

Max Fuchs

Qualitative Criteria of Arts Education in Formal and Non-formal Education

Report of the Workshop

The topic of our workshop was not only quality but more exactly: high quality arts education.

But: What is “high quality arts education”?

There are some, more formal descriptions of this concept in the Roadmap and we tried to come to more precise descriptions. Therefore we tried to exchange information about different national experiences about this issue and we tried to find some common ideas and essentials.

We were busy and successful: We found 22 essentials, in terms of quantitative evaluation that means: every seven minutes we found one common position, which is not bad for an international conference (if you compare it – for example – with the security council of UN).

I don't read these 22 results just now (see list at the end). I want to give an overview in seven points.

1. Some colleagues told us, how useful the Roadmap was as tool in bringing forward the national arts education policy (this happened for example in Croatia or Iceland).
2. The same colleagues and others told us, that this is true especially for the activities of civil society. This underlines the idea that there is a common responsibility for arts education. We can say: The Roadmap is a useful instrument in practical politics and advocating.
3. We found that “quality” and especially “high quality arts education” has a lot of different dimensions: legal, financial, conceptual, managerial, educational, social, aesthetic and other aspects.

For some of these aspects there are meanwhile some systematic instruments which we can use as a kind of checklist in order to plan arts education projects. We presented one of Ann Bamford and one from the German Federal Association of cultural education. (see the annexes)

4. It was a common conviction, that we have a lot of stakeholders which are responsible for arts education. But above all we see a special responsibility by the state.

You can find some of our essentials in this context. Only to mention three examples:

- the demand for including arts education into the curriculum as a compulsory part,
- the need for supporting arts teachers in the classroom and the schools,
- to make sure that there is a kind of sustainability.

5. Concerning the methodology and didactics of arts-teaching we found some important principles, for example

- to take into account the important role of aesthetic influences onto children and young people outside arts education in school which we can call “informal arts education”.
- the role of social dimensions of arts education at least in two aspects: social impacts of the arts, but also the special situation of the society in which arts education takes place.

6. Our colleague from Turkey presented a new idea of “teaching”, of making arts popular: a TV-show. I think it is a good idea to think about new non-traditional ways of arts education and maybe that we can use much more creative industries in this way.

7. Maybe that the presentation sounds a little bit too harmonious up to now. Therefore it might be interesting to mention some points of possible tensions:

- Concerning cultural interests we have to face that different generations have different interests. Some of us told this a “conflict”, others preferred to speak simply of a “relationship” between the generations.
- The same is true concerning the aims of the different stakeholders in arts education. Maybe that there is a tension between the different systems of aims. But we should deal with this situation in an offensive way that means: to discuss, to clarify, to explain.

This was my last point. Obviously it was definitely not a presentation of all our findings and essentials. It was a subjective selection. I think you will have got an idea of our working group.

Concerning the wish for the most important aspects in terms of strength and potentials I would say:

Strength: There is at least a minimum of arts education inside and outside the school in all countries in Europe.

Potentials: There is an enormous need for collaboration and partnerships on all levels, the level of government, above all a need for collaboration between cultural and education policy, and the level of institutions. There is also a need for more information about the different offers of arts education, that means we need a national and even an European report or mapping on arts education.

Annexes

1. 22 essentials of the working group
2. Quality criteria for co-operation