

Rapport from the Workshop „professional training for teachers and artists

Rapporteur: Carmen Mörsch, Institute for Art Education (IAE), University of the Art, Zurich, Switzerland
carmen.moersch@zhdk.ch

Preliminary note on structure and course of the workshop

In the Workshop „professional training for teachers and artists“ we undertook a critical reading of the Roadmap, especially chapter 4 and the related recommendations. We assessed the concepts of artists, teachers, training and arts education which form the basis for the Roadmap. The aim was to come up with suggestions for the further development of the Roadmap until its final version for Seoul 2010.

The group consisted of about 40 artists, academics, teachers, teacher trainers and administrators. We decided to look at the roadmap from three different positionalities: teachers, academics and administrators. Quite a few individuals covered several of the mentioned professions and had to opt for one in this special occasion as we split up into three working groups.

It was stated that the roadmap already delivers usable recommendations for the professional training for teachers and artists and that there are countries which already use the roadmap as a framework of reference. In some of these it led to positive policy changes in the past already.

Still, the need was seen to add and to emphasize certain points in the paper and some basic critique was applied.

OUTCOME 1: Suggestions to add and emphasize certain points in the Roadmap:

- to emphasise more the need to focus on the artistic dimension in every school subject as well as the right of every child to get art education
- to promote more strongly the status of art education in schools – art education should obtain the same status as other subjects
- to add and emphasize strongly the right of access to art education for people with special needs as in many countries there is a big lack of infrastructure in this respect
- to add a focus on art education at Kindergarten level
- to concentrate more on the establishment of adequate infrastructure as this is the basis for art education world wide, no matter what form it takes in each country
- to explicitly differentiate between the different forms, fields and protagonists of the education sector
- to emphasize the need to strengthen the linkage between pre-service and in-service teacher education. The need for continuous in-service training should be mentioned explicitly
- to recommend the exchange of programmes for teachers on an international level
- to not only mention teachers and artists but acknowledge that for some years now a new profession has been developing, the art educator (or mediator)

- to address explicitly the authorities of higher education and the role they should play
- to emphasize the research character of artistic production and art education, its potential to question normative construction in society and to foster self – reflection. To link this potential to the paradigm of the “teacher as researcher”
- not to mention *only* new technologies but to emphasize the special potential of transdisciplinary and transmedia practice in the arts and in art education

OUTCOME 2: Critical remarks on the existing text of the Roadmap

One point of critique addressed the use of terms in the paper. The recommendation was to develop a glossary of terms like “art education”, “art educators”, “artists”, “participation” etc. All these terms are constructions: They are used in different contexts in different ways and they are not “innocent”, but always linked to a certain political agenda.

The obfuscation of terms was therefore seen as a serious and as a political problem.

The creation of a glossary would force the authors of the paper to make their own standpoint – the standpoint of UNESCO – more transparent and negotiable.

This would help a lot to foster the emphasized function of the Roadmap as a point of reference to initiate discussions.

The obfuscation of the term “art educator” and the strong emphasis on the collaboration of artists and schools in the framework of “creative partnerships” in the Roadmap was seen as especially problematic as it draws implicitly a picture of the artist as the better teacher and leaves the structural weaknesses in schools and the need of improvement in this respect unmentioned.

Also seen as problematic was the intend of the Roadmap to escape eurocentrism by only emphasizing that there are different (and especially: indigenous) art practices in different countries. This was seen as a blind spot concerning power relations. Often, the notions of art education in postcolonial countries are more centred around classical European models than art education in Europe.

The recommendation was to mention at some point in the Roadmap the fact that the present concept of art education was initially exported by Europeans to the colonies and that at present one can find alterations, transformations and adaptations of these concepts in the different countries. But that one also can find explicit counter–movements and that a qualified discussion and negotiation process about what art education is and should be in the different countries should be actively fostered and also economically supported.

Finally there was a concern that there was a lack of definition of what art education is aiming at. The emphasis of the Roadmap might be too much on the potential of art education to “do good” without reflecting the patronizing dimension of this gesture. Instead or at least in addition to that, there should be a much stronger emphasis on the potential of art education to initiate critical thinking and to analyse and work on dominant constructions and power relations in society.