



## Culture Factory (Germany)

### Summary

The site of “*Culture factory*” in Munich (Kunstpark Ost or Kultfabrik) used to be an abandoned factory before it was developed into a maze of bars, clubs, cinemas, concert halls, etc. *Culture factory* comes with an attractive offer of spaces at a very low price to alternative, sub-cultural and creative initiatives, including galleries, clubs, theatre companies, and others. This mix of space, at an affordable price, and the artistic offer brings benefits to the public, attracting around 250,000 visitors per month. *Culture factory* has turned out to be a win-win situation for all the players involved: the city, the land owner, artists, visitors and the general public.

### The project

In comparison with some other cities in Germany, cultural activities in Munich are rather expensive. This high price is due to the lack of urban space and high rental costs. *Culture factory*, a redeveloped old factory site, offers attractive spaces at affordable prices to alternative, sub-cultural and creative initiatives, including galleries, clubs, theatre companies, etc. The location and infrastructure of *Culture factory* offers ideal conditions for the development of creative initiatives and enables synergy between them. The large scope of entertainment, creative and culture enterprises attracts a very diverse public to the site.

#### Sector(s) covered

##### Main Sector

Arts & Creative Industries

##### Other Sectors

Society: Urban regeneration

### Approach

Munich is a high price location which makes it hard to introduce and maintain cultural activities at a low cost. In comparison to other European cities Munich has not much of brown field land such as abandoned or underused industrial and commercial facilities available for re-use. In this context *Culture factory* constitutes an exception, providing wide opportunities for entertainment and culture related offers, accessible to citizens at a very moderate price.

The re-use of a former factory area provided for the following benefits:

- Offers a possibility to re-integrate the declining post-industrial area;
- Provides further opportunities for vibrant and contemporary cultural activities; and,
- Increases the value of the area after the planning and re-generation process.

### Element of innovation – the process

The redevelopment of the old factory site was an innovative part of a broader ‘master plan’ for the regeneration of this area of Munich.



Artists, musicians, painters and craftsmen have been given the chance to produce cultural activities and present their creative products to the public in affordable spaces. Today, the area is an innovative hot spot where plenty of cultural interactions take place.

*Culture factory* is also among the first projects integrating participative planning in Munich. It supports grassroots organisations and local culture.

## Key successes

### (outcomes, results, impacts)

*Culture factory* was developed as a pilot project. The great cultural and economic success that it has achieved so far indicates that it could act as a model for regeneration of other post-industrial areas. This initiative has showed that the re-use of industrial areas can constitute a culturally important and economically viable alternative to more traditional and higher-priced supports to cultural activities.

To illustrate this with facts, *Culture factory*:

- Attracts around 250,000 visitors per month;
- Offers a fixed job to some 1,700 persons on the site;
- Hosts approximately 26 clubs and other undertakings (e.g. restaurants, galleries, office spaces, etc.); and,
- Serves as a “home” for artists, handicrafts and private associations.

This live and innovative cultural and business scene illustrates that *Culture factory* has turned out to be a win-win situation for all the players involved: the city, the land owner, artists, visitors and the general public. The low budget cultural activities are not in rivalry with the existing institutions. They have widened the scope of activities in Munich and have helped to attract additional young people from surrounding counties. The intermediate cultural use of industrial areas or brown fields supports the city in its efforts to achieve high quality planning standards for permanent re-use and allows time to integrate citizens and relevant stakeholders in the planning process.

## Challenges

The scale and the nature of the *Culture factory* project made negotiations and discussion processes crucial in order to convince the land owner and to mobilise the support of the public authorities.

## Transferability and sustainability

*Culture factory* has proved to be a stimulating and economically viable initiative, simultaneously generating broad cultural offers at prices accessible to almost everyone. This serves as an indication that the re-development concept is transferrable and, in fact, it has already been transferred to other sites in Munich and in other German cities.



## Special Highlights

The example of *Culture factory* is illustrating a successful attempt to turn a derelict industrial area in Munich into a centre for art and entertainment. The practice reanimated an old factory site and turned it into an attractive space for alternative, cultural and creative initiatives, including galleries, clubs, theatre companies, etc.

The offer of *Culture factory* provides a “home” for artists, handicrafts, private associations, and arts businesses at a more competitive rate.

## Key characteristics

<b>General purpose of the practice</b>	Stimulating creative/innovative behaviour and thinking/promoting creative and innovative solutions to society problems
<b>Target group</b>	The area of the Kunstpark Ost used to be a factory site. Today the spaces are used by independent clubs, artists and cultural associations. The overall public of the site is very young.
<b>Type of learning</b>	Formal and informal
<b>Level of implementation</b>	Regional and local
<b>Funding</b>	Private (single occupants might receive public subsidies)
<b>Time frame</b>	Ongoing since 1995
<b>Leading organisations</b>	Department for Urban Planning, City of Munich

## Further information

### Website of the project

<http://www.kultfabrik.de/> (formerly Kunstpark Ost)

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