

Bonn Declaration

Background

In May 2011, the European Music Council (EMC) invited actors¹ from the field of music education to discuss the implementation of the UNESCO *Seoul Agenda. Goals for the Development of Arts Education*². The main task of the seminar was to explore how the Seoul agenda can be adapted to music education in Europe.

The Bonn Declaration reflects common focal points for the development of music education in Europe. It acknowledges the principle of subsidiarity and calls upon political decision makers at local, regional, national and European level to define common policies that promote the development of music education in Europe at all levels and to put these policies into practice.

The participants of the seminar agree that it is vital to recognize the value of music education in Europe for the cohesion of the European societies in the 21 century

The Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education reflects the conviction [...] that arts education has an important role to play in the constructive transformation of educational systems that are struggling to meet the needs of learners in a rapidly changing world characterized by remarkable advances in technology on the one hand and intractable social and cultural injustices on the other.

Issues [...] included [...] were peace, cultural diversity and intercultural understanding as well as the need for a creative and adaptive workforce in the context of post industrial economies.

[...] Arts education can make a direct contribution to resolving the social and cultural challenges facing the world today.

Seoul Agenda, introduction

Introductory Remark

The three goals of the Seoul Agenda are highly interlinked and cover important aspects of arts education. The Bonn Declaration reflects the arguments of the Seoul Agenda and gives interpretations of the three goals placing its own emphasis on the goals.

¹ Over 40 representatives of European music education umbrella organisations were present. The participants have a wide range of experience, e.g. formal, non-formal and informal music education, diverse musical genres and competencies of cultural and educational policies at national and European level. A list of signatories to the declaration is attached

² http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/files/41117/12798106085Seoul_Agenda_Goals_for_the_Development_of_Arts_Education.pdf/Seoul%2BAgenda_Goals%2Bfor%2Bthe%2BDevelopment%2Bof%2BArts%2BEducation.pdf

Goal 1: Access

Ensure that arts education is accessible as a fundamental and sustainable component of a high quality renewal of education

Under goal 1, the Bonn Declaration focuses on the aspect of providing “access to music education”, it looks at the precondition of the places where music education takes place and asks if they reflect the needs of the learners and if they are open to all that wish to learn and participate in music education.

Access to music education and active music participation is a human right which has to be ensured for people of all ages and all backgrounds in Europe guaranteeing that all citizens are given the right to express themselves freely through artistic means. This is in accordance with the Five Musical Rights³ of the International Music Council (IMC). Therefore:

- Music education must be a continuous, joined-up process from birth, through childhood and into adult life.
- Music education including participatory approaches must be a compulsory aspect of the curriculum in all European schools.
- Non formal and informal music education offers have to be recognized including an increased visibility of these projects
- Music education must be practiced in a variety of settings in order to reach the largest possible number of people. Formal, informal and non-formal methods must be used within the general school system, in specialised musical and artistic institutions, in the local community and in a wide range of non-artistic settings, for instance business, industry and social work.
- Opportunities and structures must be created but also barriers removed so that it is possible for anyone, irrespective of their age or social circumstances, to participate in music education.
- Music education must reflect the diversity of the society in which we live and must incorporate societal and technological developments.
- Cross curricular projects need to be developed, including interdisciplinary arts experiences as well as co-operation with non artistic disciplines

³ The Five Musical Rights:

the right for all children and adults

- to express themselves musically in full freedom;
- to learn musical languages and skills;
- to have access to musical involvement through participation, listening, creation and information;

the right for musical artists

- to develop their artistry and communicate through all media, with appropriate facilities at their disposal;
- to obtain fair recognition and remuneration for their work.

Goal 2: Quality

Assure that arts education activities and programmes are of a high quality in conception and delivery

Under goal 2, the Bonn Declaration focuses on the basic requirements how to reach high quality in music education. It is examined how training institutions for educators and educators themselves meet the quality demands. Educators include music teachers, general teachers and pedagogues in formal, non-formal and informal settings.

A high quality of music education contributes to the personal development, therefore:

- High quality music education practitioners (music teachers in general schools, music educators in non formal and informal education settings) need to be involved already in music education at the earliest stage (pre-kindergarten and pre-school education) and included in all steps of music education of the life long learning cycle.
- All musicians that enter into music education must receive the necessary social and pedagogical training, ideally this is included as a compulsory element in the professional formation of the musician. Likewise, all education professionals should receive musical training in order to understand the value of music.
- Music Teacher Training:
 - must be modernised and equip the teachers with the most up-dated methods and tools
 - Learning outcomes of music teacher training should be used as a tool for the (re)development of curricula
 - The status of the music teacher and music educators must be raised.
- Continued professional development must be offered to all music education practitioners
- High quality evaluation systems need to be established for all levels of music education (higher education, music in schools, non formal and informal sectors) in order to ensure the development of innovative pedagogies that will engage a diversity of learners. These systems shall include criteria for defining the learning outcomes as well as the teaching.⁴
- A shared understanding of quality between the different educational settings should be developed
- Cooperation between formal education institutions and non formal and informal music educations settings should be increased and partnerships, e.g. between musicians and teachers encouraged
- The exchange of best practices at local, national and international level needs to be enforced

⁴ On learning outcomes in the higher music education sector, please see the AEC studies at: <http://www.bologna-and-music.org/home.asp?id=1769&lang=en>

Goal 3: Social and Cultural Challenges

Apply arts education principles and practices to contribute to resolving the social and cultural challenges facing today's world

Under goal 3, the Bonn Declaration reflects the interdependence of the individual and the society, it focuses on the extrinsic values of music and music education and re-emphasises the potential of music for social responsibility and intercultural dialogue.

Cultural diversity is a reality in all European countries. The promotion of diversity and dialogue between cultures needs the recognition and the consideration of all musical cultures without hegemony. The intrinsic value of music needs to be respected: Music is a powerful tool for the inclusion of people that are excluded for whatever reason (gender, age, socially, economically, culturally, etc.), and it may serve as a tool for building bridges and for meeting the social and cultural challenges of European societies, therefore:

- Music education must be context-driven and take into account the changes in society
- Intercultural and socio-cultural training should be integrated in the training of all musicians and music education practitioners at all levels. Likewise workers from other disciplines should receive training in music in order to facilitate cross-over between sectors. They must be exposed to music to fully understand its value.
- Social and cultural challenges must be addressed by a variety of disciplines and cooperation between the cultural, educational and other sectors must be strengthened.
- The debate about the dichotomy of inclusion and quality has to be open; it is important to define the goals of a music project with social implications: the questions which skills are the focus of the project (artistic or social skills) should be addressed
- Music education institutions in the formal sector and organisations offering non-formal music education should offer more activities which are aimed at resolving the social and cultural challenges
- To be able to react on latest trends and to be up-to-date, music education institutions in formal, non-formal and informal settings should have appropriate facilities at hand including digital and music technology equipment
- Research as well as good practice examples need to be made available which proves the fact that music education helps to resolve cultural and social challenges

Recommendations to political decision makers at local, national and European level:

Governments and Legislation need to ensure:

- music education in the formal, non formal, and informal education settings because cultural diversity as well as participatory music education are essential for successful
- public funding for formal, non-formal and informal music education in order to ensure that music education is accessible for all
- the affordability of music education for all from all societal backgrounds, therefore grants must be made available in order to avoid elitism.
- the diversity of learning, from the concept of “music education for all” to a high level of professionalism
- sufficient funding for the provision of appropriate, high quality and up-to-date teacher training.
- high quality of the education of the educators. If music education is taken seriously, the music education practitioners must have adequate training in music
- the continuous professional training of the music education practitioners, also after having received their professional degree
- sufficient funding for both projects highlighting the social benefits of music-making and those supporting traditional music education
- sustainable funding and legislation for quality assurance and evaluation, which give important information on the social impact of music education.
- cross-over funding for multi-sector projects i.e. health, welfare, development etc.
- sustainability in its funding practices and create a balance between long-term structural funding and short-term project funding, this includes core funding to bodies organising activities in the field of music in order to be able to offer good quality education