts and cultural sector, creating and disseminating content and influencing public discourse is an essential layer of international relocation processes.

Recommended reading and listening

Self-study on race, racism, white fragility, and white supremacy:

- Layla Saad (2020): Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks.
- Robin DiAngelo (2018): White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Rafia Zakaria (2021): Against White Feminism: Notes on Disruption. New York, NY: Norton & Company.
- Kübra Gümüsay (2022): Speaking and Being: How Language Binds and Frees Us. London: Profile Books.
- "10 Books About Race to Read Instead of Asking a PoC to Explain it to You": www.bustle.comentertainment/10-books-about-race-to-read-instead-of-asking-a-person-of-color-to-explain-things-to-you-8548796

Decolonising the development and the aid sector:

- How May We Help You? A Conversation on Consent in Global Development. With Nana Apenem Dagadu, Angela Bruce-Raeburn, and Stephanie A. Kimou, CGD Talks, co-hosted by PopWorks Africa, 12 October 2019, www.cgdev.org/event/how-may-we-help-you-conversation-consent-global-development
- Podcast "Power in the Pandemic": Episode "Featured Voice Robtel Neajai Pailey on racism in development"; June 2020; open.spotify.com/episode/4B5KVY53g0LV3aJRO3wt5a
- Peace Direct (2021): Time to Decolonise Aid: Insights and Lessons From a Global Consultation, www.peacedirect.org/publications/timetodecoloniseaid
- glokal e.V. (2016): The Fairy Tale of Equality. Power and Solidarity in North-South Partnerships (e.g. "Checklist for Reflection and Practical Transformation" available in English), www.glokal.org/publikationen/das-maerchen-von-der-augenhoehe
- Maria Faciolince (2020): #PowerShifts Resources: Anti-Racism in Development and Aid, in: From Poverty to Power Blog, frompoverty.oxfam.org.uk/powershifts-resources-anti-racism-in-development-and-aid

Institutional environments and the workplace:

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Illustration by Amal Hamed, instagram: amalartworks, behance: AmalHamed, 2022 © MRI.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This publication presents findings and reflections of research that the two co-authors conducted between April and September 2022.

The research was guided by five research questions (see Chapter 1), allowing us to explore the current state of the TIRI ecosystem, particularly in relation to power dynamics, equity and discrimination. We centred the experience of relocated artists, which enabled us to reflect deeply on the dynamics between the different actors involved in temporary relocation efforts, and to draw conclusions and formulate recommendations for practical implementation.

Our research methodology is based on a two-pronged approach. On the macro level, our investigation focuses on analysing the ecosystem of temporary relocation programmes within large-scale patterns, structures and institutions. On the micro-level, **we focussed on mechanisms, tools and interactions between involved actors within this ecosystem**.

With this approach, we ensure a holistic investigation of a complex reality in the field of tension between the arts, international cultural politics, and international cooperation. Within this reality are people whose freedom is restricted, lives threatened and fundamental rights violated or restricted.

They are also artists and cultural workers with their very own individual life stories, qualities and experience.

Research process

The research process comprised qualitative and quantitative research methods as well as desk research of relevant literature. For the latter, we considered a range of publications from different fields such as North-South cooperation, equality and power balance in cultural and development programmes and anti-racist readings and toolboxes. Even though the latter were not developed with a focus on TIRIs, they offer relevant reflections and theoretical considerations to ground the research in a theoretical framework.

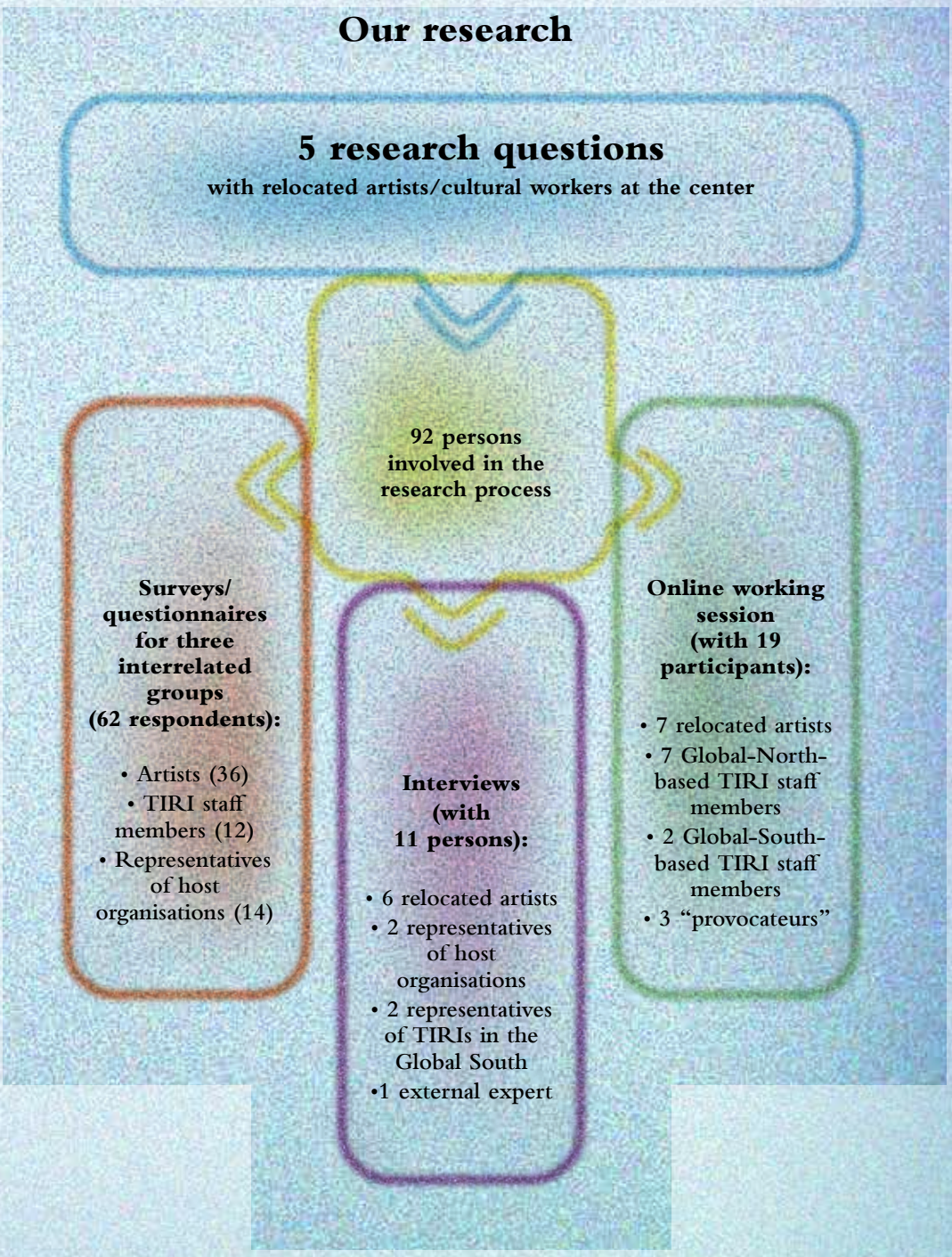
To collect a variety of diverse data sets we developed **three surveys/ questionnaires** to reflect the three-way relationship between shelter and relocation programmes, relocated artists and cultural workers and host organisations. Not all TIRIs operate with host organisations; some are hosts as well, while others – as in the case of ICORN, one of the organisations we focussed on – work with cities and municipalities as hosts. Still other TIRIs, such as the Martin Roth-Initiative, engage cultural organisations as host organisations. We do not distinguish between these different structures in this research, as we assume that the underlying dynamics of hosting are comparable across all cases.

The three surveys with open and close-ended questions were anonymised and responses were only accessible to the two researchers. **Survey recipients** were managers and coordinators of TIRIs, current and former participants of temporary relocation programmes and representatives of host organisations. The surveys were shared with the support of the Martin Roth-Initiative and ICORN as well as through personal networks with TIRIs, relocated artists and host organisations.

In total, we approached four TIRIs that offer temporary relocation to artists from the Global South (and from the Global North) for six months and longer. All of them work with host organisations and thus have different geographical and socio-economic relocation locations. In addition, their focus is not exclusively on one cultural or artistic practice, so we have a diversity of professions in the arts represented. Of the four organisations, the two mentioned above supported our research efforts and were able to distribute the questionnaires.

These **two TIRIs were our starting point for our selection of the host organisations and current/former participants**; their link to these TIRIs is the criterion for selecting the institutions and individuals interviewed in these

Our research



two categories. However, distributing the surveys and receiving a reliable number of responses was more difficult than initially anticipated, mainly because we were unable to contact survey recipients directly due to protection and security considerations for the relocated artists, as well as data protection laws. Thus, we were dependent on TIRI contact representatives and on their capacity to share the questionnaires within their organisations, with host organisations as well as with former and current participants from Southern regional contexts.

The Martin Roth-Initiative shared the questionnaire with 55 currently or formerly relocated artists, 64 individuals from 53 former or current MRI host organisations, and 9 MRI team members. ICORN sent the questionnaire to 161 current and former residents, 131 host city coordinators and 12 ICORN staff members. It is not possible to indicate specific **response rates** for each TIRI separately, as questionnaires did not require respondents to identify the institution or organisation they are affiliated with (i.e., the question remained optional). The general response rates for both TIRIs are: 16% for artists, 7.17% for host organisations and 57% for TIRI staff members.

We also acknowledge that even though the questionnaires included letters by the researchers **stressing anonymity and safe communication channels**, receiving the questionnaires from a TIRI might have deterred relocated artists from taking the survey. We were still able to achieve a substantial number of responses that allow for reflections and conclusions. More details are outlined in Chapter 3, including an interpretation and contextualisation of the data and insights we collected.

Following the end of the survey period, we conducted a **series of interviews** with survey participants that had stated their willingness to participate in an interview. We also approached representatives of organisations based in the South for their input to ensure diverse representation of different geographical locations and methods. In total, we conducted 11 interviews that lasted between 45 and 90 minutes.

We interviewed six **artists** from six different countries in the Global South who have participated in relocation programmes in the past, all of whom now live in five different countries in Europe. The majority had either participated in the MRI or the ICORN programmes; only one interviewee had taken part in another initiative. Additionally, we spoke with two **representatives of host organisations**: an independent, small cultural organisation and a large government-funded institution. Both organisations are based in metropolitan cities in Western Europe.

To observe the connections between **TIRIs based in the Global South** with those in the Global North, we reached out to three organisations based in

the Global South and conducted two interviews (as one organisation never responded – see page 48 for more information). Moreover, we conducted an interview with a cultural manager and scholar, who collaborated with around 20 artists throughout their preparation for temporary relocation so that they could benefit from the observations and analysis she had made during her own year-long research.

Furthermore, representatives of the interconnected groups assembled in an **online working session** in July 2022 that facilitated exchange and reflection on dismantling and rethinking structural inequalities and injustices. The aim was to create a space that would inspire prototyping for a (utopian) future. To broaden perspectives and provoke debate within that working session, we **invited three 'provocateurs'** from different fields to speak to the group. Participants consisted of: seven formerly/currently relocated artists, six representatives of TIRIs from the North (including one formerly relocated artist), three representatives of TIRIs from the South, three 'provocateurs' and the two researchers. Representatives of the host organisations were invited but could not attend; some of them agreed to be interviewed afterwards.

In the **selection of participants** for the working session, particular attention was paid to ensuring equal representation of individual artists/cultural workers and representatives of TIRIs. We selected the participants through purposive sampling, taking into account the following criteria: their responses to the survey, if they had provided their contact details; their involvement in the research as interviewees and/or representatives of organisations that contributed to the dissemination of the questionnaires; and personal contact with relocated artists and cultural practitioners, and with a proven interest and experience in engaging with the topic of the research.

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List of abbreviations

D&I Diversity and Inclusion

ICORN International Cities of Refuge Network

LBGTQ Lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender and queer (or questioning)

MRI Martin Roth-Initiative

NGO Non-governmental organisation

PoC Person/people of Colour

TIRI Temporary International Relocation Initiative

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An Exercise in Sitting with Discomfort

Towards more equitable support for international relocation in North-South Contexts

How can we empower civil society actors who have to leave their home country, while being sensitive to possible power imbalances? Programmes for temporary relocation are rooted in international solidarity, yet they are still part of a system shaped by global power dynamics and colonial history. What are the experiences of relocated artists and cultural workers regarding their agency, structural inequality and racism? What can be done to foster change on the individual and the institutional level? This report provides practical recommendations based on the needs of relocated artists for decision-makers and teams in relocation initiatives, host organisations, funders and policymakers, and not only in the arts sector.

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