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The Arts Education Monitoring System - Comparative Research on Human Resources in Arts Education

Initial Findings from the Austrian and German Context

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Biography of the authors

Anke Schad holds a Bachelor's degree in European Cultural History (University of Augsburg, D) and a Master's degree in European Cultural Policy and Management (University of Warwick, UK). She also gained a postgraduate certificate in empirical social research. Working as a researcher at EDUCULT since 2006, Anke Schad has extensive experience in the development and management of research projects in the field of intercultural dialogue, cultural education and cultural policy.

Peter Szokol studied business and economics at the Vienna University of Economics and Business and took additional courses in cultural economy and music industry at the Institute for Cultural Management at the University of Music and Performing Arts. Peter Szokol's main focus at EDUCULT is performance measurement and controlling in the cultural sector, market research, statistical analyses and cultural economy.

Abstract

This paper presents preliminary findings of the Arts Education Monitoring System project. The project's aim is to set up and sustainably implement a European structural tool that will make national European data on the resource input in arts education comparable and accessible to stakeholders – culture and education policy makers, practitioners and researchers. The focus of the project will be on the dimension of human resources. In this paper, first findings from the Austrian and German context are discussed.

Keywords (3-6): Arts education, human resources, comparative research, Europe, Austria, Germany

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Introduction

Arts education is one of the major topics in talking about creativity in schools, enrichment programs for migrants and elderly people, or public service of cultural institutions. It is no longer a topic limited to niches in the education, youth and the culture sector, but developing into a cross-sectorial topic of both cultural and educational (as well as youth and social) policy interest on a broader basis. This can be observed among many countries across Europe. Although this emphasis is a positive trend, there is up to now only scarce evidence how the policy emphasis is implemented on a structural level, especially in terms of resources.

Aiming to close this lack of evidence, EDUCULT carried out a pilot research project on resources in the domain of arts and cultural education, the “Arts Education Fact Finding Mission” in 2010, supported by an operating grant through the EU Culture Program. The project compared the resource dimension in Austria, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands and England.

In this pilot project, the dimension of human resources emerged as a key indicator, providing evidence both on quantitative dimensions and the qualitative development of the sector. The findings of the pilot project led to the thesis that the situation of human resources does not correspond adequately with the political focus on the topic (EDUCULT 2010).

Arts Education Monitoring System (AEMS)

Based on the findings and thesis EDUCULT created the follow-up project “Arts Education Monitoring System (AEMS)” from 2011-2012. It is again financed by the EU Culture Program, this time through the strand for cultural policy analysis groupings.

The cultural policy analysis groupings’ aim is to set up and sustainably implement a European structural tool that will make national European data on the resource input in arts education comparable and accessible to stakeholders – culture and education policy makers, practitioners and researchers. The focus of the project will be on the dimension of human resources.

The policy analysis grouping consists of five cultural policy and arts education research institutions from Austria (EDUCULT), Spain (Interarts), Germany (Zentrum für Kulturforschung/Centre for Cultural Research), England (Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE) and Bop Consulting) and Hungary (Budapest Observatory). Our associated partners EricArts, IFFACA and CultureActionEurope will help to disseminate the project and foster international discourse.

Arts education on the interface between educational and cultural policy as well as other policy fields (e.g. youth) needed to be narrowed down to make the project feasible. According to the project funding area, it was obvious to focus on the cultural policy implications in a narrow

sense, meaning to analyse educational activities in cultural institution or the cultural sector. On the macro level the country descriptions referred also to other policy fields that are of specific relevance in their contexts.

The project is carried out in two phases. During the first phase, the project partners provide a national research on the current situation and developments of the sector, focusing on cultural institutions. The investigations are based on a policy analysis approach (Schubert & Bandelow 2003) and an analysis of existing research (secondary data). On basis of the national reports a comparative analysis is carried out among the researched country contexts, giving insights on similarities and differences among the development of the project partners' countries.

The research on the first phase of the project concludes in a comparative policy analysis as a basis against which new empirical research on the dimension of human resources in the sector can be analysed. This second phase, combining a questionnaire survey and focus groups in the research partners' countries, will lead to comparative data on the situation of the work force for arts education in cultural institutions.

Given the facts that the project partners are at different stages of their research, and that the project as such is currently still running, we cannot provide conclusions. Therefore we decided to focus on the policy background and first observations of the situation of human resources in Austria and Germany. Before this, we will start with a look at the policy interest on the European level.

Part I: Policy interest

Policy interest on European level

In European cultural and education policy, arts and cultural education has become a matter of strategic interest. The creation of the "Platform on Access to Culture" and the "Working Group on Synergies between Education and Culture" are examples of this interest. Out of these networks of administrators, civil society representatives and experts emerged recommendations to advance the field of arts education in terms of quality and impact, with the intention of further professionalise the domain (Lauret 2010; Access to Culture 2011). The Council of Europe agreed in 2009 on the recommendation "Cultural Education: The Promotion of Cultural knowledge, Creativity and Intercultural Understanding through Education", in response to the UNESCO Road Map, aiming to foster arts and culture in all education activities (Wimmer 2011: 3).

However, as the European Parliament, the Council and Commission cannot intervene on the national authorities for education, youth and culture, the effectiveness of the recommendations are hard to measure (ibid).

Direct cultural policy actions are taken by the European cultural and educational funding systems. Although according to article 167/4 of the Lisbon Treaty, culture should be taken into account in all measures, a precise funding strand for arts education does not exist, neither in the culture program nor in the education or youth program (ibid).

Policy interest in Austria

Definition of arts education in Austria

Compared to other German speaking countries, arts and cultural education is negotiated as “mediation of arts and culture” (Vermittlung). The policy interest in arts and cultural education does not refer to specific art forms, but an analysis of political instruments in place indicates differences between the sectors involved (e.g. a focus on traditional forms of artistic and cultural expression rather than on new media). As education policy is currently undergoing various reforms such as the transformation to all-day schools and new general schools, the structural changes seem to dominate any discussion on education for the sake of content, by that impeding a broad discussion on the potential of arts and cultural education e.g. in school development.

Structure of arts education provision

Mediation of culture is mostly concerned with co-operations between schools and cultural institutions. As debates on the schools-curriculum are not in the educational policy agenda, the impact on education policy remains relatively weak.

Provincial (Bundesland) governments are the main authorities in terms of cultural policy. According to the federal constitution, only the federal institutions in the field of culture (Bundeskultureinrichtungen) are in the area of direct influence of the federal state. However, as long as the federal government (or any other federal level authority) acts under private law, those regulations remain disregarded.

On the federal level, supporting structure and programs for co-operations between schools and cultural institutions are provided by the arm’s length organisation of the ministry for education, culture and the arts, KulturKontakt Austria.

Equally important to the federal level is the support and provision by the nine provinces and the cultural institutions on local level. The structures for arts educations among the provinces are incoherent and vary between the provision of cultural services of provincial institutions and provision of information services and support structures for schools and other target groups.



Policy trends

Since the nomination of the social-democratic minister of education, arts and culture, Claudia Schmied in 2007, arts and cultural education is one of the major topics on cultural policy agenda of Austria. During the first years of being in office, the emphasis was to reorganize the federal museums in Vienna. In 2009 new statutes were set up for the museums, underlining that mediation is the key function of the museum aiming to achieve the broadest possible participation of the people in Austria. Other museum functions of collection, conservation, documentation, research and exhibition should contribute to the education activities (401. Verordnung der Bundesministerin für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur betreffend das Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien (MUMOK)).

Following a government initiative to provide free access to museums for young people until the age of 19, additional funding was provided for education activities in federal museums. Despite new programmes and initiatives for co-operations with schools, a significant rise of the federal budget cannot be observed. Yet, in comparison with other European countries (for example England), there are also no major budget cuts affecting the arts education programmes.

Remarkable is the fact that direct interventions on federal theatres or orchestras are missing. However, since the Minister announced the aim to organise co-operations for each school with at least on cultural institution up to 2013, several activities are also offered by theatres and orchestras, cinemas, libraries and other institutions.

Document analysis of party programs and coalition agreements indicate that there is a common agreement on the importance of arts and cultural education, although different aims are followed. (Vienna 2010: 48 – 50; Bundeskanzleramt 2008: 225; EDUCULT 2012: 5) With the upcoming elections in 2012, there is the risk that changes of political power might come to other policy focuses, thus harming the developments initiated.

Policy interest in Germany

Definition of arts education in the Germany

Arts and cultural education in Germany is negotiated under the heading of “cultural education” (kulturelle Bildung). Also in the German context a specified declaration is missing. Reference points are the aims of arts education by policy papers like the “Kinder- und Jugendplan 2000”, Children and Youth Plan 2000, where it is stated that arts education shall not only enable children and youths to creatively engage with art, culture and everyday life but also advance their aesthetic abilities and social skills. (Centre for Cultural Research 2012:3)

Compared to Austria, Germany has traditionally a stronger focus on cultural education in out-of-school settings and also a strong youth policy interest in the field.



Following the orientation on the social functions of arts education, just like in Austria a strong emphasis on co-operations with schools and provision in schools can be observed. However, in Germany there is a stronger trend to interconnect with a wide range of policy fields contributing to the field, besides education and culture especially to youth and social policy, whereas in Austria the field is more focused on culture and education.

Structure of arts education provision

Germany has a strong federal system of education and cultural policy. Therefore all 16 states (provinces) have a different structure of arts education and relying policies. On federal level, although not in charge of daily implementation of arts education, at least four ministries intervene directly or indirectly in the sector by supporting structures and funding of pilot projects and research. (Centre for Cultural Research 2012:7)

Even more complex and hard to compare is the structure of the German states. Hereby again several different ministries contribute to the domain. Taking into account the much smaller size of Austria and therefore also less agents and authorities involved, and the more central role of the federal government in terms of culture and education, it seems a comparably easy task to analyse the Austrian context.

A special characteristic in the domain of arts and cultural education in Germany is the strong intervention of private foundations. Either they provide funding or organise programs, or even establish public-private partnerships like the program “Kulturagenten für kreative Schulen”. In the case of Austria, foundations do not play a significant role in funding cultural education. The few active foundations rather focus on artistic production and curatorial activities.

The 2010 Centre for Cultural Research “infrastructure survey on arts education in classical cultural institutions” showed that the majority of institutions (87%) are actively involved in the area of arts education. (Keuchel & Weil 2010: 183). For Austria, we lack specific empirical data in this respect, but we can state that at least all major cultural institutions carry out specific education activities.

Policy trends

Because of the strong federal structure of cultural policy in Germany, a cohesive national policy on arts education cannot be observed. However, several documents underline the importance of arts and cultural education. Besides the Kinder- und Jugendplan 2000, the important final statement of the Enquete commission “Culture in Germany” incorporated a long chapter on arts and cultural education (Centre for Cultural Research 2012: 4) The Enquete process means that arts education was a matter of an intense discussion process on the federal parliamentary level – which so far has not been the case in Austria.

Just like in Austria, also in Germany there is a broad consensus on the importance of arts and cultural education by the political parties. (ibid: 5)

Since the emergence of private foundation intervening in the sector of arts and cultural education, they are playing an increasing role, as stakeholders and policy makers. Either they provide funding or organise programs, or even establish public-private partnerships like the program “Cultural Agents for Creative Schools” (Kulturagenten für kreative Schulen). There is some criticism on the legitimacy of such interventions (given that they have an agenda that is not based on democratic processes) but not yet a broad discussion on the pros and cons of public-private partnerships (Nagel, Wimmer & Schad 2012).

Part II: The situation of the workforce: a comparison of the museum sector between Germany and Austria

As the labour market for arts education is very complex and fragmented, it is rather hard to compare the existing findings of previous studies (Blumenreich 2011: 107). Therefore we decided at this stage to look into museums as the case where most existing research is available. In the follow-up research for the AEMS project, we will broaden the perspective and also include the performing arts sector (dance, theatre, music) as well as libraries and film (cinemas).

Qualifications of cultural mediators are very diverse in Austria as well as in Germany and indicate sector-specific differences between museums, orchestras and theatres etc.. Observations indicate that the museum sector is the most developed concerning education activities. However, a formal definition of cultural mediators can be found neither in Austria nor in Germany. (Ihrenberger 2007:2, Centre for Cultural Research 2012:3)

Academic qualification

In Austria, museum educators have very different educational backgrounds varying between studies of (art) history, philosophy, anthropology, arts history, pedagogy or the arts. Regular employees have in most cases a degree in arts history. In general about 84% of all educational employees hold a university degree. (Ihrenberger 2007:1) This corresponds to findings on the German situation as a whole (across cultural sectors), which regards the education level as high, with the majority of educational staff and managers holding a university degree. (Blumenreich 2011: 15)

Although museum pedagogy emerged as a professional field in Austria already more than 30 years ago, university programs developed only slowly. In 1988, the first program for museum pedagogy was implemented. Although respective demand was given, the then ministry decided to wind up the program after its first year. In in the 1990ies a new program was launched focusing on communication in museums which developed over the years into the



ecm - exhibition and cultural communication management master program at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. Currently it is the only professional program for cultural mediation in museums at university level with a master degree. (Österreichischer Verband der KulturvermittlerInnen 2012, Ihrenberger 2007, EDUCULT 2007)

Additionally several universities (mostly with a focus on culture or pedagogics) as well as private/intermediary institutions (including NPOs) offer courses for cultural mediation in museums. The latter are mostly concerned with museum management trainings and offer advanced professional courses. Both the private institute Kulturkonzepte and the interest grouping of cultural mediators in museums and galleries (Verband österreichischer KulturvermittlerInnen im Museums- und Ausstellungswesen) provide professional certifications. While the offer of Kulturkonzepte is a two year program, the interest grouping awards the certificate after the peer-reviewing of a project. (Österreichischer Verband der KulturvermittlerInnen 2012)

For Germany, there are attempts to make the offer of specialised academic training and qualification in arts and cultural education more visible. The project "Studium und Arbeitsmarkt Kultur" coordinated by the German Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft also led to the creation of a data base where specific offers can be researched (<http://www.studium-kultur.de/datenbank.html>). The most known academic programmes in Germany among experts in the field are the offer of the universities in Hildesheim and Lüneburg. (Blumenreich 2011: 34)

Working conditions

In Austria, the evidence-base on the working conditions of arts and cultural educators is very weak. Previous studies focus in the social situation of artists. (Schelepa et.al: 2008) The undefined legal description of the occupation field among all art sectors causes a lack of coverage of the domain in public labour market or taxation statistics. The following analysis of the working conditions is based on the interviews held in the context of the European Arts Education Fact Finding Mission. (EDUCULT 2010)

Despite the propagandised importance of arts and cultural education on the policy level, the majority of interviewees, especially the freelancers, describe rather precarious working conditions. This has to be interpreted taking into account that both Austria and Germany have a rather stable labour market and rates on unemployment are significantly lower than in many other European countries. Yet, some structural issues seem to cause a general feeling of insecurity among workers in the cultural (education) sector. A general problem that also is described by educators in Germany (Nagel, Schad & Wimmer 2012) is that only the actual working hours for workshops and other formats are paid, but not the time devoted for preparation and reflexion/reporting.



In a job description brochure of the Austrian employment service (Arbeitsmarktservice AMS), cultural education jobs are described as “mostly part time job contracted or employed per hour. [...] Salary is dependent on the tasks and might vary between 1300 and 1500 Euro before tax.” (AMS 2007: 20) This can be seen as a reference model for freelancers employed as educators in the museums sector.

Concerning regular employment offers a significant gap is visible. A regular employment contract for a professional theatre educator was offered about 2000 Euro for 40 hours/week and a team leader of arts educators at the arm’s length institution KulturKontakt Austria was offered 2599 Euro for 38.5 hours/week in 2011. (according to <http://kultur-jobs.at> 2011/2012) Compared to a teacher for primary schools in Austria, who receives 2025 Euro and a teacher of secondary school 2222 Euro/month before tax with the perspective on a salary of 2264/2614 Euro after 5 years and continuous pay rise up to 5139/4503 Euro, the salaries for comparable qualifications for educators in the cultural sector are significantly lower. However they are on average higher than the salary of an artist.

Occupation description	Arts educator 1)	Arts educator 2)	Artist 3)	Teacher 4)	Average Income 5)
Type of employment	Freelancer	Employee	Free/Employee	Employee	Employee
Stage of career	Start	Professional	Not defined	Start	Not defined
Income €/month before tax	1400	2300	1200	2200	1750
Income €/year before tax	16800	32200	16200	30800	24500

Arts education occupation offers by cultural institutions or equivalents

1) average of AMS report 2007: 20

2) average of job descriptions <http://kultur-jobs.at> 2011

3) Schelepa et. al. 2008: 78

4) average of teachers after 5 years

5) Statistik Austria 2010

Although the data presented in the table is only based on a brief desk-top research and statistical evidences are missing for the domain of arts education, the precarious working conditions reported in several interviews in Austria in the course of the pilot project “Arts Education Fact Finding Mission” are not confirmed by the average income. Although the



income of freelancers at the start of their careers is respectively below the income of the average of Austrians, the income of employed professional exceeds the average income. Taking into account that most professional educators have finalised tertiary education (84%), additional comparisons with academic incomes of 34720 Euro per year (median, Statistik Austria 2010) indicate a gap. Even professionals in leading positions are under the median of academic incomes. Although the situation might be regarded as unsatisfactory, it has to be taken into account that graduates from social science and humanities are traditionally on the bottom of the ranking of academic earnings. This is also true for Germany (and probably for most other European countries). However, it has to be taken into account that low incomes in the humanities are not necessarily an indicator for bad working conditions or lack of professional perspectives. Another reason might be the comparably high level of part-time jobs in the field. (Kräuter, Oberländer und Wießer 2008: 37 quoted in Blumenreich 2011:95) From these findings we will try with the AEMS project to take a more differentiated look at the working conditions of arts educators taking into account other indicators than the income. Other qualitative aspects might have as strong impact on the self-assessment of the situation of respondents.

An important factor we will regard more in-depth is the level of recognition within the institution, especially the key role of the leadership in creating support structures for the educators such as access to all facilities (rooms and technical infrastructures) and PR and marketing (Nagel, Wimmer & Schad 2012, EDUCULT 2010).

This also relates to the standing of arts educators within the institutions. Can you name an arts educator in your context who became the director of a major cultural institution? At least we do not know anyone like that in Austria. The Austrian museum sector employs many young people and students, serving school classes and other target groups. Only a few persons are in key positions developing educational programs and responsible for management tasks. Even in the major (federal) museums in Austria only two to four heads are employed on a permanent basis whereas up to 40 heads carry out the programmes on a freelance basis. Therefore only 10% of employees in the museum sector have a long-term perspective of occupation. (EDUCULT 2010: 59)

The same situation can be found in Germany: the already quoted infrastructure survey mentions that while there is a significant rise of activities and programmes, the number of permanent employees is not rising. The permanent employees are mainly concerned with the development and conceptual work, while the practice is outsourced to freelancers and agencies. (Keuchel & Weil 2010: 35)

These findings are also reflected on the micro-level: the recent research project of EDUCULT on the qualitative development of arts education in the German Ruhr region also included qualitative interviews with museum educators. The overall impression was that despite the increased work volume mainly caused by initiatives to foster co-operations between schools and cultural institutions in the sector, the situation of the work force was not strengthened. The comment of one interviewee is telling: "We have to provide additional programmes with



the existing staff". The interviews made obvious that this leads to a feeling of growing discontent among staff, asking the ones responsible (mostly the administration and politicians) to take action. Up to now, there does not seem to be a trend towards joint action – rather the tendency to act as lone fighters seems to prevail. (Nagel, Wimmer & Schad 2012)

It is also telling that in Austria, it was not the employees themselves but rather an intervention from the social insurances following an audition of employment contracts that caused a broad debate in the museum sector. Those contracts are specific in Austria and could be described as hybrids between regular employment and freelance contracts. Further effects of the current developments will be the negotiation of legal occupation descriptions for federal museums. This might offer new perspectives for professionals and long term employment perspectives in arts education. Also, it is fostering the feeling of affiliation to one sector – across institutions and across provinces. (EDUCULT 2010: 59)

Working contracts and social security – specific developments in Austria

All these findings indicate that the sector of arts education – at least the museum sector – both in Austria and Germany is characterized by a minority of professionals with permanent contracts and majority of freelancers and part-time employees. Although the paper focuses on the museums sector and its current developments, we assume that there are not major differences to other sectors (a thesis which we will test in the upcoming in-depth data collection). In the final abstract of this paper, we will take a through look at the recent developments in Austria, where specific developments caused by interventions of the social insurance is causing dynamics that might radically change the sector.

In the case of Austria, the hybrid employment contracts for “employed freelancers” (Freier Dienstvertrag) used to be very common. Hereby the specifications of working time per week/month and the task to be accomplished is declared. In principle, the freelancer can decide on the time of fulfilment of the tasks, and in case of being prevented, he/she can also name a substituting person for the fulfilment on his behalf. (§ 4 Abs. 4 ASVG)

As the Austrian social insurances started to audit the working contracts of museums in 2010, it was clear that the naming of a substitute contradicts the daily practice as educational programs have to be prepared properly by individuals with certain qualifications and experiences and an implementation of children programs by “any person” is not corresponding with the guidelines of trust and quality of the museums.

The current development of education in the museum sector is characterised by a discussion of pros and cons regarding the new employment opportunities. On the one side, most museums offer more regular employment contracts, on the other side seasonal variations of visitors will lead to a process of outsourcing of the “Freie Dienstnehmer” to real freelancers and agencies. Some provincial museums in Austria are thinking of establishing employment agencies where arts educators are employed and the hired to the institutions.



Whatever solution will be made, in the end a respective majority of educators remains freelancers with several problems concerning the social security. The seasonal fluctuation caused by the school year and tourism will lead to times of intensive occupation and times of rare/no occupation. As freelancer under Austrian law, social security and taxation are to be paid on monthly basis based on the turnover of the previous year. The fluctuation of occupation in combination with low average salary causes often a calculation of the social security close to the minimum income level necessary for taxation and social security. This situation equals the situation of the majority of artists in Austria which led to the implementation of a special security fund for artists (KSVFG) which do not reach the limit of income to acquire social insurance. However, as this fund is dedicated to artists (and audited by a commission) cultural workers and arts educators are so far not eligible to apply for insurance through that fund. Therefore the “Kulturrat Österreich”, an interest group of the culture sector argues for an extension of the security fund for all artists, cultural workers and media workers. (Kulturrat 2011)

By now the analysis of the current development can highlight that the sector forces uncertainty, but might help to come to profound working environment for further professionalization in the domain of arts education. The current discussion on worker’s representations and interest groups are hereby crucial.

Workers’ representation, political dimension – specific developments in Austria

The Austrian structure of workers’ representation is based on a typology of occupation. Membership of representations is compulsory within the system of chambers and voluntary within the system of unions. Among the two systems a division of responsibilities was established. The unions are responsible for policy setting and negotiations of working contracts, while chambers are carrying out reviews of legislations and basic research on labour.

As most educators in the museums sector are freelancers, the responsible representations are the union and chamber of businesses and industries. Comparable to many other sectors, freelancers with flexible working times were emerging where self-employment and market orientation was not a traditional feature. This is especially true among the creative industries and has led to a transformation of the unions’ structure. Under the umbrella of the Union Section for Arts, Media, Sports and Free occupations, the “Konsequente Interessensvertretung Unabhängiger Gewerkschafter – KIV” is the major representative body of arts educators and supporting the current negotiations of working contracts. Additionally, the interest grouping of cultural mediators in museums and galleries has a major impact on the domain as a networking organisation in close interaction with the Union.



Outlook

What has been presented are the very preliminary findings of a larger research project, the Arts Education Monitoring System (AEMS). During summer and autumn 2012 the partner consortium will conduct a comparative survey based on a questionnaire to cultural institutions and arts/cultural educators. This will cover not only Austria and Germany, but also include Spain, England and Hungary. Additionally, round table discussions in at least some countries will be held to add qualitative insights to the discussion on the situation of the work force as the key resource in arts and cultural education. The basic thesis is that their situation does not correspond with the policy development and with the requirements in terms of professional quality development. The findings of the AEMS project will be summarised in a report to be published in 2012.

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