

## European Arts Education Fact Finding Mission

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Michael Wimmer, EDUCULT director

### Executive Summary

Arts and cultural education has become a field of strategic policy interest. This is observable not only by an increasing number of regional and national governmental programmes in countries like Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and England but also by initiatives on the European and international policy level.

Is it a short-term boom or will it lead to a sustainable change process, reforming both the cultural and education landscape? The question whether or not the current policy awareness will be connected with the implementation of policies and the necessary support structure is crucial in this respect. Up to now, there is a lack of transparency and empirical insight when it comes to policy decisions relevant to arts and cultural education. This concerns the assessment of the efficiency of arts and cultural education policies on a structural level. Decision-makers and practitioners know very little about the status quo that any policy changes and their impact can be measured against, is it on the local, national or European level. This knowledge gap can be regarded as fundamental when it comes to creating the preconditions for a sustainable implementation of arts and cultural education measures.

Compared to the focus on output, research on the input in arts and cultural education programmes is scarce. Therefore, we are not able to answer **questions** all linked to resources in arts and cultural education:

- ▶ What does it take to deliver arts and cultural education programmes?
- ▶ Nor, what does it take to deliver good quality arts education programmes?
- ▶ Not to speak of: how much does it take to deliver good quality arts and cultural education for all on a sustainable basis?

To look into these questions from a European perspective, EDUCULT initiated the research project European Arts Education Fact Finding Mission. Our partners were Interarts/ES, Zentrum für Kulturforschung/DE, Cultuurnetwerk Nederlands, Creativity, Culture and Education (together with BOP Consultancy/UK).

In summary, the **project objectives** were :

- ▶ to create a structural framework enabling more transparency of resources in arts and cultural education
- ▶ to create awareness among policymakers, experts and practitioners about the resource dimension
- ▶ to work towards a comparison between resources provided (input) and delivery (output) to enable quality improvement in the field of arts and cultural education.

The Fact Finding Mission was understood as an exploration to enable a more in-depth analysis of specific resource dimensions on a comparative level. To make the project feasible, we focused on arts and cultural education in out-of school settings, provided by institutions in the cultural sector.

In this respect, our **main findings** were :

- ▶ there is no common understanding of the field of arts and cultural education across European countries
- ▶ there is, however, a common European sense of what the mainly relevant resource dimensions are (money, infrastructure, human and organisational resources)

- ▶ the question whether or not obligations or incentives to publicly account for activities focused at children and young people exists (e.g. quotas, more funding for those who carry out many projects) is decisive for the resources and implementation
- ▶ since 2005, there is a drastic increase of the number of education formats in cultural institutions<sup>1</sup>, notably in Germany (where we dispose of figures), but presumably also in other EU-member states, that goes hand in hand with a policy awareness and an increase of human resources working for education at cultural institutions
- ▶ at the same time a trend towards collaborations between schools and the artistic and cultural sector can be stated
- ▶ financial resources are hard to be assessed and compared due to complex, mostly project-based budgeting
- ▶ human resources are the key resource: the highest cost factor and the most valuable asset of arts and cultural education departments
- ▶ human resources are only partially covered by institutional budgets for arts and cultural education : permanent employees are calculated in the institutions' general budgets, whereas freelancers and project-based staff are counted in the project budget
- ▶ in terms of human resources, observable differences between the artistic and the cultural sector and art forms need to be further investigated: there are differences both in qualification (highly professionalised artists are commonly involved in education activities in the arts sector, whereas in the cultural sector (museums, exhibition halls etc. no common professional profile and qualification exists)
- ▶ the strategic position of arts and cultural education within institutions is decisive for the availability and distribution of resources
- ▶ the trend of finding resources goes towards mixed funding (due to constraints and instability of public budgets and an increasing interest of private actors such as foundations)
- ▶ due to the mixed funding, a comparative assessment of budgets is even more complex
- ▶ the often immense personnel effort to deliver arts and cultural education projects is usually not covered by the funding for projects, thus it has to be covered by other revenues
- ▶ this is especially true for institutions who regard social accessibility, thus low or no costs for participants as a main mission (either by their own institutional definition or as it is required by the policy environment)
- ▶ the mostly project-based funding makes the sector fragile and contributes to a lack of structural development
- ▶ therefore, a current peak of arts and cultural education activities is jeopardized and could lead to a "survival of the fittest", amalgamation and disappearance of some actors if there is no investment in sustainable supporting structures (as can be observed in England)
- ▶ the resource dimensions and limitations of data collections are a prerequisite for the follow-up research project "Arts Education Monitoring System" with a special focus on human resources as key resource.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ to enable further comparative analysis, the question of resources for arts and cultural education is to be included in the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe<sup>3</sup>, led by ERICarts and the Council of Europe

Due to its explorative character, the Fact Finding Mission is rather an invitation for further reflection on the European an international than a collection of hard facts. The results of the project can be read in detail in a Final Report, including a White Paper containing strategic

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<sup>1</sup> Keuchel, Susanne; Weil, David (2010): Lernorte oder Kulturtempel? Infrastrukturerhebung: Bildungsangebote in klassischen Kultureinrichtungen. Cologne: ArCult Media. p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> The AEMS project developed by EDUCULT and its partners (Interarts/ES, Zentrum für Kulturforschung/DE, CCE/BOP Consulting UK, Budapest Observatory/HU) was selected for funding for 2011-12 through the EU Culture Programme – cultural policy analysis groupings.

<sup>3</sup> [www.culturalpolicies.net](http://www.culturalpolicies.net)

recommendations. It also includes detailed graphical models enabling a visualisation of aspects relevant to resource distribution.