Main Trends in Policies for Widening Access to Culture
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Produced for the OMC group on Inclusive Culture

Introduction

The right to take part in cultural life is the most explicit right included in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Article 27)[2]. Taking part in cultural life implies access to the full cultural life of the community. There are a number of policy and legal instruments that enshrine the principle of access to culture and support the right to engage in culture for diverse and minority groups.[3]

Access to culture is an essential right of all citizens but becomes fundamental in the case of those with economic and social challenges such as young people and the elderly, people with disabilities and different minority groups[4]. This requires countries to manage diversity in a way that supports creative expression and ensures that living heritage is passed on[5].

Despite these ideals and legal obligations, people living in poverty are often excluded and marginalised from participating in cultural activities.[6] The denial of access to culture can result in fewer possibilities for people to develop the social and cultural connections which are "…important to maintaining a satisfactory coexistence in conditions of equality."[7]

Historical context

Ever since the birth of Europe as a cultural entity in the Age of the Enlightenment, there has been an emphasis on the inclusion of *all* the people in arts and culture. Indeed, the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau devoted his famous book *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles* (1758) to showing that the proposed theatre in Geneva was inadvisable because it

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[1] The EENC was set up in late 2010 with the aim of contributing to the improvement of policy development in Europe, through the setting-up of an effective network of leading European experts on culture which will advise and support the European Commission in the analysis of cultural policies and their implications at national, regional and European levels.. It involves 18 independent experts and is coordinated by Interarts and Culture Action Europe. EENC members John Holden, Yudhisthir Raj Isar and Michael Wimmer have peer-reviewed a draft of this paper."

[2] United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948. http://un.org/Overview/rights.html#a27. Although established in the 1948 U.N. Declaration of Human Rights and the 1989 U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, a 'right to culture' has rarely been given force in domestic legislation. Instead the 'right' has remained a moral right, and it has been translated into effect through initiatives and policies most of which are 'top down' in the sense of being exhortations from, or grant conditions imposed by, governments and funding bodies. With a few exceptions (such as the UK Libraries Act) citizens cannot go to court to give meaning to their supposed 'right.

[3] There are a number of such documents at the international, trans-national, European, national, regional and local level including, but not limited to, the: United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948. United Nations, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966 and entry into force 3 January 1976. UNESCO, Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted on 20 November 2001. See www.unesco.org, legal instruments. UNESCO, Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, adopted on 20 October 2005. UNESCO, Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted on 16 November 1972. UNESCO, Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted on 27 October 2003.Council of Europe treaty series, no. 199, Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, Faro, 27 October 2005. United Nations, Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, 92nd plenary meeting, 18 December 1992

[4] http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc/forum/platform_access_culture_july09.pdf

[5] Council of Europe: Action Plan adopted at the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government, in 2005.

[6] Finding of The cultural dimensions of the fight against poverty and social exclusion: A European perspective A position paper prepared by Culture Action Europe in the context of the preparations of the Belgian presidency conference, Brussels, 17-19 October 2010 http://www.cultureactioneurope.org

[7] European music council http://www.emc-imc.org/index.php?id=610#youth

would exclude the ordinary citizens of the philosopher's hometown from directly participating in the arts.

After the Second World War several West European countries initiated specific policies for widening participation. In the Scandinavian countries, the Danish Social Democrats' *Fremtidens Danmark*, authored by Prime Minister Jens Otto Krag, explicitly set out to "widen participation and access to arts and culture"[8]. Similar policies were enacted in other European countries including the Netherlands and Sweden. In France, André Malraux, the author, who served as Minister of Cultural Affairs under President de Gaulle outlined his vision for an inclusive and participatory cultural policy in 1959. This policy was aimed at "making available capital works from humanity, and initially from France, to the greatest possible number of French people, of ensuring the largest audience for our cultural heritage, and of supporting the creation of the spirit and works of art which enrich it"[9]. In the Federal Republic of Germany (then West Germany), a similar "New Cultural Policy" (*Neue Kulturpolitik*) emerged in the 1970s as part of a general democratisation process within society, the thrust of which was expanded to encompass everyday activities[10]. The arts were to be made accessible to all members of society if at all possible.

In the 1970s, the call for "culture for everyone" and for a "civil right to culture"[11] led to a remarkable expansion of cultural activities, the further growth of cultural institutions and the rise of numerous new fields of cultural enterprises financed by public funds. This growth was matched by continuously rising popular demands for a variety of cultural goods and services. While not all countries pursued these policies with equal vigour (Italy being one example[12]), there was a general trend towards widening participation in, and access to the arts in the period from 1945-1980.

Alongside this development, the democratisation of Portugal, Spain and Greece, gave new impetus to the trend, as cultural policies in these countries was used to create a broader based culture, and to give ordinary citizens access to culture that had been denied them by the authoritarian regimes[13].

According to overviews of comparative cultural policies in Western Europe, this trend was almost universal until the beginning of the 1980s when a gradual shift appeared under influence of the '2nd Oil Price Shock' in 1979.

Table One: Ideology and Per Capita Spending on Culture

		Ideology	Per Capita Spending on Culture
Ideology	Pearson Correlation	1	.500*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.048
	N	16	16

[8] Mads Qvortrup (2009) Fogh, Krag, Schluter og Stauning, Copenhagen, Borgen, p 133.
[9] *Decree n° 59-889, known as the "founding decree", of 24 July 1959*
[10] Bernd Wagner (1993) *Zwanzig Jahre* Neue Kulturpolitik, Band 2. 1970-1990. Berlin, Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft
[11] www.culuralpolicies.net/web/germany.php Accessed February 26, 2011
[12] http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/italy.php Accessed February 26, 2011
[13] http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documentos/110/IN040428.pdf, Accessed 26 February 2011.

Per Capita Spending on Culture	Pearson Correlation	.500*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.048	
	N	16	16

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

This led to reductions of the cultural budgets in several countries, especially in countries with Centre-Right Governments. Indeed, one of the interesting political facts is that there is a positive correlation between the type of the government and the spending on culture[14]. *Table One* shows that using composite figures gathered 1945-2001, the more 'left of centre' a government is, the more it spends on arts and culture. The amount of money spent on culture does not necessarily imply that this money is equitably spent (or not) across all sectors of society. However this reduction in spending on the arts and culture meant that the number of people employed in the cultural sector also declined. Using data from EUROSTAT, there is a positive correlation between spending on the arts and the percentage of the work force employed in the arts and culture of R=.49, indicating a high correlation between per capita spending and employment. As shown in *Table Two*, it could be assumed that at least workforce participation declines when there is less funding.

Table Two: Per Capita Spending on Culture and Employment in Arts and Culture Correlations

		Employment	PerCapSpend
Employment	Pearson Correlation	1	.495*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.051
	N	16	16
PerCapSpend	Pearson Correlation	.495*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.051	
	N	16	16

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

However, the figures do not tell us whether this relationship is true for all groups in society, and thus if participation is widespread. Anecdotal evidence suggests that it is not. While there is some indication, e.g. from the British Department of Culture, Media and Sport's survey *Taking Part[15]: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport Adult and Child Report 2009/10[16]*, that participation is uneven among different social and ethnic groups, there is no conclusive proof that this is the case across the European Union.

[14] The figures for left-right ideology is based on Budge, Ian, Hans-Dieter Klingemann, Andrea Volkens, and Judith Bara. 2001. *Mapping Policy Preferences: Estimates for Parties, Electors, and Governments, 1945–1998*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 0= Extreme Right, 1= Extreme Left.

[15] The Taking Part survey provides organisations working in the cultural sector with data about engagement and non-engagement in culture, leisure and sport. The survey provides quality assured data on participation, attendance and attitudes from a sample of approximately 29,000 people each year.

[16] http://www.culture.gov.uk/publications/7386.aspx, Accessed 26 February 2011

At the beginning in the 1990s two distinctly new developments occurred. The first was the democratization of former Communist Countries in Eastern Europe and the latter was a trend to new reliance on market forces. These market forces, at least in part led to the appearance of a 'cultural democracy' as opposed to 'cultural democratization' paradigm. [17]

In countries including Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, there was a gradual shift towards the principles that had characterised West European cultural policies in the post-war years. Thus in 2003, the Polish Minster of Culture Waldemar Dąbrowski, specified that one of the main aims of Polish cultural policy was the "broadening [of] access to cultural goods for the disabled"[18].

Another development after the 1990s was a trend towards more market-based solutions. Inspired by so-called *New Public Management*,[19] several EU countries witnessed a change in the attitude of the central governments towards the arts and cultural sectors. For example in the Netherlands the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in 1994 started to offer financial incentives. That is, cultural organisations were encouraged to become more independent financially and to look at their market, i.e. their audiences. Yet, this did not change the policy focus and the aim of inclusion. Cultural institutions were still called upon to cater for the needs of a new, young audience and to an increasing population of ethnic minorities[20]. This move to greater market-driven cultural activity was further pushed by the introduction of a 'Cultural Voucher'. This voucher was given out equally to all young people and could be used to purchase cultural activity from approved suppliers. An evaluation of this programme[21] suggested, while increasing the overall size of the market for arts and cultural activities for young people, it had done very little to change the overall equity of participation.

National programmes, such as Norway's "Cultural Rucksack" **(***Den kulturelle skolesekken*)[22] have provided high quality cultural experiences to all children (0-19 years) by delivering culture as a compulsory part of the school education system. This universal approach ensures that the population of young people receive very similar (and arguably equitable) access to cultural experiences.

Recent Economic Factors

There is considerable anecdotal evidence and media speculation to suggest that the conditions for culture, and especially wider access to culture, may have deteriorated as a result of recent spending cuts in a number of European Member States.

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[17] 'Democratization of culture' means trying to give people *access* to a pre-determined set of cultural goods and services. It assumes that there is a 'cultural canon' that can be 'shared' with 'the masses.' 'Cultural democracy' on the other hand, seeks to augment and diversify access to the means of cultural production and distribution, to involve people in fundamental debates about cultural value, while also giving them agency – with respect to the means of cultural production, distribution and consumption – in order for them to possess agency, voice and representation in terms of their own cultural expressions.

[18] http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/poland.php, Accessed 26 February 2011

[19] Lane, Jan-Erik (2000) *New Public Management* Routledge, London.

[20] http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/netherlands.php

[21] Bamford, A (3/2007) Netwerken en verbindingen: Arts and Cultural Education in The Netherlands, , Dutch Ministry for Education

[22] The Cultural Rucksack offers cultural opportunities representing a wide variety of cultural expressions, such as the performing arts, visual arts, film, music, literature and cultural heritage. The Cultural Rucksack is a joint venture between the educational and cultural sectors at the national and local level.
http://www.denkulturelleskolesekken.no/oversettelser/english.htm

While it is difficult to pinpoint the impact of the financial crash on access and outreach programmes, the most recent data from the Museum and Libraries Association (MLA) in England shows that outreach services for children and young people (at all age levels) had declined markedly (more than 10%) over the last quarter, while during the corresponding period adult attendance had actually increased. The MLA's "All Venues Data"[23] (data changes from 2009-10 to 2010-11) showed that instances of outreach activity for children (5-16 years) organised by schools had declined by 3,449 (5%) over the past 12 months. The same pattern was observed in outreach activity not connected with schools (this had fallen 6.5% over the same period). Interestingly though, adult outreach had increased during the same period (11.9%).

Based on a summary of core performance indicators[24] around accessibility, while overall numbers of visits to cultural institutions had increased during the period, the numbers of participation by targeted groups had declined, as is indicated in the following chart (Table Three)[25]

Core Performance Indicators

Table 1: National Performance Data

	All Venues Data		
	Q2 2009/10	Q2 2010/11	Change (No.)
CPI1: Total visits	5,685,697	5,819,635	133,938
CPI2: Total contacts with children and young people	296,766	295,826	(-940)
CPI3: Total instances of participation in on-site activity of children and adults	538,769	525,963	(-12,806)
Priority group visits (BME/NS-SEC 5-8/Disabled)	1,285,218	1,151,862	(-133,356)

Note: possible reasons for the reported decrease in the number of priority group visits may be as a result of a change in the proportion of visitors from priority groups or a relative decrease in the frequency of visits made by priority groups when compared to non-priority groups..

The following case study from Scotland[26], suggests that at a policy and implementation level, there is recognition that budget cuts may disproportionately impact on equity groups in terms of access and participation:

> The Scottish Government's aim is that everyone who wants to can access and share in the cultural experiences that Scotland has to offer. Creative Scotland has put equality at the heart of its activities and aims to address barriers to full inclusion in the arts. The National Performing Companies should be able to continue some of their participation initiatives - for example, targeted reduced price tickets. Similarly, Historic Scotland will aim to protect its frontline services across Scotland, including delivering outreach programmes for schools in areas of multiple disadvantage.
> Within the National Performing Companies and National Collections, savings may result in a reduction in outreach and educational activities aimed at diverse communities. Similarly, the savings

[23] Ibid http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/documents/Statistical%20Report%20-%202010-11 09%20Renaissance%20Q1%202010-11%20FINAL.pdf
[24] Since April 2008, local authorities in the United Kingdom are required to report on national indicators of performance. Museums, libraries and archives can demonstrate their contribution to two key indicators for Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) by increasing attendance and participation:
NI 9 Use of public libraries (DCMS Departmental Strategic Objective)
NI 10 Visits to museums or galleries (DCMS Departmental Strategic Objective)
[25] http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/documents/Statistical%20Report%20-%202011-01-06%20Renaissance%20Q2%202010-11%20FINAL(1).pdf
Research Briefing 4: Increasing Attendance and Participation Ailbhe Mc Nabola 18 December, 2008 http://research.mla.gov.uk/.
[26] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/11/17115419/3

in culture discretionary funding may impact on equality groups including previous funding recipients and, for example, audiences in community activities.

Barriers to participation

While there are a lot of reports about the value of inclusivity and legal and policy documents around this, there is much less evidence for appropriate actions to increase participation among different user and non-user groups.

It is important to understand why people are excluded - or may choose to exclude themselves - from cultural offers. For example, around 20% of people surveyed in England[27] were non-users who were indifferent to – or even hostile to - the cultural offering, with negative preconceptions or attitudes towards culture.

Other groups could be considered as lapsed users. These people do not currently involve themselves in culture, but are not negative to culture and would like to participate more if certain barriers were removed, or more encouragement given.

Other people could be described as 'new audience' and these are those people who have never tried cultural experiences and therefore do not hold either a negative or positive view of its value.

The research around the Find Your Talent programme[28] that aimed at a universal cultural offer of five hours per week identified four key groups of young people:

- Those people already regularly engaging and getting more than five hours;
- Those people engaging, but require more, and higher quality exposure;
- Those people not engaging but keen to engage;
- Those people not engaging and not keen to engage.

The factors identified that prevent participation included:

- Transport (especially for young people and old people)
- Group participation (everyone likes to participate as a group or at least with another person)
- Fear of crime (many people will not attend cultural places for fear of bullying or being a victim of crime)
- Education (hard to participate if you are not educated to feel comfortable with culture)
- Integrated services (people want to 'do culture' in the places where they have other leisure activities, i.e. entertainment precincts, shopping centres, sports events, schools health care, social care)

Other reasons given for simply not participating in culture included:

- Not interesting
- No time
- No need to go

[27] Find Your Talent Evaluation Report , The evaluation was undertaken by SQW Consulting, Ipsos MORI with Karl Ashworth and Wafer Hadley and reported in February 2011.
http://www.artscampaign.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=150:190210item2&Itemid=97
[28] http://www.findyourtalent.org/sites/default/files/FYT%20exec%20summary_LONG_SQW_revised_101209_0.pdf

According to the Taking Part survey, the lowest attendance rates are seen among adults in the oldest and youngest age groups, adults from an Asian background, and adults with no qualifications.[29] Studies[30] indicate that disadvantaged young people also face fewer opportunities to access culture (according to their own perception, this would be mainly for lack of time, lack of money or geographical limitations).

Find Your Talent[31] programme research (2010) found that the groups of young people most likely to miss out on culture were:

- Young Offenders
- Looked After Children
- Special Educational Needs
- Gender (boys)
- Not in Education or Employment
- Rural and isolated
- Teenage parents

This lack of equity of access is also supported by the MLA research that showed the higher an individuals' social class, household income and education level, the more likely they are to visit museums and galleries. The research also shows that those who were taken by their parents to museums as a child had significantly higher recent attendance rates that those who were not taken as a child (53% and 29% respectively). Repeat visiting is an important factor. Interestingly, though, non-white adults are more likely to be library users than white adults.[32]

So What Works?

While there are numerous examples of good and bad practice in cultural inclusion, in a simple sense, success appears to be a product of increasing the levels of both relevance and participation.

Culturally relevant[33], though not necessarily culturally specific, content has been shown to drive interest and engagement. Re-interpreting or re-positioning cultural services, manipulation of both the content (programming) and the context (e.g. location) of the offering, and making cultural activities social activities have all been proven to work across all groups within society. [34] Yet the definitions of cultural relevance are not fixed and can vary according to:

- Relevance to the nation
- Relevance to the community
- Relevance to the individual

Even under these three areas, the question is then relevance in what way? For example, relevance can be defined by artistic relevance, economic relevance, educational relevance, spiritual relevance and so on. With so many possible variables, the challenges in predicting

[29] Research Briefing – Increasing Attendance and Participation http://research.mla.gov.uk
[30] Access of Young People to Culture Final Report EACEA/2008/01 (OJ 2008/S 91-122802) p 9
[31] http://www.findyourtalent.org/sites/default/files/FYT%20exec%20summary_LONG_SQW_revised_101209_0.pdf
[32] Based on analysis of Library Non-Users (2008) http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/documents/non%20use% ibid http://research.mla.gov.uk
[33] http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/documents/MLA%20Research%20Briefing%204%20-%20Participation%2019_01_09.pdf
[34] Full House: Turning Data into Audiences (2006) http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/publications/market_and_audience_development/full_house2

relevance and participation levels are costly and often result in wasted resources. What counts as 'relevant culture' within Europe is being constantly redefined and while countries such as Denmark[35] and Belgium try to capture an agreed definition of relevance via cultural 'cannons', the concept of relevance remains as elusive and contested as ever. Furthermore, the question of relevance cannot be decided solely by expert opinion, but rather it must also involve the active input and consent of the citizen. There is however, a different view: 'Culture is not an autonomous realm of words, things, beliefs and values. It is not an objective body of facts to be transmitted to passive receivers. It is lived and experienced; it is about producing representations, creating versions, taking a position, and arguing a point of view.'[36]

The term "culture" – as predominantly used in the present discourse – is still implicitly related to the provision of appropriate programmes of professional cultural institutions. This implies an image of society in which there is "culture" encapsulated in particular institutions and somewhere else there are people trying (or not trying) to get access to this kind of "culture". There is also another notion of "culture" as an attribution to capacitate all human beings to act as cultural subjects and by that to contribute in what we might call a "common culture". If we can follow this concept, then the task for "widening access to culture" is slightly changed from not only giving access to a selected number of (publicly funded) cultural institutions" to more "enabling people to articulate and to express different cultures in different environments".

Such a political intention is – at least partly – formulated in the "Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 18 December 2006[37], on key competences for lifelong learning": One of the key competences "cultural awareness and expression" involves not only the appreciation of the common European heritage (to be found in professional cultural institutions) but equally the importance of the creative (self-)expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media (music, performing arts, literature, and the visual arts).

In general, participation in artistic activities tends to be lower than cultural consumption.[38] Participation goes beyond merely attending cultural events to be creators, constructors and/or active participants in artistic and cultural activities. It is important to separate cultural consumption from cultural participation. There is a qualitative difference between taking part and observing and consuming culture. Both have value and merit, but as experiences, they are fundamentally different and this difference needs to be reflected in meeting the obligations of providing cultural experiences. Additionally, we can see the need for readjustment of cultural policy from production to reception, from supply to demand. This means to develop a new interest not only for artists and arts institutions but equally for (potential) recipients, audiences, listeners, visitors, consumers.

[35] In April 2005, the Danish Minister of Culture, Brian Mikkelsen, appointed 7 canon committees corresponding to the 7 main art forms within the Ministry's remit: literature, music, performing arts, film, architecture, visual arts, design and crafts. These committees were responsible for selecting works to be included in the *Danish Cultural Canon* (http://www.kum.dk/kulturkanon/english).The *Danish Cultural Canon* was published and circulated by the Ministry in 2006-2007. It was created as "a collection and presentation of the greatest, most important works of Denmark's cultural heritage".
[36] E Hooper-Greenhill (2000), *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, Routledge, London p19
[37] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0010:0018:en:PDF
[38] European Commission, "European Cultural Values", *Special Eurobarometer*, 278 (2007)

There is evidence of differentiation in the drivers of participation amongst different groups within society[39]. Research on raising demand for cultural activities shows that certain approaches work across the sector: re-interpreting and re-positioning cultural services, outreach (tapping into the demand for local activities), education[40], using cultural ambassadors and involving representatives of target groups, consultation and community engagement, tapping into existing social networks, manipulation of content (reflecting the interests of particular groups, using content that engages children) and of context (taking culture out of its traditional setting or bringing social activities into the cultural space), and making the cultural offering a social activity or experience.[41]

The most recent data from "A Night Less Ordinary" (a programme to provide free tickets to young adult audiences up to 26 years of age) showed that there were high levels of seasonal variation in the take up of tickets (participation). These fluctuations coincided with university and school holiday periods with the highest take-up during vacations (up to 91.7%) and the lowest take up in term time (61.1%). Unfortunately, the vacation period was also when the lowest number of free tickets was made available as venues could be sure of full (paying) audiences at these times.

The 2010 Taking Part survey (sample size 24,224) showed that 67.5% of people had participated in some cultural activity in the past 12 months. Cinemas were the highest level of participation (and rising) and ballet was the lowest level (and declining). There was a strong positive influence on cinema attendance with the greatest growth in 3D movies or movies with advanced technical attributes. The impact of technology suggests that new media and online services might be a way to boost participation levels. Similarly, cross genre experiences tend to be more popular and the networked information economy propels the emergence of a new popular culture that is inhabited actively, particularly by young people. The networked information economy is a major new factor, in terms of the political economy of culture and its transformative impacts on the very notions of 'access' and 'participation'.

The Internet has provided a plethora of knowledge and digital learning to take place in formal and informal educational institutions. It has also enabled both learners and audiences to be mobile in their engagement. Yet, participation and integration of web 2.0 technologies has yet to be adopted extensively by many cultural institutions to enable greater collaboration with an outside audience.

The 2009 Round Table on access to culture set out a set of conditions[42] that promote cultural access including:

- Infrastructure
- Communication protocols
- Open licence
- Economic conditions (time and free access)
- Language
- Plurality of sources

[39] Renaissance Museums (2007) http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/documents/whos_visiting_12749.pdf

[40] There is still a significant correlation between the level of education and the willingness to participants in cultural activities. One of the most powerful means to improve access to culture could be to increase the levels of education.

[41] Ibid http://research.mla.gov.uk

[42] Notes taken from 2009, Round table 1: Towards equality of access: The ethical issues regarding access to information, knowledge and culture by Jean-Gabriel Ganascia, Professor at the University Pierre et Marie Curie (Paris IV)(France) http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/26955/12121602813RptTr1_en.pdf/RptTr1_en.pdf

- Confidence
- Information

Looking at the many examples of effective practice available there appear to be qualities that work in promoting higher levels of participation, these include:

- Buddying system for 'non-users'
- Low threshold activities
- 'Significant' (memorable) experiences
- Incentivised participation
- Journey from familiar to unfamiliar
- Peers as instructors
- Differentiated offer
- Value for money/ Perceptions of value
- Awards schemes
- Real resources for equity groups to produce culture
- Methods of communication
- Linking to cycles of engagement

Recommendations

Governments do not 'deliver' culture to their citizens – they provide the conditions in which citizens create culture for themselves. Ensuring access to the many facets of culture on the part of the largest number of people involves not only opening the doors of cultural organisations, but ensuring that citizens have an equal capacity to make choices.

While case studies of good practice provide practical ways for organisations to increase access to culture, the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) suggests the importance of intergovernmental cooperation. Given the recent importance of the creative industries and the growing contribution to the EU countries' respective GDPs, there is considerable scope for cooperation in this area. This cooperation is not least warranted as the individual member-states evidently follow the same policy goals. OMC in the area of arts and culture would also enable the individual governments to learn from each other and to share best-practice methods. By using the OMC mechanism, the countries will be able to avoid duplication, transpose guidelines into national and regional policies and agree specific benchmarks and indicators to measure best practice are agreed upon. Finally, results are monitored and evaluated. Efforts in the cultural field should be coordinated with social, educational, and economic activities…The work can be furthered by the development of local partnerships in which members of different fields collaborate.[43]

There is a clear lack of strategic approach to inclusive cultural polices in a large majority of Member States[44]

"It is particularly striking that nothing is said in any of the NAPs about the significa nt contributions that cultural and creative activity can make to two very important asp ects of tackling poverty and social exclusion: promoting the regeneration of disadvanta ged areas and helping people experiencing exclusion to gain the skills and self confid ence to express themselves and to participate more fully in economic and social life."

[43] http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/files/9/en/Interarts-Immigration-CulturalPolicies.pdf p 3

[44] Report on the "Analysis of the National Action Plans on Social Inclusion (2004-2006) submitted by the 10 new Member States"

[45] This lack of clarity is evident in determining the aims of cultural policy when it addresses widening access to culture. Additionally, the research base is fragmented and difficult to navigate. Studies posing as 'evidence' or 'research' are often actually advocacy. These issues around definition and evidence make inter-country comparisons about access and participation difficult. A holistic approach is needed that synthesizes research, professional training, policy, education and the arts to address the question of 'widening access to culture' – a culture that is not only about the art of the past, but the creativity of the future.

Studies have demonstrated that 5% to 10% of EU structural funds[46] goes to culture. No data is available however on how much of this amount go to cultural projects with a social inclusion purpose. There is a notable gap and a lack of political and public debate on and between principles and commitments, and everyday practices of fostering access to culture.[47] In Europe 2020[48], only Austria and Belgium integrated a consequent strand on access to culture in their programmes; while Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, and Germany take culture into account but to a lesser extent. Sweden mentions intercultural issues; Poland and Slovakia mention cultural rights; whereas the programmes of Lithuania and Luxembourg involve in a way or another their Cultural Ministries. All remaining Member States do not refer to the cultural dimension of social exclusion at all.

Key recommended actions:

1. Conduct an audit of the presence of culture within distinct policy areas such as education, health, defence, justice and home affairs, external affairs and employment
2. More joined-up cooperation vertically as well as horizontally between different pillars of the EU communities e.g. local, regional, national and community levels as well as between different policy areas
3. Develop operational definition of 'participation' in culture to differentiate between cultural consumption and cultural production
4. Achieve a better balance between cultural 'hardware' and 'software' by developing a strategy for human capital and acquisitions
5. Adopt a flexible and open-ended definition that includes both high and every day culture and is open to new cultural impressions and external inputs

[45] Ibid p 66
[46] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0242:FIN:EN:PDF
[47] Platform on Access to Culture Policy Guidelines 2009 EU Cultural Sector: http://www.efa-aef.eu/newpublic/upload/efadoc/8/Access%20to%20Culture%20Platform%20-%20Policy%20guidelines%20-%20Final%20Unabridged%20-%20July%2009.pdf
[48] EU2020 strategy –a 'European Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' was adopted during the European Council of March 2010, and will guide EU policies and actions in the next 10 years.