

Compendium of Best Practice

Edited by Bente von Schindel



Learning Outcome of Amateur Culture

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**LOAC**  
- Learning Outcome of Amateur Culture

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# Preface

This compendium is a part of LOAC - Learning Outcome of Amateur Culture - a Grundtvig Multilateral Project supported by the European Commission as a part of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

The objectives of the project are to strengthen the qualities and innovations of adult learning in the area of amateur art and voluntary cultural activities by piloting experiences in strategic areas and producing learning products of high quality with a European dimension.

For the Compendium a series of “best practice” representing different amateur activities and activities within voluntary culture have been selected.

The articles represent examples of being active in a board, in amateur music, in culture for children, in dance for elderly people, in training of conductors, in organisational work as well as in trans-European networking the way it takes place in the partnership circle. In the compendium each partnership country is represented by 2 or 3 “best practice”.

The compendium shows how amateur culture and the voluntary culture promote the main objectives of lifelong learning: Active citizenship, cultural cohesion, personal fulfillment and employability. The articles also directly relate to a broader view of learning involving competences, knowledge and skills and personal formation as a result of participation.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the compendium: The partnership circle, writers, translators and not least the amateurs and the volunteers.

*Bente von Schindel, 2011*



# Lifelong Learning on the Agenda in the EU

■ By Hans Joergen Vodsgaard

Thanks to Bente von Schindel and Susan Fazakerley

The idea of lifelong learning is not new. In the European history of ideas the humanistic tradition has always seen education and enlightenment as essential for human freedom and growth.

But the concept of “lifelong learning” has in the last decades mainly gained influence, because two important international organisations have been its advocates, namely UNESCO from the early 1970’ies and OECD from the 1980’ies, and they speak of lifelong learning from two very different understandings.

UNESCO links lifelong learning to human and democratic development. Here education is an end in itself, and not merely a mean for economic growth and government management. For example, the need for literacy was justified by each human beings need and right to gain access to knowledge and culture. The OECD on the contrary understands lifelong learning as an investment in ‘human capital’ and emphasizes the commercial advantages. The humanist and democratic values has here been replaced by the economic demands of the new global world market.

In recent decades there has been a gradual paradigm shift in the educational agenda from a humanistic discourse, focusing on democracy and personal fulfillment to an instrumental discourse, focusing on economics and global competitiveness. OECD’s paradigm became the new meta-narrative during the’80s with a strong appeal to opinion formers, policy makers and businessmen, and it has very much shaped the educational understanding of the EU and its Member States.

Lifelong Learning in the understanding of OECD had a strong appeal to policy makers, politicians and business people, and it has influenced the understanding of education in the EU system very much, especially in the European Commission and subsequently in the EU member states.

The EU Commission’s primary objective in promoting “lifelong learning” was to strengthen the vocational adult education. In 1993, the Commission prepared the White Paper: Growth, Competitiveness and Employment. *Chal-*

*Challenges and Pathways to the 21st Century. Education* is seen here as the crucial means for promoting growth, competitiveness and employment. In 1996 it was followed by a second White Paper: *Teaching and Learning. Towards the Learning Society*. At the Council meeting in Luxemburg in November 1997 a European employment strategy was launched, which included the definition of lifelong learning, which the Commission subsequently used in the Memorandum of 2000. In March 2000 the Lisbon European Council adopted as a strategic goal that the European Union was to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based society in the world. This decisive step was taken when the Commission in November 2000, detached the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning for consultation in all member states. After feedback from the extensive consultation processes including the adult education field and the associations in each country, the Commission issued interim reports<sup>1</sup> on the responses of countries and regions, and in November 2001 the Communication: *Making a European area for lifelong learning* was issued.

In the *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* the European Commission introduced a new understanding of learning, where “the concept of competence” was at the center. The new learning discourse has - with minor adjustments - finally been determined in *the European reference framework on key competences for lifelong learning*, which the Parliament and the Council adopted in December 2006. This *recommendation* has the status of supranational law, and it affects virtually all policies in the member states.

## The European Qualifications Framework for Key Competences

The memorandum from 2000 provides lifelong learning with having both the lifelong aim, learning from cradle to grave and life-wide view that one can

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<sup>1</sup> *Jf. Summary and analysis of the feedback from the Member States and EEA Countries as part of the consultation on the Commission's Memorandum on Lifelong learning, European Commission, November 2001; Summary and analysis of the feedback from the Candidate Countries as part of the consultation on the Commission's Memorandum on Lifelong learning, Nov. 2001; Summary and analysis of the feedback from Civil Society as part of the consultation on the Commission's Memorandum on Lifelong learning, November 2001; Resolution adopted by the European Trade Union Confederation Executive Committee – 13/14 June 2001, Brussels – on the Commission Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*

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learn in all learning environments, both through formal learning, through non-formal learning, and especially informal learning in the associations of civil society, including the cultural associations.

The first key message of the memorandum is the launch of a catalog of 7 basic skills that should be prioritized. They include two basic competencies within 1) reading and writing in native language, and 2) reward. In addition five enhanced skills in 3) a foreign language, 4) ICT, 5) technological culture, 6) entrepreneurship and 7) social skills. Moreover, the memorandum mentions the ability to learn and get a sense of large amounts of information. The memorandum does not explain in details why precisely these skills are prioritized, and why the last five are so dominated by a vocational focus. Or why key aspects of citizenship such as development of personal autonomy, democratic formation, historical and cultural insight are not mentioned, nor why the musical, existential and the learning which makes you reflect on life do not belong in lifelong learning. The memorandum nor explains the underlying learning theory and the applied conceptual apparatus is unclear. There is no distinction between skills and qualifications, and it is unclear when talking of knowledge, skills and attitudes and the concept of skills is continuously changing meaning from just being synonymous with “attitudes” to include all learning.

But it is rather obvious that the discourse does not refer to the broad European tradition of humanistic pedagogical thinking, where concepts such as enlightenment, autonomy, personal formation and sovereignty of the people play a central role. A thinking which after all has characterized and still characterizes the legislation of education in many member states. The tradition from the pedagogical thinkers such as Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Erasmus, Comenius and Grundtvig, who came to name the EU lifelong learning programs are silent in the proposal of the Commission.

The general trend is that the learning qualities being encouraged and recognized are the ones that are important to the vocational education and the employers. When talking about promoting “lifelong learning”, the meaning is a specific subset of the overall learning potential, namely the subset to ensure the training of employees for business. Lifelong learning in order to become a wise person or to be a knowledgeable and engaged citizen, or to participate in learning activities to create art and beauty or simply to experience joy and happiness in company with other people are not included in the Commission’s concept of learning. It is the need for learning of the system and not of the hu-

man, which sets the agenda.

The memorandum does not refer to personal formation, which can be explained by the fact that the concept comes from the German cultural sphere and is not used in the Roman and Anglo-Saxon tradition, but it is a problem that its substantive meaning and purpose has been removed as well. The term “qualifications” have also disappeared and been replaced by the term “competences”, but “competences” are here defined equivalent to “qualifications” as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes. “Qualifications” are instead defined as earlier “competences” in legal terms.

EU also launched a slightly different learning discourse, which follows from their more ambitious proposals for “a European Qualification Framework for lifelong learning (EQF)<sup>2</sup>. “Qualifications” here unchanged refer to competences in the legal sense, while the content in the reference frame is no longer composed of the components: knowledge, skills and attitudes (as in the reference framework for key competencies), but the components: knowledge, skills, and (personal and professional) competences. The reason why “attitudes” have been replaced by competencies, is that the latter exclusively assesses quality of learning based on learning outcome or output and it can be difficult to measure attitudes, whereas “competence” in this reference frame is defined, so that they more easily can be measured. The cost is however that “competencies” are more clearly being interpreted instrumentally, as means to ensure an output.

The main features of the learning discourse, which the two reference frames delineate, are firstly that the dimension regarding matters of purpose and meaning of the personal formation is out of focus, that the importance of knowledge is subject to a zweckrationell assessment of the yield, and thirdly, that the value of the soft personal qualifications also are viewed instrumentally.

### The Vague Theoretical Basis

There is one continuous ambiguity or inconsistency in the paper of the Commission. On one part it is mainly based on vocational terms, but on the other hand still highlights a double objective of both employability and citi

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<sup>2</sup> *EQF, European Qualification Framework. Adopted by the European Parliament and Council on 23 April 2008*

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zenship. It may in some way make sense because you designate the principal civil virtue of citizenship to be the one being at work. Only in this way you become a full member of the social community. This understanding is particularly evident in the first white papers and in the memorandum, but is toned down after widespread criticism during the consultation process in 2001.

In the subsequent Notice citizenship is given a more autonomous meaning with reference to civil society, and there's a division of "the aim of active citizenship" into the "personal fulfillment", "social inclusion", "cultural cohesion" and "active citizenship".

In The Memorandum and in the subsequent Announcements and Actions two main goals of all learning are highlighted: Partly the instrumental goal to promote employability for the benefit of the system world, and partly the humanistic aims to promote personal fulfillment, active citizenship, social inclusion and cultural cohesion for the benefit of the life world. The EU system has a foot in both camps, but with a preponderance of the OECD. The first and largest foot is in the system world and the aim is here to develop employability with a focus on people as employees. The second and minor foot is planted in the life world and the aim is here to develop active citizenship with a focus on people as fellow human beings and citizens. In this dual objective of lifelong learning is the recognition that a functioning society not only needs updated employees but also active citizens and formed fellowmen. For no one can realize himself fully in the work; an active, instructive and meaningful leisure time is a crucial part of the good life.

The problem with the EU objectives is that they are not anchored in a stated understanding of man and society. They float in the air, and therefore one cannot distinguish between the fact that the targets have different meanings in different spheres of life and the danger is that employability becomes the dominant goal. But the European system has nevertheless not unequivocally taken the side in the paradigm conflict, and although there is a clear predominance of the instrumental discourse, there is a theoretical and political opening for the fact that you can try to strengthen the minor foot in the life world.

In the Grundtvig project LOAC and hence through the following best practice we have tried to find a way to describe and assess the sides of the life world represented by the minor foot.



# A Life of Dance is Rewarding

■ By Roel Mazure and Lotte Volz

Thanks to Wies Rosenboom, Els van Buren and Henk Smits

## Lifelong Learning

*Modern Western society seems to focus mainly on the younger generations and their future. Fortunately, however, the fact that people can learn throughout their lives and can continue to develop when they're older is receiving increasing attention, as is shown in for example the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission. This article about the beneficial effects that dance has on the elderly is in line with the Lifelong Learning principle that all people (irrespective of age) have the right to be encouraged in his or her development.*

Dancing is part of human nature. In every culture, all over the world, people dance.

Kunstfactor has commissioned a survey to be carried out among 474 Dutch amateur dancers.<sup>1</sup> This revealed that the most important reasons for dancing are 'that it is enjoyable' (54% of respondents), 'exercise' (34%), 'social contacts' (20%), 'it is relaxing/liberating' (19%) and 'expression' (15%). Dance evokes in them feelings of joy, relaxation, lack of inhibition, conviviality and solidarity. These results are promising when looking at the effects that dance has on people's psychological and physical wellbeing. This article looks further into the ways in which the elderly can benefit from active participation in dance.

## Participation of the Elderly

The stereotype elderly person spending his or time playing cards and bingo is not consistent with the fact that a considerable number of over 50' dance on a regular basis. Despite the physical limitations that come

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<sup>1</sup> TNS Nipo commissioned by Kunstfactor, 'Motivatie om te dansen', March 2007.

withold age, it turns out that the elderly dance relatively often and can hold their own when it comes to the younger generations; 12% of the Dutch population over 6 years old regularly dance; of the 55 to 65-year olds 8% dance and of the over 65's this is 7%. This means that almost half a million elderly people dance<sup>2</sup>. Some of them have been dancing all their lives. There are, however, also people who decide to start dancing at a later age. What they have in common is that they dance because it adds another dimension to their lives.

Els van Buren (1943) has been dancing all her life. She was teaching at the dance teacher training college of the Rotterdam dance academy when in 1994 she was asked to take part in a workshop on dance didactics for older participants. 'Older participants were understood to mean people over thirty. During that workshop we came to the conclusion that for people over 30 no other didactics were necessary, but for participants over 65 there were.'

The workshop resulted in the setting up of a study group Creative Dance for the Elderly, and this inspired Van Buren to organize lessons in improvisation for the over 55s. 'The groups that were set up were highly heterogeneous, and consisted of both women and men,' says Van Buren. 'Some had danced before in their lives, but nobody had ever done any dance improvisation.'

At the time Van Buren had not asked what those lessons meant for the participants themselves. And she does not want to speculate upon that. Personally, however, she is convinced that people also learn with their bodies. What's more, dance improvisation requires cooperation and encourages non-verbal communication. You could regard that as a bonus, but in fact what it yields remains a matter for conjecture. Fortunately, Van Buren is able to help us further. Because even though she has been a retired dance teacher since 2006, she still dances. In recent years she has been a participant in a series of dance improvisation classes for the elderly. Upon our request she has asked her group what those dance classes mean to them.

### Body language

Some of the answers are straightforward. To the elderly dance means enjoyment and beauty. Some also regard it as a physical performance and indicate that dance improves their fitness and keeps their body more flexible. According to the participants, that also affects other aspects of their lives.

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<sup>2</sup> *Kunstfactor, Monitor Amateurkunst 2009, in cooperation with Bureau Veldkamp.*

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Thanks to the dance classes, exercise remains an integral part of life. It reduces the hesitance to walk or cycle and literally keeps the elderly mobile.

At least as interesting are the comments from participants that dance improvisation stimulates the imagination and leads to discovery. Those discoveries mainly concern a new language. Primarily the older participants who had never danced before learned that they can express for example emotions through their body. One of the participants even refers to this as ‘physical eloquence’ in this context. To clarify this, she told me that as she gets older she forgets words increasingly often. For her the body language is a welcome support in her declining verbal ability.

Through Van Buren we also asked the group of elderly dancers what dancing means for their personal development and to what extent that affects their everyday life. A number of answers were quite striking. It seems, for example, that many tasks during the dance improvisation classes require cooperation. The nature of the tasks results in the dancers influencing and responding to one another. That forces dancers to carefully observe one another and to take one another into account. The exercises entice the dancers to play various roles. Sometimes they are drawn in to the exercises of others, sometimes they lead themselves and encourage others to make new movements. For a number of dancers ‘leading’ forms a whole new experience. Others expanded upon that experience and said that the dance improvisation has taught them to work together (again). For many of the elderly dancers that is of course nothing new, as in many cases these people used to work, and cooperation obviously played a role in their former jobs. However, for many of the elderly their working days were a long time ago. Moreover, a certain number of them are single. The necessity to work together and to take one another into consideration has therefore disappeared somewhat. Dance improvisation brings that back to life.

### Being seen

That aspect incidentally has another important side. By taking others into consideration, the dancers also observe one another. It is important, particularly for the elderly who often already feel ‘set aside’, to have a sense of being seen. According to the participants this increases their self-esteem and gives them the feeling that they still count.

That feeling increases as the elderly work towards a performance. That is, actually, not the objective of the improvisation classes. Van Bu-

ren, however, has also led other dance groups with elderly participants, organized shows with them and performed in front of an audience.

Henk Smits (1954) is also a dance teacher who has performed with the elderly. Smits is a good example of an older man who does not shy away from continuing to learn. After an initial career as a teacher he retrained when he was 38 to become a Dance Expression teacher. Initially he taught youngsters and ‘ordinary’ adults. ‘In one of my first groups there was an elderly woman who fascinated me because of her expressive way of moving,’ he said. ‘It wasn’t her big movements, but rather her small movements that touched me.’ That experience inspired Smits to do a course at the Rotterdam dance academy aimed at teaching the elderly. He then started dance expression groups for the elderly in the province of North Holland. This resulted in setting up performances with the elderly. The effect of being ‘seen’ plays a stronger role in this – the elderly are, after all, on a stage in front of an audience. What’s more, working towards a performance has another positive effect: those who play a role cannot be missed during rehearsals and performances. That sense of indispensability and the sense of contributing to a performance increase one’s self-esteem and the vitality of the elderly.

Another special form of being ‘seen’ is physical contact. ‘Particularly single people often no longer have any form of physical contact. A hand on a shoulder or standing hand in hand can affect them deeply, and may even be a confrontational experience. But it also makes them aware of their body.’

### The strength of limitations

Smits together with various dance groups for the elderly has taken part in some beautiful processes. ‘Initially the elderly are almost always shy to move. That inhibition, however, soon disappears when you challenge them to make those movements and to expand on their range of movements.’

Smits deliberately used the floor for his groups of elderly. It is of course more difficult for them to sit and lie down. Reverse movements are often even more difficult for those stiff bodies. However, Smits does not want to be limited by that. ‘I emphasize that it does not have to be supple, but that you can even dance using awkward and clumsy movements.’

The floor exercises also have another aim. ‘Many elderly people are afraid to fall,’ Smits points out. ‘By deliberately using the floor, I hope that fear will decrease. Should one of them fall, their improved relaxation would help to decrease the chances of breaking something.’

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In that way the Smits dance classes also have a therapeutic effect.

Even though Smits does not consciously look for that effect, it can come about spontaneously. ‘We recently did an improvisation whereby coats played a role,’ he recounts. ‘The dancers brought their coats, which they put on and took off again. At a certain age, however, it is not always easy to do up the buttons. For some people that was a real struggle which led to desperate and cramped, trembling hands.’ Smits says that he uses those moments to emphasize again that the movements do not need to be supple or elegant. ‘I challenge them to use that trembling in their dance, by introducing rhythm into it.’

Smits hopes that in this way his dancing senior citizens will learn to accept that not everything is quite so supple anymore. Learning to be patient with one’s limitations, accepting them and learning to deal with them are therefore important by-products of the dance classes for the elderly.

## Dance as treatment of symptoms

Sometimes, unfortunately, the elderly develop all sorts of ailments as they get older that can be a fair bit more distressing than the inability of doing up the buttons of a coat. One of the most distressing ailments related to old age is Parkinson’s disease. This usually emerges around middle age (between the ages of 50 and 60). In the Netherlands approximately twenty in thousand people aged 70 or older gets the disease.

With Parkinson’s disease neurons die off, causing patients to no longer be able to control their muscles. This makes movement more difficult. Sometimes patients are affected by uncontrollable tremors, the so-called resting tremors.

Parkinson is an incurable disease. Regular exercise can limit the effects of it somewhat.

At the University of Leuven researchers have discovered that Parkinson patients find it easier to move when movement is supported by sounds and vibrations in a certain rhythm. That effect has also been described in the book *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain* by the renowned neurologist Oliver Sacks.

Those findings were the reason for the enthusiastic salsa-amateur Daniel Waterman to regularly dance with his mother who has Parkinson’s disease. ‘The effect was amazing,’ he says. ‘While dancing she seemed to be much better able to move.’

Waterman told his salsa teacher Morry Krispijn about that experience. That in turn inspired Krispijn to work together with an association for Parkinson patients. Furthermore, he inspires dance schools to organize classes for Par-

kinson's patients.

The patients themselves, as well as their partners, are very enthusiastic about the dance classes.

'My husband Harry's Parkinson's disease is confrontational and exhausting,' says the 72-year-old Loes Gieskens. 'These dance classes are something positive in any case, as this is also a social activity. What's more, we can practice the dancing together at home.'

Hans Bogers is sixty years old and has had Parkinson's for years now. He endorses the positive effect of the salsa dance classes. 'We know it is good for us. But because it's so nice being together, it does not feel like therapy. And yet in this playful manner we continue to keep that threatening wheelchair at bay.'

Many of the Parkinson's patients in Krispijn's dance groups had never danced before. Even though the salsa classes are almost obligatory for them – they have to keep moving in order to limit the effects of the disease – those classes mean more to them. Through those salsa classes they administer themselves in a social manner a form of self-medication. What's more, the dance classes contribute greatly to the quality of life of the Parkinson's patients as well as their partners.

## The effects in relation to LOAC

This article has looked at various effects of dance, which has revealed that dancing can be significant for the elderly both physically and in the social-emotional area. In the LOAC project learning is approached in a broad manner as a coherent whole of three dimensions: knowledge & skills, competencies and personal development. Elements from the three dimensions can be found in the experiences of and described by dance teachers and their elderly dancers.

*Personal development* will for many of the dancing elderly be a primary objective. They do not (or no longer) have the wish to become a professional dancer and do it purely for their own enjoyment and development. Dancing helps them to express what's on their minds.

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*Knowledge & skills:* during the dance classes the initial focus is on the knowledge and skills necessary for dancing. In doing so any limitations of the ageing body are consciously converted into ‘challenges’ and are ascribed specific aesthetics.

*Competencies:* elderly people who dance develop all sorts of competencies that can be applied in a much wider context than just dance classes. When dancing, the elderly continue to learn and gain new learning experiences in interaction and while taking others into consideration. This can result in an open, curious, social attitude which also manifests itself outside of the dance floor.

Furthermore, within the LOAC project it is suggested that a balanced person finds a balance between the various *spheres of life*:

1. as a modern man in the personal sphere (in their inner personal relation to themselves)
2. as fellow human being in the private and civil sphere of close relationships (in the leisure time)
3. as responsible citizenship in the civil and public sphere in civil society and the public affairs (especially in leisure time, but also in work), and
4. as an employee in the work time (and as a student in a vocational qualifying education).

You often see with the elderly after they retire and their caring role within the family diminishes, that they carry out fewer of such tasks. This can be regarded by them as a loss and can create a sense of playing a lesser role in society.

Participation in art, however, in this case dance, touches upon various *life spheres*. One effect on the *personal sphere* is for example that through dance elderly people come to terms with their ageing body and literally experience they are still there to be seen. Dance provides a language and a context for them to express themselves and feel good.

As they dance in groups, the sense of being a *fellow human being* is also evoked. Among the participants a sense of unity and enjoyment develops, which can also result in closer social contacts. What's more, the human need for contact as observed by Smits is fulfilled while dancing, and that reinforces the physical sense of belonging.

At the same time in the dance courses there are elements that are related to the third and fourth *life spheres*. The elderly dancer for example is responsible for his or her own development and is thereby obliged to make a certain effort and commitment to the group and artistic leader. It is also possible that assistance is needed for the rehearsals and the performances. Participants can thereby draw from their professional skills and dancing thereby approaches the life sphere of active citizenship or employee.

In short, dancing at a later age can be beneficial in all sorts of areas. It can contribute to a balance between various life spheres. In doing so, dance helps to strengthen the physical and mental being, without there being a specific therapeutic intention.

# Being an Amateur Musician

■ By Lise Bache and Bente von Schindel

Thanks to Susan Fazakerley

*What does it mean to you to be an amateur musician? It may well be a manageable task to tell. I have over 40 years of experience! Since I was asked to write about it, I threw myself straight on to draw a mind map of everything that occurred to me. It became several pieces of paper, and then it occurred to me: I might as well have been asked to write about what it means to be a human being or what it means for my life to be raised in a suburb of Copenhagen. It's my life, my identity, it's me. So it was not after all that easy to put in writing. There are of course all the fun and amazing experiences. It's of course of great importance to my experience that music throughout my life has been enriching, stimulating, addictive and certainly entertaining for me as a person. In this article I however want to get more into the depth. It is an opportunity to reflect on what it actually means in my daily life that I throughout my life have spent so much time and attention on music.*

I have often debated the value of music in society. In my youth, I had to frequently defend and explain why it was relevant to study music at the university. As president of the local music school board it is also a popular theme to deal with. It has been debated at a general level, where I have argued for the merits of the music. I have made myself wise to the fact on how important it can be for the development of a child, development of your identity and social competences and for supporting learning and to promote coherence in a society. My own experiences and adventures and of course education has probably been the basis from which I have spoken, but it has after all been a matter outside of myself. I have not previously systematically put into words what music has meant to me and my life. The short version is that for me music is just there all the time in my life. Music is with me everywhere. I cannot imagine my life without an active engagement in music. It is not just an isolated part of me that I can deal with from time to time. It is an integral element of my personality. My musical experiences are somehow present in all what I do. It may be the inspiration for the way I ap-

proach a task, the way I analyze a situation or the timing, I use in a discussion, not to mention something so banal as to be well prepared and “ready to play” in a meeting.

### Because I love it

Music. I love it and talk about it. I listen to it and I let it affect my emotions. I let myself get carried away by it and I relax with it. - Most importantly, I play it alone or with few or many. I use it to challenge myself to learn something new, beyond my limit for what I thought I could do to develop and refine my technique, accent, articulation, rhythm, sound, etc., so I can create exactly the expression and the sound I think is beautiful or great, just to give the individual notes that time, the stress, heat, length, etc. are needed in order for it to be interesting to hear. I enjoy it when I succeed. I thrive on having the appropriate challenge to the fact that I can continue to learn and grow. I love to discover that I can deal with nervousness and implement a concert that demands something special from me. It's great to give other people a good experience at a concert, but I also pretty much enjoy an orchestra rehearsal or to play the music all by myself. I like very much the recognition that follows a great concert and I praise above all that I as an amateur know that the best thing I can do is good enough. I will not meet the pressure of being on top all the time, as a professional. I can at my own pace, build step by step in a lifelong learning development. I don't have to learn anything but what I like. The rest I can handle or forget. I can even take a break from playing if the inspiration for a period is missing. The expectations that can be made to me from the outside are that I roughly match the group I play with, that I do my best to meet the standard of the orchestra. But it is voluntary on my part. If it is too hard, I can just leave. I'm not dependent on an income and a reputation. That's how it is to be an amateur. I do it because I love it. And what I love the most is to create music with others. To find equal musicians, where each of us produces and where the music merge into a whole, because we understand each other without talking and almost without looking at each other, just by listening and playing. It's a great feeling when one's own contribution, one's own performance succeeds and matches the others and music occurs - a product worthy to listen to. It is an exciting project, especially in chamber music or other smaller groups such as rhythmic bands where there is no conductor and where the collective leadership must work. The music is

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not a contest where you must be number one or be the strongest. Here it is rather a matter of finding your place amongst others, and it changes all the time. It is important to be sensitive and be aware that it is the music and not you that comes first. One moment you must find yourself in the background and create the platform that others can unfold on. The next moment you must come forward and deliver. But not detached. It is crucial to listen to what others have provided and try to match it or develop it. You must the one moment be supervisor and the other moment be subordinate and, above all, cooperative and responsive. It has qualities that appear to be beneficial in any cooperation beyond the music world.

### I have been on another planet

Using the word “love the music” it is not a coincidence because we really talk about great emotions. It is not just a question of making the music work though it’s also a question about that. Music is very much a craft, but when we succeed, it has an ability to go straight to our emotions. It is for example the experience of being in a large choir singing the b- minor Mass by Bach, and feel the chills and feel you hair on your arms rising, because you are standing in a middle of a sea of euphony. It’s the feeling of being sucked into the atmosphere of Romeo and Juliet by Prokofiev, Kol Nidrei by Bruch or the violin concerto by Mendelssohn, even playing a minor role yourself. It is the satisfaction of playing some passages with other instrumental groups and feel how the sound mixes perfectly into each other. It’s the kind of experiences that is not only satisfactory because we had proven that we can play it. It is a sentiment that remains in your body for a long time, and certainly may help to trigger some useful endorphins and increase your immune system! After an orchestral rehearsal, I have the feeling that we not only know the important passages. I’m almost a different person because I have practiced music for 3 hours. I have had 3 hours of sound therapy. I’ve been busy and focused. I have been carried away, perhaps for some time a little stressed because of a difficult passage and I have been a little bored sometimes because I had to count bars. I’ve been on another planet. It does something to me. I can be tired when I go there and then come home fresh although it is late in the evening.

### Music as a language

I claim that music is there all the time in my life. It is both good and

“evil”. One of “evil” things by playing so much music is that it is constantly buzzing in my head. Often it is nice music, but just as often it may be completely indifferent music - a melody that enervating continues to buzz in your head like a fly that has strayed into the room and try to find out again. It happens when I hear an interval for example the tones of a do-orbell: Ding-dong - a minor third down - and then I may have a certain melody in my head for hours. All music, tones, intervals, rhythms, approaches me and makes associations in my head. Sounds which some other persons typically do not notice reach my brain - just completely automatically. Now we are talking about the brain, I also have several examples of how music works as an agreed language. Most people have seen how music can influence the emotions. We know when the music is sad, lively, humorous, etc. and we are rubbed by the mood of the music. Humorous sequences in the music trigger amusement. It is not an intellectually process. I think it is a product of not only have listened to music, but even played it. You develop your language - in this case musical language - and the sense of the finer nuances when you practice it yourself. The richness of language I have when it comes to music, I know for sure that I do not master when it comes to literature or art. Although I can read and watch, I have not developed the same sensory and analytical tools for these media. I’m not sure that I can tell when music is funny, but when I hear it, I have no doubt. It might be an emphasis or a rhythm, a chord or an interval that has changed a little compared to a similar point earlier in the music. It may be something I consider to be caricatured or exaggerated. Typically, it is something that surprises me, but in order to be surprised, I have to have some preconceptions of what would be non-surprising.

### **Music is something you create with others**

Something that has always been important to me is making music with other people - in fact that can happen all over the world and across generations. I have no doubt that it has meant a lot to me that I as a kid was surrounded by adults who signaled that music was something important and valuable. It was not just a game.. It was something that was worth spending your time on, something both children and adults found interesting and useful to invest in. We might have different experiences and have reached different levels but we could play, sing, listen or talk about music and take each other seriously and make demands on ourselves and each other. Appropriate demands and expectations helps to create a belief that one is worth something and that something

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others believe you can handle. In this way, both my family, my amazing choir-master in the church choir, my orchestra conductors, and my instrumental teachers meant a lot to the formation of my understanding of myself as “one who plays.” To this day my parents still join all mine and for that matter, my daughter’s concerts as well and they are still playing a role for me and the value of music.

### Music is the real clue

At home I have experienced a great extra dimension in relationship with my 17-year-old daughter - we have the music in common. Despite the different levels and ages, music has always been something we had in common. Here we were not primarily mom and daughter, but interested couples. And this has meant many experiences: Both in the living room when we listen to music together and are commenting on what we hear, when she as a beginner needed help to practice or when we later on played duets. We both have over the years participated in each other’s travels with different orchestras and we have got lots of both delightful and instructive experiences in Denmark and all over the world. And we have had visits by orchestras from other countries or parts of Denmark and quartered its members. I have witnessed as a young example of the old Eastern bloc and seen how musical life flourished in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, while it was much more gray and tight in East Germany. In recent years we have learned of the Crusaders in Malta and about conditions in the Baltic States shortly after their independence. Through these experiences we’ve come close to the people who live and worship music in those countries and we have been introduced to their culture, their living conditions and their history through playing and singing with them. I can tell that the history I have learned through this contact is much better established than the one, I was introduced to in school. It is also through the music I’ve had some of the greatest experiences, like when my husband and I, with an audience of up to 1000 persons attended a concert with our daughter and her youth orchestra at the Opera House in Sydney. It was one of the great moments in both her and my musical life. In this way, music is the real clue in our lives and become networks that are constantly bringing something new.

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## The effects in relation to LOAC

### Personal formation

In the article one can read about Lise - an amateur musician - and what inspired her to play and what effect the music has on her. Clearly, for her, the most important in playing music is the type of learning that promotes personal formation. It is the joy of life, vitality and happiness. And her story shows, that playing music has developed her into a versatile person. She tells: "My musical experiences are somehow present in all what I do. It may be an inspiration for the way I approach a task, the way I analyze a situation or the timing, I use in a discussion, not to mention something so banal as being well prepared and "ready to play" in a meeting. It is also clear that music has developed her reflexivity and autonomy as she uses the learning from it to challenge herself and to learn something new, beyond her limit for what she thought she could do. It has also developed her aesthetic sense "... and I let it affect my emotions", she said. Also aesthetic sense is clearly developed through music: ". It is the satisfaction of playing some passages with other instrumental groups and feel how the sound mixes perfectly into each other. It's the kind of experiences that is not only satisfactory because we had proven that we can play it. It is a sentiment that remains in your body for a long time".

### Knowledge and skills

An amateur musician is also able - through music - to improve knowledge and skills. Lise describes it this way: "I use it to develop and refine my technique, accent, articulation, rhythm, sound, etc., so I can create exactly the expression and the sound I think is beautiful or great, just to give the individual notes that time, the stress, heat, length, etc. that are needed in order for it to be interesting to hear". She has also gained knowledge of other countries: "I have witnessed as a young example of the old Eastern bloc and seen how musical life flourished in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, while it was much more gray and tight

in East Germany. In recent years we have learned of the Crusaders in Malta and about conditions in the Baltic States shortly after their independence. Through these experiences we've come close to the people who live and worship music in those countries and we have been introduced to their culture, their living conditions and their history through playing and singing with them".

### Competences

In Lise's story one also finds many examples of the different competences one gain by playing music, for example social competences. Lise tells: "And what I love the most is to create music with others. To find equal musicians, where each of us produces and where the music merges into a whole, because we understand each other without talking and almost without looking at each other, just by listening and playing".

Also communicative competences matters: "The music is not a contest where you must be number one or be the strongest. Here it is rather a matter of finding your place amongst others, and it changes all the time. It is important to be sensitive and be aware that it is the music and not you that comes first. One moment you must find yourself in the background and create the platform that others can unfold on. The next moment you must come forward and deliver. But not detached. It is crucial to listen to what others have provided and try to match it or develop it. You must the one moment be supervisor and the other moment be subordinate and, above all, cooperative and responsive. It has qualities that appear to be beneficial in any cooperation beyond the music world".

Intercultural competences can be important between people from different countries, but also among people from different generations. Lise tells, that she and her 17 years old daughter "have the music in common. Despite the different levels and ages, music has always been something we had in common. Here we were not primarily mom and daughter, but interested couples".



# Summer School of the Visual in Nova Gorica

■ By Maja Jerman Bratec

*The Summer School of the Visual was first carried out in 1997 under the organizational leadership of the Union of Cultural Societies Nova Gorica, an organization that deals with the field of social culture in the civil sphere even today. From 2000 on the organizational and executive headquarters of the Summer School of the Visual organization is with the regional branch office of the Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities<sup>1</sup> Nova Gorica. It is taking place in the joint organization with the Audiovisual laboratory of the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts<sup>2</sup>. The mastermind, head and mentor of the summer educational project Summer School of the Visual in Nova Gorica is Naško Križnar, PhD<sup>3</sup>.*

Placing the Summer School of the Visual to Nova Gorica, which is together with the neighbouring Gorica (Italy) a place that joins spirits of two different and formerly uniquely stigmatized cultures is undoubtedly a contribution to

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<sup>1</sup> Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities is an important culture network in the country with rich experiences in organizational, educational, publishing and financial field as well as in the international space.

<sup>2</sup> The Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA) was founded in 1938 and it is the supreme national scientific artistic institution. It joins scientists and artists who were elected members for their special achievements in the field of science and art.

<sup>3</sup> Ethnologist and archaeologist, researcher, author of numerous texts from the field of visual anthropology, author of prize-winning short film *Piščal (The Whistle)* about the famous archaeological find at the Divje Babe archaeological site, member of the international IUAES (International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences) Commission on Visual Anthropology, co-operator of the Ethnological research of culture in Slovenia and the Slovene ethnic territory research programme and head of the ISE audiovisual laboratory section. As a visiting assistant professor he gave lectures on Visual anthropology at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, and is currently giving lectures at the Faculty of Humanities in Koper as well as on Visual anthropology in the framework of Interfaculty postgraduate master study at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

the contemporary approach of coexistence of cultures and cultural entities in the European space.

Moreover, the relatively new university centre enables exchange and acquiring additional knowledge and represents a new source for the users of the school in the international space. Nova Gorica is the ideal place for knowledge flow from the Western European space into Eastern and South-eastern European space.

Last but not least, the orientation of the Summer School of the Visual is a guarantee for future efforts of the participants in the field of cultural heritage preservation. Together with the internationalization of the school we have been striving to achieve within the Central European space by including participants from Serbia, Croatia, Austria, Italy, Balkan countries and the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary for many years it also means learning about different cultures, diversity, cultural dialogue, multiculturalism. Student gathering within the Summer School of the Visual prompts multidirectional activities that enable recognizing love for one's own culture, love for fellow man by means of interest and learning about his culture and expresses desire for coexistence.

## Tolerance and understanding

Organization of educational seminars on visual ethnography<sup>4</sup> and visual documentation of social and cultural processes in two neighbouring regions with different entities of participants encourages tolerance and understanding among neighbouring societies and cultures. It enhances understanding, tolerance and cooperation in neighbouring regions and countries of former Yugoslavia. It diminishes cultural differences among regions and cultures. It promotes documentary video recording in the context of intra- and intercultural communication.

On its 10th anniversary Naško Križnar presented the Summer School of the Visual in a short essay, saying: "Learning at the Summer School of the Visual arises from the methodology of visual anthropology and ethnographic film but it is focused on the skills different sorts of visual products in the field of the

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<sup>4</sup> *Visual ethnography is a form of visual production in humanities and social sciences - ethnology, anthropology, sociology - where researchers use visual technology for recording the culture of everyday life.*

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so-called non-artistic film and video have in common. For this reason the summer school is attended by the students of social sciences and humanities along with all who would like to use their own visual products at their pedagogical, cultural artistic or research work.

At the Summer School of the Visual working with a video camera is presented as a special perspective of culture research. The contact of the visual medium with the research activity makes room for completely new aspects of culture and social environment. Let me just remind you of the field of non-verbal communication that can be recorded only by means of film or video camera. Recording gives cultural components new meanings we otherwise would not even be aware of.

### There is always a surplus

The participants are trained for the production and analysis of rough visual material, which are introduced to them as two complementary processes. They are also trained for video editing as a way of structuring and forming the material into suitable forms of presentation. In the research filming there are a lot of such forms. At the summer school we get acquainted with a form of a short visual ethnography. The summer school stimulates the kind of a documentary film Toni de Bromhead, lecturer at a London film school, denotes in the following way: *“It uses the same narrative techniques as documentaries but in its purest form it sacrifices the dramatic suspense and emotional identification for ethnographic information and descriptions.”*

It may be true that the main goal of the summer school is training in recording and editing skills but there is always a surplus of this goal. This may be what Luc de Heusch expressed as: *“Film is a document from the reality point of view but at the same time it is art as well.”*

Jean Rouch’s answer to the question about who he was filming for was he was filming for himself and that he was filming because film was the only way he could show others how he saw them.

For the majority of the participants the Summer School of the Visual is their first encounter with visual technology, the contents of visual research and the production of the visual. For most this is an important turning point in thinking about the possible approaches to research in humanities. The greatest contribution of the Summer School of the Visual is perhaps the formation of the mental turning point and the plan for possible alternatives according to the disposition of an individual and his needs.

To reach the predetermined goals the Summer School of the Visual experiences changes and improvements each year. The first year there were only lectures on theory and practice of visual culture. Next year the Summer School of the Visual was orientated to practice. The beginning of cooperation with Allison Jablonko, who has shown her loyalty to the Summer School of the Visual by participating seven times, represents the first major change. She introduced the workshop entitled Visual notes which in my opinion is the most appropriate for the notions of researchers who would like to use video camera in their field work. Her workshop encourages and strengthens conscious decisions about what to film and how. It also teaches us how to analyse and systematize visual material. Without this knowledge visual research does not exist.

### The process

The Summer School of the Visual used to start with the workshop of A. Jablonko and continue with a joint production of a short documentary film. It soon turned out that participants need a lesson on handling a video camera before the A. Jablonko's workshop because at the workshop they had to start filming immediately. This brought about Tone Rački's workshop on work with a small video camera. We have been looking forward to his workshops for seven consecutive years.

However, this did not solve all the dilemmas. The difference between the distinctively research oriented workshop of A. Jablonko and the following workshop on video production was too great. The first one emphasized the meaning of rough material and the possibility of its systematization while the second one taught us how to plan filming for editing and how to create media products, which was often mutually exclusive. Thus the workshop on documentary video production was turned into the workshop on research video production.

An important emphasis in the fields of visual research methodology and visual ethnography was given to the Summer School of the Visual by two visiting lecturers Beate Engelbrecht (2000) and Peter Crawford (2001).

A big step in the development of the Summer School of the Visual in the field of visual ethnography production was made by Metje Postma (2002, 2003) when she brought a learning model of a research film from Leiden University (NE) to Nova Gorica. After her a similar learning method was introduced by Barbara Lüem (2004). A special enrichment was brought in 2004 by the participation of Asen Balicki, the doyen of ethnographic film.

Up to the eighth Summer School of the Visual the production of visual et-

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hnography was taught by individual visiting lecturers while in the years 2001 and 2005 it was conducted by Naško Križnar. From 20001 editing is taught by Miha Peče.

Contemporary structure of the Summer School of the Visual is close to the ideal model according to its goals, according to the duration of the Summer School of the Visual and according to the number of lecturers and participants. The first part is theoretical, the second cinematographic and the third, the most critical for the success of this school, production. The latter includes:

- formation of images with a small video camera
- preparation of the filming plan (research)
- filming
- analysis and listing of material
- preparation of the editing plan
- editing
- presentation of product

However, the main “doctrine” or philosophy we have been sticking to from the beginning of the Summer School of the Visual is that visual literacy helps with more qualitative visual products in all visual forms.

### **Hobby and vocational guidance**

The Summer School of the Visual has been developing from the technological perspective as well. We started out with a simple analogue technique in VHS, Hi8 and Beta formats and with analogue electronic editing. Today we work in a digital environment from filming to the final product.

At the beginning the participants were creating their final product under the guidance of the mentor while today they are divided into pairs, moving from workshop to workshop, from camera exercises to planning and production of visual ethnography. All the time they bear their theme in mind and with the mentor’s help they learn to form its visual presentation.”

The Summer School of the Visual in Nova Gorica has been attended by 171 participants. In fourteen years 1176 hours of lectures and practices have been executed. The archive of the school comprises 57 units of videographic material. Numerous short films produced at the Summer school of the visual were shown at domestic and foreign festivals of documentary and ethnogra-

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phic film. They didn't miss out on awards. All the films of annual production are first publicly presented at the end of the Summer School of the Visual. Film projection is also a condition for receiving the certificate upon finishing school.

The main sponsors and supporters of the school are the Municipality of Nova Gorica, the Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities, the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Occasionally organizers get additional sponsors and we have introduced tuition fee as well.

The idea of the Summer School of the Visual is based on the assumption that the skill of non-artistic video record can be the basis for the versatile usage of visual information in the field of research, educational and cultural activity.

One of the main purposes of the school is to transfer itself into the educational practice of visual research, mainly taking place in the field of humanities, especially in the field of ethnology, cultural anthropology, sociology. The participants are trained for the production and analysis of visual material and also by video editing as a way of structuring and forming material into suitable forms of presentation.

The educational programme enables a wide range of the interested and from the professional and social aspect heterogeneously oriented participants to realize their denied wish for fulfilment and approval, for fulfilment of the need for free time activities, after all the participants acquire knowledge that exceeds fulfilment of the need for a hobby and many are led to other and different vocational guidance.

The school combines the following educational elements: lectures, discussions, film viewing, learning how to record, material analysis, video film editing. Each of these chapters requires special theoretical preparation of the participants and practical training. When discussing and creating a theme, the participants work in pairs, thus the final product – a visual note – is a group but still author's work. The basic doctrine of the school has all these years been to teach the participants the basics of visual literacy, which contributes to higher quality of visual products in all visual forms.

As regards linguistic affiliation at the seminars of the Summer School of the Visual the lectures are mainly given in English, which is an additional aspect of the so-called lifelong learning and acquiring different usable knowledge that determines different successful or less successful business careers.

Education at the school is at university level and the participants come from different cultural, social and professional environments. For the major-

riety of the participants the summer school is their first encounter with visual technology, the contents of visual research and the production of the visual. We cannot exclude creative components from the understanding of the context of the Summer School of the Visual, however, it does include a wide range of technical skills. After all, the ultimate and for the participants extremely important goal is their own short film with all the regularities of presenting the chosen theme in the form of a film.

Nova Gorica prides itself on exclusive specimen of visual ethnology notes of the town life, territory of the town, people and their stories through which the participants have been led by remarkable domestic and foreign mentors for more than a decade. 64 units of videographic material, stored at the regional branch office of the Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities in Nova Gorica and at the Audiovisual laboratory of the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, is a rich treasury of visual documents of an era, events, comprehension of things and frame of mind. Through the prism of infinity the collection of short films produced at the Summer School of the Visual in Nova Gorica will undoubtedly achieve the status of a museum object.

***Selected reflections of the lecturers and the participants say more about the Summer School of the Visual than any kind of theorization and enumerating information.***

**Metje Postma**, mentor (*Learning basis of the visual in Nova Gorica, Bulletin of the Slovene Ethnological Society, 43/1, 2, 2003*)

At the Summer School of the Visual we put more focus on field research and on studying everyday life than on studying research objects or visual media. The important characteristic of visual ethnology is that it takes “visual surface” (the term introduced by Allison Jablonko) as its starting point and the research object. This term could be understood as a part of reality of the way of life that can be observed and as organization of space and time of a community or a cultural group and what it produces.

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In Allison Jablonko's opinion, paying attention to our inner commentary during filming and putting down our commentaries together with our observations after filming, these thoughts can help us understand our own motivations and questions when directing our camera. This process resembles the process Tone Rački probably had in mind when he said that we had to "learn to observe ourselves in the process of creating meaning and building our view during filming".

Tone, a professional artist, conducted exercises with camera. His first task was to *teach the participants how to create logical "visual and time frames" in a film/video*. We might say that his intellectual frame is mostly artistic or symbolic. He encouraged the participants to think about the way observing world around us reflects meanings and emotions in the mind and body of the cameraman. He showed interest especially for the philosophy of life and art. The ultimate purpose of a cameraman in this aspect is to communicate visual metaphors these images are creating to the audience. His exercises were mostly executed in practice, so the awareness about what this meant had to come from practice.

With this knowledge we sent the participants to the streets of Nova Gorica with their first task. We told them to produce visual notes about any situation or event that could, in their opinion, be interesting. They returned with different films: a waiter serving ice-cream to a guest; people taking their dogs for a walk; old men talking on a bench; a man talking to his friend while his child is in the pushchair; a man making pizzas; florists; people at the marketplace or while buying fish at a stall; a parking ticket seller; a ticket agent at the railway station.

**Allison Jablonko**, *mentor (Time and visual notes, Bulletin of the Slovene Ethnological Society, 43/1, 2, 2003)*

At the summer school the richness of the theoretical material is emphasized by the active attendance of the participants. During lessons they do not take a lot of notes but ideas are quickly realized. When? A small part of learning time intended for filming is by no means sufficient, especially when the participants are expected to make personal contact with people. After a few days the participants realize that they have to shoot early in the morning, between meals or late

at night, depending on the schedules of the people they are filming. This year one of the projects was taking place at the railway station with the first train departing before six o'clock in the morning. The second project was filmed at a bar which came to life after midnight. Everything went smoothly so far. But filming is only the second stage (the first one being breaking through the theory and history). The connection between these two stages does not manifest itself until the third stage - during watching films and the discussion. When is this supposed to happen? In the previous years, when there were not as many teachers, there was no time for watching current projects of all the participants. This year each team of five participants had to review their material, make a filming list and select films for the final presentation on their own. According to the high proportion between the teachers and the participants and the fact that there were enough television and/or LCD screens on video cameras the teams were able to work at the same time and the mentor could answer the participants' questions.

**Albina Bobnar**, *participant (Listen to the elders and more experienced, Bulletin of the Slovene Ethnological Society, 43/1, 2, 2003)*

I've entered the world of the visual through science and connected the society I live in with art. We worked in groups, in pairs. Sveto and I are completely different which proved to be very good when making of our film. After the first theoretical instructions of our teacher Tone Rački we both "chased" after films quite clumsily. Sometimes we didn't achieve the purpose of the exercise, another time the light wasn't right or the object wasn't right or we panicked about how incompetent we were. After the theoretical lectures of the Slovenian lecturers (Naško Križnar, Ph.D., Tone Rački, academic painter, and Miha Peče, art historian) and three days we dared to take a walk around town with the camera. Nova Gorica became the ideal visual laboratory, script, material for presentation of everyday life activities. As a woman I had the advantage of filming first. As soon as I stayed alone with the camera, I panicked because I couldn't film. My technical knowledge and handling someone else's camera respectively was terrible.

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**Nadja Valentinčič Furlan**, *mentor (Rose is a beautiful flower, Bulletin of the Slovene Ethnological Society, 43/1, 2, 2003)*

In terms of contents we defined the project in three points:

- the creation of the symbol of Nova Gorica and its meaning
- present functioning of the symbol (its occurrence and the level of the identification of the inhabitants of Nova Gorica with it)
- the presence of the real rose in the town

The principle ways of acquiring audiovisual information were filming the interviews and directed observation with a camera. We wanted to film a survey with passers-by as well but unsuccessfully – everyone was scared away by the cameras. But this deficit was compensated for in the interviews: three informants were already speaking about their experiences with the symbol and in the remaining five interviews we took advantage of the fact that all the narrators were inhabitants of Nova Gorica and we asked each of them for their personal opinion. The video film discloses the directness of their answers in this part.

**Urška Flerin**, *participant (How to show that a motor is running with a soundless camera, Bulletin of the Slovene Ethnological Society, 43/1, 2, 2003)*

Urša: The beginning of the Summer School of the Visual was curiously amusing for me. The ride to Nova Gorica with my colleagues went by fast. We were all full of expectations about what we were going to do and what kind of films we were going to make and we were also influenced by our classmates', who had already participated in the summer school, reports because their assessments were more than positive. On the way to Nova Gorica, just as he turned the key to start the motor, the colleague behind the wheel asked me: "Urša, is the motor running?" During the conversation we found just how many different senses we have for receiving information around us and how we could understand a message more wholly and with less disturbances if we used all our senses which is also true for working with camera. Nadja, why have you decided to come to the summer school? Nadja: I've always been attracted to film. I've always been interested in the images on the film tape, the stories, the depictions of an activity

... even before I started studying anthropology. I've always wanted to learn how to film and the summer school seemed like an excellent opportunity to make this true. However, I have to admit that I wasn't aware of the amazing things one could do with a camera. I didn't know anything about working with a camera but now I think I approximately understand how to start filming, how to approach people with a camera, how to film the material, analyse it and at the end edit it. I hope I can really do something like this at my work and that I will pursue this as much as I can. And you?

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*Ten years of the Summer School of the Visual in Nova Gorica (2006), Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities Regional branch office Nova Gorica*

## Lecturers at the Summer School of the Visual

From the establishment on a number of domestic and foreign lecturers have given lectures at this school (Asen Balikci, Rajko Bizjak, Peter Crawford, Roberto Dapit, Aleš Doktorič, Jože Dolmark, Beate Engelbrecht, Aurora Fonda, Silvan Furlan, Janez Hönn, Allison Jablonko, Hilde Kristin Kjös, Naško Križnar, Primož Lampič, Barbara Lüem, Amir Muratović, Miha Peče, Stojan Pelko, Metje Postma, Nataša Prosenec, Tone Rački, Mojca Ravnik, Borko Radešček, Janez Strehovec, Nadja Valentinčič, Zdenko Vrdlovec, Melita Zajc, Andrej Zdravič).



# Conductor's Competency Development in the Netherlands

■ By Jan van den Eijnden. Thanks to Alex Schillings.

*The Netherlands enjoys a great tradition and reputation in the area of amateur wind orchestras and percussion ensembles. This considerable reputation also extends beyond the Dutch borders. Practically every town and city has one or more such orchestras. It is estimated that there are some 2200 wind orchestras (Harmony, Fanfare, Brass band) in the Netherlands, as well as 1750 percussion ensembles. These orchestras play an important role in the community, for example during special festivities and memorable events. For many of the members, involvement in the orchestras is of lifelong importance. Of course, not all members of the orchestras stay involved for their entire lives, but there are many people who after starting their music training at an early age (for example at eight years old) do often continue to be involved until 70 or even 80 years of age. So in addition to the social role these orchestras play, they are clearly also of great personal importance to many people.*

## Diversity in form

There is a great deal of diversity in the manning and quality of the orchestras. For that reason there are five divisions in which the orchestras can play. Each division has a different level of difficulty of the music that is played. But there are also different types of orchestras and bands. In the case of wind instrument orchestras there is a distinction between harmony, fanfare and brass band. In addition, there is the extensive percussion, marching and show world in which again we see diverse types of orchestras.

## Music organizations of and for amateur musicians

In the Netherlands there are three umbrella organizations to which the majority of the orchestras are affiliated. These organizations try to promote the interests of the orchestras in the broadest sense, but the most important activity

was and still is the organization of the concourses. These are music competitions where the orchestras can perform in front of the public and are assessed by an expert jury. Prizes, sometimes in the form of cash, can be won, but the main motivation to participate is the pride of giving a good (and positively appraised) musical performance. Top orchestras of exceptional quality can then participate in a national competition or in the World Music Concours (WMC) in Kerkrade, which is normally held every four years. The three national umbrella organizations were created within the typical compartmentalized structures that so strongly characterized the Netherlands a few decades ago. This is why there is a 'Christian' organization, a 'Catholic' organization and a 'Royal' organization. Of course many aspects of Dutch society have changed and the three umbrella organizations had even tried to merge in 2009/2010. This turned out to be a bridge too far, but all three are now currently considering other forms of collaboration and realizing a foundation for the activities that is more in line with the highly secularized Netherlands of 2010.

### The amateur music associations as society in miniature

An (amateur) music association can be regarded as a reflection of the society but in miniature form. A few examples of the similar forces that we see within the orchestra:

- (Amateur) musicians, at a personal level, have to constantly update and improve their instrumental, artistic and technical skills, as well as guard against any deterioration of these skills.
- In the orchestra there has to be collaboration in a subtle game of give-and-take: each instrument or group of instruments is important but not for the entire duration of the performance. Sometimes one may have a leading role, but at other times a more accompanying or supporting role. Also within the various instrument groups there are different roles (for example solo clarinet, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> clarinet). There is always a great deal of attention for the aspirational character of the art, but within this there is space for personal ambition and competencies.
- In an orchestra there is a certain atmosphere. The atmosphere can often vary, depending on numerous factors. No one can avoid this and at the same time everyone is responsible for the whole.

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- A music association is not inward-looking. Generally speaking the orchestra regularly communicates with the outside world, its audience and its environment, and ‘displays’ what has been realized in a preparatory period. Actively performing to the outside world does not happen just like that: it has to be considered what and how something is to be done, how that can be planned; what finances are involved and how the PR and marketing can be optimized.
  - An orchestra is never a static entity. Every rehearsal and concert is in actual fact a unique event that will never happen again in the same way. In terms of human capital an orchestra is constantly in motion: musicians gradually play better or less well, some musicians stop or new members join. What’s more, one must constantly work hard on generating a new generation of new members for the orchestra.
  - The orchestra should follow a certain artistic, organizational and management direction. This direction is the result of a democratic process within the structures of the orchestra. Needless to say there is a great variety in the way that individuals may feel about this and how they manage to influence this process, inspire and motivate the orchestra as a whole or help to achieve the end results.
  - The orchestra selects a management board with a chairman, and there are often specific committees within the association itself.

## Conditions for a good functioning orchestra

In general one can say that orchestras are only functioning well once the three cornerstones of competencies and qualities not only can be found in their ranks but also have been developed to a particular degree.

1. Artistic competencies (of members of the orchestra as well as the conductor)
2. Managerial competencies (of the management board, the chairman and within the committees)
3. Competencies in the area of recruitment, image, public relations and art education.

## The conductor as orchestra manager

The conductor is a very important factor in the good functioning of an orchestra. If we look at the analogy of a miniature society, we can regard the

conductor as the head of state and the process that leads to the appointment of a new conductor as a presidential election.

Usually the conductor is the only 'professional' in the organization of the amateur orchestra.

In addition, there are numerous other competencies within the members of the orchestra who usually have a professional career in a completely different area to their hobby. Their competencies in finance, organization and communication are not only valuable, they are also often very necessary. Nevertheless, the conductor is generally regarded as the person who has the greatest influence on the good functioning of the orchestra. In other words, the value that is attached to the artistic competencies is usually greater than that of the other competencies that also have a role in the functioning of the orchestra. The conductor can be regarded as an orchestra manager who has an influence on all the processes that can affect an orchestra. This is on the one hand due to the manner in which musical processes proceed within orchestras (the conductor leading the orchestra), and on the other hand due to the fact that every artistic decision (suggestion or wish) of the conductor has an impact on (practically) all levels of an orchestra.

## Competencies of the conductor

In order for a conductor of an amateur musical company to effectively carry out his<sup>1</sup> role he needs to possess a wide range of competencies. As musical leader each week he inspires and coaches a large group of amateur musicians during the rehearsal; works towards a concert or concours; consults with the management board regarding the general and specific planning; monitors the playing level of individual musicians and the orchestra as a whole; chooses the repertoire for the orchestra, sometimes in consultation with a music committee; represents the orchestra in his contacts with the (professional) outside world, and constantly endeavours to improve himself on the basis of self-reflection and experiences.

In order to be able to carry out these tasks effectively the conductor should possess the following competencies:

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<sup>1</sup> When 'he' or 'his' is used when referring to the conductor this can also be read as 'she' or 'her', though in actual fact conductors still tend to be men.

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## A. Creativity

### *1. Creativity*

The conductor puts together music and musical products that arise from following his own artistic vision and places the creative process in the service of the conductorship.

## B. Musical craftsmanship

### *2. Craftsmanship*

The conductor is able to efficiently and effectively apply not only his technical skills relevant to his role as conductor but also his knowledge of his craft.

### *3. Pedagogical skills*

The conductor is able to create a stimulating learning environment for instrumentalists at an amateur level.

### *4. Didactic skills*

The conductor has the skills necessary to put together, arrange/compose and perform a suitable repertoire based on an artistic and pedagogic vision.

### *5. Operational skills*

The conductor is able to create an inspirational and functional musical situation for others in which music is made, and then maintain it.

## C. Collaboration skills

### *6. Communication skills*

The conductor is able to effectively and efficiently communicate, coordinate and justify his vision and actions, both verbally and in writing.

### *7. Collaboration skills*

The conductor is able to share and combine his own expertise with that of others in order to contribute together to the amateur music sector.

### *8. Environment-orientation*

The conductor is able to identify relevant environmental factors in society and use these in his or her work as conductor.

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## D. Self-reflection

### *9. Self-reflection*

The conductor is able to examine, analyze, interpret and evaluate his own pedagogic and artistic performance.

## Training of conductors in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands conductors are educated through a vocational music training course at higher vocational education level (HBO). They usually do this at a conservatory and conclude their study with a Bachelor's diploma. The more talented conductors carry on to do a Master's, but it should be pointed out that this Master's seems to be primarily aimed at working as a conductor for a professional ensemble. As the Bachelor's phase lasts four years, it is clear that a conductor graduate in theory is well equipped and skilled to carry out his work at elementary level. It is, however, also clear that all the skills that are necessary to carry out his work have not yet been fully developed after only four years' study. We often hear conductors say: "When I graduated I was very fresh: I still had to learn an incredible amount on the job".

## Lifelong Learning projects: further training and refresher courses for conductors

Probably in part due to the competitive elements of the conductor profession, but perhaps also because it is not customary in the Netherlands, there appears to be strikingly little peer review nor any further training or refresher courses for and by conductors after graduating. The Dutch national union of orchestra conductors (Bond van Orkestleidingen, BvO), which has approximately 700 members, does however organize an activity every year; however, it does not really attract vast numbers of the affiliated conductors, the majority of the total population.

Kunstfactor, the national institute for the voluntary arts sector, has organized successful Lifelong Learning projects between 2005 and 2010. These projects take place in various *conservatories*, where conductors, by means of clinics, workshops, lectures, concerts and conducting sessions in front of a 'real' orchestra, work on their competencies under the direction of fellow professionals and leading figures from their craft.

## Concerning the content of the Dutch Lifelong Learning projects for conductors of wind and percussion music

### *Development of conductor skills*

Leading the musical process of an orchestra or ensemble is a complex process in which numerous factors play a role: group dynamics, choice of repertoire and the art of conducting.

During the Lifelong Learning sessions conductors of all ages and experiences can train in an open atmosphere with a 'real' orchestra under the direction of an experienced fellow professional as workshop leader. The following has always been a central question: "While conducting are you able to communicate with the orchestra using your hands, mimicry and other forms of body language in order to clearly convey the musical expression you want to achieve?"

### *Development of pedagogic-didactic skills*

How can you provide intrinsic motivation to a group of amateur musicians to whom you are giving (musical) direction? Creating and maintaining a stimulating and safe musical environment is an art in itself.

During the Lifelong Learning sessions workshops, for example, are organized in the areas of motivation, stress, concentration and self-assurance. It is interesting to see here the link with the world of sports. One of the workshop leaders, Dr. Rico Schuijers (1966), is actually a sports psychologist. Although he is mainly active in the sports world he was also an incredible source of inspiration for conductors. The workshops had themes such as: performing under pressure, stress management, coping with change, understanding individual differences, teambuilding, providing inspiration for producing top performances, as well as anecdotes about working with very talented individuals.

## Repertoire development in relation to the amateur orchestra

A conductor regards choosing a repertoire as one of his most demanding challenges. There is an immense choice and a great deal of new material is produced again every year throughout the world. By no means is the entire repertoire of a high quality, but we can say that every work can be suitable to a specific situation. How do you as conductor approach a repertoire and what parameters do you have to take optimal account of?

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These were central questions during the repertoire workshops of the Lifelong Learning sessions.

The workshops enjoyed a great deal of interest thanks to the theme and also due to the prominent musicians and conductors who provided the workshops.

Questions that were dealt with included:

- What is the best repertoire for an orchestra at a particular time?
- What repertoire provides optimal stimulation for the members of the orchestra?
- When does the choice of repertoire reveal that the musicians of the orchestra have been underestimated, and when are the playing and musical skills of an orchestra overestimated?
- Short-term repertoire management versus long-term repertoire management.
- How do you put together a programme and what parameters do you base it on?
- Searching and finding a repertoire using the Internet and other modern forms of communication.
- Collections and interesting publications concerning repertoires for wind and percussion orchestras (repertories).

## Collaboration and environmental-orientation

The conductor leads to a certain extent a 'lonely' existence. If he is not careful his style of communication can quickly become 'directive'. After all, in his work he is constantly trying to convincingly convey his vision to others in a more or less 'one-dimensional' manner. Despite all his qualities the conductor should constantly reflect upon his own personal qualities as well as his relationship with the orchestra, the management board members and other stakeholders. Based on this he must, if necessary, be able to modify his attitude or actions. The conductor's task is not only to conduct; these days he is also an 'orchestra manager' in the broadest sense of the word.

During the Lifelong Learning sessions each year attention is focused on personal competencies as well as the competencies of collaboration and environmental-orientation.

## Experiences and evaluation

The Lifelong Learning sessions have always taken place at one of the Dutch conservatories or in some other inspirational and artistic environment. In addition to the workshops and clinics for the participants, there have also been exhibitions, displays and concerts. This has all been open to a wider public.

After the sessions the participants were asked to share their impressions, opinions and recommendations with the organizer Kunstfactor by means of a survey.

In general the participants were very positive about the projects. However, it was also striking that a large group of conductors for whom these projects were intended did not register. There is therefore apparently an obstacle to these people registering. The challenge for the coming years will therefore be to reach those conductors for whom participation up to now seems to be a step too far.

### Some responses:

**“A very interesting and informative programme!”**

As far as I am concerned Hans Leenders could have been given even more time. Particularly the practical aspects of his views concerning “percussion technique” could have been dealt with in more detail. From the way he worked with the string quartet you particularly could see that he had a great deal of experience and was used to working with professional people from the symphonic world. Just as with Jan Cober it was mainly to do with musical matters, as was the conducting itself, which was then immediately put into practice. I found Cober’s explanation about looking at the instrumental music with vocal eyes very instructive. Here it also became clear how important it was to carry out a good analysis of the score.

**“A national event such as Lifelong Learning is an excellent meeting place”**

“I very much enjoyed for the second time as a music student taking part in the Life Long Learning (LLL). Immersing myself for five days in the HaFaBra world with many music friends was a wonderful experience. With many more participants than the first edition, and the presence of famous orchestras, I think that LLL has become a very important event for the Dutch wind instrument music world. It certainly deserves to be a regular event.

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## Overview of Lifelong Learning sessions of the previous years

### **“Entornos Séptimos - Dirigenteneducatie**

18 to 21 May 2010 Valkenburg - South Limburg

### **Lifelong Learning International - International Conductor Course and Concours**

8 to 15 July 2009 WMC Kerkrade, The Netherlands

### **Lifelong Learning Amsterdam Conservatory 2008**

1 to 4 October 2008

### **Lifelong Learning ArtEZ Enschede Conservatory 2007**

October 2007

### **Lifelong Learning Maastricht Conservatory 2006**

October 2006

### **Lifelong Learning The Hague Conservatory 2005**

October 2005

The latest edition of Lifelong Learning will take place from 8 to 12 November 2011 in Kerkrade, the Netherlands as part of the World Music Concours (WMC).

**Some of the workshop leaders during the Lifelong Learning sessions (in random order):** Rico Schuijers; Rob Goorhuis; Jan Cober; Francis Pieters; Gert Buitenhuis; Hans Leenders; Jacob de Haan; Hardy Mertens; Ivan Meylemans; Lucas Vis; Luc Vertommen; Leo Samama; Tijmen Botma; Hennie Ramaekers; Danny Oosterman, Peter Kleine-Schaars, Jos Pommer; Maino Remmers; Thijs van Schoonhoven; Peter Stotijn; Bernard van

Beurden; Tom Brevik; Jacob Slagter; Gerrit Fokkema; Maurice Hamers; Arend Nijhuis; Jan Schut; Arie Stolk; Robby Alberga, Jan Bosveld; Ronald Slager; Jan Stulen. Kunstfactor staff: Inge Joldersma, Alex Schillings (initiator with overall responsibility) Gert Bomhof, Henk Smit, Jan van den Eijnden.senc, Tone Rački, Mojca Ravnik, Borko Radešček, Janez Strehovec, Nadja Valentinčič, Zdenko Vrdlovec, Melita Zajc, Andrej Zdravič).



# Competencies in Cultural Planning and Cultural Strategies

■ By Hans Stavnsager and Bente von Schindel

*National Association of Cultural Councils in Denmark held during the period from autumn 2007 to spring 2009 a number of courses for its members supported by the Ministry of Culture. The reason to start the project was partly a reform at the municipal level, where the 274 municipalities in Denmark became 98, and it gave many changes in local associations, but in addition more general skills and new competences in local cultural associations were needed.*

Many associations within sports and children and youth activities, the voluntary social associations etc. have a long tradition when it comes to courses for members. But in amateur culture and in the voluntary cultural field, they have very limited resources and the possibilities to offer courses to their members. The project therefore gave us a great chance to give services to the local cultural councils and their member associations for a period of time.

## Project for all councils

In connection with the mergers, many municipalities worked with both positive and negative implications. In terms of the cultural associations the reform had left a divided country, where half of municipalities had cultural councils and the other half had none. The fact that many new municipalities consisted of several old cultural councils was a great challenge. So we had to rethink what to do in many municipalities in the country, and it revealed a great need for both the councils and their member associations, when it came to a number of specific competencies within the work in the associations. In the beginning the project needed to take into account that the approx. 60 remaining cultural councils were very different. Some councils worked exclusively as coordinating bodies for the cultural associations in the area - they had a very limited economy and met a few times a year. Other councils had heavy tasks such as allocation of municipal funds and therefore had a sizeable

economy. Similarly, self awareness among the councils was also very different when it came to topics such as membership, cooperation with the municipality, etc. An important element of the project was to devise concrete offer for all councils, and not just some of them.

## Purpose

The project aimed to strengthen local council’s active participation in cultural policy, to form networks with other cultural actors, and thus being able to create something together and make better councils to resolve tasks such as administration, communication, integration, etc. All based in agreed tasks in the councils, which were:

- Being “the voice” of cultural associations and groups, including amateur and volunteers
- Provide discussions of cultural politic in the municipalities.
- Making cultural activities visible.
- Appear as a unit in the local cultural politic.
- Establish and expand networks of the local voluntary cultural area.
- Integrate new target groups in the local cultural associations.
- Provide the possibility that culture itself allocates money to the culture (“arms length” principle).
- Take the initiative to coordinate and communicate activities that a single association cannot do on its own.
- Advise and be a service organisation for members.

## Method

Specifically, it was decided to undertake the following activities:

1. Regional courses
2. Local courses
3. Help with setting up councils
4. Activity folder
5. Handbook
6. Integration
7. Establishment of a counseling hotline

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To achieve these goals, the project used the following methods:

- An intensive educational effort in relation to existing cultural councils. Efforts should mainly focus on the effectiveness of various organizational elements of daily work such as board work, political lobbying, cooperation with the local government and institutions in the municipality and communications (both internal and external).
- Creating cultural councils in the municipalities where they do not exist. Subsequently counseling and other assistance in construction a council was offered as well as advice and assistance in contacting the municipality in terms of cooperation, economics, etc.
- Ongoing advice to existing and new councils. The aim is to make councils able to better concentrate on their political activity and related efforts.
- Increase participation of people from social and ethnic groups who rarely participate in the activities in associations. This should be done by informing the board and members of both existing and new councils on positive experiences and barriers in this area and possibly help the groups mentioned in forming their own association and then later being join other cultural associations.

### Elements of the local courses

In order to make the courses relevant to the participants in the local associations we let the locals themselves prepare the courses. National Association of Cultural Councils in Denmark supplied with teachers and course materials, but everything else was in the hands of the councils themselves - for example, recruitment of participants, meeting room, meals, etc. It was ultimately the councils' own decisions to determine what kind of content the course should have, but as an inspiration they were offered four thematic courses. The four themes were:

1. Responsibilities in terms of the board
2. Communication
3. Political lobbying
4. Integration of ethnic and social minorities

It was however emphasized that the local councils could compose just the course they found would match their local needs, and although the majority of courses were held as one of the four themes, several councils preferred - particularly at the end of the project - other issues of local interest.

**The four thematic courses were from the start presented in separate folders, and the purpose of the four courses was formulated as follows:**

***Responsibilities in terms of the board***

The aim of the course is to present a series of practical tools in order to make the work in the board easier and more efficient.

***Communications***

The aim of the course is to give participants a range of specific tools that give them greater understanding of the fundamental principles of modern communications, and to give them better opportunities to communicate effectively in their own association.

***Political lobbying***

The aim of the course is to give the participants a range of specific tools that give them greater understanding of the fundamental principles of political lobbying, and to give them better opportunities to work in favor of their own association in terms of political interest.

***Integration***

The aim of the course is to give participants a number of specific tools that give them greater understanding of how their organizations can involve people from ethnic and social minorities in their activities.

**Implementation of the courses**

In total there were held 52 local courses with a total of 948 participants, which must be considered extremely satisfactory. Meanwhile, the courses inspired local councils to organize training courses and to address issues which were not directly a part of the project. Course participants came from many areas. The majority of participants came understandably from the member associations of the local council. In several places the participants also came from other associations – among other from sports and scouts. And at each course, there have even been par-

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participants from outside the associations - such as educational institutions in the locality. It has therefore been a challenge to put together a program and content in the courses that would appeal to very experienced board members and to people, who did not have any experience from associations at all. But the feedback indicates that we have succeeded, as the continuous comment from the participants was: “we have gained much knowledge”. As to the themes, it has been a recurrent feature that participants have focused on very specific tools that they have been able to use directly in their work in the associations. During the courses for boards it has been dealing with tasks of the board to ensure effective financial management, which has aroused most interest. And in communication courses it has been particularly tools for recruitment, which has been popular. Altogether it is a general experience that the recruitment of new volunteers - especially among younger generations - is a topic that concerns the cultural associations much. It is not surprising, since it is the same story in almost any other association, but it indicates that it is an issue that we may usefully work more concentrated on in the future. Generally, local courses clearly illustrated, that there is an educational gap within the cultural association area - and that this gap is especially reflected in a high demand for education in the basic tools needed in order to maintain an effective organizational work. It will therefore be of great value for the area, if in the future it is possible to ensure a continuous supply of such “tool” courses for the local councils. And at the same time it will help ensure that local councils have a greater contact with their member associations and the local associations in general.

### Help with setting up local councils

Based on the fact that cultural councils did not exist in all the municipalities (at the start of the project, there were 51 councils in 49 municipalities) a recruitment plan was added to the project. The approach was primarily to make contact with the local cultural associations, but with the municipality as a team player (if an agreement would become relevant), the municipality was also contacted in order to be informed about the construction and the possibilities for cooperation. During these meetings the municipality often suggested that it could be helpful in arranging the first meeting - both in terms of call, meeting room etc.

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## Handbook for associations

To support the various educational activities in the competency project, a “Handbook of organisational work.” was published in late 2007. The manual was around 60 pages, and was created in an A4 format, so the pages were easy to copy. A new association handbook was much needed, since the latter was created back in 1994 (by our present Prime Minister!). The manual was at first printed in 3,000 copies, and was offered free to local councils. It soon became clear that the demand was significant and that many councils were very happy to have a practical tool that they could distribute to their member associations. But surprisingly there was also a part outside the cultural councils beginning to ask for the handbook. The handbook has been a significant success, and many people have spontaneously told us that they have benefited from the content in their daily association activities.

## Integration Activities

One of the courses was about involving people from ethnic and social minorities in activities in the cultural associations. Two pilot courses took place. One was a project that took place in cooperation with a group of ballad singers and 4 ethnic bands. The other was a project that also was an offshoot of European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and in which both Danish associations and ethnic associations were participating in a marked place introduction.

## Counseling hotline

As a supplement to the courses and the handbook a telephone hotline was established from October 2007 until the end of 2008.

## Recommendations in relation to local councils

As mentioned the local councils are very different and therefore not all recommendations will be relevant for all councils. But we are convinced that many councils will benefit from considering at least some of the recommendations.

**1. *Local councils should consider to offer more courses for their members***

The numbers of demand on local courses that were offered as a part of competency project has been large and the feedback has shown that participants in the courses generally have experienced, that they have received a lot of knowledge they can use in their own association. Therefore similar courses will be needed in the future.

As to the subjects it is obvious of importance that each council carefully consider what is needed locally, but there is no doubt that the tool-oriented courses have been very popular in the project. There is clearly an educational deficit partly because board members of local associations continually are being replaced.

**2. *Local councils should consider working with other associations in terms of training activities.***

As mentioned earlier participants from other associations than the cultural area joined the courses. It gave an extra dimension, because the exchange of experiences among participants was more rewarding due to the different backgrounds. Local councils are therefore preferable to consider the implementation of future local training activities in cooperation with other associations - especially in collaboration with other umbrellas. Such cooperation will make it easier to find the necessary resources in order to get participants, and it will enable local councils to make useful contacts with other local associations that can be used for example in future debates about the municipality's policy in relation to local associations.

**3. *Local councils should highlight the need for training of their members to the politicians in the municipality.***

Generally, it is important that local councils are visible to the local authorities. An increased training effort towards the members of the associations will often require a financial contribution from the municipality, and therefore it is important to explain the need for such efforts - and make clear that the benefits of the activities of the local associations can be significant with a relatively small investment. The vast majority of municipalities provide earmarked subsidies for training courses for directors, etc. within the adult education associations, and therefore it would be

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natural for local councils to draw a comparison of this area in any negotiations with the municipality on support for training.

**4. *Local councils should consider whether - and if they do so - to what extent they can offer advice to their members.***

Although the central hotline during the project was used only in a limited way, we do not doubt that there is a large and unmet need for counseling among local council members. This is supported by the expanded and comprehensive advice which takes place in other areas, but because there has been only limited tradition of such offer within the cultural associations, they are not accustomed to being able to get advice when having a problem. The local agreement should therefore consider whether they can offer specific advice to their members on issues such as economy, fundraising, conflict resolution, interpretation of statutes, etc.

**5. *Local councils should consider what training needs they have and how they may meet them.***

In relation to the various activities of the project, many boards expressed the view that they themselves have been keen to attend courses. If the councils assume that specific tasks such as allocation of public funds are important, it will be obvious to give board members an introduction to the law dealing with the issue, so they are well equipped for the task - especially when we talk of new board members who have not previously worked with such tasks.

**6. *Local councils should consider working more closely with the local associations of ethnic minorities.***

As shown in the section on integration of ethnic and social minorities, one does not find many activities. But where the issue has been put on the agenda, you'll see a great desire among the local associations of ethnic minorities to get in contact with the "Danish" associations. Local cultural councils can usefully consider how such a cooperation can be established. If there is a council of integration in the municipality the cultural council could establish a formal collaboration between the cultural council and the integration council, but it can also "make do" with a regular briefing on each other's activities in calendars and more. Furthermore, the councils could consider taking on the task of creating "match"

between related associations, such as ethnic and Danish folk musicians so they can meet and inspire each other.

**7. *Local councils should consider defining their role and self-understanding.***

As you can see from the above, there are plenty of tasks that local councils could develop and resolve. But that does not mean that all councils must do everything. What matters is that each council discusses and defines its own role in working closely with members, so that the expectations for the councils to correspond to what actually can be met within the given framework. The task “portfolio” of the council has of course some practical consequences that must be considered as part of the process. For example: Do we have such financial and human resources in order to fill the role? Yet, this task is also to define self-understanding of the council and the image that the outside world has of the council. If a council for example gives funds to member associations, it can hardly fail to affect the overall relationship between the council and its members because the council in such cases is not only umbrella organization but also an authority. There is obviously no recipe for how a local council should work - it depends 100 % on local circumstances. But it is important that each council consider its options and actively choose the profile that match the local reality.

**Recommendations in relation to municipalities**

The project has also given rise to a range of recommendations in relation to the municipalities. The most notables of these are the following:

**1. *Municipalities without councils should consider establishing such.***

The local councils continuously show the important role they play in more than half of the municipalities of the country. The project has helped to strengthen this role because it has resulted in several new possibilities to the members. But a significant minority of municipalities still has no council, and that makes the associations within culture in those areas of the country substantially poorer. Therefore, these municipalities should consider taking an active role in creating a council. Ultimately, of course, the volunteers from associations, must take the responsibility to establish and operate councils, but a municipality can play an important

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role in identifying and motivating volunteers and provide resources and assistance available, making it attractive to engage in the project. With the larger municipalities umbrellas at the municipal level have become even more important than before, so it is natural that the municipalities “pushes” the process in order to establish a cultural council, where they are missing.

**2. *Municipalities should consider allocating funds for training of leaders in the cultural associations***

In vast majority of municipalities has earmarked grants for training of leaders within activities for children and youth. It happens because it is known that training of volunteers is a key concept both in relation to create effective local associations and to recruit and retain volunteers. Municipalities should consider allocating funds for training of leaders in the associations outside the activities for children and youth - including the cultural associations - as they inherently have the same need for competence development. One can even argue that the need is greater because the vast majority of children and youth associations are members of strong national organizations that have the opportunity to use significant amounts of internal training.

**3. *Municipalities should motivate ethnic associations and the local cultural umbrellas for closer cooperation.***

As previously mentioned, the project demonstrated that associations of ethnic minorities and “Danish” associations should cooperate much more. Municipalities should therefore consider how they can contribute to this cooperation. In municipalities with both an integration council and a cultural council it is obvious to bring the two together to discuss how they can support different activities. Similarly, it would be obvious if the municipalities that have an integration consultant or other employee ensure that he or she will be in contact with the cultural councils, so he or she becomes aware of the opportunities it gives to the integration council of being a member of the cultural councils.

**4. *Municipalities should be included in a close dialogue with local councils about tasks and roles in the future.***

As mentioned earlier, it is important that local councils define their own

roles and tasks, but it will be an advantage if the municipality is involved in one degree or another in the process as well, creating a common understanding between the municipality and the council on how the distribution of tasks between them should be. In some cases it will be useful to have a real partnership where the portfolio of the project, allocation of resources and so on is formulated in writing, while in other cases it would be more natural to “settle” with verbal agreements. But it is always important that local councils and their municipalities have a common understanding of what the council can and should do in relation to local cultural associations, so they together can ensure the optimum assistance to them.

### The aims of the project objectives in relation to the major goals for lifelong learning within the EU

As to the major goals for lifelong learning within the EU: active citizenship, cultural cohesion, employability, and personal fulfillment, the goals for lifelong learning can be seen achieved through the following activities:

#### Active citizenship

- ***Be a “spokesman” for cultural associations and groups, including amateur and grassroots across municipality and its politicians.***  
 This is a role that most councils think is important and which they already take part in in a greater or lesser degree. But it is also an area where some councils feel it has become harder in the recent years because civil society does not play a significant role in politics in nowadays society. In order to promote this issue one of the four standard local courses which were offered from the start of the project, therefore became a course in political lobbying. A series of councils conducted the whole or a part of the course, and especially in the in the last time of the project part where municipal elections were approaching, there was more focus on the topic. Compared to the feedback it is absolutely an area where many councils want more help and advice in the future.
- ***Create discussion on municipal cultural policies.***  
 This issue is obviously close to the first (being a “spokesman” for cultur-

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al associations and groups), but it is not so natural for councils to do this. There is – for many councils - a desire primarily to be in direct dialogue with the municipality, but the broader public debate will normally not be prioritized as high. This was also reflected in the activities of the project where the debate was relatively small. If this task should be strengthened in the future, it probably requires a more targeted approach, where for example, inspiration and advice about specific processes will be offered to each council.

- ***Making the cultural activities visible.***

This is also an area that almost all councils work with in some way. Some have responsibility for publishing a calendar of cultural events or the like, and almost everyone has a website which attempts to provide an overview of the local cultural activities related to the associations. The quest for greater knowledge and more competence in the field was therefore widespread, and the local course about communication, was one of the most popular. At the same time, it was also one of the areas where more councils called for more specific tools in the future - for example in maintenance of websites, working with the local press, politicians etc.

## Cultural cohesion

- ***Appear as a joint unit of the local culture.***

This task plays a prominent role for the self-understanding in most councils, and many of the tools (courses, handbook etc.), included in the project, have helped to support this. An important element to complete this task satisfactorily was the internal communication between the councils and their member associations, and many councils has therefore made use of the courses on communication and the section on the same topic in the association handbook. At the same time, it is precisely this task that has been a very important part of the motivation in relation to the creation of new councils.

- ***Create and develop networks in the local voluntary cultural area.***

This objective is very loose and general, and therefore it may be difficult to conclude whether and to what extent it has been a success. There is no doubt that some part of the project has contributed to the fact that local councils are brought into contact with new groups - both associations

who they have not seen for years, and associations/groups completely outside their members. Many local courses have been characterized by the fact that there have been participants outside the local councils, and correspondingly the handbook was commissioned by a very wide audience.

- ***Integrate new members in the local cultural associations.***  
 Basically the goal was to focus on both ethnic and social minorities, but in practice, there was a focus on ethnic minorities. From many similar projects we have learned that it is no simple task, but we still managed to get results all over the country. The tools have in particular been a local course on the topic providing advice in relation to the councils wanting to continue working on the problem. As part of the project a handbook will be published describing some of the positive experience from around the country. The subject is characterized by a strong will but has a lack of practical tools, and it is therefore important that further work is done in one form or another.
- ***Ensure that culture itself allocates money to culture.***  
 As mentioned, there are vast differences in the councils in this area. Some have more than 200.000 € per year for distribution, while others have nothing. The councils having this task normally receive professional support from the municipality in this matter. The components of the project have therefore only limited dealt with the problem, apart from the general elements of financial management, board responsibility and so on. Due to the fact that a large unmet need remains - especially in councils not handing out money - to get help and advice in relation to an internal debate about whether it is a task they wish to undertake, how they argue - facing the municipality - in order to taking over the task, and how, in such cases it will affect self-understanding of the councils, relationship to member associations and so on.

## Employability

- ***Organize, coordinate and communicate activities that one member organization cannot do alone.***  
 Also in this field the tasks differ from council to council. Most of the

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cultural councils implement activities such as culture nights, association fairs, courses, etc. Many of the project elements have been much “tool-oriented”, and this has made them useful for individual councils in relation to increase its capacity to implement such activities. Recruitment of volunteers has proven to be a particularly important issue, since it is the human resources that bring the greatest limitations on the activities of councils and it is therefore an issue on which future competences will be vital for the councils.

■ ***Advise and be a service organization for members.***

This is one of the issues of the project that has meant the most to local councils. The mere possibility of being able to offer local courses, handbook, hotline phone, etc. has upgraded the services from many councils to their member associations. Meanwhile, the different parts of the project have made a closer contact between the councils and their members in many parts of the country.

We must conclude that the project has widely fulfilled its aims. Because of the very few offers in terms of improving competences that have previously been given to the voluntary cultural associations, a great deal of the project has focused on “basic” items such as economy, internal and external communications etc. The demand for these items has proven to be many in numbers, and it illustrates that the project elements has covered an existing need within the local councils. So the fact that the project in nearly all areas have been realized with the expected volume, illustrates actually existed.

## The effects in relation to LOAC

### Personal formation

From the evaluation of the courses and the time afterwards (made some months later) we can read, that the participants in the courses gained a lot of personal formation. They all mention the self-confidence they subsequently had in their work in the boards. They also mentioned that they listened to the others in a more democratic way in the board and that they had a more personal attitude in the way they considered the problems.

### Knowledge and skills

In the evaluation we could also see, that the participants had acquired a lot of knowledge about the board work. It was a knowledge that later on could be updated through consulting the handbook.

### Competences

Because of the personal formation that happened through the courses the participants mentioned in the evaluation that the way they communicate in the board has improved. People are more cooperative and more tolerant. Because of the knowledge and skills people are more innovative and experimental. The courses also helped improving the way members of the boards communicate and the way they plan the future work.



# Cultural School – a Pilot Project

■ By Urška Bittner Pipan

*We have found ourselves in time and space where lifespan is prolonging and four generations encounter each other interactively. We live longer and new forms of intergenerational social networks are arising. The question we ask ourselves is whether we can find and make use of this new cohesion and provide flow of knowledge and experience, whether we live better and above all – what to do to make life more qualitative, coherent and interesting.*

Due to its multitude and quality of organization culture, especially amateur culture, is a peculiar phenomenon. Within this creative field every group finds its space – regardless of age, gender, race, religion, nationality. This extensive social and cultural participation, detected and statistically registered in Slovenian amateur culture, comprises about 130.000 active creators (Slovenia has 2 million inhabitants) and their production is annually seen by 4 million visitors.

## Amateurism

At the operative level the term amateurism in Slovenia determines those cultural activities where performers (members of choirs, theatrical and puppet groups, folklore ensembles, film groups, dance groups, literary and artistic groups) themselves do not practise this activity as a profession (as a rule they are neither paid for their activity nor formally educated). But in the field of amateurism as well many formally educated professionals act as mentors and professional leaders and get paid for their work. Moreover, leaders and members can obtain knowledge and competence in extensive professional programmes of seminars, courses, workshops and schools, mostly organized by the Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities (JSKD), a professional support network for versatile development of creative potentials in the field of amateur culture. Through its programmes it enables self-actualisation of individuals and their personal growth, represents a powerful element of cultural cohesion, stimulates active citizenship and through programmes of lifelong education it invigorates competence, knowledge and skills. As a professional, organizational and financial network it offers crea-

tors quality education and events, professional publications and periodicals, performs advisory activity and grants subsidies for the projects of cultural societies. As the umbrella organization for the field of amateurism JSKD engages itself in interdepartmental cooperation and international connections. It perceives the Slovenian cultural space as a field of open communication, pleasant creativity and complete cultural education for sustainable development. Due to the aforementioned data the cross-section of intergenerational activity, lifelong learning and amateur culture in Slovenia shows the effects that reflect themselves in numerous projects and extensive activity. Amateur culture joins people thus reaching every field of social activity. It enables spending quality free time, invigorates social networks, upgrades knowledge, offers new experience, develops creativity, through the systems of mentors and selectors it enables transfer and preservation of knowledge, values, tradition ... in a word, it plays an important role of a social integrator. In continuation the Cultural school project is presented. The project performer (JSKD) acts as a support network to cultural activity, mainly happening at social, amateur level. Because JSKD is aware of the influence of cultural education and creativity on different aspects of human beings, approximately half of all programmes of JSKD (education, events, publishing) are intended for children, the young and their mentors. Cultural school joins all the main functions of amateur culture:

### Cultural creativity and performance

Central functions of cultural amateurism are cultural creativity and performance. Non-institutional and non-professional status opens an entirely unburdened space for creativity and experimentation. Especially in the field of theatre and puppets, film and video, contemporary dance, fine arts and literature it gives individuals and groups a chance to take the first steps. Many young, unrecognized authors often proceed to professional cultural activity through the phase of cultural amateurism. In the framework of classical social activities, like choirs, folklore ensembles, the singled out best achievements of top ensembles – thanks to top-level professional leaders and distinctive work approach – represent an equivalent parallel to the professional ensembles and institutions respectively.

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## Culture education

Culture education in the field of amateur culture includes all generations and are equally accessible all over Slovenia – with a clear goal: to raise the quality and scope of cultural activity. Namely, the precondition for cultural activity (passive, active) is suitable knowledge, which was by the vast majority of art lovers and amateurish cultural creators not gained with mainstream education. Cultural education programmes in this field have a long tradition and comprise top Slovenian and foreign experts as well as education systems in the form of seminars, workshops, courses, summer camps, conferences, schools, upgraded over the last ten years. By means of JSKD network and cultural societies the system of lifelong learning, further training and personal growth is supported, thus including all generations, from children to seniors, in these programmes. They are focused on covering deficit areas and introducing basic practises at regional level and on upgrading knowledge at national level. Users are getting more familiar with new aspects of creative art practise and are able to connect to other segments of social life. Education for activities for which institutional education and other quality extra forms of education respectively do not exist are especially carefully prepared.

## Integration of less privileged groups

Due to diversity of forms and contents and different levels of difficulty cultural amateurism is the field that enables affirmation also for those social groups and individuals that do not achieve personal fulfilment and confirmation in their everyday working or family environment or are for biological (disabled), age (children, youth, elderly people) or any other reasons marginalised. The programmes of JSKD, cultural societies and associations thus include programmes for specific social groups with the priority task to stimulate connection with the goal of raising general sense of belonging to society, surpassing diversity, qualitative and quantitative growth of these groups, and their integration, which enables preserving their special features.

### *Accessibility of cultural goods*

From the point of view of accessibility of cultural goods amateur culture is an important factor. The network of JSKD, cultural societies association and cultural societies is the organizer and/or facilitator of cultural and cultural educational events. Diversification of the system and

intertwining of the professional network of public sector with the civil sphere enable spatial dispersion of cultural offer, which denotes equal opportunities for establishing direct contact with “live” cultural creativity.

***Spending quality free time***

An important function of cultural amateurism is spending quality free time as well. It is about cultural activity that encourages socialising, abolishes social exclusion and enables potential development. In this sense joining cultural groups has a strong meaning as regards integration and socialisation, and contributes to social cohesion.

***Interdepartmental cooperation***

Amateur culture also has the function of surpassing departmental borders. Intensive work with children, pupils and the young reaches into the school sphere where creativity and cultural activity are encouraged through numerous projects in extracurricular activities. The purpose of such connections is to raise cultural awareness and stimulate schools to become cultural centres in the environment of their activity.

On the other hand, amateur culture is the field that encourages creativity and raises the quality of life for the elders. In this area it connects to the social sector because it provides social cohesion and gives rise to a vibrant network of cultural activities, which actively influences the welfare of individuals

**Cultural school project**

The Cultural school project is an innovative integral approach for connecting the culture and education systems. It is primarily intended for culture programmes and projects performed in schools as extracurricular activities. It has a clear goal – to raise the quality and the range of active and passive cultural activity of pupils and their parents, grandparents and mentors within extracurricular activities, which are not a part of school curriculum. The purpose of the action is to increase the quality programmes for proper cultural education in elementary schools, to provide conditions for the young to be creative in all fields of art, to support quality achievements and to attend to the education of the participants and the mentors. The most important purpose of the project is for school to become the centre of culture programmes in local environments – with the purpose of promoting creativity, lifelong learning and connecting.

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The Cultural school project is thus systematically connecting cultural and school spheres that are in the process of cultural education indispensable partners. The professional approach of the project is a principle warmly welcomed by schools because it enables proper development, presentation, promotion and evaluation of work within extracurricular activities.

The Cultural school project project is structurally happening at local, regional and national levels over the network of 59 branch offices of JSKD across Slovenia and comprises:

1. ***Informational and organizational support with connecting a school to other cultural factors and with realization of culture programmes:***

By means of employees of branch offices JSKD is available to elementary schools for creating cultural life in their area. Information flow, organization of specialist education, events, issuing publications and organization of cultural events in schools add value to the intertwinement of amateur culture and schools on both sides. It is a two-way process, namely schools are invited to cultural events, performed by the culture professionals, on a regular basis – as active participants (performers) or as guests – spectators/listeners. In individual segments the project can include other organizations from public and private sphere besides elementary schools – societies and institutes from the field of culture, cultural centres, theatres, libraries, museums, institutes for the protection of cultural heritage, galleries and non-governmental organizations, Third age university, schools, kindergartens, music schools, faculties, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Government's Office for Slovenians Abroad, Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, Tourist Association of Slovenia ... depending on location and extent of the programme.

2. ***Network of events for presentation, comparison and evaluation of achievements at local, regional and national levels***

On the level of events the project has a pyramid design, meaning that it is happening at three levels – local, regional and national. Each event for children in this system has an educational connotation as well because workshops, round tables and technical consultations are organized at the same time. They are conducted by professionals with the intention of upgrading knowledge of the mentors and the participants. The pyramid system enables all children groups regardless of the activity (choralism,

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theatre, puppets, folklore, dance, literary, film activity) to present their work to general public and the selector once a year (local level is fully open for all wishing to participate). The selector then chooses the best for the regional event. The best are promoted at national festivals.

3. ***Network of seminars, workshops and other forms of education for the participants in these processes (pupils, children) at local, regional and national levels***

4. ***Network of seminars, workshops and other forms of education for the mentors of these processes at regional and national levels:***

Cultural school bears a strong educational connotation for all the participants. A lot of energy and expert knowledge is put into the preparation of quality informal educational modules with top-level mentors (from daily seminars, practical workshops, courses ... to summer camps and year-round schools) offering basic as well as further knowledge for all the project participants. On a yearly basis over 10.000 people are included in the education system (over 400 forms).

5. ***Award ceremonies through the Cultural school tender (promotion, benefits and incentives).***

By the Cultural school tender top quality achievements of elementary schools in the field of cultural activities are presented, with examples of good practice being introduced to the general public. The Cultural school title can be acquired by elementary schools with cultural activity developed above average as regards the range and the quality and that act as the centres of cultural programmes of their environment (this encourages lifelong learning, cooperation and equal opportunities).

Schools that meet the following requirements are eligible to apply for the Cultural school title:

- diversified and quality cultural life in more than three fields of cultural activities – music, theatre, puppets, folklore, film and video, dance, art and photography, literature, cultural heritage preservation – has existed in school for at least three years and that it includes a large number of pupils and teachers;

- programmes originate in and are carried out mostly within optional subjects and extracurricular activities;
- the school enables and encourages mentorship of its workers, specific education and further training in the fields of cultural and artistic activity;
- their groups regularly participate in shows, meetings, festivals and competitions, intended for the presentation, comparison and evaluation of achievements;
- it organizes cultural events for pupils on a regular basis;
- it prepares culture programmes for general public;
- it enables activity of other cultural societies and groups on its premises.

The criteria for granting the Cultural school title are mainly the range and the contents of one's own cultural activity, the range and the contents of cultural events, prepared for pupils of the school in its own production or in cooperation with others; the quality and wide response of culture programmes, prepared for general public; group achievements in different shows, meetings, festivals and competitions at local, regional and national levels, and international achievements; the range and the contents of specific education and further training the school prepares for the mentors; mentor participation in education and further training in the field of culture, prepared by others; enabling cultural activity of other groups and societies on its premises. Assessment proportionally takes into account school size and the number of pupils.

As Blaise Pascal says, *only culture makes us learn and advance constantly*. In this context the Cultural school project represents natural cohabitation of culture and education, distinctively reflected in numerous possibilities of partnership between amateur culture and school sphere. We estimate the project to be set and executed holistically. It is opening the space for arising new practices and creativity and at the same time it is setting up the framework for acquiring knowledge, comparing and evaluating achievements and connections in all directions (intergenerational, interdepartmental, international). On account of its clear structure and the ability of quick adaptation to the needs of the surroundings it is achieving its goal – more people are acquainting themselves with and getting to know amateur cultural creativity, they are learning, socializing, connecting and personally growing.



# A Culture of Lifelong Learning and a Healthy Nation

■ By Roger Fox and Bente von Schindel

*The amateur art and voluntary cultural activities play a large role in celebrating and preserving local cultures, traditions, and heritage and help develop local identity, new traditions and involvement in new areas. They also contribute to a positive public image of an area for both the citizens and outsiders. Participation in amateur art and voluntary cultural activities allows people to retain contact with their roots, enhancing feelings of community and self-esteem. It also creates fruitful fusions of old and new cultures. The enjoyment created by sharing other people's arts is a powerful force for promoting harmony and understanding, tolerance and co-operation between different communities. The amateur art and voluntary cultural activities can increase the confidence and pride of marginalized groups and improve their own and their local image.*

The members of local clubs and societies take action as citizens to address the cultural aspirations of the local people. They are democratically controlled by their members and users and, in their turn, they democratically control the national federations and guilds. This free, democratic control over your own cultural life and access to a full range of opportunities to express your creativity is the true meaning of cultural democracy. It also promotes community cohesion, reduces individual isolation and adds hugely to the quality of life of the community.

The voluntary arts, sustained locally by cultural volunteers, have the additional benefit of long term viability and sustainability. They make a large positive impact on the quality of the lives of the people of this country. Within a properly resourced infrastructure they can do even more and ensure that everyone gets the chance to exercise genuine cultural democracy.

## Cultural Rights

For many years the issue of cultural rights – as separate from, or as part of other human rights - has been a source of regular debate by academics, policy makers and those in the cultural sector. Most frequently those debates have been held at international or supranational level at the EU, Council of Europe or UNESCO.

To what extent can we say that people have cultural rights? The usual answer is to quote Article 27 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) to which the UK, Republic of Ireland and Denmark are all signatories. In fact articles 22 and 29 are also relevant.

### ***Article 27 in brief:***

*Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts .... This is clear enough. The exercise of our cultural rights is within the context of “the community”. This implies collective action in a social context, although presumably the solo pursuit of cultural activity might well be a normal part of the cultural life of a community. How may these rights be realized?*

### ***Article 22 is complex, but says:***

*Everyone ... is entitled to realization ... of the ... social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality. So social and cultural rights are indispensable for the dignity and personal development of the individual. But what of the community within which these rights are exercised?*

### ***Article 29 starts with this:***

*Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.*

So the development of personality is dependent upon social and cultural rights and also linked firmly to the discharge of duties to the community. All of this suggests that if we are to claim our cultural rights under the UDHR, we must recognise both the social and community context and our consequent obligations to that community.

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## Social and community context

“Social capital” means the trust, standards and mechanisms that are naturally created through social interaction and promote compromise and cooperation. It is a relationship or network based on people. Apart from directly reducing the benefits of human interaction, the loss of social capital also indirectly decreases the economic benefits it brings.

A community in which the dignity and personal development of the individual is valued exhibits high levels of social capital, sharing values and norms which add positively to community cohesion. It is also no surprise that freely participating specifically in the cultural life of the community is likely to increase this social capital.

What are the means by which we exercise our cultural rights?

Whilst all culture is not art, cultural activity based on arts and crafts practice can clearly claim an important place in exercising our cultural rights.

How, then, do we participate in the cultural life of the community, in a particular place or, it could be argued, community of interest?

Expressing our culture is primarily an active process. Culture is not a commodity, it is a set of feelings and beliefs through which we make sense of our experience as human beings and transmit that to others. Whilst we can experience other people’s cultures we can only exercise our own.<sup>1</sup> This active practice, then, is at the heart of exercising our cultural rights.

The most immediate way to participate in the cultural life of the community and to discharge our obligations to that community is by the practice of the arts and crafts ourselves, in a social setting. By doing this we can add to our personal development and to the social capital of the community we inhabit.

The statement from UNESCO about “Our Creative Diversity” deals with the issue of participation versus consumption:

*“The professional arts and artists are of course essential contributors to the aesthetic life of any society. But a focus on them alone can result in the underdevelopment of the creative potential of the community and the benefits that can be derived from an inventive population. Often cultural policy is confined to policy for the arts, with an exclusive emphasis on the pursuit of artistic and institutional excellence. A form of policy handicap ensues, inadvertently diverting debate from the support of diversity, choice and citizen participation to tired questions of “high” versus popular art, professional versus amateur*

*status, or whether craft, folk and other popular art forms should be eligible for support.”*

## The state and its obligations to implement cultural rights

There is another important international document which is of help here. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights postdates and builds on the UDHR and, in particular, places specific cultural rights within the framework of international obligations of states to their citizens.

*“The States Parties to the present Covenant, Recognizing that these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person, recognizing that, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his civil and political rights .*

*... The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone ... to take part in cultural life”.*

This is interesting because it puts cultural rights on a par with civil and political rights and suggests that governments have a duty to take steps to ensure the conservation, development and diffusion of culture.

## The rights of peoples

Moving on from the cultural rights of individuals, we find this from the Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Co-operation, proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its fourteenth session on 4. Of November 1966:

*“...Every people have the right and the duty to develop its culture.  
... In their rich variety and diversity, and in the reciprocal influences they exert on one another, all cultures form part of the common heritage belonging to all mankind”.*

The choice of the word “people” is significant. What constitutes a “people” as distinct from a state of a nation is not made clear. The term would almost

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certainly extend to the concept of the Welsh, the Scots, the Flemish or other identifiable cultural grouping such as the Kosovo Albanians or the Roma people. The UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies in Mexico in 1982 agreed a wider definition of culture which includes human rights:

*In its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human beings, value systems, traditions and beliefs.*

There is plenty of evidence for us to claim cultural rights as part of our human rights which are on a par with other civil rights. We exercise these rights in a community setting and we owe duties to those communities within the exercise of those rights.

The arts and crafts offer a particular mechanism for exercising cultural rights and active exercise of individual creativity is a most important strand of this. In exercising our rights in this way, in a social context, we add to our individual development and the social and cultural capital of the community. But it is the state which has a duty to foster these rights and to put in place arrangements which allows us to achieve full realisation of these rights.

The question which then arises is this: given that these are rights underpinned by international institutions, as distinct from privileges, how are they monitored and what are the sanctions we can expect to be imposed on anyone - person or state - who infringes them?

## **Changing the policy framework**

Most of us would like to see the establishment of a true civil society. One in which citizen action is a predominant feature of the political, economic and cultural life of all sections of society. Where private action for the public good is expressed by a rich and diverse array of organisations operating sometimes apart and sometimes in dialogue or partnership with government and business. A healthy society is one in which there are an equitable relationship among citizens, their associations and foundations, business and government. It would be surprising if anyone working in the third sector found much to disagree with in this statement, but what does this mean in terms of the cultural sector? How

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is it expressed and how may it be nurtured? The cultural sector in North West Europe is largely sustained by the free association of people within single, specific communities of interest. The opera houses and the flagships of the cultural industries may grab the headlines but the vast majority of opportunities for our citizens to be actively involved in cultural activities are provided by local volunteers. They come together for self improvement, social networking and pleasure, not for payment - hence the term “voluntary arts”. What are the particular benefits of the amateur art and voluntary cultural activities? With Government agendas focusing on social change this is a good time to talk about what the voluntary arts can do for society. They are vital to the health, culture, social and economic development of all European nations. Investing and encouraging participation in the voluntary arts offers a cost-effective way of bringing about social and community cohesion, a culture of life-long learning and a healthy nation with an enviable quality of life.

### **What’s the different**

It is true that some of the benefits attributed to participating in the arts can be achieved through other leisure activities. However the arts attract different people. Just as some people enjoy sport so others prefer involvement in cultural activity. Participatory arts are also very effective at drawing in and enthusing those with no previous experience of the arts. This is because the arts deal with meanings. Other activities do not do this. Art helps us understand our values. It helps us make sense of life and it reflects what matters to us whether this is through a song, a painting, a quilt or a play. Exploring what life means touches us deeply and enables us to act on and shape our lives. Sharing this process through metaphor, colour, sound i.e. creativity, also contributes to our understanding of others. Participating in the arts increases people’s self-confidence. This improves people’s social lives and extends their involvement in social activity. It offers people an opportunity to discover new talents and ability. Success and pleasure gained through creative activity encourages adults to pursue further personal development through other education opportunities. This is especially valuable for the long term unemployed and women returning to work. People also gain new practical and social skills, which improves their private lives and increases their employability. The skills acquired in the voluntary arts are wide and include work experience, administration, fundraising and training as well as transferable skills such as, team working, negotiation,

problem solving, organisational and communication skills. People often go on to use these skills in other community groups. Schoolchildren who participate benefit in areas such as language development, creativity and social skills. Taking part in the arts and crafts reduces isolation in rural and urban areas. This gives isolated individuals and minority groups an opportunity to extend their social circles and friendships, so increasing community sociability, and social capital. This is particularly important for youngsters growing up without big city arts centres and youth projects. Arts provision is scarce in many rural areas and the voluntary arts provide many opportunities for them both as audiences and participants. Similarly groups and activities bring young and old together. Young people learn to interact with a wider age range than their peer group and anxiety about different generations is reduced. Arts activities can encourage sociability in areas where sociability has been eliminated by poverty, crime and mistrust.

Local voluntary arts groups allow people to become involved in community activities that are affordable, local and appropriate to the backgrounds and aspirations of the participants.

The experience of having control over ones life, gained both through creative and organisational activities, facilitates participation in public affairs and effective public consultation especially when it addresses local political issues. This experience encourages people at local level to take part in the regeneration of their community.

Participating in as opposed to consuming art contributes to the accessibility of the arts. They are no longer seen as a rarefied skill or the preserve of an elite, professional few. This encourages experimentation and the development of fresh ideas, skills and talents.

Participating in the arts helps people develop their creativity. Creativity involves imagination and the ability to visualise. ‘Seeing’ situations as they might be in the future is a valuable tool for solving problems and changing situations. Creative projects involve positive, responsible risk taking. Risk taking is a pre-requisite for growth and development. Overcoming risks such as those associated with identity, ability and relationships creates confidence and flexible and risk competent people are able to deal with the uncertainties and challenges of the future.

Artistic activity that embraces the ideas and visions of different cultures can lead to new and innovative ideas and inventions. Creativity allows people to explore their values, meanings and dreams and raises expectations about

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what is possible and desirable.

Many arts organisations and projects work along non-hierarchical and co-operative structures. People take on roles according to need and are adaptable and flexible. This encourages innovation and promotes positive social relationships.

The enjoyment and pleasure gained from participating in creative activities creates a sense of well being. John Davies, Professor Emeritus at Cambridge University suggests that arts provide a way of coping with the whole of life, including disease and death. “Arts should help us in medicine to minister to patients as whole persons living out their lives, enabling us to treat life in its totality”.

## Economic benefits

The real purpose of the arts is not to create wealth but to contribute to the creation of a confident, stable society. Economics here means the long term management and development of society’s resources and not merely financial gain. It is impossible, therefore, to separate the social from the economic benefits. Most voluntary arts organisations and activities draw on their local community. Thus money spent on staff, materials and services is fed back into that community. Participating in the arts produces savings in public expenditure. Confident, creative, capable people get jobs, and those with active social lives tend to spend less on healthcare. People who know their neighbours and neighbourhoods are less likely to vandalise them. High quality participatory arts and crafts activities provide an attractive quality of life in any geographical area that is worthy of investment.

Local voluntary arts and crafts activists often donate their knowledge for the benefit of young people. Links between voluntary artists, schools and after-school clubs offer a cost-effective means of passing on skills, providing new creative opportunities and assisting with child care.

The voluntary arts provide accessible, cost-effective and informal opportunities for lifelong learning. Informal learning is often perceived as less threatening by new or returning learners. The participatory cultural sector delivers exactly the kind of projects through which informal learning takes place as well as encouraging a culture of continuing education.

The foregoing has been a formidable catalogue of the benefits of the amateur art and voluntary cultural activities to our communities, our society and to our nations. How can these benefits be harnessed? Whose job is it? The first

requirement is for local and national government to realise the value of the work which is already happening. The self-help ethic and self-sustaining approach of the amateur art and voluntary cultural activities often renders them invisible to policymakers. Then a genuine partnership must be formed between local and national government and the sector. A planned approach should be taken to create a space for experimentation, learning and growth, supported by relevant local, national and international experience.

There are plenty of examples of good and successful practice in amateur art and voluntary cultural activities across Europe, but perhaps the first step is to quantify what is happening at home. VAN has examples of research using templates developed with local and national authorities and the sector.

### **Defining and measuring**

We live in a time of measuring, monitoring and evaluation. The benefits of participation in the amateur art and voluntary cultural activities and crafts have been rehearsed elsewhere in this essay. But why are we measuring it? If it is to prove that we are getting the results we need, we must be very careful in our choice of measurements and our motives. The dangers of placing an entirely instrumental value on the arts are discussed below. So the question is: whose values and measurements are important? What measurements are appropriate? Far too often, the amateur art and voluntary cultural activities are judged by the same criteria as the professional arts. This is absurd. Much of the amateur art and voluntary cultural activities sector aspires to the highest standards in output – performance, attainment or whatever. Nevertheless, that is only a part of the output. As we have seen, the exercise of our creativity within the context of a geographic community and a community of interest provides a range of benefits to individuals, communities and society as a whole. It is a major component of cultural democracy. That is what the amateur art and voluntary cultural activities and crafts do brilliantly. You cannot evaluate a voluntary choir by comparing its concert performance with the same piece performed by a professional choir. Sometimes the singing will be on a par, but most of the real benefits are to the participants, their families and the community. No-one would judge a professional symphony orchestra by the quality of the social life surrounding its rehearsals, the opportunities for informal learning provided to its board members, or the mental wellbeing of its members. Moreover, the evidence suggests that practice of the voluntary arts and crafts will inevitably

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produce some or all of the benefits outlined above. Two things follow from this. First the key measurement for policy makers is “is enough amateur art and voluntary cultural activities happening” and second the voluntary arts sector itself needs to take control of the measurement criteria and refuse to be judged by inappropriate measurements.

### Your neighbor’s dream

Globalisation is a term which often divides people into two noisy camps. One side are the idealists and activists who want to resist capitalist domination of the world and the enslavement of peoples powerless against the money muscle of the rich and greedy. This camp also provides a home for every rigid preservationist conservative who firmly believes that nothing should ever change and that the world was a better place in the remembered rosy past of perfect childhood summers. In the other camp are those who believe that a totally connected world and market place is inevitable and that every problem can be solved by technology. Here you will also find those who believe that greed is good and that market forces must be allowed to prevail over old fashioned protectionism. These positions are so polarised that it is almost impossible to speak on the issue without being labelled as an extremist.

If you express regret that every town is beginning to resemble every other, with Coke, Pepsi and the ubiquitous MacDonald’s displacing local symbols, you are likely to be considered a wild anti-progress activist with eco-terrorist leanings.

On the other hand, if you speak about the enormous opportunities of global communication, with the ability to connect directly with people and cultures hitherto considered exotic, you may well be identified as a selfish, planet-raping demon. In reality, of course, there are good and bad aspects of globalisation, which of itself are a neutral sociological phenomenon. As little as three hundred years ago, most of us lived, not in the global village, but in the village – or small town. The world beyond a day’s walk or ride away was largely unknown and had little impact on our lives. Our understanding of the outside world was limited to stories told by travellers, snippets in newspapers and the facts or fictions in the few books we read. We have not changed that much. We still measure our familiar world by where we can travel in a day. We still gain our understanding of the world from other people’s words and pictures, mainly through television, which is a mechanism for selling us things (goods, services and opinions) in return for keeping us enter-

tained, rather than an impartial provider of factual information. The trend is for fewer but larger states and for formal collaboration between states to develop into confederal arrangements. Much is gained. Sharing objectives and resources and achieving convergence of working practice permits the creation of mechanisms which allow the weakest to bring their economies and infrastructure closer to the standards of the strongest. This is the story of the EU. Much is also lost. Harmonisation of systems can give an extra impetus to standardisation of our experience of life in general – and the same brand names and shops in all our cities. This may be seen as a dilution of our distinctive cultures and that may be an impoverishment of our human experience.

Does it matter? Of course it matters. Culture, as has been noted above, is a set of feelings and beliefs through which we make sense of our experience as human beings and transmit that to others. And it was we ourselves who invented it for that purpose, or actually our hunter-gatherer ancestors did. These people had no “distributable income” to buy cultural product to fill their leisure time, but what we now call culture was one of the four essentials of life into which they put their efforts. The need for food, shelter, procreation and culture drove their lives. It is not surprising that culture is being rediscovered as a way to improve dysfunctional communities and individuals.

But therein lays a great danger. As policy makers use the practice of culture as an instrument for social good, they lose sight of the “why”. They forget that it is participation in geographic communities and communities of interest for the purpose of exercising shared cultural norms which produces the benefits. Because that is the way that human beings designed it. Doing an arts project may look like exercising your culture through creativity and a good project may provide some part of that objective, but to separate the practice from its social context makes no sense. Applying an arts project to a social problem like a dollop of Clearasil encourages mere skin deep instrumentalism. As our lives take place in a bigger, faster arena where we are governed by structures distant from our local communities, we feel threatened. One response to this is ultra-nationalism where we can blame all our troubles on “outsiders” – in other words, xenophobia. There is an increase of bonding social capital in small inward looking groupings and a decline in bridging capital.

When people feel secure that they can exercise their culture freely, they begin to unclench their fear. Once people know that their cultural aspirations are respected and in turn respect their neighbours’ aspirations, they are much more likely to be open to each other. But this requires lots of opportunities for

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everyone to exercise their creativity freely. The simple measurement of the number of opportunities to exercise your right to be a voluntary artist becomes a key indicator of the health of the community you live in. The voluntary arts have real strength in allowing people to have their own voice.

In the wider sphere too, the amateur art and voluntary cultural activities have a major role to play. The arts use a genetic language which all humans can understand. Even when Europe was divided by the iron curtain, voluntary arts groups organised exchanges, staying in each other's houses, performing in international festivals and forming lifelong friendships with people whose language, culture and daily lives were very different. Now is the time, with the enlargement of the EU and the increasing interaction of all European states, for the amateur art and voluntary cultural activities sector to play its part in defeating xenophobia and racism. This could be a very cost effective investment for governments to make.

The article is a compilation of a speech held for board members from organisations within the amateur arts and the voluntary field and an article. Roger Fox is the former Chief Executive of The Voluntary Arts Network (VAN), UK.

## The partnership circle

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