

COLLABORATING WITH BUSINESS

by academics in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Business school researcher makes an impact on the creative industries

A project with Festivals Edinburgh took Dr Jakov Jandric back to his artistic roots.

Each year, Edinburgh's Festivals attract audiences in their millions to the Scottish capital. From the Royal Tattoo to the International Film Festival and the Festival Fringe, these annual cultural events have cemented the city's reputation for internationalism and the arts. However, it wasn't this status as a global hub for the creative industries that first attracted Dr Jakov Jandric to pursue his PhD in Edinburgh.

Despite his background in creative industry and festival programming in Croatia, Jakov's career aspirations drew him to the Business School and its strength in organisational studies. But his two different worlds came together much sooner than he could have expected: "I had just successfully defended my thesis when I heard Festivals Edinburgh was looking for an academic to assess the impact of the past 10 years of Scottish Government funding on the creative industry."

"The project could not have been further removed from my doctoral research exploring student experiences in higher education. But it spoke to my interest in the arts and also gave



me a chance to advance my qualitative research skills."

The Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festival Expo Fund was launched in 2007 to increase opportunities for performers based in Scotland. During the past decade, it has allocated a total of £21 million to festival organising bodies to fund activities which strengthen the voice of domestic talent.

Jakov worked with the Knowledge Exchange and Impact team to secure external funding to pursue the project. For the next six months, he pored over hundreds of pages of detailed reports on arts projects and productions. Jakov also interviewed more than 25 festival leaders, programme directors, and different artists to assess the cultural and human impact of the funds on Scotland: "It was a great opportunity to learn how the creative industry works on the funder's side, directly from the people behind one of the largest festival cities in the world."

The report gave Jakov the chance to hear personal stories from artists who had benefited directly from the programme: "The impact on many of the individual performers I met was



profound. Support from the Edinburgh Art Festival gave artist Jonathan Owen international exposure, which has since taken his sculpture work to Australia and India. Meanwhile, renowned Scottish storyteller, Andy Hunter's widow, Anne, told me how the Seeing Stories project had forged new European artistic links which have endured beyond his untimely death in 2015."

Jakov's final policy document attracted media attention and praise from Scotland's creative sector and the Scottish Government. Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs said: "These reports

demonstrate the benefit of the Scottish Government's Festivals Expo Fund to the Edinburgh Festivals and to culture and artists across Scotland...The Festivals themselves create a multitude of wider benefits throughout Scotland's creative industries, helping to sustain Scottish talent and encourage people to take part in cultural activity."

For Jakov, the most significant rewards from the project were the new skills and experience working with industry he gained: "Creating an impact assessment for policy makers and the public was an entirely new experience for me. It made me think differently about how I present my work. It also taught me how to write in an accessible way for these important external audiences."

"Conducting in-depth interviews with people from so many different backgrounds has been very beneficial to me as an early-career qualitative researcher. The more I have done, the more I have come understand how to ask questions in ways which elicit insightful responses. Working with an industry partner also gave me legitimacy, which opened doors to collect data on the ground I wouldn't have had access to working alone."



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