

Nordic Association for Music Educators (NUMU)

Nordic Association of Music and Art Schools (NMKU)

The Nordic development program “The Cultural Greenhouse” is a project related to our field of work in both Nordic and European network of music and arts schools.

About “The Cultural Greenhouse”

The development program “The Cultural Greenhouse” is a cooperative project of between the networks of Nordic Association for Music Educators (NUMU) and Nordic associations of music and arts schools (NMKU). The aim is to use their network and their expertise in the implementation of the project in cooperation with research institutes from the Nordic countries.

The original idea was, in a unified way, to chart the way in which music and arts schools are organized in the Nordic countries. When Professor Anne Bamford became involved in the project as an international adviser, the idea extended to place emphasis on an evaluation of quality arts education in a comprehensive way. Therefore, at least in some of the Nordic countries, a holistic approach to research will be implemented, based on findings from the charting project. This will determine the nature, scope and impact of arts and cultural education for young people.

Short description of the Cultural Greenhouse:

The aim is to investigate the present situation of music and arts education in general, and the role of the music and arts schools in particular, through cooperation and exchange of experience between organizations and research institutions in the Nordic countries. We will achieve this by:

1. Creating a database and collecting statistics that make comparisons between the Nordic countries.
2. Evaluating the operation of the music and arts schools and their relationship to the national school system.
3. Revealing the diversities of practices and cooperation in the system.
4. Finding the “best-practice” models of music and arts education, which can be laid as a foundation for extending development of quality in arts education.
5. Using music and art schools as a means to strengthening and developing quality arts education in cooperation with kindergarten, primary and upper secondary schools.
6. Emphasizing the efficiency and synergy in the system as an entity, thereby contributing to quality arts education for **all**.
7. Revealing the conditions needed for teachers to contribute to high quality teaching that can be used to improve teacher pre-service and in-service training.
8. This charting will be based on the “UNESCO Road Map for Education” and world standards - benchmarking for quality in arts education” from the “Wow Factor”.

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Phase 1: The mapping process

In the mapping process, the extent of music and arts schools will be depicted and analyzed: the service they provide, the training they offer, the teaching arrangements, the service and activities as a process and a continuum.

There already exists information concerning the framing and structure of music and arts schools in Europe, e.g. Polifonia (October 2007), statistical information from EMU (March 2007) and the Wow Factor (2006). Now we want to look deeper into these activities.

A questionnaire will be designed using information gained from political documents and the structure of the system in music and arts schools: legislation, curriculum, examinations system, quality assessment, teacher education and the professional qualifications. The questionnaire will be designed in different phases: activities, resources, cooperation between schools, relationships to local communities, the teacher situation, the principal and their leadership, and the consumer.

School activities (snapshot)

Number of students, age and gender, according to: Subjects and levels (where applicable)

The aim is to reveal the effectiveness of the system in whole and in each school: Starting age, the peak of number of students in different art subjects at different age levels and gender, drop outs, and which subjects are most common and popular related to age and gender.

Resources

Teaching arrangement, group lessons, private lessons, combination of methods, hours per student, average group sizes.

Teaching-resources ratio per student (teaching ours in the school divided by number of students)

Teaching-service ratio (how many ours the student get taught)

Activity ratio (number of subjects per student)

Communication ratio (how frequently students perform etc.)

Cooperation between schools

To which extent do music and arts schools cooperate with kindergarten, primary and secondary schools, and – if they do – in which ways.

Relationships to local communities

In which way do the music and arts schools and the primary and secondary schools support the cultural activities in the local community?

The teacher situation

Examine background and working conditions of teachers in kindergartens, music and art schools, primary and secondary schools relevant for arts education at all levels.

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The principal and their leadership

What the leaders consider being the role of a music/arts school in the society regarding to questions like: target groups, role of the school for the local community and professional music live, subjects to teach, challenges in the future, the value of music and arts education for individuals and society, and s.o.

The consumer

Expectations from the users about the services and their opinion how the school has fulfilled them.

The findings

The results are planned shared through the international, Nordic and national networks (that have unique possibilities to bring forward the findings to all stakeholders, teachers, principals, and organizations of music and art schools) report publication, conferences, further researches, bringing conclusions and recommendations to the authorities and policy makers.

„Quality monitoring system“

As one possible scope of action for further work in the program of The Cultural Greenhouse is developing an on-line electronic quality monitoring system for Music and Arts schools and individual students. The system will have the main focus on reporting and documentation of the work done by students and schools.

With regard to students, the electronic portfolio will give a unique record of their achievements through a multimedia approach, using photographs, sound and video tracks, as well as more conventional methods like examination results and written reports. The portfolio will be of great help in monitoring learning as a continuum and the individual learning process.

Regarding institutions, the electronic portfolio can be developed according to universally agreed criteria for quality in arts education, and the objectives and goals for each institution.

Phase 2: National evaluation

Based on the mapping phase, some of the involved countries just now examine the possibility of using University of Arts / Wimbledon College of Arts, and Anne Bamford as responsible researcher, to do an external evaluation of the status of arts education in general. This should be based on the criteria mentioned above: The UNESCO benchmarking for quality in arts education.