

Regional Preparatory Conference (Europe and North America)
“SYNERGIES BETWEEN ARTS AND EDUCATION”
For World Conference on Arts Education

8-11 September 2005 Vilnius, Lithuania

Recommendations

Taking into account the deliberations carried out during the sessions of the Regional Preparatory Conference (Europe, North America) “Synergies between Arts and Education”, held in Vilnius, Lithuania, Sept 8-11, 2005, in preparation for the World Conference on Arts Education in Portugal in March, 2006,

we participants from 25 countries, namely, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, USA, have agreed that:

whereas engagement with cultural expression and creative activity – through fostering the process of learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together - can contribute in profound ways to the competence of human individuals to respond throughout life in confident, imaginative, entrepreneurial, ethical, reflective and generous ways to the complex challenges of the contemporary world;

and whereas arts education, through strengthening the creative, reflective and expressive process, reinforces the unique qualities of cultures, encourages adaptability, innovative vision and the sharing of knowledge, fosters social and inter-cultural understanding and respect for otherness, and contributes to the economic prosperity and physical health of societies;

we urge the delegates to the Portugal World Conference to consider adopting the following recommendations for simultaneous action:

to governments:

that, since it can be clearly shown that arts education can contribute significantly to the improvement of student performance in topics such as literacy and numeracy, as well as provide the human and social benefits identified above, arts education be given a permanent central place in the educational curriculum, funded appropriately, and staffed by teachers of appropriate quality and skill, and that partnerships among schools, artists and cultural institutions be integrated into the core educational process, that education authorities should take research into account when making funding and program decisions and that new norms of assessment of the impact of arts education be articulated;

that the training and preparation of arts teachers become a new priority within the education system, enabling them to contribute more effectively to the process of learning and cultural development, and that sensitization to these issues be part of the training of all teachers and of education actors;

that arts education be made available inside and outside schools to all individuals, whatever their abilities, needs and social, physical, mental or geographical situation;

that, recalling the principles contained in the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity, arts education be provided to indigenous peoples, including indigenous children, in a manner

appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning, accessible in their own languages;

to governments and UNESCO:

that urgent priority be given to the need to advocate the importance of arts education, in order to generate a better understanding and deeper recognition of the essential contributions made by arts education to individuals and society, and that governments at every level join forces with educators, artists, NGOs, lobby groups, members of the business community, the labour movement and members of civil society to create specific advocacy action plans and messages;

that the growing understanding of this importance be translated into the commitment of resources sufficient to translate principles into action, in order to create a greater awareness of the benefits of arts and creativity for all and support for the implementation of a new vision for arts and learning;

to UNESCO:

that an international data-base of research on this topic be established, to provide scientifically sound evidence of the individual and social significance of arts education and creative involvement, including but not limited to such areas as the development of the integrated human being, social cohesion, conflict resolution, public health and the use of new technologies in creative expression in the schools; and that international networks to facilitate regional cooperation and sharing of best practices in implementing arts education policies be put into action;

that, to reflect the important contributions that arts education can offer to all areas of society, UNESCO identify arts and education as one of its major sectoral cross-cutting strategies, linking it, with appropriate resources, to related areas such as Education for All and Education for Sustainable Development,

and further that UNESCO by example and by exhortation actively encourage governments and other agencies to facilitate collaboration among ministries, departments, cultural institutions, NGOs and arts professionals, emphasizing the need for bottom-up strategies that empower and validate practical, grassroots initiatives.