

Proposal for children's culture policy programme

Publications of the Ministry on Education and Culture, Finland 2014:10

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<p>Name of publication Proposal for children's culture policy programme</p>		
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<p>Abstract</p> <p>The steering group established in August 2012 by the Ministry of Education and Culture has formulated a proposal for a children's culture policy programme for the years 2014–2018. The programme proposal promotes the goal of supporting the right of all children to access art and culture by strengthening the status and operating conditions of children's culture, as stated in the government programme.</p> <p>Art and culture reinforce the creativity of children and young people as well as their critical thinking, self-esteem and ability to utilize and change culture. They give children and young people possibilities to discover their own strengths and objects of interest. The cultural activities of children and young people exert many multiple influences: they increase initiative and enterprise and improve the quality and management of life and the ability to understand oneself and others. Knowledge, skills and experiences of art and one's cultural heritage are a key part of all-round education.</p> <p>The outlook for Finland as it nears its 100th anniversary as an independent nation is characterized and delineated by its children and youth: in their values, creativity, well-being and success in life. Support for the upbringing of children and young people represents one of the most important tasks of a society and a civilized country. Nevertheless, decisions in our society are frequently made compromising children's basic needs – and at risk to children.</p> <p>This programme proposal presents measures through which aim to promote and foster the equal opportunities of children and youth to participate in art and culture, strengthen the status children's culture, and increase the well-being of children and youth.</p> <p>In this programme, children's culture is conceived as the provision of artistic and cultural heritage suitable for children and youth and as children's participation in the creation of art and culture. The scope of the programme is limited to children and young people under the age of 18. In particular, the proposal emphasizes listening to children and youth as well as appreciating childhood and the youth experience. The programme is directed first and foremost to decision-makers concerned with children's affairs and to those working with children. The implementation of these measures nevertheless requires cooperation and commitment on the part of many actors and administrative fields.</p> <p>The key measures are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establishing a National Centre for the Promotion of Children's Culture and Art Education - increasing the all-round teaching provided to children in general education by means of art and culture - including the accessibility and availability of art and culture as a basic right for children and young people in decision-makers' key planning and strategy documents - developing the environments of children and youth based on their needs and hearing their views - increasing the cultural competence of children and youth - providing children with more opportunities to participate in art and culture - increasing the teaching of children's culture and the related methods and pedagogy in class teachers' and other types of art education <p>The steering group hopes that its proposals for measures will be dealt with and implemented comprehensively throughout the entire field of art and culture. The programme proposal considers children's cultural rights and, in particular, subjectivity as part of the policies of children's culture. The implementation of these legal rights requires a more precise specification in practice, as well as ensuring that opportunities to participate are equally available to all children and youth.</p>		
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1 Programme proposal starting points

The outlook for Finland as it nears its 100th anniversary as an independent nation is characterized and delineated by its children and youth: in their values, creativity, well-being and success in life. Support for the upbringing of children and young people represents one of the most important tasks of a society and a civilized country. Nevertheless, decisions in our society are frequently made at children's risk¹ and in a manner that compromises children's basic needs.

Childhood experiences and quality as well as the environment in which children grow up strongly affect their later development and potential in adulthood. Finland should pay more attention to the quality of childhood. Children are currently required to adapt to a work-dominant community based on productivity and the related pressures.

Art and culture give children and young people important provisions for life. Each child and young person has a legal right to art and culture, though they do not yet have equal opportunities to benefit from them. Varying possibilities result from the amount and quality of art and cultural events offered in different regions; accessibility; the possibilities available to parents, daycare centres and schools; and, to a large extent, the choices, values and attitudes of adults and decision-makers.

The half-day structure of lower classes in the school system was created during a period dominated by agricultural production, when parents mainly worked at home. In the current scientific/technological economy, parents work outside the home nearly 40 hours a week, but schooldays still last half a day. The period between the end of the schoolday and termination of the parents' workday is long – and can be even longer than the schoolday itself. At the same time, the borderline between the workday and leisure time has blurred. These conditions affect children and can be seen as loneliness, insufficient interaction with adults and emotional uncertainty. In their daily life, children and youth need time and opportunities for interaction – for play, dialogue and being together with others. The hectic character of adults' daily life and the irregularity of work and domestic life do not promote a child's positive development and growth.

Improving children's social skills and well-being has been studied in integrated schoolday experiments which have noted good results. Arts, handicraft skills and physical exercise comprise the integrated schoolday together and in mutual dialogue with other subjects, in accordance with a comprehensive concept of knowledge. An 'integrated'

¹ Professor of Psychology Liisa Keltinkangas-Järvinen, hearing for the Children's Culture Policy Programme Proposal, 14 May 2013

school day means arrangements in which learning and schoolwork are complemented by versatile, professionally instructed hobby and leisure activities within the school's premises.

During the new millennium, the significance of cultural fields in Finland and the European Union has been emphasized as a source of future job creation, growth and social cohesion. The creative skills of the individual are the foundation of these fields. They must be learnt and practised at a young age so that they can be further developed at a later age and to ensure that there will be creators of cultural products and an audience for them in the future. In the past few years, universities of arts and sciences have been concerned about the level of the basic skills of new students.

Recently, the preconditions for economic growth and the preservation of democracy as well as their connections with humanism and the arts² have also been raised in discussion. The study and practice of the humanities and the arts strengthen the imagination, critical capacity and the ability to understand oneself and others.

The experiences children and youth have and the skills and knowledge they acquire about different art forms and our cultural heritage improve their cultural competence and cultural literacy. Studies on cultural competence³ have shown that art instruction reinforces self-esteem, gives a sense of responsibility for one's own life, promotes the learning of other subjects, and increases enjoyment both at school and at home.

The programme proposal presents measures which give children and young people opportunities to access, absorb and enjoy art and culture in a more equal manner than at present. The goal of the proposed measures is to increase the well-being of children and young people and strengthen children's culture.

In this programme proposal, children's culture is conceived as the provision of artistic and cultural heritage suitable for children and young people and as children's participation in the creation of art and culture. The scope of the proposal is limited to children and young people under the age of 18.

The proposal emphasizes, in particular, listening to children and youth as well as appreciating childhood and the youth experience. It is directed first and foremost to decision-makers concerned with children's affairs and to those working with children. The implementation of these measures nevertheless requires cooperation and commitment on the part of many actors and administrative fields.

The key measures are:

- establishing a National Centre for the Promotion of Children's Culture and Art Education
- increasing the all-round teaching of children in general education by means of art and culture
- including the accessibility and availability of art and culture as a basic right for children and youth in decision-makers' key planning and strategy documents
- developing the environments of children and youth based on their needs and hearing their views
- increasing the cultural competence of children and youth
- providing children with more opportunities to participate in art and culture
- increasing the teaching of children's culture and the related methods and pedagogy in class teachers' and other art education

² Professor Martha C. Nussbaum (2011), *Taloukasvua tärkeämpää* ('More Important Than Economic Growth'), *Gaudeamus*.

³ DICE (Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences) project.

The Ministry of Education and Culture launched the preparation of the programme proposal in August 2012. The steering group hopes that the measures it has proposed will be dealt with and implemented extensively throughout the entire art and cultural sector. The programme proposal has been formulated for the years 2014–2018. The first children's culture policy programme was for the years 2003–2007.

2 Current status and potential

Children's cultural rights and children's culture policy

The rights and status of children are enshrined in our legislation and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Finland joined in 1991. The right to education is noted in the Finnish Constitution. In our national legislation, the right of children to art and culture is included in the Basic Education Act (628/1998) and the Children's Daycare Act (36/1973). The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which binds our government, municipalities and citizens, deals with the cultural rights of children in greater detail than our legislation. According to the Convention, a child has the right to cultural education, to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. Finland and the other countries that are parties to the Convention respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity. The implementation of these rights requires more precise specification in practice and, in particular, that children are provided with possibilities to participate in art and culture.

Children's culture policy is a part of the legislation in the field of culture and education. The pivotal objectives of general cultural policy concerning the promotion of creativity, diversity, participation and accessibility are also goals for children's culture policy. It is decided on the State and municipal level as to which sorts of possibilities children and youth have to learn and engage in arts and culture, how talents and skills amongst children or young people are supported, which kinds of services are available and what potential exists for youngsters and families to make use of them.

Inequality in Finnish society has increased. The question may be asked as to whether or not we live at the expense of our children. In 2013, 11% of Finnish families lived below the poverty line. The situation has taken a turn for the worse: during the recession in the early 1990s, the corresponding figure was 5%⁴.

The goal of Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen's government programme is to support the right of all children to access arts and culture by strengthening the status and operating conditions of children's culture. The Finnish Government has also approved a Child and Youth Policy Programme 2012–2015. One of its goals is that children and young people have equal opportunities to participate in cultural, physical and leisure activities.

⁴ Pasi Moisio, National Institute for Health and Welfare, 2013.

The measures presented in this programme proposal support the Child and Youth Policy Programme 2012–2015 which broadly covers children’s and young people’s participation, non-discrimination and everyday life management. This programme proposal focuses in particular on increasing the opportunities of children and young people to be heard and improving their access to hobbies and leisure activities. The goal is to create more unified entities and increase the multidisciplinary and cross-administrative work for the benefit of children and youth.

Financing and operators – the supporters of equality

Families have great responsibility in selecting and supporting the hobbies and activities of children and young people. Families finance the majority of the hobbies children and young people pursue. The extent to which parents participate in funding hobbies varies and depends on, for instance, socioeconomic factors.

Municipal funding is the most important source of financing for children’s culture. The municipalities fund on their part the legislated and discretionary expenses of children’s and youth culture. Of the central government’s transfers to local governments, municipalities channel a part to children’s culture on the basis of municipal budgetary priorities. The municipalities’ strategies, their plans concerning well-being and early childhood education and school curricula significantly impact the ways and to which extent art and culture form a part of the services and activities municipalities offer for children and young people. Other policies, such as library, youth, physical exercise, social and health, building, environmental and cultural policy, also have an impact on children and young people.

Children’s culture involves various operators: the field comprises libraries, children’s cultural centres, schools that provide basic education in the arts, institutions and organisations in the fields of art and culture, museums, artists and other art and cultural heritage professionals, as well as schools, civic institutes, daycare centres and other actors in early childhood education. In the operating environment, the global children’s and youth culture, one’s own cultural environment and other closely related cultures overlap. Virtual cultures, digitalization and technology bring new dimensions into the expression and forms of traditional children’s culture (see Fig. 1: Grand Plan for Cultural and Art Education).

Changing environments

The habitat and cultural environment of children have changed considerably from previous decades. With the increase in material well-being, the external factors influencing children’s growth are mainly in order for the majority of Finnish children. Nevertheless, many children feel poorly – which can be seen in, for example, the insecurity of children and young people, an increase in mental health problems, the failure to fit in with other pupils and in the inability of many young people to find a fixed point of interest in their lives.

In multicultural Finland, children’s opportunities for interaction and internationalization are better than before. Cultural diversity enriches our national culture. Vibrant and genuine multiculturalism requires open-mindedness and courage from everyone concerned. The scarcity of interaction between groups as well as attitudes and various experiences of discrimination result in barriers that are labelled as cultural

differences⁵. These barriers must be torn down. The general distribution of social well-being also affects attitudes towards disadvantaged groups: the increase in poverty, inequality and unemployment contributes to racism in the community⁶.

What we need is locales and venues where it is natural to participate and do things together – where children, young people and families from different groups may engage in positive interaction. Interaction, involvement in cultural activities and the development of positive attitudes can be promoted by means of development projects and by spreading good practices. One good way to get acquainted with new cultures is to celebrate the holidays and festive events of different cultures at daycare centres and schools on an equal basis.

Promoting the even distribution of well-being also reduces confrontations in society. The goal is to establish a positive two-way interaction between immigrants and the native population, allowing the various groups to orient themselves to both cultures instead of the different cultures being mutually exclusive. This prevents social inequality and the marginalization and exclusion of certain groups.

Children and young people with different backgrounds have different capacities and abilities to access art and culture. The services financed through public funds should aim to level out these differences and focus on the accessibility of culture. The role of daycare, pre-primary education and schools is pivotal in this respect, but it is also important that, for example, schools of music and the visual arts are open and market the possibilities they offer to various population groups. It is vital that operators have competence in reaching out to children and young people and that they are committed to non-discrimination and equality.

The media environment and culture impact the growth, learning curve and construction of personal identity and world-view of children and young people. Children and young people are natural actors within the media environment, and different age groups use different media environments. Already from early childhood, the media landscape of children and young people is extensive and versatile. It comprises books, magazines and newspapers, radio, audio recordings, digital games, the Internet, mobile phones, television and visual recordings. It is important to ensure that rapid technical development brings about accessible devices that promote development and are practical in use as means of communication for children and young people. Children themselves have become more active in building the media environment; they are no longer merely consumers and recipients but also act as the producers, recorders, narrators and distributors of their own stories.

The implementation of cultural equality is hampered by the segregation of residential areas as well as differences in the cultural provision offered by municipalities and the socio-cultural differences found between families. The reduction of local services particularly affects children and youth.

Schools and institutions of early childhood education are extremely vital in ensuring equal access to children's culture and art education. Art and cultural instruction and activities in early childhood education carried out by schools, daycare centres and playgrounds reach children in each age group very well. There is room for improvement

5 Tuuli Anna Mähönen and Inga Jasinskaja-Lahti (2013). "Etniset ryhmäsuhteet ja maahanmuuttajien akkulturaatio" [Ethnic group relations and immigrants' acculturation], in Martikainen, Saukkonen and Säävälä (Eds.) "Muuttajat. Kansainvälinen muuttoliike ja suomalainen yhteiskunta" [Migrants. International migration and Finnish society].

6 Vesa Puuronen (2011) Rasistinen Suomi [Racist Finland].

in the content and methods of instruction as well as in the time used for learning and practice.

In terms of the total number of art lessons, the situation is the most worrying in the upper classes of comprehensive schools and in upper secondary schools. The challenges concerning the content of art instruction affect the lower classes of the comprehensive schools in particular. The art instruction currently included in class teacher training does not provide sufficient capacity for teaching arts, crafts and physical education. This has become apparent from the learning results of these subjects. The problem can be resolved by increasing instruction in art subjects in class teacher training, producing more learning materials for art subjects, and employing professionally skilled art teachers at the primary school level. In class teachers' continuing education, special attention should be given to the pedagogy and methods used in arts, crafts and physical education. The employment of art professionals can enrich a school's art and culture-related teaching and education.

Supporting the talent of children and young people

In supporting talent, a child's early years are decisive. To enable children to grow up to fulfil the potential of their talent, it is necessary to identify and support talent, especially during periods of sensitivity. At school and in leisure activities, pedagogically competent and sensitive teachers and tutors are specifically required.

A child or youth who has internal motivation, personal commitment and love for a subject or activity succeeds and develops if s/he is offered expert assistance. This applies to any sort of talent from sports to mathematics and music and other types of art.

The significance of parents changes as a child grows older. In early childhood, the role of parents is important: they should monitor practicing and provide a secure environment that gives support to the activity. As the child grows and develops, s/he gradually takes responsibility for practising and then the significance of the teacher's perceptual sensitivity and skills increases. On the threshold of puberty, a strong commitment to one's own genre emerges, along with the 'inner fire' to succeed and work hard. At this point a professionally skilled teacher is needed who has, in addition to competence in arts and pedagogy, the skill to understand and listen to young people.

Passion for one's own choice of activity is a prerequisite for top performance in all fields. Talent is important but is inadequate on its own. A considerable amount of practice is required. The approval of friends and the right kind of competition provide motivation. Competition in itself is not a bad thing: some like it, and a little competition can provide motivation – however, it should not be the only goal. If there is nothing but competition in the life or community of a child or young person, it is destructive.

A child should also have the opportunity to pursue several interests, so that one hobby does not exclude others, for example, due to lack of time. This versatile pursuit of interests is common with small children, but it declines with age.



Figure 1. The 'Great Tree' of Cultural and Art Education (Riitta Molsander).

3 The significance of culture for a child

There are many studies on the impact of culture, art instruction, art education and cultural heritage education which note their positive influences on the development and well-being of children and youth. The effects can be detected even in very small children. A small baby already has the capacity to assimilate art and culture. A child's parents and other close individuals have an important role in helping the small child experience art and culture (e.g. in the form of nursery rhymes, fairy tales, music, experiences with colours, dance). Daycare and other early childhood education professionals also fulfil this task. Already in early childhood, a child learns and collects experiences about the arts and cultural heritage. What is learnt and experienced increases a child's cultural competence, i.e. the ability to assimilate, use and change culture.

Art and culture strengthen the sense of self and self-esteem of children and youth. They create possibilities to find one's own strengths and develop them. The cultural activities of children and young people exert many multiple impacts: they influence the development of creativity, encourage initiative and enterprise, improve the quality of life and life management and promote intellectual growth. Art and culture increase well-being: they open up new perspectives on matters regarded as self-evident, strengthen general education, offer leisure time activities and help generate new ways of thinking. Art and culture can be decisive factors promoting self-esteem and coping for a child and young person lacking permanent friendships, hobbies or interest in attending school.

The education in humanities and arts given to children and young people has an extensive and comprehensive impact on society. 'Reform pedagogy' (teaching based on a particular world-view or pedagogical system) already emphasized the connection of the humanities and arts with the inner vitality of democracy. The subjects reinforce critical thinking and internal examination, i.e. the ability to 'put oneself in another's shoes'. These skills are amongst the most important characteristics of active citizenship.

In addition to factual information and logic, understanding our complex world requires the ability to examine the world from another person's perspective and through the lens of various cultural traditions. To a large extent, families help children develop empathy, but the task also belongs to daycare centres and schools.

In Finland, children can engage in play more freely for a long period, since school does not start until the age of seven. Play is an interesting subject for research: when a child begins to play alone in the company of a parent, it is a mark of trust. Play is an absolute prerequisite for the healthy development of personality. The arts continue the function of play at a later age and in adulthood.

The teaching of arts-related subjects at school has many functions: it generally increases the ability of pupils to engage in play and empathy. In addition, artistic expression also exerts transplanted influence: the visual arts and music impact, for instance, linguistic and mathematical development and the conceptualization of time and space. In their work, teachers should be aware of the periods of sensitivity in the life of a child and young person. The methods of art education and pedagogics are used in therapy treatments with children and youth. However, the costs of therapy to the society are multiple times higher than the costs of preventive work, or all-round support for the development of a child's or young person's personal identity.

A unique school system

In terms of learning outcomes, Finnish schools are among the best in the world. Challenges experienced in schools include children's disruptive behaviour and the lack of comfort and enjoyment at school. During the school day, there is little time for personal interaction between teachers and pupils. One explanation for this is that the school day is short by international standards.

This shortcoming could be corrected with after-school activities. It would be easy for children to remain in the school premises after school to take part in activities led by either a teacher or some other professional instructor. Schools are in a unique position to increase the well-being of children and youth during and after school days, because they can reach children and use the school premises and because most parents have a positive attitude towards activities going on at school.

Professor Lea Pulkkinen has studied the socioeconomic development of children and has proven through studies how children's quality of life can be improved. She has introduced the term 'integrated school day'⁷, which refers to a school day in which extracurricular activities and child care are organised at the school before and after lessons and sometime also between lessons. It includes voluntary morning/afternoon activities and hobby clubs. The results obtained from integrated school day experiments indicated that the amount of unsupervised time spent by children reduced, children's well-being increased, and children's satisfaction with school increased according to teachers' assessments. Teachers' job satisfaction increased too. Well-being increased when children could participate in supervised activities with their classmates. The research also demonstrated that school has a significant influence on parents' eagerness to participate in their children's education.

The studies also suggested that children's social anxiety can be diminished by increasing peer group activities supervised by adults, and that children's working and social skills can be promoted by including voluntary art, crafts and musical activities within the school day. This is in line with current brain research, according to which music and handicrafts exert a broad, positive influence on the development and functions of the brain.

⁷ The Integrated School Day – improving the educational offering of schools in Finland. Lea Pulkkinen, Professor Emerita of Psychology. Article published in "Improving the Quality of Childhood in Europe 2012, Volume 3". A Finnish-language translation of the article is available.

Creativity and the arts require time and space

Learning by means of art is a process that requires time. In addition to developing the skills and language needed for thought, expression and communication, it is a resource that helps to maintain good health. Curiosity about what is new and bold, brave interests spring from the multiplicity of cultures and multiculturalism. Attuned senses, intuition, throwing oneself into an endeavour and combining experiential knowledge form the basis. A sense of community and the recognition and identification of cultural rights create a fair and equitable culture.

The prerequisite of creativity is experimental and spontaneous play. Without a tolerant environment that respects diversity, it is difficult to live everyday life in an adventurous manner, learn, and realize one's dreams. The prerequisites of creativity and self-expression are built in childhood and youth. Creative learning is a lifelong process.

Cultural heritage education supports a child's basic right to language and culture, an integrated cultural identity and a sense of self-worth. It offers a child the opportunity to regard him/herself as part of history and a continuum of generations, as well as creating interest in cultivating one's cultural heritage and to continue in its creation.

Cultural activities strengthen a sense of self and self-worth amongst children and young people. It provides opportunities to find one's own strengths and develop them. The cultural activities of children and young people exert a great many multiple impacts: they develop of creativity, increase initiative and enterprise, improve the quality of life and life management, and promote intellectual growth. Cultural activities increase well-being, open new perspectives on matters regarded as self-evident, reinforce general education, offer leisure time opportunities, and help foster the emergence of new ways of thinking.

Children and young people as users of culture

The frequency of voluntary cultural activity amongst children and young people has been surveyed twice in reports compiled by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In the most recent report⁸, it was noted that libraries and the services they offer are abundantly used. Almost nine out of ten children and youth aged 3–18 utilize library services. Children aged 7–11 are particularly enthusiastic readers: of these, 96 % report having borrowed a book from the library. The next most popular activity is going to the cinema: approximately 80 % report having gone to see a film. The moving image reaches children and young people in their leisure time also via the media. Over half (about 58 %) visit museums and theatres.

Visits to art exhibitions are the least common form of activity. On the other hand, children and young people live in a culture that is more visual than ever before. Image-based communications in the form of various media content, films, TV, games and the Internet are the main communication and information channels in the life of children and young people. It is important to develop the foundation and comprehension of visual culture as well as image and media literacy from early childhood onwards.

Girls engage in culture more than boys, and in the capital city region (Helsinki), participation is more intensive than in the countryside and sparsely populated areas.

⁸ Ministry of Education and Culture report: Taide- ja kulttuuri lasten elämässä 2009–2010 [Art and culture in children's lives 2009–2010]

It should also be noted that children and youth who belong to sports clubs would also appear to use cultural services more actively than children who are not associated with sports clubs.

Engaging in hobbies and the hobbies themselves appear to support each other. Almost half of children and youth engage voluntarily in literature and reading as well as drawing outside lessons. One-third of children and young people play a musical instrument and sing in their free time, and about one-fifth paint, write, take photographs or dance.

There would not appear to be any significant regional disparities in the practice of voluntary arts-related hobbies; but when comparing students in different educational institutions, students at vocational institutions seem to engage in arts and culture less frequently than upper secondary school students. Children and youth residing in the countryside practised drawing and writing slightly more often than the others.

All forms of knowledge in active use

Children are creative by nature: they have the ability to set their own hypotheses and test them, adopt artistic skills and both use and develop their imaginations and forms of expression. A child is sensory and curious but also sceptical. Observations and perceptions connected to nature, cultural environment and social relationships are pivotal to the growth and learning of children and youth. Aesthetic environments sensitize the understanding of art-related modes of expression.

When a child experiences and learns about art and culture, his/her ability to adopt, use and change culture is reinforced. This relates to cultural competence which is comparable to verbal competence and which develops from an early age and childhood onwards, under an adult's guidance and interaction. Most people are able to remember and even name a person from their childhood who "gave them language and stories". Or perhaps even opened the gates to the rich world of art and culture which, via experience, tends to lead a person to imagination and imagining – and thus to the gates of creativity. The most important muscles are the "imagination muscles" in one's head. Language and, in particular, the languages of art create one's identity and self. Children and young people are the heirs of art and culture.

Art processes, with artists, children and youth working together, have their own inherent artistic value but also an instrumental value as a tool. When art professionals are used in the work, children's culture also creates employment opportunities for artists. It is necessary to create a structure and place for art processes. They must not be submitted to being merely a tool for learning or social growth. It is essential that all actors ensure the rights of children and youth to culture and art.

In the modern world, children and youth encounter an abundance of ready-made and diverse art and cultural outputs, which they should be able to enjoy as well as evaluate in a critical manner. Learning about the reception of art is just as important a part of art instruction as teaching practical performance and creativity. It is important to show children and young people high-quality art from various fields, so that they learn to compare and evaluate art.

Research indicates that organising hobby activities for schoolchildren in school premises in cooperation with schools, cultural actors, educational institutions providing basic education in arts, sports associations and children's culture centres generates good results. Social capital grows, enjoyment increases and bullying declines.

Instruction and education that takes outside the school premises should be part of the daily routine: children should be given opportunities to visit to libraries, museums and art facilities and to meet artists and professionals from the field of culture. Within the context of children's culture, attention should be paid to promoting boys' participation.

At present, boys remain at the edges of children's culture considerably more often than girls both as recipients and creators of culture. This is a challenge not only to the performers of children's art but to art instruction as well. At the same time, attention should be paid in all services to the groups that have limited access for various reasons (socio-economic position, isolated area, minority cultures, special groups, etc.).

4 Measures

The goal of this programme proposal is to increase equal opportunities for cultural participation for children and young people, increase the cultural competence of children and young people, and consolidate the cooperation amongst the administration responsible for art, culture, education and youth affairs, the Arts Promotion Centre Finland and other operators active in the fields of art and children's culture.

What follows is a presentation of the measures to achieve these goals.

1. A national centre for the promotion of children's culture and art education (Valas) will be established in Finland.

Finland has information centres dedicated to various fields of art (music, literature, theatre, dance, visual arts, architecture, circus and the game sector), but children's culture does not have a corresponding cooperative body that would bring together the operators in the field. The new centre for the promotion of children's culture and art education will aim to strengthen the status of the field and to highlight information and research concerning children. Moreover, it shall be responsible for the promotion of children's and young people's cultures and the coordination of research and opportunities for cooperation among various actors in Finland.

The promotion centre will give the fields of children's culture and art education the continuity and stability that are currently missing on national level. The centre will support more versatile and stronger cooperation between actors. The centre can be given national tasks.

The promotion centre will engage in cooperation with Finnish and foreign scientific and professional communities in multidisciplinary research concerning children and youth and distribute the research results to operators and decision-makers in the field. It shall disseminate information and good practices obtained through the networks and form international networks. The centre will also serve export projects in children's culture. Together with the Art Centres for Children and Young People, the promotion centre will systematically gather information on children's culture and the actors operating in the field.

- The Ministry of Education and Culture will prepare a report on the establishment of a promotion centre in 2014, defining the tasks of the promotion centre and its cooperation partners.

2. At school, the well-being of pupils will be promoted by means of art and culture.

Research conducted on integrated schooldays and cultural competence indicates that art subjects and club activities relating to arts, culture and crafts increase children's well-being,

strengthen their self-esteem, and have a positive impact on school satisfaction and the learning of other subjects. Club activities increase interaction between classmates as well as between children and their teachers/supervisors.

- The Ministry of Education and Culture will look into the possibilities to increase, diversify and stabilize after-school hobby and club activities.
- The Ministry of Education and Culture will launch a project in which innovative pedagogical materials will be produced and compiled for schools and other educational institutions as support for consolidating the teaching of arts, crafts and physical education and for implementing the curriculum reform in general education.
- Schools and the actors in the fields of art and culture will increase cooperation, for example, in the form of regionally circulating presentations and workshops.

3. The accessibility and availability of art and culture will be enshrined as basic rights for children and youth. Children's cultural rights should be taken into consideration in the municipalities' well-being reports. Municipalities are supported in the formulation of cultural education plans for children and youth.

The cultural rights of children and young people should be established as a structural element of all cultural activity programmes both at State and municipal level and also be taken them into account in more general operational strategies. The well-being report prepared by municipalities is a cross-administrative document to which the municipality's administrative branches deal with children and young people are committed, both financially and operationally. Thus, they enable broad cooperation between administrative branches for the benefit of children and youth. Culture and art are good instruments for preventing social exclusion and related problems. Well-being reports are completed in all Finnish municipalities and they help to diminish attitudinal, geographical and social cultural differences. In the well-being reports, it is possible to focus, in particular, on the accessibility and diversity of art and culture from the viewpoint of municipal residents of various ages.

The goal of art and culture education is to cover the whole country. Central government units whose branches include matters that concern children and youth, such as ministries, regional state administrative agencies and centres for economic development, transport and the environment, and other units, the National Board of Education, Arts Promotion Centre Finland and national working groups raise the equal participation by children and young people in the arts, the accessibility of cultural heritage to children and youth, and the improvement of cultural competence and the related measures as key goals in their planning documents.

The early childhood education plans formulated by the municipalities enable the implementation of cultural rights during the children's first years.

Local curricula that are formulated on the basis of the national core curriculum enable the utilization of local cultural resources and conditions. It would be good to enter art and cultural heritage teaching, the practice of creative skills and regular experiences of the arts and cultural heritage into school curricula; that way, all children and young people would gain a versatile knowledge of culture during basic education and upper secondary education.

Municipalities are supported in the preparation of a special cultural education plans for schools based on local cultural conditions by means of comprehensive cooperation and national guidance. In addition to operators from the fields of art and children's culture, the

Arts Promotion Centre Finland is also involved in this cooperation. Through a systematic cultural plan, it is possible to ensure that all children and young people get to know local art and cultural heritage. In addition to teachers, the guides and supervisors will be professionals appropriate for the age and skills concerned.

4. Premises that encourage physical exercise and hobby activities will be planned with made available to children and youth.

The courtyards of schools and daycare centres as well as playgrounds should be enjoyable, stimulating, aesthetic, safe, and both planned and realized in a high-quality manner. They should inspire and encourage children to experiment and develop their physical skills in such things as balance, running, hanging down and climbing; to study nature, play, and provide opportunities for practicing different activities, such as skateboarding and scootering. More parks designed by professionals should be built for young people. The parks should be suitable for hobbies and spending time with friends.

When new learning and recreational environments are designed and built for children and youth, their actual users – children and young people – must always be heard and involved in the process. After the school day, children and young people should have the opportunity to use the school premises for optional exercise and art hobbies, such as the possibility for boys to play ball games.

Attention should also be given to children's and young people's learning and hobby environments. School premises and equipment affect students' subject choices. The scarcity and lack of diversity of arts-related learning environments and equipment do not motivate learning and enjoyment in the best possible way. The anti-aesthetic and inappropriate character of learning environments can also generate anxiety and disruptive behaviour. Experts have produced information for designing teaching facilities and their structure. It is important for planners, designers and builders to consider the diversity and versatility of environments and premises as well as the impacts of various learning environments on the learning results and working atmosphere. Flexible learning environments improve job and school satisfaction and help students gain good results.

- The Ministry of Education and Culture will determine ways and means to highlight exemplary and innovative parks and facilities where the wishes of children and youth have been taken into account by consulting them.
- The participation of children and youth starting with planning shall be taken into account in all repair and new construction efforts.
- In construction projects that affect children and young people, a percentage of the construction costs should be used for the procurement of art that fits the environment concerned.

5. The cultural competence of children and youth will be reinforced.

Despite the legal basic right, the opportunities of children and youth to participate in art and culture are, both regionally and socially, unequal. The availability of education in art and culture and children's possibilities to participate in it depend on many factors, such as the area's cultural services for children; the art and cultural services offered; the distances from home and school to libraries, museums and art institutions; the number of professional art teachers at school; and the possibilities of parents to support the cultural pursuits of children and youth and offer stimuli in the field. The significance of school and early childhood education including pre-primary education is pivotal from the perspective of accessibility.

Art-related experiences are important to all of us as experiences and conceptual interpretations. Encounters with art, create a vibrant fascination with and thirst for art. This is how a future audience for art and culture and a demand for increasingly versatile and more highly developed creative content and products are created. Culture and art must be studied and learnt on a long-term basis.

Early childhood education plans and the curricula of educational institutions support creative learning environments and the improvement of cultural competence. They help to guide the society and future decision-makers to respect and value their own traditions and their diversity as well as the cultural traditions of others. Understanding the different modes of expression and meanings of arts and cultures requires thorough and diligent long-term work.

- In basic education, more attention and resources will be given to the development of pedagogics related to art, crafts and physical exercise, so that children are given general knowledge and skills concerning arts and cultural heritage.
- Audience development at art institutions and the participation of children and youth in particular will be included in the institutions' funding criteria and will be monitored as part of performance management.
- Improving of the cultural competence of children and youth will be entered as a goal in the next government programme.

6. Children will be given more possibilities to participate in art and culture.

In Finland there is a rich, versatile and artistically high-quality children's culture, but it does not reach all children equitably. Children's Cultural Centres can on their part correct this problem. The centres offer children's culture in their own premises and take children's culture to schools, daycare centres and playgrounds. They can regionally exert a positive influence on increasing cooperation amongst various operators, so that culture and art are close to children and participation for children and parents is maximally easy and either affordable or free of charge.

The operational model for the Children's Cultural Centres should be expanded and developed so that children and young people have equal access to high-quality art and culture, regardless of where they live.

More ways and means as well as resources are required for children's cultural participation. These are, among other things:

- allowing school groups to use public transport free of charge during the schoolday
- increasing art institutions' audience development efforts targeting children and youth
- directing government grants given to Art Centres for Children and Young People so that children's opportunities for equal cultural participation is boosted throughout the country
- gradually increasing the resources allocated to children's culture over the next five years.

7. Studies in children's culture and art pedagogy as well as related methods will be included in the teaching staff's basic and continuing education.

The provision of art subjects-related basic studies and continuing education will be increased in the education received by preschool teachers, class teachers, subject teachers and others working with children and young people. In the development and provision of education, means will be sought to reinforce the identities, cultural expertise and

sense of community of children and youth in teaching. By developing art pedagogy, the resourcefulness and participation of pupils should also be strengthened both locally and globally.

In the basic education of the teaching staff, the potential and requirements of working with children and young people will be taken into consideration. In teacher training (in particular, the education of class teachers and preschool teachers), instruction in art subjects and further study of the related pedagogy will be increased.

Starting with early childhood education, a systematic and long-term continuing education programme will be developed for all teachers and instructors. In the programme, professionals in various arts, experts in art pedagogy, and art and cultural institutions will be responsible for the training. Projects crossing administrative borders will be used in the multidisciplinary improvement of cultural competence. Art education and art-related pedagogical and community-based methods will be added to the training of all professionals who work with children, such as youth and social workers and public health nurses.

In the continuing education of staff, attention will be given to expertise in the instructional use of information and communications technologies as well as the utilization of digital culture databases.

5 Conclusion

The Hundred Languages

No way. The hundred is there.

The child is made of one hundred.

The child has a hundred languages

a hundred hands, a hundred thoughts

a hundred ways of thinking of playing, of speaking.

A hundred always a hundred ways of listening of marveling, of loving

a hundred joys for singing and understanding

a hundred worlds to discover

a hundred worlds to invent

a hundred worlds to dream.

The child has a hundred languages (and a hundred hundred hundred more)

but they steal ninety-nine.

The school and the culture separate the head from the body.

They tell the child:

to think without hands to do without head

to listen and not to speak

to understand without joy

to love and to marvel only at Easter and at Christmas.

They tell the child:

to discover the world already there and of the hundred

they steal ninety-nine.

They tell the child:

that work and play reality and fantasy science and imagination

sky and earth reason and dream are things that do not belong together.

And thus they tell the child that the hundred is not there.

The child says:

No way. The hundred is there.

Loris Malaguzzi (translated by Lella Gandini)

Appendix 1. Preparation process of the proposal for a children's culture policy programme

The Ministry of Education and Culture launched the preparation of a proposal for a children's culture policy programme on 23 August 2012. The programme proposal was prepared in cooperation with the National Arts Councils. The Minister of Culture and Sport appointed a steering group for the formulation of the programme proposal. The steering group's mandate was set to run until the end of 2013, and the proposal was to be prepared for the years 2013–2017. The programme period was revised so that the proposal was to cover the years 2014–2018 and so that its implementation would not be initiated in the middle of the year. The steering group received extra time until the end of 2013.

In 2010, the children's cultural section of the Central Arts Council of Finland had given the Ministry its proposal for follow-up measures regarding the previous programme (2003 –2007). The measures included providing art experiences for students receiving upper secondary vocational education and training, creating a cultural path for comprehensive schools, and allocating an appropriation for audience development targeting school children. A new children's culture policy programme is mentioned in the Child and Youth Policy Programme 2012–2015 approved by the Finnish Government.

The steering group included the following members: Chairperson, Director Hannele Lehto (Ministry of Education and Culture), Special Adviser Ansa Aarnio (Arts Promotion Centre Finland), Counsellor of Education Mikko Hartikainen (Finnish National Board of Education), Senior Advisor Tiina Kavilo (Ministry of Education and Culture), Senior Advisor Emma Kuusi (Ministry of Education and Culture), Regional Manager Arja Laitinen (Arts Promotion Centre Finland), Counsellor of Education Armi Mikkola (Ministry of Education and Culture), Counsellor for Cultural Affairs Esa Pirnes (Ministry of Education and Culture), Project Planner Leena Rantala (Ministry of Education and Culture) (replaced as of August 2013 by: Project Planner Elina Hänninen, Ministry of Education and Culture), Senior Advisor Hannu Tolonen (Ministry of Education and Culture) and Special Advisor Ditte Winqvist (Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities). The secretariat of the steering group was comprised of Senior Advisor Iina Berden and Senior Advisor Lea Halttunen. Drafting the programme proposal was the responsibility of Special Adviser Riitta Moisander (Arts Promotion Centre Finland), Senior Advisor Iina Berden (National Board of Education) and Senior Planning Officer Maria Merikanto (Arts Promotion Centre Finland).

Before the proposal for a children's culture policy was drafted, the regional arts councils, the Art Education 2012 project and the Arts Centres for Children and Young People organised a series of children's culture seminars all over the country in autumn 2012 and spring 2013. A total of 300 operators working with children's culture participated in these events.

At the invitation of the steering group, the following children's culture specialists participated in the consultation events in spring 2013:

Ombudsman for Children Maria Kaisa Aula, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Professor Pauline von Bonsdorff, University of Jyväskylä / Department of Art and Culture Studies

Executive Director Mervi Eskelinen, Arkkitehtuuri- ja ympäristökulttuurikoulu Lastu ry (Lastu School of Architecture and Environmental Culture)

Project Planner Elina Hanninen, Ministry of Education and Culture

Executive Director Anu Hietala, Taiteen perusopetusliitto TPO ry (Association of Finnish Art Schools for Children and Young People, TPO)

Professor Antti Juvonen, University of Eastern Finland

Lecturer Liisa Karlsson, University of Helsinki / Teacher Training

Professor Liisa Keltikangas-Järvinen, University of Helsinki

Professor Joel Kivirauma, University of Turku Development Manager Nina Lahtinen, Trade Union of Education in Finland (OAJ)

Educational Work Developer Marja Laine, Suomen kulttuuriperintökasvatuksen seura (Finnish Cultural Heritage Education Society)

Executive Director Panu Mäenpää, Nuori Kulttuuri-säätiö (Young Culture Foundation)

Professor Kati Mäkitalo-Siegl, University of Eastern Finland

Manager Leo Pekkala, Department for Media Education and Audiovisual Media

Rector Pia Poutanen, Taiteen perusopetusliitto TPO ry (Association of Finnish Art Schools for Children and Young People, TPO)

Head of Public Programmes Minna Raitmaa, Kiasma

Art Educator Mervi Riikonen, Children's Cultural Centre Verso (Lastenkulttuurikeskus Verso)

University Lecturer Inkeri Ruokonen, University of Helsinki, Department of Teacher Education

University Lecturer Marjo Räsänen, University of Turku

Executive Director Päivi Setälä, Pori Centre for Children's Culture

Researcher Leena Suurpää, Finnish Youth Research Network

Cultural Manager Katri Tenetz, Cultural Centre Valve / City of Oulu

Publishing Manager Saara Tiuraniemi, Tammi

Curator of Education Majju Tuisku, National Museum of Finland

Director Tiina Valpola, Architecture Information Centre Finland

Coordinator Saara Vesikansa, Taikalamppu Network

Lecturer Riitta Vira, Aalto University / Department of Art

Appendix 2. Key concepts

Childhood

In this programme proposal, childhood refers to the age period between 0 and 18 years. Basic cultural rights cover the entire period of childhood, but their realization requires various tools and methods at different stages of childhood.

Children's culture

In this programme proposal, children's culture refers to art and culture education and services directed towards children and youth, as well as culture and art created by children and young people themselves. These include experiencing art and culture as well as acquiring the related knowledge and skills. Children and young people are active actors, explorers and creators.

Cultural equality

Cultural equality refers to the possibility of children and young people to participate in cultural and art events where they live, to produce culture, and to use public and commercial art and culture services. Municipalities have legal obligation (Municipal Cultural Activities Act 728/1992) to promote, support and organise cultural activities in the municipality and this obligation also applies to children. Cultural activities refer to the practice and pursuit of the arts, the provision and use of art services, promotion of local culture and the cultivation and promotion of the cultural heritage of local or personal minority cultures.

Cultural equality comprises respect for human equality and diversity. According to the Finnish Constitution and the Non-Discrimination Act, everybody must be treated equally, regardless of age, language, gender or other reason that concerns his or her person. The authorities must promote the realization of equality. The Constitution also states specifically that the Sámi, as an indigenous people, as well as the Roma and other groups, have the right to maintain and develop their own language and culture.

According to Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (60/1991), the states parties recognize the right of the child to participate freely in cultural life and the arts and respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

Child orientation

Child orientation refers to education in art and culture and the investigation of one's own environment and selfhood, and participation and influence by means of art and with the help of art. In child-oriented activities, the child is taken into consideration as an active agent in both designing the content of activities and during the activity. Children dare to see the matters round them from different perspectives and do not necessarily function as adults expect.

A child is a sensory researcher and a creative interpreter of him/herself, a setter and tester of his/her own hypotheses.

The own cultures of children and youth

Children and young people have their own cultures, tied to time and place. They reflect and tell of the children's growth and community-based development.

Cultural competence

Cultural competence refers to an individual's ability to absorb, utilize and change culture. It is reinforced already at a young age, when a child learns new things and has experiences of and special encounters with the arts and cultural heritage. Cultural competence comprises knowledge, skills, awareness and attitudes.

Cultural education

Cultural education refers to the transmission of the mankind's global heritage, European heritage, and Finnish national, local and child-specific cultural heritage connected to ethnic or cultural backgrounds and the environment. Our artistic and cultural heritage and children's own culture are riches which children and young people should be able to enjoy and to which they are entitled.

Art education

Art education is the teaching of the languages, content and forms of various forms of art as well as their reception and self-production. Finnish art education comprises art and culture education in general education and early childhood education, general art and culture education at upper secondary level and instruction in the contents of the artistic field of specialisation selected in vocational education, basic education in the arts and hobby-based art activities and the related instruction.

Art education in comprehensive schools, upper secondary schools and educational institutions is part of the school curriculum system. The Board responsible for education confirms the municipality- and school-specific curricula on the basis of the national core curriculum prepared by the Finnish National Board of Education.

Basic education in the arts

Basic education in the arts refers to art education outside the school that is in accordance with the basic education curricula formulated by the Finnish National Board of Education and advances on an annual basis. It provides special skills for later art studies. The municipalities decide on the organization of basic education in the arts and either provide it themselves or procure it as a purchased service.



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