



Building Common Ground for Spaces of Public Discussion & Dialogue

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Deadline to apply: **Monday, 11 September 2020 (23:59 CET)**

Open to organisations based in **Turkey, Europe** and **neighbouring countries**.

Learn all about the story behind this new programme called VAHA and all the details on how to apply in the call below. We also prepared a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section which we invite you to check if you consider to apply.

We hope to welcome you in this exciting new journey!

VAHA Team

*If different, geographies may seem;
exploration may connect your “oases”.
Meet the partner(s) in action;
and foster resilient practices.*

VANA (meaning “oasis” in Turkish) is a two-year programme made with and for the empowered voices of **independent arts and culture spaces, advocating for public discussion and dialogue** in cities across Turkey, Europe, and their neighbouring countries. Bringing together the diversity of hybrid spaces and contextual responses to the crises of democracy the regions are currently facing, VANA explores the power of learning from local practices to develop **tailor-made support for platforms of free expression and cultural programming**. Exchange on alternative approaches and transformative economies, as well as international solidarity and outreach are at the core of VANA’s activities. With this approach, VANA hopes to provide a framework that allows local venues to form a socially prominent ecosystem of interconnected oases, growing as fertile landscapes for open dialogue.

Creative players in and around the spaces above-mentioned are invited to join the process to gain insights into systemic practices and connect their endeavours, helping them thrive in greater resilience.



VANA stands for

VOICING out stories of resilient spaces and organisations;

ACTIVATING local sustainability resources, together with partners in their surroundings;

HARNESSING networks and new forms of alliances at the local, regional and international level;

ACCELERATING learning synergies, co-programming, and partnership for a more sustainable impact.

WHY?

At a time when uncertainty and censorship have come to characterise the political environment of our contemporary societies, a growing number of arts and culture actors are struggling to preserve spaces for democracy and informed communities on questions of social importance in Turkey, Europe, and their neighbouring countries.

Public access to independent cultural programming is, in the meantime, made possible by the players standing outside the mainstream. Yet, their unconventional position makes them vulnerable to a higher degree of instability since few opportunities are available to support their emerging actions. Many risks, such as shrinking funding, institutional control on public programming, and intellectual oppression, are narrowing the spatial standards for thinking, production, and outreach.

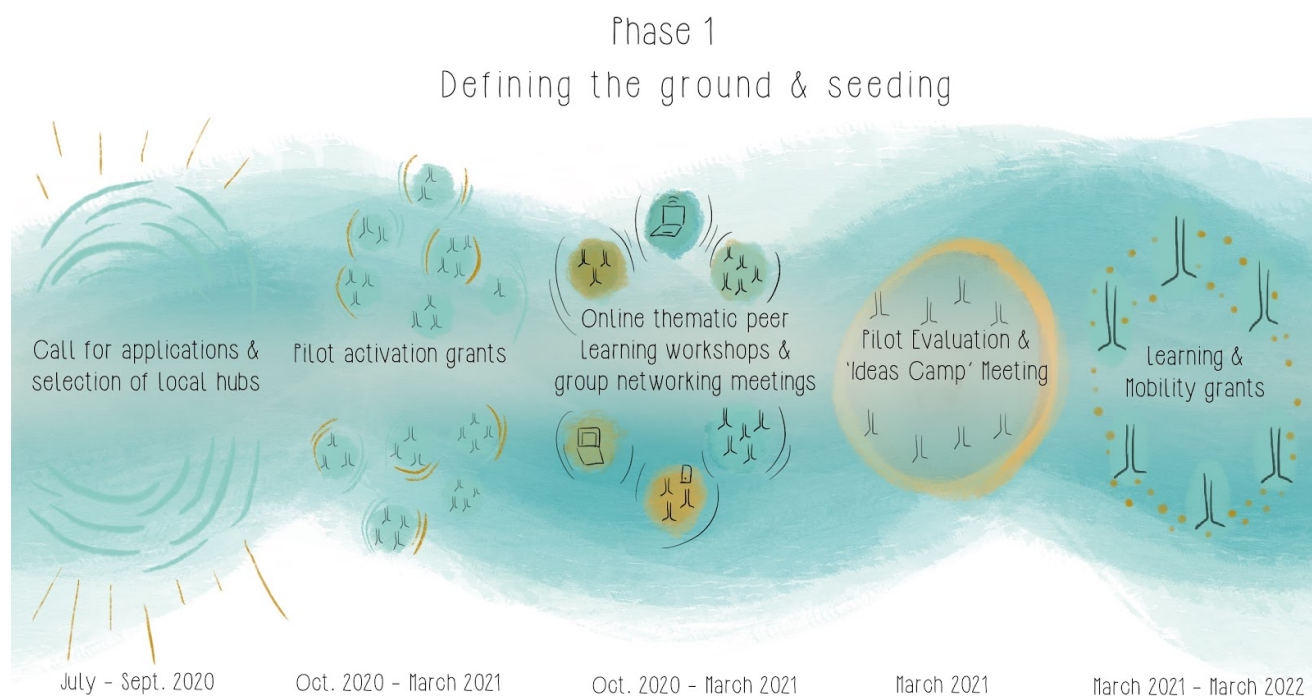
Thanks to their resilient character and energy, however, these actors are producing new community formats to voice the narratives of the oppressed, the forgotten, the marginalised, and the censored. Libraries, cafés, social venues, and cultural houses are becoming so-called hybrid spaces, offering alternative settings where the right to free thinking and free speech can be exercised.

VANTA explores these practices to drive the energetic flow of hubs and strategic alliances supporting freedom of expression. It sets the exploration of micro-resistances in a wider political context in order to foster a collective understanding of ways to regain spaces for open public debate in critically challenged societies and countries.

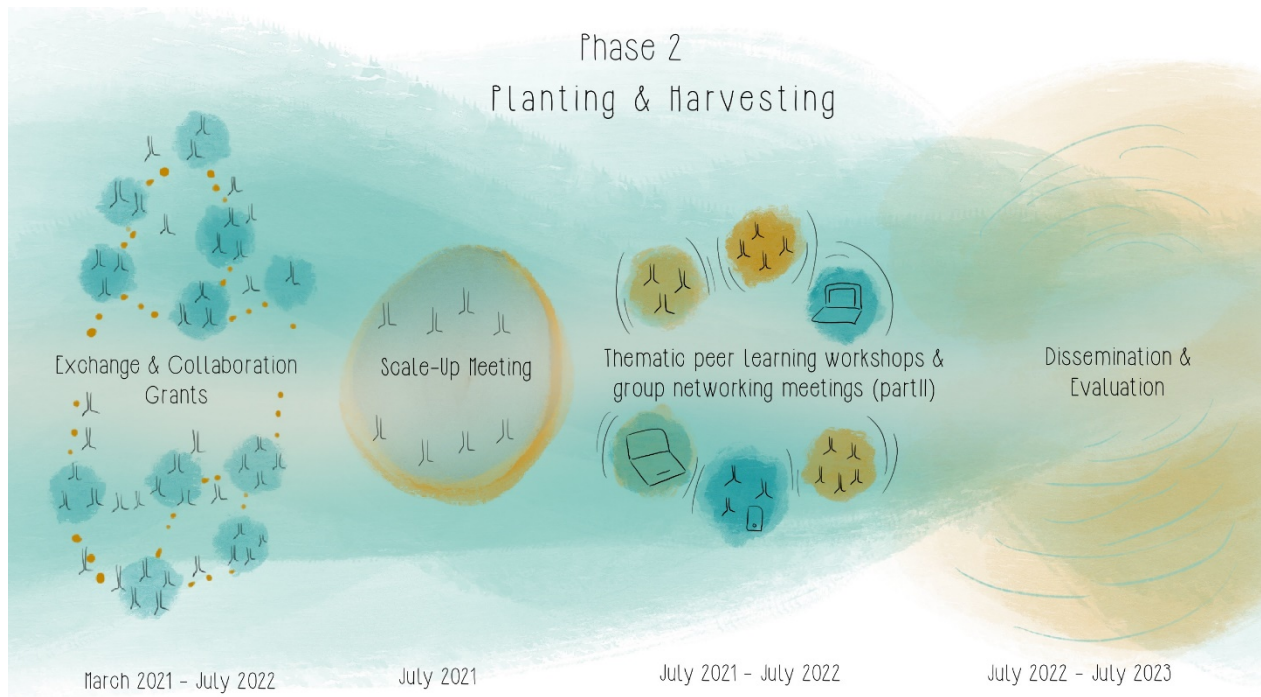
HOW?

VANA will connect and enable up to **50 independent arts and culture spaces and organisations** for public programming to shape **16 local hubs** interconnected within an international solidarity network. Each hub partnership convenes up to three existing spaces, established in one of the selected cities across Turkey (**Ankara, Diyarbakır, Eskişehir, İstanbul, Antalya, Mersin**), or set in another area of **Europe and its neighbouring countries**.

Eight selected hubs from Turkey and eight hubs from other countries will first get the opportunity to develop pilot actions within their own environments and will be invited to follow the activity flow in Phase 1 (pictured below).



In the second phase, participants will be invited to scale up their work into a larger ecosystem of independent places for free discussion and open dialogue through an open structure of international collaboration. In this phase, a series of activities will support the scaling process (pictured below).



For this aim, VANA offers to each local hub constellation:

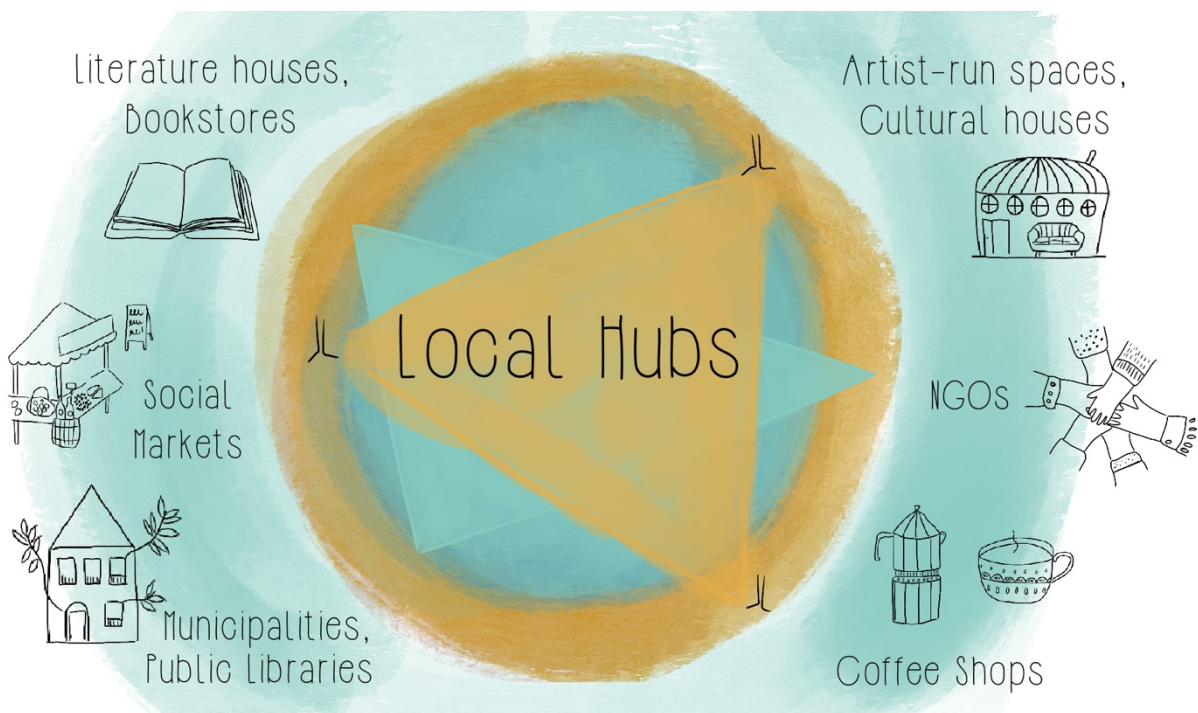
- **A pilot activation funding** of 5,000 EUR to experiment with new formats of collaboration.
- **Methods and tools** to map local ecosystem resources and plan perspectives of sustainability.
- **Learning mobility grants** of 1,000 EUR to foster knowledge and practice exchange among participants.
- **Regional/international collaboration grants** varying between 10,000 to 25,000 EUR to scale-up pilot actions within more large-scale geography through collaborations with other hubs.
- **Peer mentoring** to support the development of local hubs along the project lifetime.
- **Thematic peer-learning workshops** through 1 online/offline small group meetings to gain specific insights for professional and organizational development and networking.
- **Access to international synergy building moments** through 2 meetings, gathering all participants from diverse cultural contexts.
- **Opportunities to harvest, disseminate, and advocate** at the local, regional, and international levels.

- Participation in a **solidarity network**, building a resilient future for an ecosystem of independent spaces on public dialogue and cultural programming in Turkey, Europe, and neighbouring countries.

WHO?

Representatives of spaces and organisations that offer **public cultural programming**, which are based in one of the Council of Europe member states, Belarus, Kosovo and Middle East & North Africa (MENA) countries (see FAQ section), are invited to form local hubs and apply together. **For Turkey**, the call for application is **by-invitation only** in this pilot round of VANA.

Ideally, three applicants representing three organisations are expected to form a local hub. The partners in each local **hub** can be composed of different types of spaces and organisations, with at least one of them holding a physical space for public events.



visuals by Julia from www.mosaics-circles.de

HOW TO APPLY?

Fill in the [online application form](#) together with your local partners:

For further information about VANA programme and eligibility requirements, have a close look at the **FAQ section** of this call.

Applicants will be informed of the results by **Monday, 21 September 2020**.

Contact Serra & Aysu for further inquiries:

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THE BACKGROUND STORY

All partners and funders behind this programme are long-standing players of empowering civil society and enhancing open debate and cultural dialogue in Turkey. The core consortium of the program has approached civil society development particularly through arts and culture but also addressing contemporary challenges in Turkey and its neighbouring regions. The broad spectrum of experience tackling larger public and social issues has substantially informed the formation of this new programme.

The [Tandem Turkey](#) programme, which lasted from 2011 to 2019, is one of the long-term collaborations of VANA partners. Around 150 participants representing cultural and civil society organisations from Turkey, Europe, and the neighbouring region participated in the programme, which supported a total of 65 collaborations. Following in the footsteps of Tandem Turkey's nearly decade-long legacy, we continued our collaboration to develop a new programme targeting active cultural spaces that promote public discussion and dialogue in Turkey, Europe and in the wider region. We visited several cities across Turkey and met with recently emerged initiatives in the winter of 2019, and then involved them in co-designing the programme through a meeting in March 2020. We are pleased to introduce you the resulting VANA programme, and thank everyone involved in the making of it.

VANA is an initiative of [Anadolu Kültür](#) and [MitOst e.V.](#), funded by [Stiftung Mercator](#) and the [European Cultural Foundation](#). VANA partner consortium is in a collaboration with the [iac Berlin](#) to implement a series of 'thematic workshops and network meetings'.



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