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History of Changes

Chapters	Changes
1	We explicated the purpose of the WP1 and hence the deliverable: what was not included
1.2	The introduction of the contents was updated
2.1	We shared concrete experiences of dialogic working practices
3-10	Two new subchapters at the end of each chapter were created: 1) consortium partner's comment on the analysis and 2) commentaries by the non-academic partners and associated partners in response to the policy analyses in each country
13-19	Two new subchapters at the end of each chapter were created: 1) consortium partner's comment on the analysis and 2) commentaries by the non-academic partners and associated partners in response to the curriculum analyses in each country
20	The text was re-written
several	We changed phrasing and paid more attention to problems, contradictions and shortcomings in the data to make the analysis more coherent and demonstrate a critical analytical approach
several	The typos mentioned in the feedback have been corrected.
2.1	We added explanation on the contributions of the commentaries by the non-academic and associated partners.
11, 12, 20, 21, 22	We added introductory paragraphs to explain the rationale of the chapters.
9, 18	We revised phrasing to align the tone with other sections, removed off-topic, unsourced and opinion-heavy passages, including content inconsistent with the project's inclusion aims, and added a short evidenced synthesis.
4, 13	We reduced first-person and evaluative phrasing to align the tone with other sections.
several	We reviewed sections relying on personal opinion and strengthened the analytical voice and robustness of argument, in line with the second review.
several	We corrected the final typos identified in the second review, except one suggested change within a verbatim quotation from the official English translation of the Norwegian curriculum (retained as published).

Abstract

This analysis has been conducted as part of Work Package 1, Tasks 1.2 and 1.3, within the dialoguing@rts (d@rts) *Advancing Cultural Literacy for Social Inclusion through Dialogical Arts Education* project, funded by the Horizon Europe.

The aim of the Task 1.2 was to analyse how the roles, understandings and mutual relations of cultural literacy learning and performing arts are articulated in curricula, using current national or regional curricula for pre-primary, primary, secondary, tertiary and non-formal education in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Serbia, and Uganda. T1.3 investigated the roles, understandings and mutual relations of cultural literacy, social cohesion and inclusion, and the position of performing arts in this context in policy frameworks regarding education and culture. The data consists of European, national, regional, and organisational policy documents in the seven consortium countries as well as the Council of Europe and the European Union. The analysis also focused on relevant policy frameworks produced by NGOs representing the d@rts target groups.

The analysis focuses on the core concepts of the d@rts project: cultural literacy, social cohesion, inclusion, and performing arts education. These concepts form the conceptual framework utilised in the policy and curriculum analyses. A decolonial lens provided by the d@rts project was used in the analysis. This data-driven qualitative analysis applied a conceptual approach, paying attention to the multiple uses and interpretations of concepts as well as interconceptualisations of cultural literacy, social cohesion, inclusion and education in performing arts. As such, it produces an overview of cultural and education policies and curricula in Europe and beyond. It provides up-to-date knowledge about the roles of performing arts education and cultural literacy learning in them as well as how questions of cohesion and inclusion are perceived in this context.

The analysis reveals that cultural literacy is not an established concept in education and cultural fields, but it is implicitly discussed through other terms. The focus of cultural literacy learning was frequently, especially in the curricula, on the individual learner rather than on the collective level. One of the conclusions of the analysis is that to create cohesion and inclusion and combat fragmentation and polarisation, cultural literacy should be understood as a collective competence operating at organisational and societal level.

Emphasising interaction in the context of cultural diversity implies a central position of dialogue, which is a core element of cultural literacy as understood in d@rts. However, the related inequalities and power relations were often not comprehensively addressed in the data, which constrains cultural literacy learning. The analysis concludes that there is a need to proceed from celebrating diversity to learning to construct new shared meanings, actions and ways of knowing in the context of cultural plurality. Moreover, the contribution of performing arts education to cultural literacy learning should be specified and strengthened.

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1. Introduction

Katja Mäkinen and Kristie Mortimer

> Cultural diversity, flourishing within a framework of democracy, tolerance, social justice and mutual respect between peoples and cultures, is indispensable for peace and security at the local, national and international levels. (UNESCO, 2005, p. 2)

"[C]ultural diversity is a defining characteristic of humanity", as the opening phrase of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005, p. 1) states. The Convention aims at encouraging dialogue "with a view to ensuring wider and balanced cultural exchanges in the world in favour of intercultural respect and a culture of peace" and "to develop cultural interaction in the spirit of building bridges among peoples" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 6). Diversity has gained increasing attention in the policy frameworks from international and European to national and local levels. For example, the notion of intercultural dialogue has been proposed as a tool for diversity policy (Council of Europe, 2008; European Commission, 2017; UNESCO, 2018; Voices of Culture [VoC], 2016a).

It is important to bear in mind that culture is always hybrid: it has been and is constantly evolving through interaction. Hence also societies are plural from the outset. Plurality is necessary for democracy to function, and it is an asset that supports economy and enriches societies, but prejudiced, discriminative and mono-cultural attitudes and practices attempt to prevent it. These attempts cause exclusion, inequality, insecurity, polarisation and fragmentation, which is why diversity needs active maintaining and defending.

Education is a powerful tool for enhancing cultural diversity in a way that gets closer to the goals of peace and security set out in the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. It is through education that constructive and dialogical relations can be practised to create conditions for "democracy, tolerance, social justice and mutual respect between peoples and cultures" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 2) in various contexts and levels, starting from the school environment. For example, the Council of Europe has developed the idea of intercultural competence in the field of education (Huber, 2012; Huber & Reynolds, 2014). In the EU key competences for Lifelong Learning framework, "intercultural skills are embedded throughout the key competences" (European Commission, 2019, p. 5). The Cultural Awareness and Expression Competence, included in the framework, relates closely to several elements of cultural literacy (European Commission, 2019, p. 14).

The *Framework for Culture and Arts Education*, released by UNESCO in 2024, mentions promoting cultural diversity, intercultural understanding and respect as well as social cohesion as a task of education. It emphasises that education must enhance "the knowledge and the appreciation of cultural diversity, human rights, intercultural understanding and respect, social cohesion, conflict prevention, and post-conflict reconciliation and healing through culture and the arts" (UNESCO, 2024, p. 5).

The framework advocates the role of culture and the arts in education and lifelong learning, underlining how "learning in, through and with culture and the arts can develop a broad range

of cognitive, social and emotional, and behavioural skills, strengthen holistic learning and sensitivity to the natural environment, as well as foster intercultural dialogue, cooperation and understanding, which are critical to sustainably address global challenges and transformation processes" (UNESCO, 2024, p. 3).

Researchers have scrutinised how the idea of cultural literacy can be used in strengthening competences in operating in culturally diverse contexts and how cultural literacy learning can be supported through arts-based practices (Lähdesmäki et al., 2022). While there is ample evidence of the potential of performing arts education to advance intercultural competence (Mortimer et al., 2024), there is thus far no research on how the contribution of performing arts education to cultural literacy learning is addressed in education and cultural policies and curricula.

To understand how performing arts education can promote cultural literacy and advance social cohesion and inclusion requires investigation of cultural and educational policies and curricula. These lay the foundation for implementing cultural literacy learning and are central to enhancing social cohesion and inclusion, constructive interaction, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence in today's culturally diverse societies. This analysis on the interconnections of cultural literacy, performing arts and social cohesion and inclusion has therefore been conducted as part of Work Package 1, Tasks 1.2 and 1.3, within the dialoguing@rts (d@rts) *Advancing Cultural Literacy for Social Inclusion through Dialogical Arts Education* project, funded by Horizon Europe.

The aim of Task 1.2 was to analyse how the roles, understandings and mutual relations of cultural literacy learning and performing arts are articulated in curricula, using current national or regional curricula for early childhood, primary, secondary, higher and non-formal education in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Serbia, and Uganda.

T1.3 investigated the roles, understandings and mutual relations of cultural literacy, social cohesion and inclusion, and the position of performing arts in this context in education and cultural policy frameworks. The data consists of European, national, regional, and organisational policy documents in the seven consortium countries as well as the Council of Europe and the European Union. The analysis also focused on relevant policy frameworks produced by NGOs representing the d@rts target groups.

The purpose of the tasks 1.2 and 1.3 – and hence this deliverable – is not to study the roles of various actors below the national/regional level, since other work packages in d@rts focus on them. Neither is implementation of curricula or policies analysed. Curriculum and policy implementation and organisational practices is primarily the focus of WPs 2 and 3. However, policy documents produced by NGOs, included in our analysis, offer glimpses on actors and activities in the field of performing arts education and cultural literacy learning. Similarly, the commentaries written by the non-academic and associated partners at the end of the analysis chapters provide perspectives from the field.

This analysis will be useful for policy makers and those involved in the design and revision processes of policies and curricula at different levels. Within d@rts, it informs actions in the other work packages. It will be utilised for designing a novel analytical framework (WP1, task 1.4, deliverable 1.3) to be used in the other work packages and beyond d@rts. It will provide

contextual information and insights for conducting surveys in WP2, ethnographic research in WP3, and innovative actions in WP4. Data collection and results of D1.2 contribute to the development of the Portfolio of Collective Competences in WP5. Furthermore, WP1 provides a basis for making policy recommendations in WP7 about improving cultural literacy learning. The analysis promotes research in the field by producing an overview of cultural and education policies and curricula in Europe and beyond and up-to-date knowledge about the roles of performing arts education and cultural literacy learning in them, as well as how questions of cohesion and inclusion are perceived in this context. It helps to find answers, in d@rts and beyond, to the question: How can performing arts education in formal and non-formal contexts reimagine cultural literacy as a dialogical practice that enhances social cohesion and inclusion?

1.1 Theoretical Background

Because the policies and curricula analysed in this deliverable are embedded in the institutional and cultural contexts in each country, the consortium partners collected and analysed policy documents in their own countries to ensure the expertise of contexts and languages. The authors of the analyses in each country come from diverse disciplinary and geo-political backgrounds. For these reasons, we decided to make a data-driven qualitative analysis. However, the literature review – d@rts task 1.1, deliverable D1.1 (Mortimer et al., 2024) – submitted by WP1 in August 2024, provides shared perspectives for all the authors and thus forms the theoretical background for this deliverable. The next task (T1.4) of WP1 is to design a novel analytical framework, drawing on multiple sources of knowledge from various work packages. D1.1 and D1.2 will play a central role in providing key insights for its development. Therefore, it was not appropriate to determine any rigid framework during this analysis process. Instead, we wanted to analyse the policies and curricula with a data-driven approach – however acknowledging that our lenses are shaped by previous research and other forms of knowledge we have gained so far during and before the d@rts project. The idea was that different approaches and interpretations can be weaved into the common knowledge production. At the end of each policy and curriculum analysis, the authors reflect the results in the light of the literature review (D1.1) and the decolonial analytical framework that was produced as one of the first steps towards the novel analytical framework in the task (T1.4).

The analysis focuses on the core concepts of the d@rts project: cultural literacy, social cohesion, inclusion, and performing arts education. These concepts form the conceptual framework utilised in the policy and curriculum analyses. They are therefore briefly introduced here based on the D1.1.

1.1.1 Cultural Literacy

In the context of d@rts, *cultural literacy* is understood as a dialogical practice which emphasises the dynamic, interactive process of engaging with others across perceived cultural boundaries (Maine et al., 2019). Cultural literacy moves beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge, to an active, ongoing exchange that shapes understanding, relationships, and mutual respect. This aligns with the understanding that “cultural identities and heritages are fluid and pluralistic in modern society” (Maine et al., 2019, p. 384). Cultural literacy therefore

encompasses the ability to communicate effectively across perceived cultural differences, negotiate meanings, and foster empathy, tolerance, and inclusion (Lähdesmäki et al., 2022).

Central to the understanding of cultural literacy in the d@rts project is the dialogic practices of engaging with others to explore cultural values, heritages, knowledges, and identities, thus transforming it into a practice of mutual understanding and meaning-making (Maine et al., 2019). These dialogic practices within the context of cultural literacy include verbal and non-verbal means of communication, as well as embodied ways of knowing. In the context of d@rts, cultural literacy as a dialogue can occur through performing arts, where participation in music, drama, and dance education creates space for intercultural dialogue (Dyson, 2019).

Cultural literacy education involves the incorporation of cultural literacy principles/practices into education settings (formal, non-formal, and informal contexts). In the context of d@rts, cultural literacy education may utilise performing arts as a medium to introduce people to traditions, foster connections, address shared concerns, adapt and transition traditional practices, and encourage meaningful dialogue across communities and generations. Maine et al. (2019) describe cultural literacy as a "pedagogy where dialogue is actively encouraged and solutions are not neatly sought, but alternative perspectives are appreciated and included as positive" (p. 390). Cultural literacy education therefore promotes shared understanding and respect among diverse groups by engaging learners in collaborative and reflective activities and processes that value cultural diversity (Kobakhidze, 2021; UNESCO, 2013).

1.1.2 Social Inclusion

Drawing on the d@rts literature review, the term *social inclusion* is understood as a dynamic and multidimensional concept deeply interwoven with cultural and social practices. We draw on the following definition from the d@rts proposal:

> **Social inclusion:** Social inclusion is about equal participation of individuals and groups in the social, economic, political, and cultural life of the communities and societies (Lähdesmäki et al., 2022). Elements contributing to social inclusion include access to social goods and services, resource allocation, empowerment, participation in decision-making, institutional trust, justice, recognition, self-determination, and solidarity. (d@rts consortium, 2023, p. 2)

Social inclusion is framed as a practice and process that seeks to ensure equitable participation, representation, and access for all individuals in cultural, social, and educational spaces (Salgado & Patuzzi, 2022; Rinde, 2023). It emphasizes the dismantling of systemic barriers that lead to exclusion, marginalization, and inequity (Rivers, 2020). The literature highlights key ideas associated with social inclusion, such as promoting mutual respect, fostering a sense of belonging, bridging divides between cultural groups, and addressing historical injustices. Social inclusion also involves implementing culturally inclusive practices and policies, supporting marginalized groups, and creating opportunities for meaningful intercultural dialogue and collaboration. It is closely linked with cultural literacy, as fostering an understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural identities contributes to inclusive and equitable environments (Lähdesmäki et al., 2022). Furthermore, the arts play a critical role in this understanding, serving as a vehicle to express, challenge, and reshape narratives about identity and community (Coppi, 2017; Guijarro, 2018; Ntambirwa, 2022; Rivers, 2020).

1.1.3 Social Cohesion

The concept of *social cohesion* is framed by discussions emphasizing inclusivity, mutual respect, and collaboration across diverse cultural and social groups. Based on the d@rts proposal we draw on the following definition:

> **Social cohesion:** The ongoing process of developing well-being, sense of belonging, and voluntary social participation of the members of society, while developing communities that tolerate and promote a multiplicity of values and cultures, and granting at the same time equal rights and opportunities in society. (Fonseca et al., 2019, p. 247)

Drawing from the literature review, social cohesion is characterized by efforts to bridge divides between communities, promote cultural belonging, and foster equitable relationships within educational and social frameworks. It emphasizes equality, dialogue, and peaceful coexistence while acknowledging the challenges of addressing structural inequalities and exclusion. However, we acknowledge that social cohesion involves both opportunities and tensions. Social cohesion can signify shared goals and collective well-being, fostering dialogue and unity in increasingly diverse societies. Alternatively, it has been critiqued as overlooking systemic inequities and deeper socioeconomic issues, potentially leaving underlying dynamics of exclusion and marginalization unchallenged (Stead, 2017).

The arts emerge as a critical means to advance social cohesion by creating inclusive spaces for dialogue and collaboration across cultural divides (UNESCO, 2013). Performing arts such as dance, drama, and music provide opportunities for participants to engage in shared creative practices, fostering empathy and mutual understanding. Performing arts education promotes intercultural dialogue and a sense of community, even in contexts marked by trauma or cultural tensions (Banks, 2009; Rowe, 2016). Additionally, embodied, culturally sensitive pedagogies can reduce feelings of exclusion and enhance social cohesion in multicultural settings (Svendler Nielsen et al., 2020).

1.1.4 Performing Arts Education

In this context of the d@rts project, *performing arts education* is understood as practices specifically referring to music, dance, and drama/theatre, encompassing their use in formal, non-formal, and informal educational settings. In particular, we draw on the understanding that performing arts education leverages the arts as tools for learning, cultural expression, and social transformation. Performing arts education includes the teaching and facilitation of music, dance and drama skills, as well as being a medium for embodying and transmitting cultural knowledge, enabling the telling of cultural narratives, and fostering intercultural dialogue (Darder & Cronin, 2018; Joseph & Trinick, 2016; Taeao & Averill, 2021). The literature review reveals how performing arts education has the potential to create spaces for empathy and mutual understanding, promote cultural literacy, and advance social cohesion in diverse educational contexts. Additionally, it values embodied knowledge, often central to indigenous and oral traditions, which challenges the dominance of Western-centric paradigms in education (Foli, 2020; Rivers, 2020).

Our understanding is further shaped by the integration of de/post-colonial frameworks which highlight the importance of including indigenous and marginalized perspectives, recognizing

performing arts as deeply entwined with cultural identities and practices (Candusso, 2016; Mabingo, 2020). As a dialogical space, performing arts education fosters critical reflection on historical and systemic inequalities while supporting interdisciplinary learning and creativity, enabling learners to navigate and contribute to increasingly diverse societies (Prest et al., 2023). In this way, performing arts education emerges as a tool for the exchange of diverse perspectives and experiences, fostering cultural understanding, inclusion, and the development of reflective communities.

1.2 Introduction to the Contents

The next chapter of the deliverable, Chapter 2, introduces data and methods of the policy and curriculum analysis. The policy analysis begins in Chapter 3 with the examination of the education and cultural policies from the Council of Europe and the European Union. Following this, policy analyses in the seven countries are presented with one chapter per country in Chapters 4-10. Each analysis chapter ends with two reflective commentaries: the first written by another d@rts partner and the second by an actor working in the field of cultural literacy learning and performing arts education. A summarising discussion in Chapter 11 brings together the main findings in all countries.

The curricula in the seven countries are analysed in Chapters 13-19. Again, they end with reflective commentaries by another d@rts partner and an actor working in the field. Chapter 20 provides a summary of these findings. Finally, the conclusions reflect on the significance of the policy and curriculum analysis, emphasizing the need for continued scrutiny of education and cultural policies and curricula in the future.

The curriculum analyses are structured according to the levels of education. This solution improves the usability of the report for various uses and by various audiences. Since education systems vary from one country to another, the division between pre-primary–primary–secondary–tertiary education is sometimes adjusted according to the country. Under each level of education, thematic sub-sections focus on specific topics, if needed. As policy documents form a more diverse data set compared to the curricula, there is some more variation in the structure of the policy analyses. We agreed that also the length of the analyses can vary from one country to another according to the amount of data.

To make space for the voices of data, the analyses include ample data quotes as well as metatext interpreting and framing them, indicating why the quote is important for analysing the d@rts topics. Some of the documents included in the data are in English while some are in other languages. To make the original languages in which the documents were made visible, we provide the original language versions of all the direct quotes in footnotes.

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2. Methodology

Katja Mäkinen

2.1 Dialogic Working Practices

Throughout the process in T1.2 and T1.3, we sought to develop dialogic and reflective working practices. Partners collected and analysed policy documents in their own countries. Drawing upon mutual discussions and the results of T1.1, the lead partner provided a template for the analysis (see chapter 2.3). Based on individual analyses in each country/region, the lead partner collated the findings from all countries, informed by ongoing dialogic reflection and exchange among the consortium partners.

Our working practices enabled dialogue between the different tasks included in WP1. In practice, this is evident at the end of each policy and curriculum analysis, where the authors contextualise the findings in relation to the literature review (D1.1) and the decolonial analytical framework that was produced at the early stages of task T1.4.

When preparing the policy and curriculum analyses for D1.2, we used tandem work for giving feedback and asking questions that help to improve the analysis. The partners paired up and shared their drafts with each other and commented on them. The aim of this dialogue was to provide both parties with insights for refining their analyses. Reading and reflecting the partner's analysis can help identify unique aspects of one's own data or highlight gaps in the analysis. In particular, the purpose was to check, if anything was unclear for a reader who is less familiar with the context. The pairs agreed among themselves the way of giving feedback (e.g. comments and suggestions in the draft, online meeting).

For example, the teams from the universities of Hildesheim and Verona engaged in an intensive dialogic and reflective approach. The first example of their dialogue concerns the analysis of implicit assumptions within the documents. In an initial step, each team independently examined the analysis produced by its counterpart and engaged in internal discussions to reflect on it from an alternative perspective. This shift in perspective — enabled by the "external" viewpoint on a different national context — made it possible to identify several areas worthy of further exploration. For instance, the Verona team identified some aspects in the partners' analysis that would have benefited from deeper investigation, such as the need to clarify more explicitly the distribution of responsibilities between the federal and state levels, or to explain more deeply the rationale behind the selection of the documents analysed (methodological aspects that the Verona team had also encountered similarly). As a result of this process, the idea emerged to ask the Hildesheim colleagues for direct feedback on possible implicit assumptions contained in the Verona analysis, to make the work more transparent and the exchange more productive.

A second example of dialogical and reflective practice was the joint Zoom meeting, during which the two teams discussed their respective analyses. This real-time exchange offered an opportunity to clarify doubts, deepen the understanding of different interpretations of the con-

cept of cultural literacy in the two national contexts, and discuss the role attributed to the performing arts within the analysed documents. The meeting also served as a valuable occasion to reflect more consciously on integrating an intersectional perspective. Peer-to-peer dialogue supported a deeper understanding of the content, encouraged discussion on key conceptual issues, and led to the emergence of new interpretative perspectives, thereby creating a space for mutual learning.

For instance, the Verona team — also drawing on the exchange with the analysis developed by the University of Hildesheim — acknowledged the need to provide a more robust rationale for selecting the policy documents analysed and clarify the Italian context more explicitly. This context is marked by a broad, fragmented, and highly localised policy production, often lacking coherent national coordination. The comparison also offered an opportunity to reflect more deeply on the role of the Italian state in the development of educational policies — an aspect that became more evident through the dialogue with the German context.

Another example of contextual improvements after the exchanges was on the term “Kulturelle Bildung” from the German side, as the Verona team needed a background explanation on why the Hildesheim team chose to address arts education, cultural literacy, and cultural education in its original German understanding. The rationale for using “Kulturelle Bildung” was discussed thoroughly in its German context, as this often provides readers with a better understanding from a German perspective, addressing both non-formal and formal educational frameworks.

Finally, following the meeting, each group revised their own analysis. This phase went beyond simply incorporating the suggestions received; it was also influenced by how the partner team had structured and developed their work — for example, in terms of text organisation, use of key terminology, or interpretation of the role attributed to the performing arts.

The iterative and reflective nature of the process contributed to deepening mutual understanding and enhancing the overall quality of the analyses produced by both groups. The following example from the German team well illustrates this reflective revision process:

«In light of the exchange with Verona University, we have made improvements on separating federal, state and municipal level policies in our paper, as this political structure was quite interesting to our tandem partners. Understanding the complexities of power relations between these structures, we have emphasised the best practices. Verona University highlighted how advanced the state of Germany is with its barrier-free approaches, gender debates, and migration themes compared to Italy. The regional differences in educational and cultural policies were particularly intriguing. In the case of Italy, the industrial regions (North and South) exhibit substantial structural differences, whereas in Germany, the disparities between East and West remain visible today even after unification in 1990. Furthermore, the discussion overall also highlighted how intersectionality can be effective in combating discrimination in many cases».

The same pairs also wrote a reflective comment on the final versions of each others’ policy and curriculum analyses. These comments were placed at the end of each analysis chapter. Moreover, several partners had ongoing internal dialogue among the colleagues involved in the analysis.

To enhance dialogue, we agreed to share our reflections about the significance of the policy and curriculum analysis by writing about two questions:

- Why does curriculum analysis matter?
- Why does policy analysis matter?

In addition, we also reflected our findings with the help of this question:

- How do your curriculum and policy analyses look like in the light of the theoretical framework drawing from the literature review (D1.1) and the decolonial analytical framework under construction in T1.4?

These reflections can be found in the chapters 12, 21 and 22 of this deliverable.

This deliverable also enabled dialogue beyond the partners conducting the analysis. We invited actors working in the field of performing arts education and cultural literacy learning – primarily the non-academic partners and associated partners of d@rts – to write practitioner commentaries in response to the analyses. They kindly agreed to read the final versions of the analyses and write their perceptions about the policies and curricula based on their activities with the questions related to cultural literacy learning and performing arts education. The commentaries can be found at the end of each analysis chapter. They discuss how the findings about cultural literacy learning, performing arts education and inclusion and cohesion-building resonate with their experiences as experts in the field. Some of them reflect the policies and curricula while others respond to the analysis conducted in this deliverable. They all reflect the various realities of the field, providing new perspectives to the analyses and broadening the range of interpretation. The practitioner perspectives make the deliverable more multi-vocal and provide a foundation for forthcoming dialogues between researchers, practitioners and other actors in the field.

2.2 Data

The cultural and educational administration is organised in different ways in different countries and the education systems differ from one country to another. This is reflected in the data collected by the consortium partners. Due to the diversity of contexts in the seven countries, the data is rich and versatile. Instructions and reporting templates provided by the lead partner were used for data collection.

Since guidelines for cultural literacy learning are formulated in education and cultural policies, the analysis in task 1.3 focused on both fields. The consortium partners identified and gathered policy documents through online databases such as EurLex and its national variants. The data includes official governmental documents released by public authorities such as governments, parliaments and ministries at national, regional and sometimes municipal level, depending on the system of the country and the position of educational and cultural policies in it. The documents include various types of texts, such as guidelines, reports, programmes, and legal acts regulating formal and non-formal education and cultural activities. The data also includes policy recommendations, programmes, strategies and mission statements produced by non-governmental organisations. Some of the documents are released by umbrella organisations working in the field of performing arts education or associations representing the d@rts target

groups. They discuss education in performing arts and questions of inclusion and cohesion related to various d@rts target groups.

According to the division of labour between the work packages in d@rts, WP1 does not analyse internal policies of individual organizations or education institutions. Instead, the purpose of the data collection in T1.3 was to select documents that draw guidelines for cultural literacy learning at national/regional level. As such, these documents do not represent the voices of practitioners and experts operating on the ground but rather umbrella organizations or sometimes researchers or consortiums of practitioners. They are mostly not grass-roots organisations since that is not the focus of WP1.

The curricula analysed in this deliverable concern early childhood education, primary education, secondary education as well as non-formal learning environments and activities. The aim was not to collect curricula concerning individual schools or individual cities and municipalities, because other d@rts work packages will focus on those levels, but rather overarching curricula at national/regional level that lay the guidelines for the more local levels.

In most consortium countries, the national level regulations on tertiary education are very general, not touching upon the contents of education. Instead, each university and other education institutions design their own curricula. This is why higher education has been mostly excluded from this analysis. However, national guidelines for curricula on tertiary education in teacher education in performing arts exist in Norway. Since teacher education is significant for cultural literacy learning and performing arts education, the data also includes Norwegian curricula of teacher education.

In non-formal education, we sought to find curricula that focus on different age groups (children, youths, adults, senior citizens) as well as other groups defined as d@rts target groups, such as migrants, refugees and exiled people, indigenous people, LGBTQI+ groups, rural and urban poor as well as groups with special needs and/or disabilities.

The data collected for this deliverable does not include case studies and does not enable exploring curriculum and policy implementation and organizational practices. WPs 2 and 3 are primarily responsible for collecting empirical data including voices from practitioners.

Curricula and policies create webs of meanings and action and produce definitions, categorisations and namings (Shore & Wright, 1997, p. 22). As such, they influence practices through their discursive power, which various actors, however, can also resist. While policy documents and curricula reflect empirical spatial and temporal situations in which they are designed, it is important to note that they are often vision statements depicting the desired situation rather than the current realities, using optimistic and idealistic rhetoric. As a genre, curricular and policy documents lack conceptual and contextual specificity. Their rhetoric is abstract and general, and they do not discuss practical implementation of the guidelines drawn in them. As research data, they are characterised by sleek rhetoric that does not easily open itself for interpretation. All this poses challenges for analysing them critically. In the policies and curricula investigated here, all the core concepts of the d@rts project – cultural literacy, social cohesion, inclusion, and performing arts education – are mentioned but usually not defined or deeply discussed. This is why we use ample quotations from the data to show how the core topics are conceptualised.

2.3 Analysis Method

Because of the wide variety of the data and contexts, we chose from the beginning not to aim at a comparative study that would seek to analyse the data through one matrix. Instead, we applied a conceptual approach, inspired by conceptual history and conceptual research in politics. This approach pays attention to the multiple uses of concepts and acknowledges that concepts are constantly constructed and re-interpreted by various actors and are thus contingent and contradictory (Wiesner et al., 2018). It emphasises that concepts do not only describe reality but also produce it and that their changing interpretations produce institutional, political, and social changes (Koselleck, 1996). The analysis investigated how cultural literacy, social cohesion, inclusion and education in performing arts are interconceptualised with each other and with related concepts (Mäkinen, 2019).

Instead of using a common analysis matrix, we had a loose analysis template – a living document that was updated after each meeting based on the discussions among the consortium members. It was available in Teams for modifications by anyone also between meetings.

While it was rather simple to explore the discussions on performing arts in the data, other core concepts of our analysis – cultural literacy and social cohesion and inclusion – are more blurred and mutually overlapping. We therefore discussed which concepts should be taken into account in our reading. Examples of concepts related to cultural literacy include:

- cultural competence, cultural awareness, cultural understanding
- (intercultural) dialogue / interaction / communication (with people and groups across perceived differences)
- producing and interpreting (cultural) meanings
- intercultural education, intercultural competence
- cultural diversity, diversity in terms of cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious, gender and socioeconomic aspects
- openness, tolerance, respect, empathy

Examples of concepts related to social cohesion and inclusion include participation, involvement, equality, equal access, democracy, solidarity, bridging. We also found it useful to explore opposite terms such as polarization, marginalization, and inequality.

Common principles for the analysis were identified in dialogue by all partners. The first analysis round was guided by the following questions:

- How are the concepts either explicitly or implicitly defined?
- What is their conceptual context in the documents?
- What is their cultural/societal context to which they are connected in the documents?
- Who are the documents trying to influence and how?
- Who are “we” in the documents? Who are “not we”, i.e. “others”?
- What other concepts are often used in the documents?

Critical perspectives drawn from the theoretical framework provided by the literature review (D1.1) and the decolonial perspective (T1.4) guided our analysis. As mentioned in the Introduction, the findings from the literature review (D1.1) provide an overarching theoretical framework for our analysis. D1.1 gave us numerous questions that we could ask from our data in

the second round of analysis. The literature review confirmed that performing arts can make a significant contribution to cultural literacy learning and building inclusion and cohesion. Based on this result, we sought to examine whether or not the curricula and policies give the same impression and how is this contribution discussed in them. We also paid attention to the shortcomings and problems of cultural literacy learning through performing arts education in the curricula and policies. Valuable questions for the analysis – particularly for curriculum analysis – were also provided by the ongoing work in the task T1.4, providing a decolonial lens for the analysis. These questions include for example what ecologies of knowledge are represented in the curriculum and how does the curriculum seek to address plurality and ambiguity.

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A. Analysis of the Policy Documents

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3. Education and Cultural Policies at the European Level

Katja Mäkinen

The analysis in this section focuses on the education and cultural policies given by the Council of Europe (N=12) and the European Union (N=11). Even though non-legislative, they are taken into consideration in the policy design at national, regional and local levels in different countries. Thus, they lay the foundation for implementing policy and performing arts education in different education levels in formal and non-formal education. The topics of the documents reflect the research interests of d@rts and include intercultural dialogue, intercultural competence, cultural diversity, migration, social inclusion, social cohesion, equality, as well as the contribution of education, culture and the arts to these questions.

One of the European Union [EU] documents is a recommendation by the Council of the European Union [CofEU] and the others are reports and studies by or in collaboration with various working groups, published by the European Commission [EC]. Among the Council of Europe [CoE] documents, one is a recommendation of the Committee of Ministers, and the others include reports and studies made by various working groups and experts. In the documents, the ideas related to cultural literacy and social cohesion and inclusion are primarily discussed in terms of intercultural dialogue and cultural participation, which is why the analysis is structured around these notions. Particular attention is paid to the role of performing arts and performing arts education in these contexts.

3.1 Council of Europe

3.1.1 Intercultural Dialogue

Intercultural dialogue is a concept that has been strongly promoted in the policies of both Council of Europe [CoE] and European Union [EU]. *The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*, published by the CoE in 2008 is a key document in this area. The point of departure of the CoE's (2008) *White Paper on intercultural dialogue* is that cultural diversity (that is seen as rooted in the history of Europe and enhanced by globalisation) needs to be managed in a democratic manner to promote a vibrant and open society based on solidarity and inclusion of all residents. Intercultural dialogue is an approach that aims to safeguard and develop human rights, democracy and the rule of law and to promote mutual understanding and respect for the equal dignity of every individual. It seeks to prevent discrimination and ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural divides.

In the context of learning and teaching intercultural competences, the White Paper mentions performing arts as a channel of learning appreciation of social and cultural diversity: "Appreciation of different expressions of creativity, including artefacts, symbols, texts, objects, dress

and food should be incorporated into learning about one another. Music, art and dance can be powerful tools for intercultural education" (CoE, 2008, p. 44).

Arts and cultural activities are seen as useful for connecting people across perceived borders and making space for dialogue.

> Cultural activities can provide knowledge of diverse cultural expressions and so contribute to tolerance, mutual understanding and respect. Cultural creativity offers significant potential for enhancing the respect of otherness. The arts are also a playground of contradiction and symbolic confrontation, allowing for individual expression, critical self-reflection and mediation. They thus naturally cross borders and connect and speak directly to people's emotions. Creative citizens, engaged in cultural activity, produce new spaces and potential for dialogue. (CoE, 2008, p. 33)

The openness for contradiction and respect of otherness can be seen as citizenship competence as well as aspects of democracy. Cultural and arts-based activities can develop them. In another document the CoE explicates that the arts and culture can foster democracy by enabling multiplicity and provocation: "artistic expression and creativity contribute to […], by allowing for the expression of and exposure to multiple, often provocative viewpoints, the functioning of democratic societies" (CoE, 2016b, p. 10).

One of the core approaches for advancing intercultural dialogue in the CoE's (2008) White Paper is democratic citizenship and participation. Democratic citizenship, languages and history are the key competence areas in learning and teaching intercultural competences, defined by the White Paper: "Education for democratic citizenship is fundamental to a free, tolerant, just, open and inclusive society, to social cohesion, mutual understanding, intercultural and interreligious dialogue and solidarity, as well as equality between women and men" (CoE, 2008, p. 28).

In a later CoE document, Huber and Reynolds (2014, pp. 45-46) perceive intercultural competence as useful for citizens to be able to participate in intercultural dialogue and act as global citizens. In its project of designing a reference framework of competences for democratic culture, the CoE defines intercultural dialogue within the context of democracy.

> In culturally diverse societies, democratic processes and institutions require intercultural dialogue. A fundamental principle of democracy is that those affected by political decisions are able to express their views when decisions are being made, and that decision makers pay attention to their views. Intercultural dialogue is, first, the most important means through which citizens can express their views to other citizens with different cultural affiliations. It is, second, the means through which decision makers can understand the views of all citizens, taking account of their various self-ascribed cultural affiliations. In culturally diverse societies, intercultural dialogue is thus crucial for ensuring that all citizens are equally able to participate in public discussion and decision making. Democracy and intercultural dialogue are complementary in culturally diverse societies. (CoE, 2018b, p. 24)

Intercultural dialogue is here seen as citizens' competence, enabling citizens to express their views in the context of plural cultural affiliations. Intercultural dialogue can open vertical con-

nections and communication channels between citizens and decision-makers. Through intercultural dialogue, decision makers may improve their ability to "understand the views of all citizens" (CoE, 2018b, p. 24).

3.1.2 Arts and Culture as Building Blocks for Dialogue

CoE's *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* underlines the role of a range of cultural activities in forming shared public spaces and encourages participation in cultural and artistic activities.

> Public authorities and non-state actors are encouraged to promote culture, the arts and heritage, which provide particularly important spaces for dialogue. The cultural heritage, "classical" cultural activities, "cultural routes", contemporary art forms, popular and street culture, the culture transmitted by the media and the internet naturally cross borders and connect cultures. Art and culture create a space of expression beyond institutions, at the level of the person, and can act as mediators. Wide participation in cultural and artistic activities should be encouraged by all stakeholders. Cultural activities can play a key role in transforming a territory into a shared public space. (CoE, 2008, p. 47)

Arts, culture, and heritage are here seen as constituting public space and offering spaces for dialogue, crossing borders and connecting cultures. Similarly, a background paper discussing the impact of culture on democracy, published by the CoE (2013), describes how creative arts-based practises can bring together people from different population groups and foster mutual awareness and respect.

> Inducing cultural co-operation between specific groups of society is probably the most obvious means of cultural democracy. Programmes across Europe have aimed at involving various excluded groups in artistic collaboration with representatives of the broader community. Joint actions connect minorities (religious, ethnic, sexual orientation, etc.) with the rest, the poor with the better-off, the homeless with those with a home, the unemployed with those in work, etc. Creating common art products is the immediate goal: performances (theatre, songs, musicals, etc.), stories, graffiti, sculptures, street or public art, films, photographs, etc. the underlying purpose being knowing, accepting and appreciating one another and building cohesion. (CoE, 2013, p. 18)

Performing arts are here explicitly mentioned as a way of cultural co-operation bringing together people from different backgrounds – also from excluded groups – and seeking to build cohesion and knowing, accepting and appreciating one another in the context of diversity. In a CoE document about developing intercultural competence through education, drama and theatre are seen as activities that help to develop intercultural competence in education as the quotes below demonstrate (CoE, 2014, pp. 41–42).

> The benefits of role plays, simulations and drama for the development of intercultural competence are numerous. Learners experience what it is like to be different, to be looked on strangely, to be criticised or even excluded. […] As a result, such activities can help to develop attitudes of openness, curiosity and respect, as well as a willingness to empathise and suspend judgment. Students are also encouraged to develop skills of observation and interpretation, skills for learning about one's own culture and

> discovering others, as well as skills of adapting and empathy. […] When appropriately implemented, such role plays, simulations and drama also raise awareness of and build knowledge about similarities and differences, assumptions and prejudices, and verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions. (CoE, 2014, pp. 41–42)
>
> When we watch or read plays in our spare time because someone in the family or among our friends or colleagues recommended them, we learn about other people of diverse cultural affiliations with a variety of perspectives. Reading plays in literature or foreign language classes helps students learn from and through theatre in many different ways. Staging theatrical works takes this learning even further as acting out enables people to explore and reflect on experiences that they would probably never encounter otherwise. […] These processes can help learners to develop a willingness to question what is usually taken for granted in their own environment and to challenge their stereotypes of other people. (CoE, 2014, p. 42)

These quotes bring together the potential of arts and culture, discussed in many of the EU and CoE documents, to contribute to critical thinking, awareness of plurality and appreciation of differences. According to the quotes, drama and theatre can develop multiperspectivity, empathy and communication skills. These elements of intercultural competence can be interpreted as aspects of cultural literacy.

The role of arts-based practices and cultural collaboration for democracy, inclusion and cohesion is acknowledged in two documents by the Council of Europe scrutinising the Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy (CoE, 2016b; CoE, 2018a).

> Participation in cultural activities can also lead to the creation of shared narratives and shared values. […] arts-based initiatives, especially community-based ones, seem to be particularly effective in providing social spaces for diverse groups to come together and providing forums in which shared cultural meanings are developed and problems are solved. (CoE, 2016b, p. 13)

According to the quote above, arts-based practices can provide social spaces for exchange and shared meaning-making and problem-solving of diverse groups. Willingness to engage in dialogue across cultural and other divides is seen in the document as a central element of a culture of democracy that constitutes inclusive society. Other elements include respect for diversity and divergent values, lifestyles and norms, a conviction that conflicts be resolved without violence, and a commitment to protecting minorities and their rights (CoE, 2016b, pp. 9–10). Significantly, the CoE (2016b, pp. 9–10) reminds that inclusion does not mean perfect harmony and cohesion must not be interpreted as constructing artificial cultural entities that include some but exclude many others. Instead,

> inclusive societies are about values and norms that are shared by individuals and groups that are likely to hold and express many diverse identities. Such shared values do not depend on homogeneity of ethnicity, religion or way of life, much less on ways of expressing and creating. Rather, they depend on respect for diversity and human rights for all. (CoE, 2016b, p. 10)

This reflects the conceptions according to which difference, dissent and controversies are an indispensable aspect of democracy. Also the second document based on the Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy stresses exchanging views, pluralism and diversity in dialogue. Focusing on online participation in culture and politics, it discusses the potential of online platforms to enhance participatory or direct democracy and stimulate democratic practices by engaging more and new actors in political debate and enabling the dissemination of an increasing amount of political information (CoE, 2018a, p. 31). However, the document points out how they can also provide arenas for distributing disinformation, manipulating public debate and narrowing perspectives through echo chambers created by algorithms and filter bubbles (CoE, 2018a, p. 38). Social media can build both walls and bridges between opposing perspectives (CoE, 2018a, p. 31). This discussion underlines dialoguing and digital skills as citizens' competences. In both documents, cultural education, including arts education and intercultural education, are defined as components of this indicator framework (CoE, 2016b, p. 37; CoE, 2018a, p. 44).

3.1.3 Cultural Participation

The CoE underlines the participation of citizens and civil society in the field of culture and its contribution to democracy: "There is a strong consensus about the relationship between cultural participation and democracy" (CoE, 2013, p. 3). It pays attention to non-participation and inequalities embedded in access to culture and argues that both quality and intensity of cultural participation play a role in the impact of culture to democracy (CoE, 2013, p. 12).

However, the relations between cultural participation, democracy, equality and inequality require further clarification (CoE, 2013, p. 5). There is also a need to clarify the impact of culture on "democratic values like equality, human rights, social justice, freedom of speech, social cohesion and inclusion" (CoE, 2013, pp. 16–17). Increased participation in culture has an impact on democratic societies in areas such as economy, education, health systems, environment, regional development, urban regeneration, well-being of young people, and the fight against social exclusion, according to the document. In addition to these instrumental roles in several sectors, culture carries important functions in society through the public value of culture.

Increasing access to culture is conceived as a way of promoting democracy in the society:

> Besides communicating aesthetic and cognitive values, cultural participation benefits citizens in many ways: it builds self-confidence, self-esteem, pride and dignity, which are essential for democratic citizenship. Citizen participation, collective identities and engagement, conflict recognition and management, personal creativity, intercultural affinity, etc. are fostered. (CoE, 2013, p. 5)

Cultural participation is here seen as a channel of developing competences for democratic citizenship, including intercultural affinity. The power relations in terms of top-down and bottom-up approaches to participation are recognised in the document. Citizens' agency and autonomy is underlined in this context:

> The concept of cultural democracy with the emphasis on involvement, equality and diversity has been gaining ground over top-down cultural democratisation strategies.

> Greater autonomy of citizens in defining their cultural priorities and habits represents an incentive for the authorities to involve them in policy decisions. Giving people a say in matters of public culture is an important training ground for democratic participation. Democracy gains with the improvement in citizens' responsive critical thinking. The arts are particularly appropriate for boosting divergent and critical thinking. (CoE, 2013, p. 5)

Citizens' participation in "matters of public culture" is conceptualised in the quote above as an arena for training democratic participation. According to it, arts promote critical thinking, which is needed in democracy. In this document, participation in cultural activities also builds social trust and helps tackle problems such as crime.

Cultural participation as a way of generating encounters and dialogue across perceived difference is discussed in the context of the Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy, developed by the Council of Europe (CoE, 2016b; CoE, 2018a). The CoE (2016b, p. 13) refers to research findings about cultural participation and cultural education supporting civic and political participation.

> Have you read a good book lately, seen a film at your local cinema, or visited a new exhibit at a museum? Have you sung with a choir, taken a painting class or started writing a novel? Have you uploaded a video to the internet or created a website? If so, you have been participating in culture.
>
> The assumption, then, is that through cultural participation you have been able to express yourself creatively, have been exposed to alternative perspectives, and may have even had opportunities to engage with people with different backgrounds, beliefs or values. In doing so, it might be expected that you would have (or gain) greater tolerance for differences and more respect for and trust in others and that you would acquire the capacity to engage more actively in democratic life. (CoE, 2016b, p. 5)

Cultural participation and encounters with arts can bring individuals into contact with a variety of ideas and perspectives and help them to appreciate diversity and increase their openness towards other groups in society. As such, their potential to support cultural literacy learning is here implicitly acknowledged. Moreover, "[t]he creation of art through composing, writing, singing, dancing and other activities" (CoE, 2016b, p. 14) also allows expressing and shaping identities.

Often policy documents, programmes and projects lay their focus on the individual level, and this (i.e. teachers and learners) is primarily the focus also in the reference framework of competences for democratic culture. Nevertheless, the CoE importantly notes that citizens' competences are not enough:

> while it is necessary for citizens to acquire a range of competences in order to participate effectively in a culture of democracy, these competences are not sufficient for such participation to occur because democratic participation also requires appropriate institutional structures. In other words, both competences and democratic institutions are essential to sustain a culture of democracy. (CoE, 2018b, p. 9)

Also institutional structures are needed for democratic participation. In d@rts, institutional and organisational competences of cultural literacy are scrutinised and developed, in addition to individual competences.

Equally importantly, the CoE explicitly underlines that the democratic participation of all citizens requires measures to tackle social inequalities and structural disadvantages. Without such measures, "the members of disadvantaged groups will be marginalised in democratic processes, whatever their levels of democratic competence might be" (CoE, 2018b, 9).

> The presence of systematic patterns of disadvantage and discrimination, and differentials in the allocation of resources within societies, may effectively disempower many people from participating on an equal footing, irrespective of their levels of competence (e.g. by limiting their access to sources of information, or their access to the time or the financial resources which are needed to participate). These inequalities and disadvantages are often further compounded by disparities of power and by institutional biases which lead to democratic and intercultural settings and opportunities being dominated by those who occupy positions of privilege. Systematic marginalisation and exclusion from democratic processes and intercultural exchanges can lead to citizens' civic disengagement and alienation. For all of these reasons, special measures need to be adopted to ensure that members of disadvantaged groups enjoy genuine equality of condition. In other words, it is not sufficient only to equip citizens with the competences that are specified by the current model. It is also necessary to adopt measures to tackle inequalities and structural disadvantages. (CoE, 2018b, p. 18)

Participation is a recurrent topic also in many other CoE documents included in the data and frequently linked to democracy and citizenship. For example, education for democratic citizenship seeks to support citizens' capabilities "to play an active part in democratic life" (CoE, 2010, p. 2) and aims at "empowering them with the readiness to take action in society" (CoE, 2010, p. 4).

3.2 European Union

3.2.1 Intercultural Dialogue

In the EU documents, intercultural dialogue is seen as a way of enabling citizens to express their views and claims across perceived differences. The EU (2014) explains how "[i]ntercultural dialogue is a support for democracy" because it can "provide a public space for citizens to express their differences peacefully and openly" (p. 10).

Arts and culture are seen as ways of promoting intercultural dialogue as a citizens' competence that is similar to cultural literacy. For example, in its document about the role of culture and the arts in promoting intercultural dialogue in the migratory and refugee context, the EC (2017) describes a theatre workshop and performance with young migrants which was "aimed at fostering intercultural and inter-generational dialogue and active citizenship through theatre" (p. 93). The workshop was seen as a space for "multifaceted perspectives, contributing to exchange and dialogue" (EC, 2017, p. 93) in three languages (Italian, English and French).

Based on a study on arts-based projects, the EC (2017) claims that "[a]rts-based intercultural dialogue […] provides a democratic focus for a nuanced public dialogue on the refugee crisis" (p. 33). The document lists eight basic principles for projects to contribute to intercultural dialogue and democracy – transparency, equality, freedom, openness, indeterminacy, diversity, mainstreaming and intersectionality – and explains how art enables these principles to work. For example, art can increase transparency by helping the dialogue participants to become aware of implicit biases. The EC (2017, p. 48) underlines that the awareness of the relationships between the arts, intercultural dialogue and participation is needed. This awareness is seen in the document as important regarding the role of art in intercultural dialogue and, furthermore, the role of intercultural dialogue for democracy and participation.

The EC argues that to encourage intercultural dialogue means to contribute to the transformations of traditional understandings of migrants, refugees and integration. This requires going beyond the traditional understanding of the role of the arts in society. Art projects could be used as a public arena in which the newcomers' perspectives intersect traditional ones and cause mutual transformations: "The artistic processes would then have functioned as a catalyst for intercultural dialogue on the issue of race, human rights and their relationships to cultural diversity, economic inequity, identity and decision-making" (EC, 2017, p. 48). Arts-based practices are seen as an opportunity for a public space fostering dialogue. The transformative potential of arts is recognised: the art projects allow the exchange and mutual transformation of different perspectives and knowledges.

An EC document about the contribution of culture to social inclusion and cohesion discusses the role of culture and education for promoting social inclusion:

> The challenge for the field lies in better recognition of key competencies enhanced by creative education for the active citizenship as well as for the labour market (creative thinking as a core competence raises the chances of employability). On the other hand, different stakeholders both in culture and education (experts, facilitators, educators, artists) need to be trained and motivated to dedicate their work to social inclusion. (EC, 2019, p. 41)

Arts and cultural education are here linked to citizenship education. Part of the awareness and appreciation of diversity is "to overcome the fear of the unknown":

> avoiding the educational discrimination of children based on disability, social background disadvantages, minority or migrant backgrounds, urban/rural areas could be crucial for creating healthy environments for future citizens and active citizenship. Arts and cultural education and its methods can help to overcome the fear of the unknown on an individual and social basis, and assist in preventing future radicalisation or violent extremism. (EC, 2019, p. 76)

Arts and cultural education is seen as having suitable methods for tackling the fear of the unknown and preventing the development of radicalisation and extremism. Arts education, including teaching in fine arts, music, drama and crafts, has potential to overcome the barriers of social exclusion and to promote social inclusion and accessible content for marginalised groups (EC, 2019, p. 76). Arts and cultural education can support reducing inequality, creating more cohesive societies and achieving "a socially aware society in the future" (EC, 2019, p.

79). Arts education in formal, non-formal and informal education is seen as important as it can advance creative skills, which "are becoming a necessity for taking part in society" (EC, 2019, p. 76) for solving problems, identifying gaps in knowledge, missing elements and disharmonies as well as for decision-making and communicating the results. The ability of arts education and creative practices to produce new ways of knowing is thus acknowledged.

3.2.2 Cultural Participation and Public Space

Citizens' participation and inclusion are emphasised in an EU report on intercultural dialogue, culture and public spaces. Public space needs to be inclusive for the participation by migrants, refugees and also the natives having low cultural, social and economic conditions (Voices of Culture [VoC], 2016a, p. 2). Public space and dialogue are closely entangled and mutually constitutive notions, and they are discussed together in this EU report. In the public space, economic, political, social, ethnic and cultural interests "can be accommodated and peaceful coexistence tested" (VoC, 2016a, p. 2). This is seen as "one of the greatest achievements of democratic modernity" (VoC, 2016a, p. 2). The document acknowledges the changing nature of culture and the creative and transformative agency of citizens, highlighting the importance of ensuring the citizens' capacity to create new cultures and new public spaces. New ways for developing public spaces are needed in the face of several transformations related to the economic crisis, energy transition, demographic or migration factors and a reduction in resources. The report suggests that this involves intercultural dialogue, greater democracy, stronger citizen participation and better governance based on more open, reactive and transparent institutions.

An EU report on the role of culture in migrants' inclusion underlines the significance of culture to democracy.

> Culture should work to inform, advise and substantiate policy making. In order to reach this potential, however, the interface between culture and policy must be strengthened. Culture is particularly significant as an enabler of sophisticated democracy: it provides spaces for the articulation and dissemination of complex ideas, and facilitates broad participation in social space. The dynamic nature of cultural participation makes the cultural sector the perfect space from which to catalyse the development of polity and society as spaces in which refugees and other new citizens are afforded equal voice and status. (VoC, 2016b, p. 8)

The potential of culture to shape democracy and make space for citizens' voice and articulation and dissemination of ideas is present in this quote. In the same document, a theatre project with young refugees was depicted as "an attribute of participatory democracy" (VoC, 2016b, p. 24). Culture and cultural participation are understood as significant influencers in policy making. Equality of all citizens in participation is emphasised, and the universal right to cultural expression therefore needs to be promoted at all policy levels (VoC, 2016b, p. 23).

A report on social inclusion and the cultural sector highlights participation and the public space. It recognises citizen's agency: "People and communities, if given the opportunity to be empowered, can usually talk for themselves as well as contribute to the development of policies and programmes" (VoC, 2018, p. 57) in which they are involved. Being co-creators and having ownership can deepen their engagement with arts and heritage, according to the document.

The role of shared public space is seen as crucial for democracy: “To be democratic society requires accessible and comfortable free spaces for people to commune together” (VoC, 2018, p. 57).

The report underlines the importance of cultural expression and co-creation: “[a]ll citizens, residents and communities should be engaged in the co-creation and co-design of their living environments and cultural expression” (VoC, 2018, p. 57) and not regarded as a target. According to the report, this should be inclusive for it to foster equality and democracy: physical and mental barriers preventing people from taking part in cultural activities need to be removed. Moreover, the report also acknowledges how “[a]rtistic vision and the humanities can shed light on the conflict” (VoC, 2018, p. 27) between human rights, democracy and equality and “economic and political gain through military cooperation, arms sales, etc.” (VoC, 2018, p. 27). The influence of arts-based activities thus goes beyond the individual and group level.

3.2.3 Dialogue and Diversity

Social and cultural plurality is a frequent topic in the EU documents analysed here. For example, citizenship is discussed in the context of diversity in an EU report and linked to cohesion, equality and non-discrimination: “when there are many different groups within a nation, citizenship may be the only real bond, which unites everyone as equals without discrimination” (VoC, 2016a, pp. 2-3). In a recommendation by the Council of the European Union [CofEU] (2018), “an awareness of diversity and cultural identities in Europe and the world is essential” for citizenship competence, which is one of the eight key competences for lifelong learning defined in the recommendation.

An EC document reported about a project that used theatre for citizenship education and aimed at bringing artistic expressions to the centre of school learning. This project included the creation of a theatrical show, a teacher training programme, a set of workshops and masterclasses for students, an exchange programme for music students and the publication of a model that could be replicated in other institutions (EC, 2019, p. 19). An art festival for prisoners organised a theatre performance and various activities (sport, art, culture, citizenship) involving the neighbourhood’s cultural structures “to ensure that the prisoners can become citizens of their territory” (EC, 2019, p. 61).

In a document about EU’s international cultural relations, the EC (2014) advocates a notion of global cultural citizenship that is about “[d]ialogue through culture, understanding through culture, empowerment through culture, as well as prosperity through culture” (p. 22). Such a citizenship is a process rather than a product, and the document recommends creating stronger linkages between culture and citizenship education in order for the children to learn respect for others and understanding of their own and others’ culture.

> School is where the child learns respect, first self-respect then respect for others. It is here that the child needs to learn the basics of citizenship, civic consciousness and understanding of culture, both her own and those of others. These tasks imply the reworking of syllabi and assessment criteria alike; they require innovation in teacher training and special attention to the learning of several languages. (EC, 2014, pp. 97–98)

These learning goals can be interpreted as elements of cultural literacy understood as active interaction, cultural understanding and respect. The document underlines the role of cultural expression as well as cultural activists and other civil society actors in strengthening democracy and human rights and empowering citizens.

> Precisely because civil society empowerment for democratisation and human rights is increasingly placed at the heart of the human development agenda, the potential of cultural expression to inform, inspire, and energise civic aspirations to democracy needs to be vigorously fostered, in the spirit of global cultural citizenship. (EC, 2014, p. 98)

The idea of global cultural citizenship is proposed in this document as a way to construct the cultural relations of the EU member states with the non-member states, seeking "the development of a global civil society and public sphere that is able to constructively 'negotiate difference' and foster a spirit of trans-national solidarity" (EC, 2014, p. 22). Intercultural dialogue is discussed in this document as part of international cultural relations.

> Cultural engagement with the rest of the world can serve the interests as well as the ideals of the EU and its Member States. Such engagement would benefit both intercultural dialogue and global solidarity. It would strengthen respect for and the affirmation of cultural diversity. It would also foster trade, investment and competitiveness. Equally, it would promote innovation and development. (EC, 2014, p. 9)

The point of departure for developing cultural relations with "the rest of the world" is explicitly defined from the perspective of the EU. Although global solidarity is mentioned, the point of view is Eurocentric. The document discusses international cultural relations as serving the interests of the EU and its member states and promoting their trade, investment and competitiveness. In its rhetoric, however, the document underlines mutuality and cosmopolitan solidarity.

> While Europeans have already succeeded in projecting to the world an image of their shared space as one of cultural creativity and diversity, the inquiry reveals that the time has come for them to go beyond representation alone and engage with the rest of the world through stances of mutual learning and sharing. Adopting such stances would mean adopting a spirit of global cultural citizenship that recognises shared cultural rights as well as shared responsibilities, hinging upon access and participation for all in a framework of cosmopolitan solidarity. (EC, 2014, p. 8)

According to the document, "Europeans" need to practice "mutual learning and sharing" in their engagement "with the rest of the world". The EC (2014) claims that the EU should develop its international cultural relations according to the preferences of the "people in the rest of the world […] They want Europeans to engage with them in new ways, listening, sharing, imagining and creating together" (pp. 13–14). The EU strategy for international cultural relations should therefore respect "reciprocity, mutuality and shared responsibility". It is not explicated whether the goal is to generate and utilize more diverse knowledges and ways of knowing and how to ensure the equality between partners.

The document mentions the image of the Europe as a space for cultural creativity and diversity and notes that all cultural practice is becoming increasingly trans-national and trans-continental:

> How could it be otherwise, in a world in which all cultural practice is becoming increasingly trans-national and trans-continental, as artists and creative people everywhere remain rooted in their own cultures yet have recourse to globalised repertoires, methods and strategies? The challenge for Europe in this multi-polar world is to remain true to itself, yet to continue to position itself creatively in a globalised world of fluid and multiple identities and permanent cultural and social transformation. (EC, 2014, p. 8)

The mobility and multi-scalarity of artists and creative people is presented as a reason for cultural diversity, which depicts diversity and transformation as a recent characteristic of Europe and ignores that all cultures are always hybrid and changing.

The value-based principles for international cultural engagement, defined in the document, continue to emphasise reciprocity of international cultural relations:

> Reciprocity and mutuality, notably mutual listening and learning; the more vigorous promotion of cultural diversity in the spirit of the 2005 UNESCO Convention; respect for open expression, critical reflection and free debate, notably regarding the ways in which artists and cultural operators appropriate and adapt cherished European values in their own diverse ways. In a nutshell, "Europeans must be willing to ask the 'Other' what (s)he really wants". (EC, 2014, p. 9)

This quote includes several aspects central in cultural literacy understood as constructive interaction in the context of cultural diversity, such as mutual listening and free debate. Artists and cultural operators are mentioned as actors in the international cultural engagement. The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) is referred to also elsewhere in the document.

Importantly, the quote also brings to the fore the complex relations between Europe/ EU and the "Other". The document discusses this in a section titled *The Weight of History*.

> Historical baggage weighs heavily on Europe's relationships with strategic partners and neighbourhood countries alike, in both positive and negative ways. For several nations, historical cultural relations with Europe were based on conquest, conversion and colonisation. This legacy has certainly created shared understandings. Yet it has also led some people to view present-day European overtures in the cultural arena as a disguised form of neo-colonialism. (EC, 2014, p. 102)

The discussion on "the weight of history" in the international cultural relations and its longstanding and current ramifications is important background for the EU policies concerning the topics related to intercultural dialogue. The document discusses the positive and negative aspects of the globalised world of fluid and multiple identities and permanent cultural and social transformation. For example, concentration of ownership and power can limit cultural freedom and creativity. However, it does not discuss further the power imbalances derived from the colonial legacy that continue to cause various problems in global relations today as well as in intercultural dialogue within countries.

3.3 Conclusions and Reflections

3.3.1 Findings in Light of the Theoretical Framework

In several documents included in the data, the prominent way of promoting understanding of cultural diversity and inter-relations across perceived differences is intercultural dialogue, which has been strongly promoted in the policies of both CoE and EU.

In many documents of both CoE and EU, interaction across perceived differences is one of the most common roles given to arts. Cultural and arts-based practices are conceived in the documents as arenas that help citizens to come together and create common bonds. The ability of arts to provide space and manifestation of plurality, vital for democracy, is repeatedly underlined in the EU and CoE documents. Cultural participation and expression promote awareness and understanding of different perspectives and other differences. It can strengthen the capacity of the citizens to create new cultures and new public spaces, in which differences can be constructively negotiated.

Arts and cultural education is seen as having suitable methods for tackling the fear of the unknown, preventing radicalisation and extremism and promoting social inclusion, equality and cohesion. Arts education in formal, non-formal and informal education is seen as important for advancing creative skills necessary for problem-solving, decision-making and participation in society.

Especially the CoE documents discuss the role of cultural participation and arts-based practices in promoting democracy – and thereby cohesion. Cultural participation enhances equality and inclusion, and vice versa, some degree of equality and inclusion is also required for cultural participation of all. The ability of arts-based practices to make space for plurality, dialogue and new ideas also advances democracy and cohesion.

3.3.2 Decolonial Perspective

While the notion of intercultural dialogue seeks to improve relations between different groups and build solidarity and inclusion, it is an ambiguous policy idea. In the documents by the CoE and the EU, intercultural dialogue remains vaguely defined. This creates a risk that the idea of culture is conceived as rigid and distinct. Furthermore, intercultural dialogue may in some cases imply assumptions about the ethnic or religious background of those participating in the dialogue. It also remains unclear who makes the rules of the dialogue and whether the partners are equal in it. Such an idea of intercultural dialogue does not support equal, transformative interaction, but may instead maintain hierarchical power relations. This narrows the space for transcultural learning and mutual collaboration, and the partners and their positions may stay the same without any transformation.

The decolonial perspective is crucial when intercultural dialogue is discussed in the context of migration. An EU document (EC, 2017) acknowledges that in dialogue, migrants' perspectives can intersect traditional ones and mutual transformation can take place. Arts can provide platforms for such dialogues, according to the document.

In a document about the EU's cultural relations with "the rest of the world" (EC, 2014, p. 9), the point of view is Eurocentric: intercultural dialogue is advocated from the perspective of interests of the EU and its member states. However, reciprocity, mutual listening and learning, and cosmopolitan solidarity are underlined at the same time, although the rigid divide between Europe and the "Other" remains. In the same document, there is also explicit discussion on colonial legacies, but the continuous problems of discrimination and power imbalances derived from them are not further elaborated.

While not central, the role of arts in intercultural dialogue and education is recognized by both the CoE and the EU. In their documents, the ability of arts education and creative practices to identify gaps in knowledge, missing elements and disharmonies and produce new ways of knowing is acknowledged to some extent. This implies an understanding of the transformative potential of arts and its performative power to undermine hegemonic conceptions.

3.4 Comment from the European Music School Union (EMU)

The European Music School Union (EMU) is the European umbrella organisation of national music school associations. As a non-governmental and non-profit entity, the EMU provides a supranational platform that unites member associations from 27 European countries. Together, these associations represent over 6.000 music schools, 150.000 teachers, and more than 4 million pupils and students. Our member associations are recognised as working in the public interest and benefit from public funding. Their responsibilities encompass the development of nationwide standards, the creation and maintenance of infrastructures, and the provision of organisational support and capacity building for their member schools. This includes curricular development and the promotion of educational quality and inclusiveness. Despite the common use of the term 'music school' across Europe, there are no binding international standards; however, EMU membership is linked to conditions that include public responsibility, quality assurance, professional qualifications for teaching staff, a broad curriculum, and a commitment to openness and inclusion across all age groups and sectors of society.

In reflecting on the introduction in the document, I wonder to what extent EU policies influence national cultural education policies. It is not entirely clear to me whether principles or recommendations at the European level have a significant direct impact on national or regional policy-making in the field of music education. The cultural and educational sectors in Europe, particularly cultural education, are deeply rooted in longstanding national traditions. While these sectors are continuously evolving in response to societal, cultural, and economic changes my experience suggests that such evolution is largely driven by internal factors rather than by European-level policy frameworks. This observation aligns with the principle of subsidiarity, which supports the autonomy of individual countries and regions in shaping and implementing their cultural policies. From the EMU's perspective, such independence is both natural and appropriate, as it allows for cultural policies to reflect local realities and identities.

The document rightly highlights the crucial role of culture — and by extension, cultural education — in building shared public spaces and fostering social cohesion. In this context, I would like to emphasise that music schools have a particularly significant role to play. As the CoE documents stress, public performances, community music events, and open house initiatives

contribute directly to creating spaces for dialogue, shared experience, and mutual understanding. These activities offer tangible manifestations of the ideals of cultural participation and intercultural dialogue that the CoE and EU promote. However, it is important to acknowledge, as also discussed in Chapter 3.1.3 of the document, that institutionalised music education often grapples with challenges related to social inclusion. The students of our music schools do not always reflect the full diversity of society. This signals a need for ongoing reflection and action within our institutions to ensure that access to music education truly embodies the values of equality, diversity, and inclusion as described in the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (2008).

Regarding cultural participation as a means of strengthening democracy and fostering inclusive societies, I can only echo the document's concepts. Music schools contribute to this aim not only by teaching music but also, perhaps more importantly, by creating environments in which democratic values are lived. While our primary focus is musical training, we see how participation in music education fosters openness, critical thinking, respect for diversity, and social engagement — qualities that are essential for democratic citizenship. As highlighted in the CoE and EU documents, the arts provide spaces for dialogue, the negotiation of differences, and the development of competences for democratic culture. It is noteworthy that even though music schools do not explicitly set out to teach democratic citizenship, the participatory nature of musical activities — particularly ensemble work, public performances, and collaborative projects — inherently promotes these values. In this way, music schools contribute to preventing social exclusion, radicalisation, and extremism, as underlined in the EU's reflections on the role of arts and culture in fostering social inclusion and cohesion, (e.g. *From social inclusion to social cohesion—The role of culture policy: Guidelines for policy-makers and cultural institutions*).

In relation to the section on international cultural relations, I find that the emphasis on arts-based intercultural dialogue and the transformative potential of cultural exchange resonates with the mission and practices of European music schools. However, as mentioned above, there appears to be a gap between the aspirations articulated at the European level and their practical reflection within national policies and local institutions. From the EMU's standpoint, while we fully support the principles of reciprocity, mutual learning, and cultural diversity as foundations for intercultural dialogue, we observe that national music education policies are primarily shaped by domestic priorities and frameworks. The instrumentalisation of culture in EU-level discourse, aiming to serve broader political or economic interests, does not translate into tangible effects within music schools or their governance structures.

In conclusion, the EMU aligns with the visions outlined in the CoE and EU documents regarding the role of cultural education in promoting democracy, social cohesion, and intercultural dialogue. Our member institutions embody these principles through their daily work, even if the link to European-level policy frameworks is not always direct or explicit. We recognise the need to further advance inclusivity within music schools and to continue contributing to the creation of shared public spaces that reflect and celebrate Europe's cultural diversity.

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4. Aotearoa New Zealand

Ralph Buck and Sarah Foster Sproull

The following analysis focuses on how the interconnections of cultural literacy, social cohesion, and inclusion are articulated in New Zealand's arts policies, specifically through examining the following policy documents:

- Creative New Zealand (2020–2028)
    - *Statement of Intent 2022–2026* (Creative New Zealand [CNZ], 2022b)
    - *Te Hā o ngā Toi, Māori Arts Strategy 2019–2024* (CNZ, 2019)
    - *Pacific Arts Strategy 2023–2028* (CNZ, 2023a)
        - *Pacific Dance New Zealand (2008-2025): Pacific Islands Dance Fono Strategic Plan 2022*
    - *Diversity in the Arts Policy 2015* (CNZ, 2015)
    - *Tapatahi Accessibility Policy and Action Plan 2023–2028* (CNZ, 2023b)
    - *Remuneration Policy for Artists and Arts Practitioners* (CNZ, 2022a)
    - *Interim Investment Intentions 2023–2025* (CNZ, 2023c)
    - *Advocacy Strategy 2016–2021* (CNZ, 2016)
- *Ngā Kaupapa here Toi Tūmatanui: Public Art Policy* (Auckland Council, 2021)
- *Policy for Government Management of Cultural Heritage Places* (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Manatu Taonga, 2022)

This policy analysis has a focus on governmental arts policy as listed above. These policies dominate strategic plans and policies formed by non-government organisations. The present policy analysis, none the less, includes non-government policy developed by Pacific dance New Zealand as a case study of how national non-government organisations in New Zealand are interpreting government led policy.

The analysis of these documents will focus on how Creative New Zealand [CNZ], the Ministry of Culture and Heritage [MCH], and Auckland Council's arts policies address the development of cultural literacy, social cohesion, and inclusion through the performing arts (dance, theatre, music) in Aotearoa New Zealand. The analysis will also review the Pacific Dance New Zealand Policy and give an account of how it both connects with the dominant government policy, but how it also connects with diverse Pacific Island communities. Our analysis also explores decolonial and indigenous perspectives within arts policy in Aotearoa New Zealand, with particular attention to Māori and Pasifika cultural expression.

The analysis firstly offers an introduction to the arts funding climate in Aotearoa New Zealand. Performing arts funding for dance, theatre, and music in Aotearoa New Zealand occurs at local, and national level through government departments including Creative New Zealand [CNZ] and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage [MCH], and local councils including the Auckland Council. Government arts funding supports companies, institutions (Pacific Dance New Zealand), festivals, events, and independent artists work. A variety of community arts and professional arts projects are funded across dance, drama, and music. The Auckland Council

has a total public art fund of $1,331,869.00 NZD available to support Regional Arts and Culture (Our Auckland, 2024). CNZ has a budget of approximately $70 million for the 2024/25 financial year (CNZ, 2024). MCH leads government work in the arts, heritage, broadcasting and sports sectors, and funds some arts organisations, for example the NZ Symphony Orchestra, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Te Matatini (Māori Kapa Haka performance) and NZ Opera through its $450 million in *Budget 2024* (MCH, 2024b). MCH's budget is framed under the *Vote Arts, Culture, and Heritage* title (MCH, 2024a). As stated, policy developed by these independent individual organisations correlate with national funding policy. Our aim in this policy analysis is to focus on national and large regional policy, not individual organisations policy, and we offer Pacific Dance New Zealand as a case study as a national yet independent non-government organisation.

Creative New Zealand funds 80 arts companies on recurrent 3-year funding called *Kahikatea* or *Totara* funds. These funds are in their final round in 2027 and will change to a new funding format from this point, to be announced. The new National coalition government in New Zealand has impacted the allocation of arts funding for New Zealand artists and audience engagement. Arts organisations and companies funded by Creative New Zealand's *Kahikatea* or *Totara* funds instigate a diverse range of arts experiences in New Zealand including theatre performances, site specific work, festivals, and community arts/ educational engagement activities. Funding is allocated via a contestable funding model where companies or organisations submit applications to cover multi-year funding for a programme of events/ activities. Diverse groups, including Māori and Pasifika organisations, are equally represented within this funding policy context. The objective is to provide arts experiences for all New Zealanders, and people that engage with the outcomes of this funding policy live in urban and rural locations around Aotearoa New Zealand, with some additional international arts activity funded.

Because Creative New Zealand holds the largest portfolio for the allocation of government funds to the arts in New Zealand, this analysis will cover 8 key policy documents, the central document being the *CNZ Statement of Intent 2022–2026*. Under the Pacific Arts Strategy section, we include a case study of how Pacific Dance New Zealand (2008-2025) has addressed and included overarching Creative New Zealand policy within their Pacific Islands Dance Fono Strategic Plan (2022). Following this, the analysis covers the relevant arts policy of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, and the Auckland City Council as Aotearoa New Zealand's largest council and population area.

This analysis looks at the structure/ framework of the document, its processes of consultation, what legislation it connects to, what philosophies are involved, and its key principles. Then it addresses specific areas relating to cultural literacy, social cohesion, and inclusion.

4.1 Creative New Zealand Statement of Intent 2022–2026

The *Statement of Intent 2022–2026* (Creative New Zealand [CNZ], 2022b) is setting a strategic direction for Creative New Zealand to support and promote the development of arts and culture in Aotearoa, New Zealand. It outlines CNZ's vision, goals, and initiatives to foster a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive creative sector. This framework highlights CNZ's commitment to strengthening the arts ecosystem, including supporting Māori and Pasifika artists and communities, and promoting cultural exchange and understanding both within Aotearoa New

Zealand and globally. The document is focused on nurturing a creative, diverse, and resilient arts sector while ensuring equitable access to arts funding and opportunities. Dance, theatre, and music are named a handful of times as one of the artistic disciplines funded by Creative New Zealand and within this policy document, it is identified that "The arts contribute to education, skills development and creating a highly skilled workforce" (p. 20). This policy acts as a guiding document driving the aspirations of the arts sector in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and while the document's intent is clear, it is perceived that the onus is significantly on artists and arts organisations to deliver the government arts creation, performance, and audience engagement aspirations in a tangible sense.

The document references the living standards framework, adopted by treasury "as a high-level way to measure and analyse intergenerational wellbeing" (CNZ, 2022b, p. 17). This framework includes:

- **12 domains of wellbeing** – aspects of our lives that are important for our individual and collective wellbeing (such as health, knowledge, cultural capability and belonging).
- **Six types of institutions** – political, economic, social and cultural – that play a role in facilitating the wellbeing of individuals and collectives, as well as safeguarding and building our national wealth.
- **Four areas of wealth** – these identify how wealthy we are as a country and support current and future wellbeing, including our natural environment, social cohesion, human capability, and financial and physical capital. (CNZ, 2022b, p. 17)

The consultation process aimed to ensure the framework was informed by diverse perspectives and involved a broad range of stakeholders, including:

- Māori and Pasifika communities and artists, ensuring that their voices and cultural values were reflected in the strategy.
- Arts practitioners and organisations from a variety of disciplines, including theatre, dance, music, visual arts, and literature.
- Key government agencies and public sector entities that are involved in cultural and creative policy.
- Industry leaders, cultural commentators, and members of the general public with an interest in arts policy.

The *Statement of Intent* seeks to ensure that Creative New Zealand's activities are conducted in accordance with principles of inclusivity and respect for indigenous and cultural rights, and references key legislation, including:

- *Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi)*: Creative New Zealand recognizes its obligation to work in partnership with Māori and ensure that Māori cultural values, perspectives, and rights are respected and integrated into arts funding and policies.
- The *Public Finance Act 1989*: As a Crown entity, CNZ aligns its strategic goals with government priorities and financial oversight (Public Finance Act, 1989).

- The New Zealand *Public Service Act 2020*: Ensures that the statement aligns with broader public sector goals, including transparency, accountability, and service to the public (Public Service Act, 2020).
- *Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa Act* (2014)
- *New Zealand Bill of Rights Act* (1990)
- *Human Rights Act* (1993)
- *New Zealand Disability Strategy* (Ministry of Disabled People, 2001)
- UN *2005 Convention on Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (Unesco, 2005)
- UN *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations, 2006)

The policy is structured around core strategic priorities aimed at addressing opportunities in the New Zealand arts landscape. These include supporting cultural diversity and inclusion, ensuring that all communities have access to the arts, and that different forms of cultural expression are supported and celebrated. Ensuring that Māori and Pasifika voices are integral to the arts sector and that there is a strong focus on the continuation and revitalisation of indigenous art forms. Strengthening New Zealand's position on the global stage through cultural exchange and international collaboration. Supporting the sustainability of the arts sector through ensuring that artists and arts organisations have the resources and support to thrive, including funding, professional development, and audience development initiatives.

The general principles included in the *Statement of Intent* include:

- Equity: Ensuring that access to arts funding and opportunities is equitable, with particular emphasis on supporting Māori and Pasifika artists, as well as communities that face barriers to participation.
- Cultural sustainability: Supporting the long-term viability and growth of New Zealand's arts and cultural sectors.
- Partnership: Collaboration with Māori, Pasifika, and other cultural groups to ensure arts policies are inclusive and reflect Aotearoa's diverse society.
- Innovation and creativity: Encouraging new ideas, experimental approaches, and creative risk-taking across art forms.
- Cultural exchange and global visibility: Promoting New Zealand artists and culture internationally while also bringing global artistic influences and opportunities to Aotearoa.

The specific *strategic intentions* outlined are:

> - **Resilience** – developing a resilient and sustainable arts sector, including sustainable arts sector careers
> - **Access, inclusion and equity** – ensuring our services and the arts are accessible to, inclusive of and equitable for all New Zealanders
> - **Wellbeing** – embedding a recognition of the role of the arts and ngā toi in contributing to the well-being of New Zealanders. (CNZ, 2022b, p. 2)

The above citations underscore CNZ's approach to fostering an arts sector that is equitable, inclusive, and culturally sustainable. It is our perspective that by embedding principles of part-

nership, innovation, and wellbeing, the strategy positions the arts in Aotearoa as a vital contributor to the social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of all New Zealanders, with particular emphasis on supporting Māori and Pasifika communities.

4.1.1 Cultural Literacy

Cultural literacy is evidenced throughout the *Statement of Intent*, particularly in its commitment to Māori and Pasifika cultures. The document outlines the importance of understanding and engaging with indigenous worldviews, values, and cultural practices. Cultural literacy is also reflected in the acknowledgment of the different art forms within New Zealand's diverse communities, including traditional Māori art forms, contemporary art, Pasifika cultures, and the importance of cultural heritage. The policy also places emphasis on developing programs and opportunities that increase cultural awareness across communities, ensuring that all New Zealanders can understand, appreciate, and participate in the country's rich artistic traditions.

> Central to Te Kaupapa o Toi Aotearoa is that, as an organisation, we'll create value for New Zealanders by working in a way that enhances the mana and wellbeing of the people and communities we serve, guided by the intellectual traditions, knowledge and tikanga of tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti, alongside conventional government approaches. (CNZ, 2022b, p. 5)

"**Tauiwi** – we recognise New Zealand's distinctive cultural and social diversity and work to ensure arts opportunities for all" (CNZ, 2022b, p. 3).

"**12 domains of wellbeing** – aspects of our lives that are important for our individual and collective wellbeing (such as health, knowledge, cultural capability and belonging)" (CNZ, 2022b, p. 17).

"**Culture** has been identified as an underpinning element of the framework. It emphasises that all aspects of our wealth, institutions and wellbeing are cultural, and that culture is in every part of the framework." (CNZ, 2022b, p. 17)

The *Living Standards Framework* and *He Ara Waiora* outlined in the document includes "Cultural capability and belonging" (CNZ, 2022b, p. 19) as a key component.

"People can access and are participating in cultural activities and experiences" (CNZ, 2022b, p. 26)

4.1.2 Social Cohesion

Social cohesion is evidenced through the document's commitment to promoting diverse artistic voices and supporting cross-cultural collaboration. By ensuring equitable access to the arts for all communities, including Māori, Pasifika, and other groups representing the diversity of Aotearoa, the framework prioritises strengthening connections between different cultural groups. By supporting the creation of work that reflects Aotearoa's multicultural society, Creative New Zealand encourages social cohesion through arts participation and community engagement.

> We want to see increased public engagement with the arts, recognising their powerful ability to improve our personal wellbeing and that of whānau, communities and society.

> The arts inspire, delight and provoke us; they help people understand, interpret and adapt to the world; they let us express our identities; and they help build social cohesion. (CNZ, 2022b, p. 15)
>
> For example, the arts contribute to social inclusion by connecting people and communities and this, in turn, will contribute to the wellbeing domain of *Family and friends*. By strengthening social connections, the wealth of **social cohesion** will grow. (CNZ, 2022b, p. 17)

Social cohesion is named on page 19 within the *Living Standards Framework* (CNZ, 2022b).

> The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us the value of the arts and ngā toi in challenging times, with more people turning to the arts because of their power to inspire, delight and provoke us; their ability to help people understand, interpret and adapt to the world; the way they enable us to express our identities; and the way they help build social cohesion. (CNZ, 2022b, p. 29)
>
> Te Waka Toi Pātaka, our Mātauranga Māori Framework, anticipates a wider view of wellbeing, incorporating the social, cultural, environmental and economic value of ngā toi Māori. It links to the concepts of Hononga Whenua (connection to Papatūānuku), Hapori (community) and Whakarite (balance) within the framework. (CNZ, 2022b, p. 19)
>
> New Zealanders place a high level of value on the arts and ngā toi, recognising the vital contribution they make to the cultural, social and economic wellbeing of New Zealanders and New Zealand communities and society. (CNZ, 2022b, p. 30)

The *Statement of Intent 2022–2026*'s evidences social cohesion by promoting inclusive participation, as well as reflecting the cultural diversity of Aotearoa. Through prioritising equitable access, cross-cultural collaboration, and support for Māori and Pasifika voices, it is our perception that the arts are positioned (in this policy) as a vehicle for strengthening social bonds and community identity. The integration of aspects of mātauranga Māori frameworks highlights how the arts contribute to collective resilience, belonging, and shared societal values.

4.1.3 Inclusion

Philosophically the *Statement of Intent* is inclusive and culturally sensitive. It is committed to fostering a cultural environment where all New Zealanders, regardless of their background, can participate in and enjoy the arts. Key components include:

- Inclusivity: Ensuring equitable access to arts funding and opportunities for all communities, including groups such as Māori, Pasifika, and those from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Commitment: To honouring Māori arts and culture, in line with *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, and ensuring that Māori have agency and leadership in the arts sector.

Cultural sustainability: Supporting the preservation and development of both traditional and contemporary cultural practices in New Zealand.

Inclusion is embedded in the *Living Standards framework* through the emphasis on equitable access to arts funding and opportunities for diverse communities, particularly Māori, Pasifika

people. Creative New Zealand promotes the participation of all communities by supporting projects that focus on accessibility, community engagement, and the integration of diverse cultural and artistic practices. The policy also highlights the importance of honouring *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, ensuring Māori arts and language are central to the national arts landscape, fostering an inclusive environment for all New Zealanders.

"The arts contribute to social inclusion and cohesion by connecting people and communities" (CNZ, 2022b, p. 17).

"**Access, inclusion and equity** – ensuring our services and the arts are accessible to, inclusive of and equitable for all New Zealanders" (CNZ, 2022b, p. 27).

"Underpinning our strategic direction for 2019–2029 is our purpose: *To encourage, promote and support the arts in New Zealand for the benefit of all New Zealanders*" (CNZ, 2022b, p. 28).

"New Zealand artists and arts practitioners from diverse communities can access Creative New Zealand's services, and our services are enabling" (CNZ, 2022b, p. 30).

"Through our diversity reporting, we can accurately identify who is and who isn't benefiting from our services and implement initiatives that seek to address gaps" (CNZ, 2022b, p. 30).

"Our policies reflect our aspirations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, address equity alongside access and inclusion, and are widely reflected in the practices of those in whom we invest" (CNZ, 2022b, p. 30).

"Te Kaupapa o Toi Aotearoa is embedded across our organisational processes, policies and structures, and Creative New Zealand has the capability and capacity to operate effectively in te ao Māori and take a 'multi-lensed' approach to its work" (CNZ, 2022b, p. 30).

"Creative New Zealand will be recognised as a leader in the delivery of services that are fair, transparent, inclusive and equitable" (CNZ, 2022b, p. 30).

"Those who use and benefit from our services and investment broadly reflect New Zealand's population" (CNZ, 2022b, p. 30).

"Creative New Zealand is recognised as a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-honouring organisation" (CNZ, 2022b, p. 30).

Inclusion is also embedded in the policies through the bilingual acknowledgement to Te Reo Maori and English. The *Statement of Intent* acknowledges the use of *Te Reo Māori* as an integral part of New Zealand's cultural landscape, alongside English and Pasifika languages. The document supports initiatives that promote bilingualism and the revitalisation of Te Reo Māori, ensuring that Māori cultural expressions and language are embedded in all forms of creative expression. There is also recognition of Pacific Island languages, reflecting the country's diverse cultural makeup and the importance of fostering and preserving indigenous languages.

4.1.4 Decolonial Approach

The Creative New Zealand *Statement of Intent 2022–2026* demonstrates a *decolonial approach* by actively prioritizing and elevating Māori and Pasifika perspectives, ensuring that indigenous knowledge systems, cultural practices, and languages are central to New Zealand's artistic landscape. Through its alignment with *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, the framework commits to redressing historical inequities by promoting Māori sovereignty over arts and culture. By supporting indigenous-led initiatives, fostering cultural inclusivity, and creating spaces for underrepresented voices, the policy challenges colonial narratives in the arts and enables the restoration of indigenous cultural authority. This approach actively works to decolonize the arts sector, ensuring that Māori and other marginalized communities are not only participants but leaders in defining the future of New Zealand's cultural expression.

We hold the opinion that the *Statement of Intent 2022–2026* shows a strong commitment to inclusivity and cultural sustainability. The integration of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* into the framework demonstrates respect for the Treaty's principles of partnership, protection, and participation. The emphasis on collaborative, or cross-disciplinary innovation offers a space for emerging art forms to thrive and for traditional practices to be revitalised. It is perceived by members of the arts community in Aotearoa that this is a forward-thinking, inclusive, and culturally responsive policy that seeks to build an equitable and sustainable arts sector for New Zealand.

While the policy acknowledges art's value in Aotearoa, we acknowledge with concern that government funding for the sector is being increasingly reduced.

4.2 Te Hā o ngā Toi, Māori Arts Strategy 2019–2024

This strategy document is written in Te Reo Māori (CNZ, 2019)[1]. *Te Hā o ngā Toi, Maori Arts Strategy 2019–2024* is the umbrella arts document that guides how Māori people are to be included/ represented within CNZ funding and decision making for the arts in Aotearoa. The philosophy is strongly indigenous and culturally grounded, centring on Māori autonomy, expression, and cultural revitalization. It aims to uphold Māori sovereignty within the arts.

Te Reo Māori is the primary language involved, ensuring Māori language and tikanga are central to the arts. There is an English version available. Consultation is not explicitly discussed but indicated through the following: "During our engagement with the sector we heard calls for greater partnership, more responsiveness to serving the communities we represent, and acknowledgement that people, art and culture are inseparable in te ao Māori" (CNZ, 2019, p. 2).

The strategy aligns with *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, emphasizing the partnership and protection of Māori culture, language, and arts. It also complements policies like the *Māori Language Strategy* and *New Zealand's Arts and Culture Legislation*. Dance, theatre, and music are named a handful of times as one of the artistic disciplines funded by Creative New Zealand.

[1] English version of the *Te Hā o ngā Toi* document: https://creativenz.govt.nz/-/media/project/creative-nz/creativenz/legacy-page-documents/nga_toi_maori_strategy_english_web.pdf

The document is underpinned by a mātauranga Māori framework which "incorporates knowledge – knowledge creativity, knowledge transfer and knowledge reclamation" (CNZ, 2019, p. 4) that honours *ngā toi Māori* as *taonga* (treasure) for all New Zealanders and foregrounds collaboration between Māori, the government, and New Zealand community. This document is the first of its kind for CNZ and seeks to capture the evolving relationship between Māori as *tangata whenua* and New Zealand's diverse communities within the arts. The establishment of this document has been guided through consultation with Māori and uses a decolonial lens through processes of consultation with, and inclusion of, Māori.

The strategy aims to promote the flourishing of Māori arts, ensuring Māori cultural practices are strengthened and visible in Aotearoa's artistic landscape. The policy is structured around supporting Māori artists, ensuring cultural integrity, and providing pathways for Māori-led arts initiatives. The key framework proposed in the document is the *Mātauranga Māori Framework* (CNZ, 2019, p. 14). It consists of the following elements:

- ***Tekoteko: Ko Tāne*** – Resilience (*Manahau*): Tāne is celebrated for his resilience by obtaining the baskets of knowledge (*ngā kete o te wānanga*). Tāne retrieved the baskets to embue humankind with knowledge.
- ***Pou Aronui*****:** Divine Connection (*Hononga Whenua*). The Pou Aronui maintains our connection to Papatūānuku and the essence and knowledge that anchor us together.
- ***Koruru*****:** *Ko te Kete Aronui* – Responsibility (*Kawenga*). Amongst those baskets was Te Kete Aronui containing both wisdom, virtue and the arts. This pātaka symbolises the knowledge retrieved by Tāne in his trying journey to remind us of our collective responsibilities to nurture and protect them into the future.
- ***Paepae Kaiāwhā*****:** Balance (*Whakarite*). The Paepae Kaiāwhā represents the relationship between the past and the present. It acknowledges and grows the engagement and connection.
- ***Maihi*****:** Development (*Whanaketanga*). The *pākake* (whale form) designs remind us of the deep cultural wealth within our arts, and represents the developmental journey of adaptation and innovation.
- ***Mahau*****:** Ancestral Connection (*Hononga Tipuna*). Within the mahau reside representations of ancestors who have defined the pathway for today's artists. These elements, bound by *whakapapa*, make our artforms distinctive.

Key principles are listed as Tekoteko ko Tane: Resilience (Manahau), Koruru ko te Kete Aronui, responsibility (Kawenga), Paepae Kaiawha: Balance (Whakarite), Pou Aronui: Divine Connection (Hononga Whenua), Maihi: Development (Whanaketanga), Mahau: Ancestral Connection (Hononga Tipuna) (CNZ, 2019, p. 14).

The document focuses efforts on:

1. Joining with others, including community and iwi (CNZ, 2019, p. 11)
2. Advance ngā toi Māori practice development (CNZ, 2019, p. 11)
3. Increase public engagement with ngā toi Māori (CNZ, 2019, p. 11)
4. Build a stronger sector to advance ngā toi Māori aspirations (CNZ, 2019, p. 11)

These focuses can be seen as emphasizing a commitment to Māori cultural sovereignty, resilience, and intergenerational responsibility through engagement with a Mātauranga Māori approach to artistic practice. This approach seeks to support that Māori arts are nurtured and protected within a holistic worldview that honours ancestral connections, and cultural integrity, positioning Māori-led initiatives at the heart of key parts of Aotearoa's arts landscape.

4.2.1 Cultural Literacy

The strategy emphasizes Māori worldviews, including the understanding of whakapapa, *tikanga*, and te reo Māori in arts practice, ensuring cultural literacy is embedded.

"people, art and culture are inseparable in te ao Māori" (CNZ, 2019, p. 4)

> Ngā toi Māori: includes Māori heritage arts practice such as tā moko, tārai waka, waiata, mōteatea, rāranga, whakairo, te reo, whaikōrero, karanga, tukutuku, kowhaiwhai, kapa haka, waiata ā-ringa, waiata tawhito, poi, whakaeke, whakawaatea, waiata haka, mau rākau, taonga pūoro and traditional Māori games. It also includes the work of Māori artists across all forms of contemporary arts practice. (CNZ, 2019, p. 10)

> This investment in ngā toi Māori at a local level, combined with the success of regional artist networks, has raised the visibility of ngā toi Māori for the wider public – especially Pākehā who may not have had much exposure to ngā toi Māori before. Visibility and exposure drive demand, through more public art, touring work, lively events and festivals, and Māori content in galleries, museums and other public spaces, and the cycle continues. (CNZ, 2019, p. 38)

4.2.2 Social Cohesion and Inclusion

Social cohesion is supported by prioritizing Māori representation and ensuring Māori voices are central to Aotearoa's cultural narrative. Inclusion is demonstrated by creating opportunities for Māori artists, acknowledging diverse Māori expressions, and fostering a space for Māori creativity to flourish.

> The strategy has two strands: The first strand is about collaborating, initially with other Crown organisations and leading cultural agencies that have a key role in advancing ngā toi Māori, so that together we can have a bigger impact… The second strand is about focusing our own efforts, within Creative New Zealand, to strengthen ngā toi Māori by: advancing ngā toi Māori practice development, increasing public engagement with ngā toi Māori, and building a stronger sector. (CNZ, 2019, p. 5)

"We have a particular interest in building the ngā toi Māori sector to ensure as many New Zealanders as possible have opportunities to participate in ngā toi Māori" (CNZ, 2019, p. 20).

> Te Hā o ngā Toi is about: joining with others, including community and iwi. Our strategy commits us to working collaboratively with other Crown organisations and leading cultural agencies. Our aim is to build a bigger platform for ngā toi Māori development and, domestically and internationally, ngā toi Māori visibility. (CNZ, 2019, p. 13)

> Visibility has been the key to success. Ngā toi Māori is incorporated in our schools and kura, and businesses harness the unique contribution ngā toi Māori makes to the

> global stage. Wellbeing indicators that include arts and culture have meant the arts, including ngā toi Māori, are incorporated in long-term strategies for social, economic and environmental development. (CNZ, 2019, p. 38)

"Te Hā o ngā Toi will focus on how we can increase New Zealanders' participation in, and access to, ngā toi Māori across the country and across artforms" (CNZ, 2019, p. 30).

"We will increase the number and range of opportunities for New Zealanders to participate in ngā toi Māori" (CNZ, 2019, p. 33).

Māori Arts strategy underscores the importance of Māori representation within Aotearoa arts practice and collaboration in strengthening social cohesion, fostering widespread participation in ngā toi Māori, and enhancing the visibility and vitality of Māori arts both nationally and internationally.

4.2.3 Decolonial Approach

This document speaks directly to Māori arts practice in Aotearoa, and its aspirations for future development. The strategy is developed by and for Māori people and Māori arts practice, and looks to increase Aotearoa's engagement and participation in ngā toi Māori. More than 800 Māori arts practitioners/ organisations shared their thoughts with Creative New Zealand *ka-nohi-ki-te-kanohi*, face to face. The document is written first in te reo Māori, with an English translation available.

The term "decolonial", "decolonisation", or "decoloniality" does not exist within this document, however, a decolonial lens could be analysed through the following:

> If you're a ngā Toi Māori artist... You'll see more money and support available from Creative New Zealand Toi Aotearoa to help advance your ngā toi Māori practice, and more opportunities to get involved in the design of new initiatives. (CNZ, 2019, p. 9)
>
> If you're an arts organisation we currently fund... You'll see Creative New Zealand Toi Aotearoa working with you to share more examples of good practice, promotion, support and advocacy for ngā toi Māori, and more opportunities to get involved in the design of our new programmes. (CNZ, 2019, p. 9)

"If you're someone who wants to experience ngā Toi Māori... You'll see more ngā toi Māori content and opportunities to experience ngā toi Māori across the country, especially outside of the main centres" (CNZ, 2019, p. 9).

> If you're a Crown organisation or cultural agency [...] You'll see an open invite from Creative New Zealand Toi Aotearoa to join us as we implement Te Hā o ngā Toi to drive a shared agenda to advance ngā toi Māori. (CNZ, 2019, p. 9)

In the establishment of the document "800+ Māori artists and organisations engaged kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face to face) and shared their stories" (CNZ, 2019, p. 23).

The document is an example of the attempts to centre indigenous knowledge at the core of government funding processes. By centring mātauranga Māori and embedding Te Reo within the strategy's framework, Creative New Zealand seeks to resist colonial models of cultural policy that have historically marginalised Indigenous voices. This can be seen as reclaiming space for Māori self-determination in the arts and enabling a decolonial praxis that positions ngā toi Māori not as a subset of national culture, but as foundational to Aotearoa's cultural identity.

4.3 Pacific Arts Strategy 2023–2028

The *Pacific Arts Strategy* aims to build connections between Pasifika artists and artists/markets in Oceania and globally. Māori and the people of the Pacific Islands share common cultures, language, arts practices and worldviews. The *Pacific Arts Strategy 2023-2028* aligns with the Arts Council's overall vision and work for a thriving arts ecosystem in Aotearoa and intersects with our *Te Hā o ngā Toi-Māori Arts Strategy*.

Consultation involved Pacific artists, cultural leaders, and communities to ensure that the strategy reflects the needs of Pacific peoples and their artistic traditions. The Pacific Arts Summit 2022 provided final consultation on the draft strategy in March 2023 (CNZ, 2023a, p. 4). The document aligns with other overarching CNZ government legislation including the Treaty of Waitangi, supporting the participation and protection of Pacific cultures in Aotearoa. It also aligns with the *Pacific Employment Action Plan* (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2022). The document is written in English, with important Pacific terms including Tangata, Va, Vaka and Moana included. Dance, theatre, and music are referenced as core forms of Pacific artistic expression, with an emphasis on traditional and contemporary forms of performance. The document specifically references successful Pacific arts companies (CNZ, 2023a, p. 23).

The CNZ *Pacific Arts Strategy* takes a Kaupapa Pasifika approach, recognising the different journeys of Pacific arts communities to uphold Mana Pasifika in the arts of Aotearoa New Zealand. The strategy works in alignment with the broader CNZ goals of resilience, wellbeing, access, inclusion, and equity. This Strategy embraces the essence of Pasifika peoples and cultures, gathered around four focus areas, or guiding stars: *Tagata*, *Vaka*, *Va* and *Moana*.

The policy provides a vision for enhancing the visibility, sustainability, and recognition of Pacific arts in Aotearoa. It is structured to provide long-term support for Pacific arts practitioners, ensuring they have the resources and platforms to express their cultures. The frameworks outlined in the document are philosophically inclusive and culturally specific, focusing on supporting Pacific communities while celebrating their diverse arts practices, and include principles of cultural empowerment, representation, autonomy, and creativity. The document refers to the *Pacific Arts Strategy* (CNZ, 2023a) as having a focus on:

- **Tagata:** The people are the heart of the Strategy.
- **Vaka:** The vessels for the journey and the potential for more vaka to join the growing fleet in the future.
- **Va:** The meaningful spaces between people, places, cultures, time, and dimensions, tangible, and intangible. Adorning this space includes accepting talanoa that may challenge

how things are done, to enable new ways and new thinking to emerge, and to innovate for the benefit of Pasifika peoples and wider communities.

- **Moana:** Te Moana-nui-a-Kiva, the vast Blue Pacific Ocean homeland of Pasifika peoples that is the fluid bridge between a new home in Aotearoa, other lands and opportunities, and to the #GlobalMoana and #DigitalMoana of new tools and technology.

4.3.1 Cultural Literacy

The strategy emphasizes the need for understanding Pacific languages, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs in arts programming and education.

> Kaupapa Pasifika refers to a foundation of understanding and knowledge created by Pasifika people and expressing Pasifika aspirations, values and principles. It is based on these two concepts: Kaupapa – awareness of the unique cultural perspectives of a distinct group of New Zealanders; Pasifika – the unique cultural perspectives and beliefs embodied in the values, customs, rituals, dance, song, language and cultural expressions of the individual Pasifika nations. The combination of the two attributes reflects the unique context of Aotearoa-based Pasifika communities, their aspirations, values and principles, and desire to express cultural values and worldviews that relate to their experience living in New Zealand. Pacific arts values and the worldviews and experiences of diverse Pasifika communities in Aotearoa – from Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia – create a proud identity and belonging, including our whakapapa to our home islands in Te Moana-nui-a-Kiva. (CNZ, 2023a, p. 20)

“Supporting the arts of Pacific Islands peoples in Aotearoa has been an important part of Creative New Zealand’s mandate and whakapapa, under the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council and then the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa” (CNZ, 2023a, p. 10).

> We want our work to help the unique voice of Pacific arts inspire and influence people – in Aotearoa New Zealand, across the Moana and around the world. Building understanding and a deeper sense of the wider value Pacific arts bring to our lives will also be important. (CNZ, 2023a, p. 13)

Through a CNZ survey 3.6 million adults in Aotearoa New Zealand identified they are interested in Pacific arts (CNZ, 2023a, p. 13).

> Strengthening links with artists and communities in Oceania is important to many Pasifika artists and helps develop the arts of Aotearoa New Zealand. Arts/cultural exchange with artists based in Te Moana-nui-a-Kiva is also important to the health of Pacific heritage arts in New Zealand. (CNZ, 2023a, p. 19)

“Professional development opportunities for individual Pasifika artists at all career stages” (CNZ, 2023a, p. 14).

“Empowering and supporting diverse Pasifika communities, organisations, collectives and groups to lead their own growth” (CNZ, 2023a, p. 15).

“Expansion and strengthening of the Pacific arts, culture and creative ecosystems and development of dynamic forms of infrastructure from a Pasifika worldview” (CNZ, 2023a, p. 15).

"Greater support for Pacific arts communities to connect with each other to strengthen the Va, share knowledge and expertise, from urban metropolitan centres to smaller towns in regions around Aotearoa" (CNZ, 2023a, p. 18).

The above citations reflect the Strategy policy's commitment to cultural literacy by recognising distinct worldviews, values, and expressions of Aotearoa's diverse communities. By supporting the development of diverse artistic languages and cultural practices, in both arts programming and education, Creative New Zealand affirms its desire to promote and embrace the importance of artistic growth, identity, and connection across local and national contexts.

4.3.2 Social Cohesion and Inclusion

The policy strengthens social cohesion by fostering understanding and connection among different Pacific communities and between Pacific peoples and the wider New Zealand society.

"Access, inclusion and equity – ensuring our services and the arts are accessible to, inclusive of and equitable for all New Zealanders" (CNZ, 2023a, p. 21).

"The Va represents the space in between people and things; a space that connects rather than separates" (CNZ, 2023a, p. 16).

"A stronger focus on access, inclusion and equity through greater support and empowerment of the diverse range of Pasifika peoples, including Deaf and disabled Pasifika artists and practitioners, and LGBTQIA+/MFPFAFF+ artists" (CNZ, 2023a, p. 14).

"Pacific arts are bold and enterprising Pacific arts are nurtured and nourished through a connected, resilient Pacific arts community in Aotearoa Pacific arts reach, inspire and are valued by more people and communities, everywhere" (CNZ, 2023a, p. 13).

"Powerful and resilient Pacific arts, led by passionate and enterprising Pasifika people, for Aotearoa, Te Moana-nui-a-Kiva and the world" (CNZ, 2023a, p. 13).

"Through our work we celebrate, connect, develop and invest in Pacific arts, by delivering to the Strategy's priorities for action" (CNZ, 2023a, p. 4).

"Powerful and resilient Pacific arts, led by passionate and enterprising Pasifika people, for Aotearoa, Te Moana-nui-a-Kiva and the world" (CNZ, 2023a, p. 4).

"Our Pacific Arts Strategy is a vital and vibrant part of our wider strategic direction, for Creative New Zealand and for the arts in Aotearoa" (CNZ, 2023a, p. 5).

> The Pacific arts community continues to make a huge and dynamic contribution to the arts in Aotearoa. Pacific arts, culture and creativity are a major feature of the arts environment and contribute to the cultural, social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Aotearoa New Zealand. (CNZ, 2023a, p. 9)
>
> Both Dame Winnie and Caren led the development of the first ever Pacific Arts Strategy 2018–2023, with support from the wider Arts Council and Creative New Zealand staff, with extensive and robust fono, talanoa and consultation with our Pacific arts and wider communities. (CNZ, 2023a, p. 10)

> As a navigator charts a long voyage under the stars, we'll continue to review and reset our course regularly, so we're agile in an ever-changing environment. Maintaining and strengthening meaningful relationships and regular talanoa with Pasifika artists and communities will help us do this, by always adorning the Va to uphold Mana Pasifika. (CNZ, 2023a, p. 11)

"We chose the word Tagata as it's a word commonly used across the Pacific to mean 'person' or 'people'; showing the many connections Pacific people share, to each other and to the tangata whenua of Aotearoa" (CNZ, 2023a, p. 14).

> The youthful demographics of New Zealand's Pacific communities (eg, over 55% aged 25-years and under, NZ Census 2018) means that more young and emerging artists and arts practitioners are coming through. Supporting them to both create their art and to develop their skills and experience will be increasingly important, to help nurture and strengthen the Pacific arts sector over the next five to 10 years. For all artists and arts practitioners, being able to navigate the New Zealand arts funding and support system is essential to access what's available. (CNZ, 2023a, p. 14)

As the examples show, social cohesion and inclusion factors are involved in the language of the strategy.

4.3.3 Decolonial Approach

This strategy document centres Pasifika art practice and people at its core, and identifies key approaches to moving forward together with enhanced respect and generous space for Pacific cultures to thrive. In particular the concept of Va as a space where respect, non-exploitation, and mutually beneficial relationships are nurtured, is potent in relation to a decolonial lens. The strategy advocates for Kaupapa Pasifika approaches to be embraced, and the strategy values the contributions and aspirations of Creative New Zealand's Pasifika staff and Aotearoa's Pasifika arts community. The strategy indicates a desire for reparation and forwards movement in relation to Pasifika arts practice, citing a desire for equity and inclusion.

"The imbalance and lack of equity in a relationship where one partner has most of the resources, skills and industry knowledge working with less-experienced Pacific organisations or community groups who have a wealth of Pacific arts cultural expertise" (CNZ, 2023a, p. 18).

"We expect the Va to be characterised by respectful, non-exploitative, mutually beneficial collaborations; those that teu le Va ['adorn the Va'] rather than detract from it" (CNZ, 2023a, p. 18).

> TAGATA Pasifika artists and arts practitioners are resourced to develop their practice and deliver outstanding work. MOANA Meaningful connections, across Aotearoa, Oceania and globally, ensure that Pacific arts are further enriched. VA An innovative and networked Pacific arts environment exists, so that Pacific arts are strengthened for future success. (CNZ, 2023a, p. 4)

"Our resources: Our people and expertise, including our Pasifika staff, Arts Council members, assessors and others Our systems and processes, including Kaupapa Pasifika approaches" (CNZ, 2023a, p. 5).

> In troubled times or unexpected circumstances, the Strategy provides a shining light and a map that allows us to navigate change to continue to deliver to the four strategic fetu of Tagata, Vaka, Va and Moana. During disruptions, global volatility and closed borders over several years, the Va focus gained more significance and allowed new partnerships and relationships to bloom. These new bonds help to strengthen the Pacific arts ecosystem and powerfully connect people, communities and opportunities. Activating the #DigitalMoana concept created new ways of working with others, allowing for more innovation and opening new opportunities for community-building, learning, making and connecting. (CNZ, 2023a, p. 7)
>
> A further change came in 1994, with the formation of a dedicated South Pacific Arts Committee, overseeing funding for Pacific arts. Many of our community and cultural leaders served on the Committee, and imagined a prosperous future with opportunities abound for Pacific artists and creatives to thrive, in Aotearoa and internationally. (CNZ, 2023a, p. 10)

The policy focuses on cultural autonomy and self-expression for Pacific artists and aims to increase the representation of Pacific art forms in New Aotearoa's cultural landscape. By embedding the concept of Va as a relational ethic that privileges reciprocity and care, the Strategy seeks to disrupt extractive colonial models of arts engagement and reassert Pacific epistemologies as central to policy-making in Aotearoa. The Strategy's prioritisation of Kaupapa Pasifika affirms Pacific-led frameworks. Moreover, positioning Pacific knowledges, languages, and values as authoritative and foundational rather than peripheral or consultative can be seen as an indication of challenging institutional hierarchies.

4.3.4 Case Study: Non-Government Arts Organisation Policy

The Non- government organisation **Pacific Dance New Zealand (PDNZ)** provided the D@rts research project with their Pacific Islands Dance Fono Strategic Plan (2022) for analysis. Pacific Dance New Zealand is funded by the government organisation Creative New Zealand (CNZ). This policy analysis is offered here as a case study of policy from a non-governmental organisation, but again to be very clear, this organization operates within and under government policy and funding, as outlined by the government's Pacific Arts Strategy.

Formed in 2008, PDNZ is a national organisation based in Auckland, (the world's largest Pacific Islands community). The core purpose of PDNZ as stated in the Pacific Islands Dance Fono Strategic Plan (2022) is "connecting, nurturing and innovating Pacific Dance" (p.1). The vision states, "Take Pacific Dance to the world, increasing visibility, regional, national and global presence" (p.1). Immediately one can see how PDNZ is serving the governmental Pacific Arts Strategy in making connections across Oceania and globally. PDNZ's core values build a bridge between community needs and government policy. The core values that articulate this bridge are stated in the Strategy (2022) policy:

Guardianship: Protecting culture and the traditional heritage art forms of the Pacific.
Service: Tautua and honouring the role of leadership through service and education.
Innovation: Allowing for the innovation (new Programmes)/ contemporisation of Pacific Dance without losing the core essence.

Wellbeing: Wellbeing of the culture and people.
Collaboration: Working collaboratively with multiple organisations, connectivity and relationships. (p.1)

Accounting for the values above and the action noted in the Strategic Plan, PDNZ is clearly working towards the Arts Council vision of fostering an arts ecosystem within the Pacific communities in terms of organising festivals, education programmes, industry awards and events, and community -based workshops. In respect to decoloniality and inclusion, it is noteworthy that the Director of PDNZ is Samoan, and the Executive Board Members come from across NZ, representing Tongan, Samoan, Pakeha, Fijian and Cook Island communities. Diverse Pacific voices and communities are involved and served as the PDNZ establishes a visible, sustainable, socially cohesive platform for Pacific artists. The work and community engagement of PDNZ takes an artist-centred approach that prioritises the voice, creativity, and outputs of the artists involved, and works in alignment with Creative New Zealand policy. The perception is that PDNZ is actioning decolonial philosophies, and in doing so maintaining practices of inclusion and social cohesion.

4.4 Diversity in the Arts Policy 2015

The *Diversity in the Arts Policy* states CNZ's commitment to recognise, promote and celebrate diversity in the arts and ensure that funding and services are fair, equitable, non-discriminatory and keep pace with demographic changes in Aotearoa New Zealand society (CNZ, 2015, p. 18). The policy identifies the role of the arts to contribute to a distinctive and multi-faceted New Zealand identity through advocacy, funding, and support for arts in Aotearoa New Zealand. The *Diversity in the Arts Policy* document outlines Creative New Zealand's responsibility to uphold, advocate for, and promote diversity in the arts in Aotearoa New Zealand, as it relates to artists, practitioners, individuals, groups, and communities "who access and benefit from participating in, and experiencing, the arts activities that we support" (CNZ, 2015, p. 1).

The *Diversity in the Arts Policy* has a direct relationship with the *Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa Act* (2014), *New Zealand Bill of Rights Act* (1990), *Human Rights Act* (1993), and *New Zealand Disability Strategy 2001*. It supports international commitments and obligations under the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Unesco, 2005) and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006) government legislation that guides Creative New Zealand's activities. The legislation and policy interpret *arts* as including "all forms of creative and interpretative expression" (CNZ, 2015, p. 1). In this document, dance, theatre and music are not mentioned specifically.

The document aligns with the *Cultural Sector Strategic Framework 2014-18* led by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (CNZ, 2015, p. 2) and complies with *Arts Council of New Zealand Aotearoa Act 2014*, *New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990*, *Human Rights Act 1993*, and *New Zealand Disability Strategy 2001*. This document does not explicitly discuss consultation, although, it is likely to fall under the umbrella of broader CNZ consultation processes that involve *iwi*, artists, community groups, elders, and expert practitioners. Languages are not specifically mentioned, but the policy suggests an inclusive approach to multilingual expression: "supports

a diverse range of ways to access the arts, including digital platforms and other means of distribution as well as arts expressed in different languages" (CNZ, 2015, p. 1).

4.4.1 Cultural Literacy and Social Cohesion and Inclusion

Cultural literacy is evidenced by the policy's commitment to multicultural arts and ensuring that diverse cultural perspectives are represented in arts programming and education.

"Encourages the arts sector to recognise, promote and celebrate the arts of the diverse cultures of New Zealand" (CNZ, 2015, p. 3).

The policy focuses on promoting diverse cultural expressions in the arts, ensuring that all people, regardless of background, have access to participate in and enjoy the arts. The policy encourages broadening representation in arts programming. The philosophy is inclusive, aiming to remove barriers and ensure broad participation in cultural life. Key principles include equality, cultural diversity, representation, and equity.

"Diversity in the arts applies both to the artists and practitioners we support as well as to the individuals, groups and communities who access and benefit from participating in, and experiencing, the arts activities that we support" (CNZ, 2015, p. 1).

"This policy ensures that the benefits of the arts that Creative New Zealand supports are available to all New Zealanders, irrespective of age, gender, ethnic affiliations, physical or other disability, sexual orientation or religion" (CNZ, 2015, p. 1).

"Will ensure there are no significant barriers to accessing our support and our resources (this includes making sure our own communications and application processes meet, as far as possible, agreed standards for removing barriers)" (CNZ, 2015, p. 3).

"Encourages the arts sector to remove barriers to access the arts for practitioners, participants and audiences" (CNZ, 2015, p. 3).

"Will fund educational and advocacy services to promote diversity in access to the arts sector and other relevant sectors" (CNZ, 2015, p. 3).

"Takes account of approaches to supporting diversity by public cultural entities in New Zealand including NZ On Air, Sport NZ, NZ Film Commission and Te Papa Tongarewa" (CNZ, 2015, p. 3).

In this document social cohesion and inclusion is achieved by fostering shared cultural dialogue and encouraging understanding between different cultural groups in the arts. Inclusion is evidenced in the policy's emphasis on creating pathways for marginalized groups and making the arts sector more representative of New Zealand's multicultural society.

4.4.2 Decolonial Approach

The policy's commitment to diversity supports a decolonial approach by ensuring that marginalized voices are not just heard but included in shaping the future of the arts in New Zealand. The decolonial impetus for this document is to advocate for diversity in the arts in Aotearoa. With this view, all reference to diversity may be viewed as a decolonial approach seeking

inclusion and equity amongst Aotearoa's constitutionally bicultural, multicultural population. The document discusses the removal of barriers to engagement and inclusion within Aotearoa's multi-cultural arts environment, seeking to increase visibility for the diverse range of arts activities on offer both in community and professional arts environments. Written in 2015, this document may be in line for a refresh post Covid-19, and in line with the more recently developed Māori and Pasifika arts policy.

One aspect that is appreciated about this policy is the emphasis on representation and cultural equity, ensuring that all people have the opportunity to express themselves in the arts without facing systemic barriers. However, while the policy articulates a commitment to diversity, it is our opinion that a more explicitly decolonial approach might require naming and redressing the historical and structural power imbalances rooted in colonisation that continue to shape access, representation, and resource allocation in Aotearoa's arts sector.

4.5 Tapatahi Accessibility Policy 2023-2028

> Ko au ko koe, ko koe ko au, I am you, you are me. (CNZ, 2023b, p. 3)

In 2013 23% of New Zealand citizens identified as deaf or disabled. Creative New Zealand's *Tapatahi Accessibility Policy guides* work with/ for Deaf and disabled artists and arts practitioners, turi Māori, tāngata whaikaha Māori and disability communities. The policy has a focus on ensuring that Creative New Zealand arts funding is accessible and inclusive for all New Zealanders.

Consultation process for the document included disability advocacy groups, arts organizations, Māori, artists, and individuals with lived experience of disability to ensure the policy meets the accessibility needs of the community.

> The policy has been developed by Creative New Zealand working alongside turi Māori, tāngata whaikaha Māori, Deaf and disabled arts and disability rights leaders in the Creative New Zealand Deaf and disabled-led Manga Tipua Accessibility Reference Group. Creative New Zealand has also consulted with Deaf and disabled artists and a range of disability arts, rights, and advocacy organisations. (CNZ, 2023b, p. 2)

Other legislation that this policy aligns with includes

- *Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa Act 2014*
- *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*
- *New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016–2026*
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*
- *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*
- *Bill of Rights Act 1990*
- *Human Rights Act 1993*
- *Creative New Zealand Accessibility Policy and Action Plan 2023–2028*
- *New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006*
- *Plain Language Act 2022*

Key principles of the policy include Mana Tautika – Equity, Te Mana Whaikaha Hei Kaihautū – Leadership by Deaf and disabled people, Iti Kahurangi – Value, Ngākau Pono – Integrity (CNZ, 2023b, p. 5). They express Creative New Zealand's commitments to accessibility. There is an emphasis on sign language, braille, and alternative formats to ensure all people, regardless of their sensory impairments, can engage with the arts. A theatre company is mentioned (CNZ, 2023b, p. 4), but aside from this dance, theatre and music are not mentioned specifically in the document.

4.5.1 Cultural Literacy

Cultural literacy is demonstrated by the policy's emphasis on recognizing disability culture and ensuring that disabled artists are represented in all arts sectors.

> We have used Deaf (with a capital D) in this policy, to refer to Deaf people, culture and communities who use New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) as their first or preferred language. This meaning matches the definition of 'Deaf community' in the New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006. (CNZ, 2023b, p. 7)

"We recognise the diversity of turi Māori, tāngata whaikaha Māori, D/deaf, hard-of-hearing and disabled people and that language is very important" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 7).

"We use the words and language preferences that people use to describe themselves and their communities. Language evolves, and we will update the policy as required" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 7).

"We build accessibility into the way we work as an organisation. We meet our responsibilities and have the right skills and attitudes" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 11).

"We use universal and inclusive design to ensure accessibility is built into the way we work so that our services, information, systems, and processes are fair, and easy to understand and use" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 11).

"We are open and responsive to feedback and continue to adapt and change to be accessible" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 11).

"We ensure decision-making is informed by robust data and evidence that includes the knowledge and perspectives of turi Māori, tāngata whaikaha Māori, Deaf and disabled artists and people. We ensure that our research and data is accessible" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 11).

> We provide ongoing training and professional development for staff to ensure we have the right skills and tools to work and communicate accessibly. We use training providers that are Deaf and disabled-led or recommended by Deaf and disabled communities to ensure we are building our capability appropriately. (CNZ, 2023b, p. 11)

"We regularly review and update the services and information we provide, working with Deaf and disabled people to check we are meeting our responsibilities under key legislation and guiding documents" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 11).

"We have the right skills, attitudes, and culture to ensure our services are accessible" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 21).

4.5.2 Social Cohesion and Inclusion

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that information, services and spaces can be accessed with ease and dignity, services and funding are non-discriminatory, fair, equitable, inclusive and safe, and that Turi Māori, tāngata whaikaha Māori, deaf and disabled artists and arts practitioners are visible, acknowledged, valued and respected on an equal basis with others.

The policy is designed to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for people with disabilities in the arts sector. It establishes clear guidelines for making arts events, programming, and venues accessible to all individuals, with a focus on reducing barriers for people with physical and sensory impairments.

The policy is inclusive and empowering, advocating for the rights of people with disabilities to access and participate in all forms of art. By ensuring that disabled artists have the same access to artistic opportunities, the policy helps promote greater social cohesion through shared experiences. Inclusion is at the heart of the policy, specifically focusing on ensuring that people with disabilities are not excluded from the arts.

“Aotearoa New Zealand is a non-disabling society – a place where disabled people have an equal opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations, and all of New Zealand works together to make this happen” (CNZ, 2023b, p. 4).

“Principle 1. Mana Tautika – Equity We remove barriers so that Deaf and disabled people, turi Māori and tāngata whaikaha Māori have equitable opportunities to access, participate and engage in the arts and ngā toi” (CNZ, 2023b, p. 9).

“Our services, information and workplaces are fair, equitable, inclusive, safe and can be accessed with ease and dignity for the benefit of Deaf and disabled people and Aotearoa whānui (all New Zealanders)” (CNZ, 2023b, p. 9).

“We create opportunities for Deaf and disabled leadership, by including turi Māori, tāngata whaikaha Māori, Deaf and disabled artists, arts practitioners and leaders in our work, staff, and governance” (CNZ, 2023b, p. 10).

> We celebrate the diversity of cultures and identities within Deaf and disabled communities. We support people having choice and control over how they wish to identify and express themselves and their whole identity including (but not limited to) their disability, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, and beliefs. (CNZ, 2023b, p. 10)

“Deaf and disabled artists and arts practitioners, turi Māori and tāngata whaikaha Māori can access the assistance they need” (CNZ, 2023b, p. 15).

“Our systems, processes, and places can be accessed safely with ease and dignity” (CNZ, 2023b, p. 15).

“Deaf and disabled people, turi Māori and tāngata whaikaha Māori can communicate and receive information in the formats and languages that are right for them” (CNZ, 2023b, p. 17).

"Our recruitment and induction processes are accessible. We provide inclusive employment opportunities that support the development of turi Māori, tāngata whaikaha Māori, Deaf and disabled professionals joining Creative New Zealand" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 18).

"We work in partnership to increase opportunities with and for turi Māori, tāngata whaikaha, Deaf and disabled artists and practitioners" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 19).

"Accessibility Charter: We sign up to the Accessibility Charter to commit to making our online content and digital systems accessible for disabled people, so all New Zealanders have access to our information and services" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 20).

The policy demonstrates a commitment to equity and inclusion by explicitly prioritizing accessibility and representation for Deaf and disabled artists, including tāngata Māori, seeking to ensure that they are valued and respected equally within the arts sector. The policy aims to foster leadership opportunities and embrace the diverse identities within these communities, promoting empowerment alongside prioritising inclusion. This can be interpreted as going beyond access. By embedding these principles into funding, programming, and governance, the policy actively has the potential and capacity to contribute to social cohesion through shared participation and dismantling barriers.

4.5.3 Decolonial Approach

The policy promotes a decolonial approach by challenging ableism and creating space for disabled people to be active agents in the arts, thereby addressing historical exclusion and marginalization. This document is anti-discriminatory and seeks equity in the arts for all members of Aotearoa's population. The decolonial conversation in this document places artists at its core and engages diverse communities as consultants. It discusses "lived experience" as a means of centring peoples experiences as essential in the development of the policy. Processes of consultation have been engaged with relevant members of the "Deaf and disabled people, turi Māori and tāngata whaikaha Māori" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 6), meaning that these policies could be viewed as linking to reconciliation, and embracing of diverse lived experience. This policy has strong and sustained reference to inclusion as a founding pillar of the policy.

"We remove barriers and act against discrimination. Artists and creatives are at the centre of our decision-making and actions" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 9).

> Deaf and disabled people, turi Māori and tāngata whaikaha Māori are consulted and involved in decisions about Creative New Zealand's work that will impact them. We support Deaf and disabled artists to have rangatiratanga – authority and determination of their own futures. (CNZ, 2023b, p. 10)

"We value the lived experience of turi Māori, tāngata whaikaha Māori, Deaf and disabled artists and arts practitioners, and the perspectives, expertise, and innovation that comes with lived experience" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 10).

"Turi Māori, tāngata whaikaha Māori, Deaf and disabled artists and arts practitioners see themselves reflected in Creative New Zealand because we are inclusive, have access to specialist Deaf and disability knowledge, and are representative in our staff and leadership" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 19).

"We are accountable to the communities we serve" (CNZ, 2023b, p. 20).

The policy's commitment to accessibility and inclusivity ensures that disabled people are not just passive recipients but active participants in the arts. Foregrounding the leadership of tāngata Māori, the policy not only disrupts colonial hierarchies of knowledge and power but also affirms the significance of Indigenous epistemologies and lived experiences in shaping inclusive arts practices. The policy's emphasis on co-design and consultation with disabled and Deaf communities also reflects a shift away from paternalistic models of policy-making towards relational, mana-enhancing approaches aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi and decolonial frameworks of self-determination.

4.6 Remuneration Policy for Artists and Arts Practitioners 2022

The *Remuneration Policy for Artists and Arts Practitioners* outlines CNZ's commitment to supporting and promoting the rights of artists and arts practitioners to fair remuneration for their work, recognising the value of the arts, creative and cultural practice to the social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of Aotearoa New Zealand. The policy provides guidelines for fair and equitable remuneration for artists and arts practitioners across New Zealand. It aims to address the systemic undervaluing of creative labour, ensuring artists are compensated appropriately for their work. Dance, theatre and music are not mentioned specifically in the document.

Consultation included artists, arts organizations, and industry stakeholders, seeking feedback on fair remuneration standards for artists. The document is written in English and is not language-specific, though the policy encourages cultural inclusivity. It aligns with the *Employment Relations Act* and *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, ensuring equitable working conditions for Māori and other artists in Aotearoa: "Remuneration practices must comply with relevant legislation and sector organisations' standards: (a) All employment must conform to relevant New Zealand employment legislation and other legal requirements" (CNZ, 2022a, p. 3).

The policy is grounded in fairness, equity, and respect for artistic labour, acknowledging the value of creative work in society.

> This policy states Creative New Zealand's commitment to promoting and supporting the rights of artists and arts practitioners to fair remuneration for the work they undertake, recognising the value of the arts, creative and cultural practice to the social, cultural, economic, and environmental. (CNZ, 2022a, p. 1)

Key principles include fair pay, equity, recognition of artistic work, and sustainability.

- Artists and arts practitioners' creative practice is valued and regarded as 'real work'
- Artists and arts practitioners are remunerated fairly for their work
- Artists and arts practitioners are well positioned to adopt a portfolio approach to achieving a sustainable career
- A portfolio career in the arts sector is one in which artists and arts practitioners are unlikely to have a single permanent job, and may be balancing their creative practice with related creative work such as teaching and/or non-creative work
- Artists and arts practitioners are prepared for a career in the arts and cultural sector

- Artists and arts practitioners can access support to grow and develop a sustainable career
- Artists and arts practitioners' careers contribute positively to their wellbeing (CNZ, 2022a, p. 1)

4.6.1 Cultural Literacy

Cultural literacy is evidenced by the policy's commitment to ensuring that artists of all cultures are fairly compensated, recognizing the value of diverse artistic contributions.

> This policy is a step towards ensuring that creative work is valued, that artists and arts practitioners are treated fairly when forming working relationships and are better supported to develop a sustainable career in their chosen field. Fair remuneration for creative work also contributes to artists' and arts practitioners' life satisfaction and wellbeing. Diversity within the sector is also supported when artists and arts practitioners are less reliant on working outside the sector to make a living. (CNZ, 2022a, p. 2)

"Supporting advocacy for fair payment for all aspects of employment in the sector by central and local government and the private sector" (CNZ, 2022a, p. 2).

"Cultural practices are customary activities that are recognised as fundamental to upholding the values and recognising specific people and culture" (CNZ, 2022a, p. 3).

4.6.2 Social Cohesion and Inclusion

Social cohesion is supported by ensuring that artists are valued and compensated fairly, which promotes respect for the cultural contributions of all communities. The policy promotes inclusive pay standards, ensuring artists from all backgrounds are compensated equitably.

"These [remuneration] principles and practice guidelines align with key elements of Te Waka Toi Pātaka (Creative New Zealand's Mātauranga Māori Framework), including: Kawenga (responsibility), Whakarite (balance), Hapori (community) and Āwhina me te Ākina (support and advocacy)" (CNZ, 2022a, p. 4).

> Remuneration practices should be equitable: (a) All artists and arts practitioners should receive equitable remuneration. Where appropriate, experience and expertise should be recognised in remuneration levels. (b) Equitable access to employment opportunities should be available for diverse communities irrespective of age, gender, ethnic affiliation, physical or other disability, sexual orientation, or religion. (CNZ, 2022a, p. 5)

"Remuneration practices should be transparent" (CNZ, 2022a, p. 5).

4.6.3 Decolonial Approach

The policy challenges historical inequities in artist compensation, offering a decolonial shift by ensuring that diverse artists, including Māori and Pasifika, are fairly compensated for their cultural labour. This policy supports a decolonial conversation through advocating for fair pay for artists, who have traditionally been underpaid and sometimes treated unfairly in Aotearoa. A decolonial approach could be read in how the policy calls for a transparency of processes,

practices, and decision making. Creative New Zealand has published suggested artist rates of pay and per diems on their website as a guide to fair remuneration. Creative New Zealand cites that equitable access to employment opportunities should be available for diverse communities irrespective of age, gender, ethnic affiliation, physical or other disability, sexual orientation, or religion. It is not clear how this is monitored or upheld.

> Cultural practices are customary activities that are recognised as fundamental to upholding the values and recognising specific people and culture. For Māori as tangata whenua these activities include the appropriate application of te reo, tikanga and mātauranga Māori; knowledge of whakapapa, forms of artistic expression, knowledge of the taiao, natural materials and resource management and knowledge of people and place to support identity and belonging. For Pasifika people as tagata o te Moana Nui a Kiwa, these activities include the appropriate application of language, customary practice, ways of knowing and being in culturally specific ways; knowledge of place, people, and environment which support and nurture identity. (CNZ, 2022a, p. 3)

It is our perspective that the policy focuses on fair compensation for artists, and acknowledges the inherent value of creative work and promotes sustainability in the arts sector. By recognising cultural practices as legitimate forms of creative labour, it is perceived that the policy disrupts colonial distinctions between ‘art’ and ‘culture,’ affirming Indigenous modes of knowledge production as central to Aotearoa’s creative economy. Embedding key Māori principles enables the policy to reframe remuneration as not just about economic fairness, but as a practice of manaakitanga and relational accountability rooted in mātauranga Māori.

4.7 Creative New Zealand Interim Investment Intentions 2023-2025

This document outlines CNZ’s investment plans (until 2025) with a focus on supporting NZ artists to generate high-quality, dynamic and resilient New Zealand arts, valued in Aotearoa and internationally and create opportunities for New Zealanders to participate in the arts (CNZ, 2023c). The document identifies that the arts and ngā toi improve the lives of New Zealanders, the arts sector contributes to prosperous and resilient communities, the arts and ngā toi strengthen whānau, hapū, communities and society, and ngā toi and the arts contribute to the wellbeing of Te Taiao (the natural world). The document is a succinct capture of what has been extrapolated in the other CNZ policy/ strategy.

The policy outlines Creative New Zealand’s funding priorities for the next two years, focusing on arts initiatives that reflect the diverse cultural landscape of Aotearoa and promote access, sustainability, and innovation in the arts sector. It is structured around clear funding criteria and aims to support a wide range of arts projects, from Māori and Pacific arts to digital and experimental art forms. The policy refers to dance, theatre, and music noting that all of these art forms will benefit from the funding priorities outlined.

The policy uses Te Reo Māori to frame aspects of the policy. The majority of the document is written in English. Consultation was carried out with arts organizations, artists, and community groups across Aotearoa. The process was designed to gather input on the sector’s needs and aspirations for the next phase of investment, especially in the wake of COVID-19’s impact on

the arts. The document aligns with *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* by recognizing the importance of Māori art forms and ensuring support for Māori artists. It also aligns with broader government cultural policy frameworks and the Arts and Culture Legislation.

The philosophy is inclusive, aiming to support artists and communities from diverse cultural backgrounds. It recognizes the importance of innovation, collaboration, and cultural sovereignty in shaping the future of Aotearoa's arts sector. The key principles are equity, accessibility, collaboration, and sustainability. The policy emphasizes long-term support for innovative and culturally diverse projects.

4.7.1 Cultural Literacy

Cultural literacy is evidenced in the policy's recognition of Māori and Pacific arts, alongside emerging forms of digital art and hybrid art practices. It emphasizes the need for artists to engage with their communities and cultural contexts.

> The impacts (or value) we've identified align with the wellbeing domains and wealth areas in the Treasury's Living Standards Framework 4, which provides a more holistic look at how we can strengthen wellbeing; and the He Ara Waiora framework, which provides a mātauranga Māori perspective on wellbeing. (CNZ, 2023c, p. 6)
>
> Through our investment, we are committed to advancing ngā toi Māori and advocating its value as part of the unique culture and identity of Aotearoa. The way we work and how we approach our investment, consistent with our legislative mandate, recognises in the arts the role of Māori as tangata whenua. (CNZ, 2023c, p. 6)

4.7.2 Social Cohesion and Inclusion

Social cohesion is fostered by supporting arts that promote shared cultural understanding and represent a diverse range of voices. By investing in underrepresented groups, the policy seeks to create greater connection between communities. Inclusion is evidenced by the focus on funding opportunities for Māori, Pacific, and diverse communities, as well as initiatives that support underrepresented artists and art forms.

In relation to diversity and reach CNZ prioritises:

- Investment that ensures diverse communities across New Zealand can access and engage with the arts
- Investment that engages with new audiences, in New Zealand and internationally
- Investment in the development and delivery of New Zealand arts digitally (CNZ, 2023c, p. 2)

4.7.3 Decolonial Approach

The policy acknowledges the historical marginalization of Māori, Pacific, and other minority communities in the arts. By focusing on inclusive investment and cultural innovation, it can be seen as a step toward decolonizing the arts sector, empowering marginalized communities and providing them with platforms for expression. The decolonial conversation is woven into the fabric of all Creative New Zealand guiding documents. It is clear that there is a desire to

consult and involve Māori and Pasifika people at all stages of the policy decision making process for CNZ. There is wide reference to diversity and inclusion in the arts through this (and all) CNZ documents, and I look forward to seeing how these things are monitored and accounted for in the reporting on policy in future years.

“Pacific arts inspire and influence people, everywhere Moana – Meaningful connections, across Aotearoa, Oceania and globally, ensure that Pacific arts are further enriched” (CNZ, 2023c, p. 3).

“Ngā toi Māori artists and practitioners are working across the arts sector, with opportunities for ngā toi Māori practice development, capability building and career progression in Aotearoa and abroad” (CNZ, 2023c, p. 3).

“Va – An innovative and networked Pacific arts environment exists, so that Pacific arts are strengthened for future success. Vaka – Pacific arts groups, collectives and organisations are supported to help lead and grow Pacific arts in Aotearoa” (CNZ, 2023c, p. 3).

> Whakamana i te Tiriti: Giving effect to both Māori sovereignty and partnership aspirations embedded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi – Tuku Rauemi: Empowering and enabling the communities we work with to determine their futures – Mana aki i te Tangata: Amplifying reciprocity and wellbeing in the way we work. (CNZ, 2023c, p. 4)
>
> In our Statement of Intent 2022–2026 we identified, as one of three strategic focus areas, Access, inclusion and equity. Under this focus area we’re continuing to work on identifying who is and who isn’t benefiting from our services, and seeking to implement initiatives that will contribute to addressing these gaps. (CNZ, 2023c, p. 6)

“A greater focus on communities that have been under-represented – leading to the development of an Accessibility Policy focused on Deaf and disabled communities (to be released in 2024)” (CNZ, 2023c, p. 8).

In this policy we recognise that there is strong commitment to equity and cultural diversity. The focus on Māori and Pacific communities, as well as new experimental art forms, highlights Creative New Zealand’s role in fostering a dynamic and inclusive arts ecosystem. This commitment potentially signals a movement toward decoloniality by supporting Indigenous and culturally diverse communities to lead, define, and shape their own artistic futures within Aotearoa’s arts infrastructure.

4.8 CNZ Advocacy Strategy 2016–2021

This advocacy strategy sets the high-level direction that Creative New Zealand will take to make the case for the arts in encouraging, promoting, and supporting the arts in New Zealand for the benefit of all New Zealanders (CNZ, 2016). As the national arts development agency, CNZ are uniquely placed to proactively advance the case for the arts, as well as providing others with the means to do so. This strategy document outlines how advocating for the arts will promote stronger investment by others into the arts sector and stimulate New Zealanders’ appetite for high-quality, dynamic arts experiences.

The *Advocacy Strategy* is a forward-looking document that outlines how Creative New Zealand plans to advocate for the value of the arts in society. The policy is structured around building relationships with stakeholders, ensuring that the importance of the arts is understood by key decision-makers in government, the private sector, and wider society. The strategy makes clear that all art forms, including dance, theatre, music, and visual arts, are central to the advocacy efforts, emphasizing their collective importance in fostering a vibrant national culture.

The strategy supports the use of Te Reo Māori and other New Zealand languages, acknowledging the importance of language in cultural expression and advocacy. Consultation for this strategy involved arts leaders, cultural advocates, and policy experts to ensure a well-rounded understanding of the challenges facing the arts and how to advocate effectively for the sector. The strategy also takes input from audiences, artists, and cultural organizations.

The strategy aligns with *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, advocating for the recognition and support of Māori arts. It also aligns with broader cultural policy frameworks that seek to highlight the importance of the arts in New Zealand's development.

The philosophy is advocacy-based, with an emphasis on raising awareness of the value of the arts in enhancing society's cultural, social, and economic well-being. It stresses engagement and public awareness**.** The key principles are advocacy, representation, engagement, and collaboration. The strategy aims to make the case for arts investment by aligning with societal values and national priorities.

4.8.1 Cultural Literacy

Cultural literacy is evidenced through the advocacy for cultural diversity, Māori arts, and Pacific arts, positioning these areas as central to the arts sector's broader value proposition.

"Strong messaging about the value of the arts will help strengthen our relationships with other groups, including iwi, Pasifika groups, local authorities, community trusts and other funders" (CNZ, 2016, p. 3).

> Involvement in the arts improves personal health and well-being, including helping people to understand and adapt to the world around them, and inspiring, stimulating and raising life aspirations. They also build individual skills and talents, and instil a sense of self-worth, confidence and personal achievement. (CNZ, 2016, p. 8)

"celebrate Māori cultural achievement as a gateway (waharoa) for advancing Māori identity and success, so that the centrality of cultural identity is amplified and visible" (CNZ, 2016, p. 14).

4.8.2 Social Cohesion and Inclusion

Social cohesion is emphasized through the strategy's goal of building stronger connections between the arts community and wider society, promoting mutual understanding and respect across cultural lines. Inclusion is embedded in the strategy by highlighting the importance of representation from all communities, especially Māori, Pacific, and other minority groups, in advocacy efforts.

> Those who participate in the arts are motivated to do so through: a desire for entertainment, fun, relaxation or excitement; to express themselves or 'make sense'; to define who they are/ strengthen their identity; as a framework for social interaction; to experience something unusual or uplifting or surprising; and for the opportunity to learn something new. (CNZ, 2016, p. 6)

> There is an inherent tension in developing an effective set of arts advocacy messages. The value of the arts cannot be expressed in purely economic terms; yet, we are required to advocate for the arts with many audiences in the language of economic benefit and cost-benefit analysis. The solution to this is to advocate in the language of economic benefit when it is viable, and to also make the argument that the arts have both 'intrinsic value' (ie, the inherent value that the arts have in and of themselves) and 'instrumental value' (ie, the value of the arts not as ends-in themselves but as means to achieving something else). The Treasury makes this point in its own Higher Living Standards work; that a nation's wellbeing is derived from far more than just economic growth. (CNZ, 2016, p. 8)

"Arts learning fosters critical thinking, using language and symbols, managing self, relating to others, and participating and contributing. It helps build the skills modern societies need to thrive, including empathy, creativity, problem-solving and teamwork" (CNZ, 2016, p. 8).

> The arts allow communities to come together and express shared values and beliefs. They help build **social cohesion**, community resilience and the rejuvenation of communities suffering from long-term economic deprivation, population decline and following natural disasters. The arts work for our businesses and economy by creating jobs, promoting spending and attracting people to our communities. They also help to make our communities more inclusive and explore our connection to the natural environment. (CNZ, 2016, p. 8)

> The arts are an important way for people and communities to explore and express their identities, individually and collectively, which also helps build more cohesive communities. The arts help us understand our own humanity and reinforce shared human connections. Participation in the arts produces a more engaged citizenry and promotes civic participation, and the arts provide an accessible forum for discussing society's challenges and opportunities. (CNZ, 2016, p. 8)

The above citations articulate the dual role of the arts in fostering both social cohesion and individual identity, emphasizing their intrinsic and instrumental values beyond economic metrics. It recognizes the arts as a vital space for cultural representation, dialogue, and community resilience, particularly for key groups such as Māori and Pacific peoples. By highlighting the arts' contribution to critical skills like empathy and creativity, we also believe the strategy underscores its broader societal importance in cultivating engaged, thoughtful, and connected citizens.

4.8.3 Decolonial Approach

The *Advocacy Strategy* seeks to decolonize the way the arts are valued in Aotearoa by advocating for Māori and Pacific art forms to be treated as equal to Western forms, pushing for greater recognition of indigenous cultural sovereignty within the arts landscape.

Creative New Zealand plays an essential role in advocacy for Pasifika and ngā toi Māori art, and contributes to the diversity of arts practices in Aotearoa. CNZ is essential in embedding the importance of arts practices in Aotearoa with a desire to "assure their vibrancy and sustainability into the future" (CNZ, 2016, p. 3). Importantly, Māori don't perceive the arts to be separated from everyday life, but rather they are perceived as an essential and entangled part of their identity and culture. Similarly, creative practice is intrinsic in the lives of Pasifika peoples (CNZ, 2016, p. 7), and this policy document acknowledges that Pasifika people contribute a diversity of cultures to Aotearoa as a society.

Within this policy we have appreciated the focused approach to advocacy that centres the value of the arts in societal well-being and fosters broad-based engagement, helping to reshape the national narrative around the arts in a way that is inclusive, representative, and culturally aware. This shift is a crucial aspect of decoloniality, because we believe it challenges dominant Eurocentric narratives and prioritises Indigenous worldviews as central to Aotearoa's cultural identity. By embedding Māori and Pasifika understandings of art as integral to daily life and identity, we believe the strategy supports a more holistic and decolonial framework for valuing creative expression.

4.9 Auckland Council: Kaupapa Here Toi Tūmatanui Public Art Policy (2021)

This policy supports Auckland Council funded public art activity and contributes to the Council's vision of Auckland being the world's most liveable city (Auckland Council, 2021). It aligns with Auckland Council's strategic plan called *Auckland 2050*. It also aligns with *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* by incorporating Māori cultural values and perspectives in public art. It acknowledges the importance of integrating mana whenua and mātauranga Māori into the public art landscape, which is essential to acknowledging the Treaty relationship. Furthermore, the policy also aligns with *Auckland 2050*, the city's long-term strategic plan that guides growth and development. It is also designed to comply with New Zealand's local government and arts legislation, including the *Local Government Act* and the *Public Art Guidelines* (Auckland Council, 2021, para. 7).

The policy is written in both some Te Reo Māori words and English, ensuring that both languages are represented and accessible to a wider range of Auckland's residents. This bilingual approach reinforces the cultural significance of Māori language and culture within the public art landscape, as well as the city's commitment to bilingualism and cultural inclusivity (Auckland Council, 2021, para. 7–8). While the exact details of the consultation process are not explicitly outlined in the policy document, the policy recognizes the importance of community engagement in shaping public art projects. Input from iwi, Māori communities, artists, and local community groups is emphasized, ensuring that public art reflects the cultural diversity and identities of Auckland's inhabitants. The policy states that public art should celebrate and

express the histories and stories of both mana whenua and other diverse communities in Auckland, underscoring the inclusive consultation process (Auckland Council, 2021, para. 8).

The vision of this policy is to inspire public art throughout Auckland so that everyone can experience thought-provoking, culturally vibrant, enjoyable, and challenging public art and public space. Public art can include forms or approaches that are: integrated into the overall design of a building or built space such as train stations, bridges, cycleways, and community facilities, installations integral to a place, including cultural markers such as pou whenua or environmental art, stand-alone, three-dimensional art works such as sculpture, "landmark" artworks conceived of from the outset as a destination or cultural icon, features applied to an exterior surface, such as mosaics, murals or reliefs, creative activation that may be transitory in nature, such as performance or digital art, creative processes, such as artists working collaboratively within design teams or community groups.

This policy is predominantly addressing how public art finds a permanent place (through council funding) in Auckland City. This can sometimes mean visual arts and can sometimes capture *performance works*. The policy is primarily focused on visual arts, but it does acknowledge that public art can also take on performance-based forms, such as temporary or transitory art like live performances and digital installations. It highlights that public art should not only be permanent sculptures or markers but can also include performance and ephemeral art that engages with the public in dynamic ways. This inclusivity allows for a broader interpretation of what constitutes public art, blending different art forms and practices (Auckland Council, 2021, para. 7–8).

In the opening paragraphs, in relation to public art, the English translation states:

> Let me welcome all that I treasure, and invite you to meet the challenge and leave your signature on the world around you, a legacy to all that you too passed this way. Art that is sacred. Art that is enduring. Art that emanated from that great somewhere, the birthplace of humankind itself. So even I can proclaim, it is life, it is done. (Auckland Council, 2021, paras. 2–3)

The Auckland Council Public Art Policy is designed to support public art across the city, contributing to Auckland's broader vision of becoming the world's most liveable city. It aligns with the strategic plan Auckland 2050. The policy aims to create and promote art that is thought-provoking, culturally vibrant, and accessible to all Aucklanders. The policy recognizes the importance of public art in transforming public spaces and enhancing urban environments. Public art can take many forms, including permanent sculptures, murals, digital art, cultural markers, and performance-based works. These projects are expected to engage with the cultural identity and values of local communities, fostering a deeper connection between people and their surroundings. The four key outcomes guiding the policy are:

- Auckland's public art is unique and distinctive, responding to place
- Auckland's public art delights, welcomes, challenges, and inspires
- Auckland's public art is artistically strong and innovative while celebrating cultural richness and creativity
- Public art transforms Auckland's public spaces (Auckland Council, 2021, p. 6).

The policy philosophy is rooted in inclusivity, cultural celebration, and the belief that public art has the power to transform public spaces and communities. It stresses the importance of creating art that reflects the diverse cultures of Auckland, including Māori, Pacific, and other migrant communities. The policy is committed to providing equitable access to public art and ensuring that artists from all backgrounds have opportunities to contribute to the city's cultural fabric. The value of public art as a tool for fostering a sense of belonging and shared identity is emphasized (Auckland Council, 2021, para. 7–8).

The key principles of the policy include:

- Cultural relevance and connection: Public art must resonate with and reflect the cultural identity of Auckland's communities, especially Māori and Pacific peoples
- Artistic excellence and innovation: Public art must be of high artistic quality while pushing the boundaries of creative expression
- Community engagement: Public art must engage local communities in its creation, ensuring it is meaningful and relevant to them
- Sustainability: Public art projects should contribute to the long-term transformation of public spaces (Auckland Council, 2021, para. 6–7).

4.9.1 Cultural Literacy

The policy highlights cultural literacy by emphasizing the importance of integrating Māori and Pacific perspectives into public art projects. It mentions the role of public art in expressing the creativity, history, and stories of mana whenua, mātauranga Māori, and Auckland's diverse communities. The inclusion of cultural markers such as pou whenua and other Māori art forms within public spaces is noted as essential to preserving and celebrating Auckland's cultural heritage (Auckland Council, 2021, para. 8). Additionally, the policy acknowledges the importance of respecting and valuing different cultural practices in the creation of public art, ensuring that all cultural contributions are recognized and respected (Auckland Council, 2021, para. 8).

"celebrates and expresses Te Ao Māori and the creativity, history and stories of mana whenua, mātauranga Māori and communities" (Auckland Council, 2021, p. 8)

4.9.2 Social Cohesion and Inclusion

The policy supports social cohesion by ensuring that public art reflects and celebrates the diversity of Auckland's population. It emphasizes that public art helps to build cultural and social connectivity by fostering inclusivity and making all communities feel represented. Public art is seen as a tool for creating spaces that everyone can relate to, with particular emphasis on Māori and Pacific identities, as well as other cultural groups in Auckland. The policy states that public art can help develop a sense of belonging, and fosters participation in community life (Auckland Council, 2021, para. 8–9). Public art is also viewed as an integral part of urban development that can help make public spaces more accessible and inviting to all residents (Auckland Council, 2021, para. 11).

Inclusion is embedded in the policy through its commitment to ensuring that public art is accessible and representative of Auckland's diverse communities. The policy specifically mentions the importance of showcasing Auckland's Māori identity and vibrant Māori culture, as well as celebrating the contributions of Pacific peoples and other communities. It emphasizes that public art should contribute to an inclusive Auckland where everyone feels they belong (Auckland Council, 2021, para. 8–9). Furthermore, the policy explicitly supports the participation of underrepresented communities in the creation of public art (Auckland Council, 2021, para. 7).

4.9.3 Decolonial Approach

The policy has a clear decolonial aspect in its emphasis on the inclusion of Māori and Pasifika perspectives in public art. By prioritizing Māori cultural markers, mātauranga Māori, and the involvement of mana whenua in the development of public art, the policy challenges the historical neglect of indigenous and minority cultures in urban spaces. It also contributes to a decolonizing shift by recognizing the agency and value of Māori and Pasifika artists, offering them a platform for visibility and cultural expression. The policy advocates for cultural practices that honour indigenous knowledge systems, such as tikanga Māori and the preservation of Māori language (Auckland Council, 2021, para. 8–9). In this way, the policy contributes to a broader movement toward the reclamation of indigenous spaces and cultural sovereignty in Aotearoa.

The policy emphasises cultural inclusion, focusing particularly on Māori and Pacific communities and seeking to ensure that public art reflects the full diversity of Auckland. The focus on artistic excellence combined with cultural relevance ensures that public art not only contributes aesthetically to urban spaces but also provides an important avenue for cultural expression and belonging. The policy's incorporation of Māori and Pasifika art forms is a central component of the public art landscape and a positive step toward creating a more equitable and inclusive city.

4.10 Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Manatu Taonga: Policy for Government Management of Cultural Heritage Places (2022)

The Ministry of Culture and Heritage fund, monitor, and support the performance of organisations that deliver the government's arts, culture, heritage, media and sports sector programmes. The Policy outlines the Ministry of Culture and Heritage's role in managing and conserving Aotearoa's cultural heritage (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 2). It focuses on the protection and conservation of cultural heritage places, recognizing their significance in linking the past to the present and future (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 2).

The policy primarily focuses on cultural heritage places rather than specific art forms like dance, theatre, or music. Nevertheless, this policy has been included in the analysis because the Ministry of Culture and Heritage funds Aotearoa arts organisations including: The Royal

New Zealand Ballet, The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, and Te Matatini – a major Aotearoa Kapa Haka organisation. These organisations contribute to the preservation of Aotearoa's cultural legacy through their performances, many of which are linked to New Zealand's heritage and identity.

The policy is written in English, with a strong emphasis on Te Reo Māori to ensure that Māori cultural and linguistic practices are respected and incorporated. The inclusion of Te Reo Māori throughout the document reflects the policy's commitment to cultural inclusivity, acknowledging the importance of language in the preservation and representation of heritage. As stated, "Cultural heritage will be recorded using appropriate and accurate language, dialect, and terminology to describe places including Māori cultural heritage places and their values" (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 10), and similarly, "Inventories will use appropriate and accurate language, dialect, and terminology for Māori/Moriori cultural heritage places and their values" (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 11). This approach aims to acknowledge and represent Māori and Moriori heritage through the use of culturally appropriate language.

The policy appears to have been developed in consultation with cultural heritage professionals, iwi, and key stakeholders in Aotearoa's cultural sector, including those involved in performing arts, heritage management, and Māori cultural practices. However, the document does not specifically outline detailed consultation processes or name participants.

"Iwi Management Plans may set out iwi expectations for partnering with iwi. Other advice on Māori cultural heritage may be available from iwi planning documents for example Environmental Management Plans. Te Arawhiti's guidance on Crown Engagement with Māori should be consulted" (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 6).

"At all stages of the cycle… Partner and consult with Māori/Moriori and other communities" (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 8).

This policy aligns with several pieces of New Zealand legislation, most notably the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act* (2014) and *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*. It emphasizes the responsibility of the Crown and iwi in the protection and management of cultural heritage, ensuring that cultural practices and places are preserved in a way that reflects both Māori and Pākehā heritage. The policy acknowledges the Treaty as foundational to the management and care of heritage places in Aotearoa. The policy also needs to "meet conservation standards, such as the ICOMOS Charter 2010" (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 8).

This policy (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022) acknowledges the significance that land and place have in relation to Aotearoa's heritage, linking us back to the past, so that we can learn from it today. The document is structured around guiding principles on how to manage and conserve heritage places, and how these practices contribute to the collective identity and wellbeing of Aotearoa (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 5). Key Principles include cultural and historical continuity, shared stewardship, accessibility and education, and upholding cultural significance. Specifically, this focuses on:

> Aotearoa New Zealand's cultural heritage is part of our country's foundation and an important contributor to our personal, community and national identities. Protecting and conserving cultural heritage places ensures that the stories, histories and events

> that reflect who we are and where we have come from will continue to be experienced by future generations. (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 2)

The key principles of the *Policy for Government Management of Cultural Heritage Places* are the recognition of cultural heritage as essential for the wellbeing and resilience of New Zealanders, with an emphasis on promoting environmental sustainability through the conservation and adaptive reuse of heritage resources (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 5). Additionally, the policy stresses the national importance of protecting historic heritage, ensuring that government agencies work in partnership with Māori/Moriori to uphold their traditional knowledge and respect their relationship with ancestral lands and taonga (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 5).

1. Cultural heritage contributes to wellbeing and resilience. The retention and conservation of cultural heritage supports New Zealanders' economic, environmental, social and cultural wellbeing and resilience.

2. Cultural heritage conservation contributes to environmental sustainability. The retention, conservation and, where appropriate, adaptive reuse of cultural heritage benefits the community by promoting the sustainable use of resources, retention of embodied energy and minimisation of waste.

3. The protection of cultural heritage is a matter of national importance. Under the Resource Management Act 1991, the protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use and development is a matter of national importance, as is the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu and other taonga.

4. Government agencies work to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty of Waitangi provides the foundation for engagement with Māori communities in respect of their heritage places. Government agencies make informed decisions and work in partnership with Māori/Moriori and recognise and provide for the relationship of Māori/Moriori communities with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu, wāhi tūpuna.

5. Government agencies recognise that Māori/Moriori are the holders of their traditional knowledge. When partnering with Māori, government agencies recognise and respect that Māori. (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 5)

The philosophy of the policy is rooted in cultural preservation, respect for ancestral knowledge, and shared responsibility for cultural heritage between the Crown and Māori communities. It acknowledges the importance of maintaining links to the past to ensure that Aotearoa's diverse cultural heritage continues to inform the present and future. The policy is culturally inclusive and supports the intergenerational transfer of knowledge, safeguarding cultural stories, places, and practices that shape Aotearoa's identity.

4.10.1 Cultural Literacy

Cultural literacy is strongly evidenced in the policy's focus on *Māori cultural practices*, specifically the management of culturally significant heritage places. The policy aligns with *mātauranga Māori* (Māori knowledge systems) by emphasizing the importance of Māori involvement in cultural heritage management and protection. The policy acknowledges the connection between land, place, and identity, underscoring the importance of Māori perspectives in conservation and heritage practices.

> Aotearoa New Zealand's cultural heritage is part of our country's foundation and an important contributor to our personal, community and national identities. Protecting and conserving cultural heritage places ensures that the stories, histories and events that reflect who we are and where we have come from will continue to be experienced by future generations. (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 2)
>
> New Zealand's cultural heritage is rich, varied and unique. It is a legacy of all generations, from the earliest places of Māori use and occupation to inner-city buildings. Heritage places connect us to our personal, community and national identity, support sustainable development and contribute to society's resilience and wellbeing. For Māori, place gives meaning to the history, traditions, culture and identity of whānau, hapū, and iwi. (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 3)

"Cultural heritage value means possessing aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, commemorative, functional, historical, landscape, monumental, scientific, social, spiritual, symbolic, technological, traditional, or other tangible or intangible values, associated with human activity" (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 5).

"Cultural heritage contributes to wellbeing and resilience The retention and conservation of cultural heritage supports New Zealanders' economic, environmental, social and cultural wellbeing and resilience" (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 6).

4.10.2 Social Cohesion and Inclusion

Social cohesion is promoted through the policy's emphasis on cultural inclusivity and the importance of preserving the diverse cultural narratives of Aotearoa. The policy celebrates both Māori and non-Māori contributions to Aotearoa's heritage and encourages collaboration across communities to safeguard cultural heritage places. By supporting the recognition of diverse heritage sites and practices, the policy seeks to create shared understanding and respect for Aotearoa's multicultural identity.

The policy promotes inclusion by advocating for inclusive representation in the management and preservation of cultural heritage places. It specifically acknowledges the need for Māori input in the decision-making process, ensuring that Māori identity and cultural values are embedded in the management of heritage. It supports inclusive practices by recognizing the contributions of both Māori and non-Māori groups in the cultural landscape: "Government agencies are stewards of the heritage places in their care and follow best practice to ensure their long-term contribution to New Zealanders' economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing" (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 4).

4.10.3 Decolonial Approach

The policy acknowledges the colonial history of cultural heritage management in Aotearoa, and although not using the word “decolonial”, advocates for a more decolonial approach by ensuring Māori-led involvement in the stewardship and protection of cultural heritage places. This shift represents a move toward cultural sovereignty, where Māori communities have greater control over how their heritage is preserved and represented. The policy supports the recognition of Māori knowledge systems and traditions, which were historically marginalized in heritage management, and actively seeks to restore Māori authority in these areas. As stated, “This policy looks to acknowledge the significance land and places have in relation to our heritage, linking us back to the past, so that we as people can learn and thrive from it today” (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 2), this reflects a decolonial perspective by empowering Māori to reclaim and preserve their heritage. The policy’s support for Te Matatini, with a $1 million baseline increase through Budget 2022, highlights the government’s recognition of Māori cultural practices, such as kapa haka, and its commitment to ensuring “all New Zealanders can continue to access a wide range of arts, culture, and heritage services” (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2022, p. 2). Although the policy does not explicitly use terms like “decolonial” or “decolonisation”, its emphasis on Māori involvement in cultural heritage management and funding initiatives like Te Matatini demonstrates a tangible move toward acknowledging and addressing historical inequities in cultural representation and governance.

The policy’s commitment to cultural inclusivity and its recognition of Māori in managing cultural heritage are strong aspects of this document. The policy integrates Māori perspectives into the broader cultural landscape, seeking to ensure that cultural heritage is preserved and actively managed in a way that is meaningful to those whose history it represents.

4.11 Conclusions and Reflections

4.11.1 Findings in Light of the Theoretical Framework

The analysis of Creative New Zealand, Auckland Council, and Ministry of Culture and Heritage policy documents reveals the institutional direction toward promoting access, equity, and diversity in the arts sector. Framed through a theoretical lens of cultural literacy, social cohesion, and advocacy, the findings highlight their alignment with values that prioritise community wellbeing, inclusion, and resilience. It is our perception that CNZ emphasises the importance of arts as a means of enhancing social and cultural identity, with a focus on supporting Māori, Pasifika, and other diverse communities. The use of frameworks such as the Living Standards Framework indicates a broader government-wide shift toward recognising holistic and Indigenous conceptions of wellbeing.

Each policy positions the arts as both intrinsically valuable and instrumental in achieving broader societal outcomes, including economic development, social inclusion, and expressing identity. It is our belief that the documents also reflect a growing understanding that the arts are embedded in everyday life and have the capacity to shape collective narratives, strengthen communities, and foster civic participation. Importantly, CNZ’s strategies demonstrate increasing efforts to consult with artists, communities, and cultural leaders to inform decision-making, suggesting a commitment to more participatory and representative governance.

4.11.2 Decolonial Perspective

From a decolonial perspective, the policy documents analysed here offer evidence of the desire of arts institutions in Aotearoa to redress colonial legacies within the arts funding and governance landscape. The integration of Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles, the elevation of Mātauranga Māori and Pacific epistemologies, as well as the acknowledgment of Indigenous art forms as central (rather than peripheral) to national identity, in our opinion, marks significant progress, by including decolonial principles through language, consultation processes, and funding prioritisation. However, while these commitments are promising, the documents also reveal the ongoing tension between inclusion within existing structures and the need for deeper/ ongoing structural transformation. True decolonial practice requires more than recognition, it demands a redistribution of power and a centring of Indigenous authority in the decision-making processes that shape the arts. CNZ has laid foundational groundwork through its frameworks and philosophies, but the impact of these initiatives will be determined by their enactment, ongoing monitoring, and the extent to which Indigenous and diverse communities can genuinely shape their own futures within the sector. Decoloniality, in this sense, is not a fixed goal but a continuous relational process, and one that CNZ, the Auckland Council and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage appears increasingly focused on engagement with.

4.12 Commentaries

4.12.1 Comment by the Ugandan Consortium Member University of Makerere

Both the curriculum document and analysis of policies capture the essences of cultural literacy, social cohesion and inclusion, and celebration of diversity. Expressed different because of the nature of their orientation, the two documents project application of these ideas in the practice of music, dance, and drama. While ‘bi-cultural’ is still being used in the documents, the outlook shows that Aotearoa/New Zealand has transitioned into a more multicultural country. This transition is reflected in how the documents capture ethnic diversities between Maori and White Settler communities. We think that the analyses can problematize ‘bi-cultural’ more in the context and contestation of the existing diversities. Furthermore, we question whether mentioning the diverse cultures in the document is in itself tantamount to de-coloniality. We are saying this because even what is being decolonized is not adequately articulated. A contextual coverage of the colonization and colonizing aspects as lived in New Zealand can give a reader a snapshot of where the de-coloniality you are talking about is situated.

Response to Makere University comments

We appreciate the supportive response gained from Makere University’s reading of our critical review of arts policies and arts education curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand. By way of continuing the conversation and providing more context we respond to key points made regarding the bi-cultural status of Aotearoa New Zealand, but in no way do we give a deep historical or conclusive response as this is beyond the scope of this review document.

Aotearoa New Zealand is a country operating within and under the Treaty of Waitangi: a bi-cultural treaty between pakeha (European cultures) and Māori (the indigenous people of Aotearoa) signed in 1840 at Waitangi, Northland Aotearoa New Zealand. The Treaty is an articulation of how the colonising peoples of United Kingdom defined as 'the Crown' and the indigenous owners of Aotearoa New Zealand – Māori, work in partnership and ideally respect each other's rights and perspectives. The treaty theoretically set Māori and Pakeha on a path to understand how our two worlds co-exist. It is on the one land recognising and respecting each other's differences, responsibilities, laws, cultures, values and needs without destroying each other. The treaty is ongoingly contested by political entities and Māori Iwi (communities), as each generation of leaders re-build their understandings and interpretations of the Treaty. The following websites provide more detailed insights.

https://nzhistory.govt.nz/page/treaty-faqs

https://www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/en/publications/education/tow-past-and-present/new-section-page-5

Aotearoa New Zealand's demographic make-up has diversified since the signing of the Treaty. Aotearoa New Zealand has become a much more plural society with large communities from Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Korea, China, India, Australia, Croatia to name a few. These communities have deep roots in Aotearoa New Zealand and call it home.

Arts policies and arts education curriculum in Aotearoa acknowledges the contemporary plural demographics; however, these documents and governing laws remain ideologically and constitutionally focused upon honouring the original indigenous owners of the land, the Māori. Given this, the documents purposefully refer to the bi-cultural construct of Aotearoa New Zealand while also implicitly recognising that it is not a simple 'bi-cultural' social landscape.

Within the arts education curriculum and arts policies, the purposeful use of Te Reo (Māori language), recognises and honours indigenous rights and needs, and to directly support Māori communities who have been disadvantaged through the process of colonisation (https://www.nzgeo.com/stories/the-treaty-today-what-went-wrong-and-what-are-we-doing-about-it/). The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture are mindful of colonisation and the need to counter these paradigms through policy, curriculum and funding support. For example, within the arts curriculum proactively acknowledging diverse teaching and learning processes, skills, needs and content knowledge speaks to a process of decolonisation of the curriculum and the classroom. The aim being to maximise success for all learners in the classroom.

Decoloniality in Aotearoa New Zealand is an ongoing social and political discussion which is shifting and morphing in response to political ideologies, wider society conversations and aspirations and Māori Iwi expectations (https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c8je9013m0ro). The critical reading of the aforementioned arts policies and arts education curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand arts reveal current interpretations of the Treaty of Waitangi and the current democratic directions.

4.12.2 Comment from the Dance Aotearoa New Zealand (DANZ) Prepared by Executive Director Sheryl Lowe

DANZ has examined the two chapters on Curriculum and Policy recently prepared by Professor Ralph Buck and Dr Sarah Foster-Sproull, Ngā Akoranga Kanikani Dance Studies, Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland, as part of their contribution to the Horizon Europe research work on dialogical arts education. We find the analysis presented to be comprehensive, robust and fair in respect of both the national education curriculum policy documents and the arts sector funding, operational, and strategic policy documents selected for review. While the national education curriculum setting process is relatively linear, the arts policy ecosystem is arguably more complex and dynamic with multiple actors. In view of the latter, we consider the authors made an excellent decision to include documentation emanating from different levels of the arts policy, sector development and funding hierarchy.

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5. Finland

Katja Mäkinen

The documents analysed here focus on the national level policies related to art education both in formal and non-formal education. Three of the documents are published by the Ministry of Education and Culture: *Strategy for Cultural Policy 2025* (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017), *High-Quality Basic Education in Arts: Strategic Objectives and Strategic Quality Indicators in Basic Education in the Arts* (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, 2023) and *Art, Culture and Diverse Finland* (Lummepuro, 2023). One document is commissioned by the Finnish National Agency of Education (Luoma, 2020) and introduces the way in which basic education in arts was organised in Finland in 2019–2020. The education policy report of the Finnish Government (2021) is also analysed.

The analysis also focuses on policy documents published by non-governmental organisations. Three of them are policy briefs made by the ArtsEqual research project: *Accessibility as the Starting Point in the Finnish Basic Education in the Arts System* (Laes et al., 2018), *Let's Dance!* (Anttila et al., 2019) and *Cultural Outreach Work Promotes the Cultural Participation of Children and Young People* (Turpeinen et al., 2019). The *ArtsEqual* research initiative, financed by the Academy of Finland's strategic research council, was coordinated by the University of the Arts Helsinki in 2015-2021. It focused on the arts as public service, exploring equality and how the arts can meet the social challenges of the 2020s.

Two vision reports about performing arts education are also analysed: *Vision 2030 for Finnish Music Education* (Auramo et al., 2020) and *Vision 2030 for the Education in Performing Arts* (Metsälä et al., 2022). *Finland National Working Programme 2023–2027* by the Observatory for Arts and Cultural Education (2023) is also part of the data. *Observatory for Arts and Cultural Education* seeks to reinforce the equal accessibility and effectiveness of arts and cultural education and to improve the social status and appreciation of the field. It is formed by cERAda Network for Educational Research and Academic Development in the Arts (part of the University of the Arts Helsinki) and the Association of Finnish Children's Cultural Centres. The observatory is a member of the European Network of Observatories in the Field of Arts and Cultural Education (ENO).

The data also includes a *Programme for Parliamentary Elections 2023* by Basic Art Education Association & The Conservatory Association of Finland (Taiteen perusopetusliitto & Konservatorioliitto, 2022) as well as a *Statement for the Ministry of Education and Culture About the Legislative Proposal on Revising the System of Central Government Transfers for Performing Arts* given by the Culture for All Service (Kulttuuria kaikille, 2020).

Basic Art Education Association is an umbrella organization for its six nationwide member organizations representing 270 institutions providing basic education in architecture, visual arts, crafts, media arts, music, literary arts, circus art, dance and theatre. Founded in 2008, it advocates the significance of basic education in arts in the society.

Founded in 1986, the *Conservatory Association of Finland* consists of sixteen member schools: all 11 conservatories of music in Finland and five polytechnics offering a degree in music. It aims to support and promote music education and advocate its members' interests, focusing especially on upper secondary level education in music.

The *Culture for All Service* offers information on accessibility and diversity and tools for workers in the cultural field to create cultural services that are inclusive, equitable and take diverse audiences and art professionals into account. Supported by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, The Culture for All Service was launched in 2003 and is currently run by an association called Yhdenvertaisen kulttuurin puolesta ry. (The Association for Culture on Equal Terms) with 25 member organizations.

The analysis is divided in four parts according to the main focus. The first part discusses formal education, second part discusses non-formal education, third part discusses both formal and non-formal education particularly in performing arts, and the fourth part focuses on cultural policy.

5.1 Formal Education

5.1.1 Social Cohesion and Inclusion

Education Policy Report of the Finnish Government (2021) sets a broad framework for the development of the education system in Finland. The document focuses mostly on formal education, including early childhood, primary, secondary, and higher education, but covers also non-formal education such as liberal adult education and basic education in the arts.

The discussion on the objectives of education and research and policy actions is divided in 13 subchapters. One of them is "Art and cultural education and basic art education", covering less than three pages in a report of 100 pages. At practical level, the report encourages municipalities to make cultural education plans through cooperation between education, cultural and youth services. Performing arts are not explicitly discussed.

The Education Policy Report highlights the role of education in promoting social inclusion and cohesion, particularly through equitable access to education for all demographic groups, including minorities and people with disabilities. It underlines equality in and through education and points out that inequality in education results in inequalities across all areas of society.

> Inequality has many negative societal impacts. It erodes social cohesion, trust between people and trust in institutions, environmental awareness, social interaction, inclusion and civic participation. […] An equal society is based on incentives that support citizens' feelings of self-efficacy and autonomy, inclusion and agency. A more equal society has repeatedly been proven to benefit the large majority of citizens. (Finnish Government, 2021, p. 77)

Inclusion is also underlined in the policy brief *Let's Dance!* by the ArtsEqual research project (Anttila et al., 2019). Addressed to the Finnish National Agency for Education, teachers, teacher trainers, headmasters, municipalities, and political decision-makers, the policy brief seeks to strengthen the role of dance in formal education, especially in primary education.

Based on research, it links dance education to creating cohesion and preventing exclusion. Dance-pedagogical interventions have shown that dance promotes interaction and improves cohesion in multilingual groups with no common language. Dancing improved wellbeing and increased motivation to learn in school, which will reduce the risk of becoming excluded in adolescence. Thus, dance is linked to cultural inclusion and active participation:

> Dance can increase sense of community within a group of pupils, be a source of empowerment for individual pupils, and contribute to the formation of an embodied, active school culture. More generally, the question is about cultural inclusion and active participation. (Anttila et al., 2019, p. 5)

The policy brief points out that it is more beneficial to take proactive measures than to retroactively resolve problems related to the youth and their exclusion from society.

> In forms of embodied expression and dance, the physical activity becomes interconnected with emotions, social interaction, and cultural participation. This creates a multidimensional link to the pupils' holistic development, learning, and wellbeing in the school context and shows that dance may also proactively support children and young people who are suffering from mental health issues, or who are in danger of becoming socially excluded. (Anttila et al., 2019, p. 3)

Diversity is closely linked to performing arts education in the *Let's Dance!* policy brief. Referring to prior studies, it suggests that dance is connected to the development of social cognition, empathy and processes related to emotions and memory. Dance can develop skills that are important for a positive atmosphere in schools, tolerance for diversity, and prevention of bullying. The policy brief underlines that dance education that is integrated into the curriculum helps pupils to be less prejudiced. Dance education that brings together all the pupils can also help the pupils relate to diversity and differences both in themselves and in others more openly and naturally (Anttila et al., 2019).

5.1.2 Cultural Literacy

According to the *Education Policy Report*, skills in "aesthetic perception and creative expression" (Finnish Government, 2021, p. 54) are important in the information and knowledge society, both in citizens' free time and work and production industries, which can be interpreted as a reference to some sort of broader literacy enhanced by art and cultural education. Cultural literacy is not explicitly mentioned in the report, but the term critical literacy is used once. Critical literacy is discussed in terms of using digital tools, linked with social and civic participation: according to the report, education needs to promote children's and young people's ability to use digital tools "safely and responsibly for participating in social and civic activities" (Finnish Government, 2021, p. 24). While this is crucial in the digitalising world, critical literacy goes far beyond digital skills. Similarly, social and civic participation is a broader phenomenon than online participation. The term multiliteracy is mentioned twice in the report – both times in the context of digitalisation and ICT skills. The discussion on critical and multiliteracy is minimal and technology-oriented in the report, ignoring for example the embodied and multisensory character of cultural literacy.

Instead, the embodied and multisensory character of cultural literacy is implicitly discussed in the *Let's Dance!* policy brief. In it, dance is seen as capable of promoting competences included in cultural literacy, connected to interaction and appreciating diversity. Dance is depicted as a creative activity, which allows everyone to be seen and treated as who they are and makes it possible to express feelings that are difficult to verbalise. Dance can provide pupils who need special support with positive experiences of interacting with others by using their own bodies (Anttila et al., 2019).

5.1.3 Summary

When designing policies and practices of performing arts education, timing is a crucial issue. Performing arts education should be part of lifelong learning, available for all age groups. Moreover, to promote social inclusion and cohesion, the *Let's Dance!* policy brief by the ArtsEqual research project (Anttila et al., 2019) points out that it is more beneficial to take proactive measures than to retroactively resolve problems related to exclusion. Cross-sectoral collaboration can be used to promote social inclusion and cohesion: for example, the *Education Policy Report* of the Finnish Government (2021) encourages municipalities to make cultural education plans through cooperation between education, cultural and youth services. The discussion on critical and multiliteracy is minimal and technology-oriented in the *Education Policy Report*, whereas the *Let's Dance!* policy brief discusses the embodied and multisensory character of cultural literacy.

5.2 Non-formal Education: Basic Education in Arts (BEA)

5.2.1 Access and Inclusion

The document called *High-Quality Basic Education in Arts: Strategic Objectives and Strategic Quality Indicators in Basic Education in the Arts* (hereinafter *High-Quality BEA*) by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, 2023) outlines the strategic goals and quality indicators for basic education in the arts (BEA). BEA is a system that provides non-formal education for all age groups in architecture, visual arts, crafts, media arts, music, literary arts, circus art, dance and theatre. Education providers follow their own curricula which are guided by two national level documents: National core curriculum for basic education in arts for basic studies (Opetushallitus, 2017a) and National core curriculum for basic education in arts for broad studies (Opetushallitus, 2017b). These documents, designed by the Finnish National Agency for Education, are analysed in chapter 14 of this deliverable.

In *High-Quality BEA*, equal access of different population groups to basic education in art is discussed with regards to linguistic, regional and economic factors, age and gender, taking into account each field of art. Removing barriers of participation and adapting pedagogical activities are underlined, for example through utilising digitalisation in instruction. Promoting access strengthens cultural participation and involvement in the society and advances the equal realisation of cultural and educational fundamental rights (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, 2023, p. 39). Indeed, cultural participation and involvement as well as growing inequality and polarisation have been identified as processes in the changing society that need to be noted in developing BEA (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, 2023, p. 9).

Accessibility of BEA is the main topic of the policy brief by the ArtsEqual research project, *Accessibility as the Starting Point in the Finnish Basic Education in the Arts System* (hereinafter *Accessibility in BEA*) (Laes et al., 2018), addressed to government bodies and local institutions responsible for the implementation of basic education in the arts. It defends inclusive art education, using examples from activities related to dance and music. BEA is not connected to cultural literacy learning in this policy brief.

For all people to be able to realize their cultural and educational rights, it is necessary for arts and cultural services to guarantee equitable opportunities for cultural participation regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability, ethnic, religious or cultural background or income. However, currently participation in BEA is districted for many due to e.g. physical, social, geographical or financial barriers. Therefore, educational institutions providing BEA must remove these barriers, for example through equality and non-discrimination strategies, that they are obliged to prepare. This would facilitate the participation in BEA of marginalized groups such as students with special educational needs or from non-majority cultural backgrounds (Laes et al., 2018).

Accessibility in BEA addresses physical, economic and pedagogical accessibility. The discussion on accessibility covers for example inclusive operating cultures, resources, teaching methods, communication in teaching, services, and information, as well as usable learning tools, equipment, and materials. One way of improving pedagogical accessibility would be to provide possibilities for teachers to encounter student and population groups different from those they are already familiar with (Laes et al., 2018).

Accessibility in BEA discusses how BEA can act as and contribute to an inclusive community:

> Social inclusion within and beyond the BEA system can be enhanced by developing accessible learning environments, services and communication. Promoting inclusion requires an ongoing evaluation and development of institutional policies and practices that relate to facilitating participation of all, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability, ethnic, religious or cultural background or income. (Laes et al., 2018, p. 5)

The commitment to inclusion should cover the ways in which students are enrolled, taught, and assessed, and how staff are recruited and trained as well as accessible communication.

The BEA institutions are advised to draw upon the expertise of various organizations in the field of diversity, disability and accessibility, as well as individuals with first-hand experiences of accessibility challenges and innovations (Laes et al., 2018).

According to Laes et al., accessibility and inclusion means that the BEA system is not only open to everyone but also allows for multiple and diverse forms of participation. For example, everyone has the opportunity to participate in interaction and decision-making concerning one's own life. Such accessibility takes into consideration the diversity of users and does not discriminate between them, the authors state. However, more advanced inclusion means that everyone has the opportunity to participate in decision-making concerning the education institution and not only concerning the matters of one's own life.

The accessibility of BEA is also briefly discussed in the report on *Basic Education in Arts 2020* (Luoma, 2020). Commissioned by the Finnish National Agency for Education, it focuses on non-formal education and provides a comprehensive overview of the state of BEA in Finland during the 2019-2020 academic year. It covers the structural and quantitative aspects of arts education, such as educational institutions, the studies offered, student demographics, and geographic distribution of services. However, it does not discuss how BEA contributes to social cohesion and inclusion. Cultural literacy and its development through performing arts education are not discussed either and cultural diversity is not addressed.

Also the *Education Policy Report* of the Finnish Government (2021) proposes improving the accessibility of BEA and cultural and other services, taking into account changes in the demographic structure of society, such as the presence of migrants and the range of linguistic and cultural minorities. Cultural diversity is thereby addressed as a context of BEA, but this is not specifically linked to cultural literacy learning.

5.2.2 Cultural Diversity

High-Quality BEA defines cultural diversity and language awareness as one of the indicators of the pedagogic quality of BEA, including respect for cultural and gender plurality and understanding cultural heritage as diverse and reforming (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, 2023, p. 36). Indeed, respect of cultural diversity is included in the value foundation defined in the core curriculum for BEA, together with respect of human rights, equality and non-discrimination.

Laes et al. (2018) link cultural diversity in BEA closely to inclusion. They argue that special and minority groups need to be taken into consideration as part of staff recruitment in arts and cultural institutions. According to them, teachers who are experienced with working with diverse student populations, for example students with special educational needs or non-majority cultural groups could be seen as an asset in the recruitment processes in BEA institutions, offering versatile pedagogical skills and thus contributing toward implementing the institutional accessibility strategies. Laes et al. argue that BEA institutions should also seek to attract teachers and staff from a variety of cultural backgrounds and abilities, through diversifying their communications and institutional profiles. BEA institutions that reflect the diversity of society are better equipped to be inclusive and accessible for all, according to the policy brief.

5.2.3 Impacts of BEA and Cultural Outreach Work: Cohesion and Inclusion

Referring to prior research, the *Accessibility in BEA* maintains that extracurricular activities have the potential to both produce and prevent inequalities, thereby influencing social cohesion and inclusion. Earlier research also shows that engaging in the arts plays an important role in the prevention of social exclusion. Collaborations between schools, other arts educational institutions, and units of early education can support low-threshold activities and thereby counter rising social inequality. Through collaboration with the social and welfare sector, the organizers of BEA can promote social wellbeing (Laes et al., 2018).

In their policy brief Laes et al. (2018) bring forth youth outreach practices as a way to help BEA to reach new student populations who might not otherwise seek arts education through

this system. Another policy brief by the ArtsEqual project is entirely dedicated to cultural outreach work (Turpeinen et al., 2019). *Cultural Outreach Work Promotes the Cultural Participation of Children and Young People* (hereinafter *Cultural Outreach*) focuses mainly on non-formal education and is aimed at municipal service providers, such as institutions of basic art education, congregations, day-care centres, children's cultural centres, and other third-sector agents but also to primary and lower secondary schools as well as political decision-makers, ministries and agencies. Cultural outreach work goes beyond the BEA system, although BEA institutions can be partners in it.

Cultural outreach work seeks to promote the active participation of children and young people in artistic and cultural activities and foster equal opportunities for all demographic groups to take part in cultural, artistic, and general educational activities. The goal is to improve people's standard of living, foster their sense of communality, promote their wellbeing, and prevent marginalisation. Promoting inclusion and cohesion are thus at the core of this work. This can also be seen in the aims such as supporting cultural equality and non-discrimination, promoting the realisation of people's basic cultural rights, and preventing exclusion.

In practice, cultural outreach work can mean customising the services according to the end users' interests and needs and taking the services directly to the potential target groups. One of the recommendations made in this policy brief is to produce and develop activities together with children and young people.

Cultural outreach work is seen as an investment for the future: the focus is on proactive and anticipatory activities, which are performed before the marginalisation process has begun and/or before corrective measures become necessary. Opportunities for cultural participation should be offered to children and young people who are at risk of becoming excluded from the existing cultural services because of socio-economic, cultural or gender-related reasons or difficulties related to the acquisition or understanding of the available information.

> Several studies show that art education and artistic activities are connected to learning, wellbeing and the development of social skills. There are also a number of studies that have established a connection between cultural capital and learning outcomes, academic ability, and education choices. As people enter adulthood, their cultural capital also becomes connected to social participation, wellbeing, and their sense of worth and meaningfulness of life. (Turpeinen et al., 2019, p. 5)

In *Cultural Outreach*, improving people's possibilities to engage in art-related leisure activities is implicitly seen as enhancing competences included in cultural literacy: promoting collaborative social activities for young people with diverse backgrounds, encouraging them to become acquainted with each other, and teaching them how to react to divergence and perceived otherness (Turpeinen et al., 2019).

5.2.4 Cultural Literacy and Citizen Participation

High-Quality BEA also lists elements that can be interpreted as contributing to cultural literacy. It discusses how arts learning contributes to teamwork, systemic and creative thinking, imagination, socio-emotional skills needed for solving complex problems. Referring to the EU and OECD, Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö (2023, pp. 17-18) discusses future skills needed in the

constantly changing operational environment. They relate to social skills, emotional skills, empathy, respect for others, multilingualism, digital and technological skills and skills related to cultural awareness and expression. According to Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö (2023, p. 7), BEA strengthens individual identity building and increases mental resilience, hope for the future, positive curiosity and courage to encounter new things. Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö (2023, p. 7) explicitly locates the impact of BEA especially at the individual level, which is typical in educational discussions. However, the skills and capabilities enhanced by BEA are not only individual but they have consequences in the broader society.

Indeed, the societal impact and transformative potential of arts is recognised in *High-Quality BEA*: "Art education, arts and culture reform the society" (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, 2023, p. 44). Basic education in art is said to promote knowledge, enlightenment, involvement, well-being and societal innovations. Collaboration with various actors expands these impacts broader to different sectors and creates preconditions for artistic activity that reforms the society. However, building inclusive and cohesive society through arts education is not discussed further.

The *Education Policy Report* mentions citizenship when it discusses art and cultural education in the context of recreational and NGO activities. Education in arts, culture and cultural heritage "strengthens creativity, life skills and understanding of life as well as promotes active citizenship and broad knowledge and ability" (Finnish Government, 2021, p. 55). However, arts and cultural education are not present in the report's discussions on civic participation and democracy, which are core aspects related to social cohesion and inclusion.

> Participation in civic activity is the primary precondition for effective democracy. Skills in participation and involvement as well as a responsible attitude towards the future can only be learned by practising. The school and ECEC community offers a safe setting for this. At the same time, ECEC and pre-primary and basic education lay a foundation of skills for children's and pupils' growth into active citizens who exercise their democratic rights and freedoms responsibly. The mission of early childhood education and care and the school is to reinforce the participation of each child and pupil. (Finnish Government, 2021, p. 91)

5.2.5 Summary

Basic education in the arts (BEA) is a system that provides non-formal education for all age groups in architecture, visual arts, crafts, media arts, music, literary arts, circus art, dance and theatre. Education providers follow their own curricula which are guided by national core curricula (Opetushallitus 2017a; Opetushallitus 2017b). Several policy documents analysed here discuss the need to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of BEA considering the demographic structure of society, such as the presence of migrants and the range of linguistic and cultural minorities. Equal access of different population groups to BEA is discussed with regards to linguistic, regional and economic factors, age and gender. Promoting access strengthens cultural participation and involvement in the society and advances the equal realisation of cultural and educational fundamental rights (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, 2023, p. 39). Therefore, it is necessary for arts and cultural services to guarantee equitable opportunities for cultural participation regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability,

ethnic, religious or cultural background or income (Laes et al., 2018). As a result, educational institutions providing BEA must remove physical, social, geographical or financial barriers that currently restrict participation in BEA. Concrete tools include the equality and non-discrimination strategies, that BEA institutions are obliged to prepare.

Accessibility in BEA, a policy brief by the ArtsEqual research project, also discusses how BEA can act as and contribute to an inclusive community by developing accessible learning environments, services and communication as well as institutional policies and practices (Laes et al., 2018, p. 5). According to Laes et al. (2018), accessibility and inclusion means that the BEA system allows for multiple and diverse forms of participation.

Cultural diversity is seen as a context of BEA in the policy documents analysed here. *High-Quality BEA* defines cultural diversity and language awareness as one of the indicators of the pedagogic quality of BEA, including respect for cultural and gender plurality and understanding cultural heritage as diverse and reforming (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, 2023, p. 36). Laes et al. (2018) link cultural diversity in BEA closely to inclusion: special and minority groups need to be taken into consideration also in staff recruitment in arts and cultural institutions.

It is important to remember that extracurricular activities have the potential to both produce and prevent inequalities and exclusion, as the *Accessibility in BEA* points out based on research (Laes et al., 2018). In two policy briefs by the ArtsEqual project, cultural outreach work is discussed as a way to promote the active participation of children and young people in artistic and cultural activities and foster equal opportunities for all demographic groups to take part in cultural, artistic, and other educational activities (Laes et al., 2018; Turpeinen et al., 2019).

Promoting inclusion and cohesion are at the core of this work. Cultural outreach work is seen as an investment for the future: the focus is on proactive and anticipatory activities, offering opportunities for cultural participation to children and young people who are at risk of becoming excluded from the existing cultural services because of socio-economic, cultural or gender-related reasons or difficulties related to the acquisition or understanding of the available information. One of the recommendations made by Turpeinen at al. (2019) is to produce and develop activities together with children and young people.

In *Cultural Outreach*, improving people's possibilities to engage in art-related leisure activities is implicitly seen as enhancing competences included in cultural literacy: promoting collaborative social activities for young people with diverse backgrounds, encouraging them to become acquainted with each other, and teaching them how to react to divergence and perceived otherness (Turpeinen et al., 2019).

The societal impact and transformative potential of arts is recognised in the policy documents to some degree. According to them, BEA strengthens individual identity building and increases mental resilience, hope for the future, positive curiosity and courage to encounter new things. Arts education can reform the society, generate societal innovations and foster active citizenship, and collaboration with various actors is expected to expand these impacts broader to different sectors (Finnish Government, 2021; Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, 2023).

5.3 Visions for Formal and Non-formal Performing Arts Education

This section analyses policy documents that design future scenarios for performing arts education in Finland, primarily based on two vision documents. The document called *Vision 2030 for the Education in Performing Arts* (Metsälä et al., 2022) makes policy recommendations on performing arts education, covering performance art, circus, dance and theatre, including also perspectives from object theatre, puppet theatre, music theatre and performance technology. It is made by a broad group of representatives of these fields and targeted at decision makers, directors and individuals at the state and municipal level as well as in individual schools, art institutions and other organisations to support decision-making and strategy work. The aim is to develop performing arts education and strengthen its position in the system of formal and non-formal education. Concretely, it proposes to establish theatre and dance as independent subjects in the national core curriculum in primary and general upper secondary education. Several aspects of cultural literacy are implicitly referred to in the document through discussion on the interactive nature of performing arts, intercultural interaction, cultural diversity, equality and inclusion.

Covering both formal and non-formal education, the *Vision 2030 for Finnish Music Education* (Auramo et al., 2020) designs the vision for the future of music education in Finland and makes proposals of action. The vision document is made by a broad consortium of actors of the field and targeted mainly at individuals and organisations providing music education, while some of its recommendations are targeted for the political decision-makers and the state. It does not contain ample substantial discussion on topics related to cultural literacy, social cohesion and inclusion. However, in its glossary, accessibility, plurality, inclusion and non-discrimination are included as key words.

The data also includes a *Programme for Parliamentary Elections 2023,* published by Basic Art Education Association & The Conservatory Association of Finland (Taiteen perusopetusliitto & Konservatorioliitto 2022) as well as a *Finland National Working Programme 2023-2027*, published by the Observatory for Arts and Cultural Education (2023). The first of them focuses on formal and non-formal education and highlights the importance of developing the system of basic education in arts (e.g. regional accessibility) as well as the vocational education in ats and culture. The second sets a framework for advancing arts and cultural education in Finland in both formal and non-formal education. These documents discuss arts education in a general way without explicitly mentioning performing arts or any other art forms.

5.3.1 Access and Inclusion

The *Vision 2030 for the Education in Performing Arts* (hereinafter *Vision EPA*) speaks for equal opportunities for education in performing arts (EPA) and recognising and removing barriers of participation in EPA. Accessibility is understood as enabling equal access for all and as covering several different ways of participation. A concrete tool for improving availability of EPA is a cultural education plan that all municipalities should make for the entire duration of compulsory education. EPA should be available also for adults and across generations. The teachers, communities, and governance in the field of art education need to put into practice

the principles of safe space and norm critique to be able to pursue social justice. Using the term democratisation of culture, the document discusses the regional equality of access to culture, arts and education related to them (Metsälä et al., 2022).

In the *Vision 2030 for Finnish Music Education* (hereinafter *Vision Music*), accessibility is defined as a part of promoting equality. It means making teaching and learning content easily accessible to all people. More broadly, "[e]veryone has access to opportunities to make and study music in line with their personal goals, irrespective of their location and income level" (Auramo et al., 2020, p. 19). *Vision Music* perceives accessibility as a perspective considering the wide variety of users, their differing circumstances, needs, limitations or challenges. Through accessibility and active inclusiveness, communities and organisations seek to include as many people as possible. These efforts ultimately benefit the communities and organisations themselves as there will be a larger group of people working towards the common good, according to the document (Auramo et al., 2020, p. 54).

Supporting the accessibility of arts and cultural education in all age and target groups is also one of the aims of the *National Working Programme 2023–2027*. The opportunities for engaging in arts and cultural services should also be developed within the care and wellbeing services. In formal education, accessibility can be improved for instance through making cultural education plans a binding part of the curriculum in the future. Another central objective is to strengthen the position of arts in the national core curriculum for basic education. The programme also aims to strengthen the use, development and significance of general upper secondary school diplomas in arts (Observatory for Arts and Cultural Education, 2023).

Similarly, the *Programme for Parliamentary Elections 2023* demands ensuring equal opportunities of all children and young people to participate in arts education. It claims for improving the regional accessibility of BEA in different art fields by increasing the funding for the BEA system. In addition, it demands supporting vocational education in arts (Taiteen perusopetusliitto & Konservatorioliitto, 2022).

5.3.2 Learning International and Intercultural Interaction

One of the sections in *Vision EPA* is dedicated to strengthening sustainable and open international and intercultural interaction through EPA. Here cultural literacy is explicitly connected to performing arts education and cultural diversity: in EPA, "[i]nternational and intercultural cooperation develops the cultural literacy of pupils, students and those pursuing the arts as a hobby as well as their ability to act skilfully in a linguistically and culturally rich world" (Metsälä et al., 2022, p. 18). Because the language of performing arts is broader than spoken or written language, EPA enhances learning international and intercultural interaction.

> Performing arts enable the multisensory and embodied encounters between people from diverse backgrounds, emphasising agency. It opens the space of artistic communication […] With art, we can "speak" about experiences of intercultural familiarity or strangeness in ways that are unable in ordinary education or everyday interaction. Cultural meanings, cultural heritages, underlying forces of internationality, politics and

> hegemonies can be elaborated through art. (Metsälä et al., 2022, p. 54, translation K.M.)[2]

The ability of art to support agency and enable cross-cultural exchange is emphasized here. Art is depicted as a channel for elaborating power dynamics and structures.

The UN Agenda 2030 (target 4.7: Education for sustainable development and global citizenship) is mentioned as a guiding document in the international and intercultural activities of EPA, involving for example human rights, gender equality, culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, cultural diversity, and the cultural dimension of sustainable development. Internationalisation also includes intercultural interaction in the home country: familiarising oneself with people from minority cultures or with different cultural backgrounds, studying languages and cultures and respecting cultural diversity in one's own environment. This is connected to peace education and non-discrimination (Metsälä et al., 2022).

5.3.3 Diversity, Inclusion and Cohesion

Vision EPA discusses extensively questions related to inclusion and diversity. For example, it introduces the DEI work for diversity, equity and inclusion, which aims to promote representation and participation of various groups related to age, race, ethnicity, abilities, disabilities, genders, languages, religions, cultures and sexual orientations. The DEI work seeks to diminish differences based on power position or privileges and tackle racism (Metsälä et al., 2022). As such, it can be understood as an attempt to build a more cohesive society.

Several other principles and goals in *Vision EPA* also contribute to social cohesion. The document does not only emphasise equality in access and participation but demands that also the leadership and decision-making should reflect the population structure through representation. Awareness of one's own privileges and power relations can help change systems and conditions so that it benefits the excluded or oppressed persons and helps them to become the actors in the change. The goal is non-discriminatory and anti-racist culture which is diverse and participatory and promotes everyone's sense of belonging.

Vision Music discusses plurality primarily at individual and organisational levels, referring to the respect of differences in the individuals' identities and everyone's ability of participation without any fear of discrimination. Plurality also pertains to organisations' recruitment principles and their approach to considering the cultures of minority groups in their operations (Auramo et al., 2020, p. 54).

In *Vision Music*, inclusion is defined as a sense of belonging and of having the potential for influence. The vision document explicitly acknowledges that music education plays an important role in building an equal and non-discriminatory society and contributes to an ecologically, socially and culturally sustainable future. Non-discrimination is defined as a principle

[2] "Esittävät taiteet mahdollistavat eri taustoista tulevien ihmisten kohtaamisen moniaistisesti, kehollisesti ja toimijuutta korostaen. Se avaa taiteellisen kommunikaation tilan, jossa vuorovaikutus on moniulotteista ja jossa kohtaamisen kokonaisvaltaisuus nousee etusijalle kohtaamisen osaamispainotteisuuden (kuten kielitaito) sijaan. Taiteen avulla voidaan "puhua" kokemuksista kulttuurienvälisestä tuttuudesta ja vieraudesta sellaisilla tavoilla, joilla tavallisessa koulutuksessa tai arkisessa kanssakäymisessä ei osata puhua. Kulttuurisia merkityksiä, kulttuuriperintöjä, kansainvälisyyden taustavoimia, politiikkaa ja hegemonioita voi työstää taiteen keinoin." (Metsälä et al. 2022, p. 54)

that states that all people are treated equally regardless of gender, age, origin (ethnic, cultural or social), nationality, language, religion or beliefs, opinions, injuries, health, sexual orientation or any other personal attribute (Auramo et al., 2020, p. 19, 54.). The potential of music to generate cohesion in the context of diversity is acknowleged: "[m]usical pursuits unite people from different backgrounds and cultures" (Auramo et al., 2020, p. 19).

5.3.4 Cultural Literacy, Dialogue and Interaction

In the *National Working Programme 2023–2027*, cultural literacy is not discussed, but the term cultural competence is used once:

> Arts and cultural education aims, for example, at strengthening the individual's creative skills, cultural competence and overall wellbeing. It also has value as an area of life that strengthens general education and inclusion. (Observatory for Arts and Cultural Education, 2023, p. 1)

This quotation also shows how arts education is seen as a contribution to inclusion. Furthermore, the programme underlines the possibilities provided by arts and cultural education to support the integration of children and young people from other countries.

In *Vision EPA*, the societal impact of EPA and its contribution to competences related to cultural literacy and intercultural interaction is perceived to be based on the interactive nature of performing arts. At the core of education and training in performing arts are multi-sensory and embodied encounters, where digital technology meets its limits. In EPA, interaction is based in dialogic relations and interaction. Performing arts can enforce participants' agency and their belief in their own opportunities to participate and influence and hence their commitment to the value foundation of democracy.

> Education in performing arts provide a space, in which ideas and imagination are shared, in which the boundaries of their expressions can be safely contested and in which bringing forth difference is encouraged. Through the applied forms of performing arts (e.g. story theatre and forum theatre) solutions for conflicts can be facilitated. In the framework of performing arts, interaction, participation, collaboration and influencing as recurrent situations construct the foundations of societal trust. (Metsälä et al., 2022, p. 48; translation K.M.)[3]

The discussion of conflict in this context implies the understanding of diversity, difference and dissensus as essential characteristics of democracy. In sum, "[i]nteraction, involvement, collaboration and influencing are central democracy skills that everyone needs" (Metsälä et al., 2022, p. 48, translation K.M.)[4].

[3] "Esittävien taiteiden kasvatus ja koulutus tarjoavat tilan, jossa jaetaan ajatuksia ja mielikuvitusta, jossa niiden ilmaisun rajoja voi koetella turvallisesti ja jossa erilaisuuden esiin tuomiseen rohkaistaan. Esittävien taiteiden soveltavilla muodoilla (esimerkiksi tarinateatteri ja forumteatteri) kyetään myös fasilitoimaan konfliktien ratkaisuja. Esittävien taiteiden kehyksessä vuorovaikutus, osallisuus, yhteistyö ja vaikuttaminen toistuvina tilanteina rakentavat yhteiskunnallisen luottamuksen perustuksia." (Metsälä et al. 2022, p. 48.)

[4] "Vuorovaikutus, osallisuus, yhteistyö ja vaikuttaminen ovat keskeisiä jokaisen tarvitsemia demokratiataitoja." (Metsälä et al. 2022, p. 48)

Also the *Finland National Working Programme 2023–2027* highlights the importance of arts and cultural education in the midst of societal crises and challenges: the resources invested in arts and cultural education will strengthen national resilience, according to it. In this context, sustainable development, eco-social education, and democracy and peace education are emphasised as the contents and methods of arts and cultural education (Observatory for Arts and Cultural Education, 2023).

Moreover, the authors of *Vision EPA* note that dialogic encounters in organisations, institutions and societal interaction produce multivocal knowledge and perspectives to be used in societal action and preparing and making the decisions. Institutions and organisations of EPA seek to actively connect with the surrounding community and thereby build public space, also showing how to influence society and societal debate with artistic approaches and acts.

> Education and training in performing arts support democracy and reform society. The field contributes to people's democracy skills through recurring interaction, participation, co-operation and change-making. Performing arts give a voice to various stories and thus create a platform for social renewal. Through performing arts, people express and discuss things that are not yet recognized and articulated. The education and training of performing arts fosters freedom of art, freedom of thought and opinion, and socially responsible expression. (Metsälä et al., 2022, p. 18)

As discussed in the quote above, performing arts can contribute to knowledge production by addressing matters that are not previously elaborated. Indeed, the document cites Martha C. Nussbaum's idea that the schools that ignore arts education lose an important opportunity to increase democratic understanding.

Vision EPA discusses the principles of artistic freedom and freedom of expression in a way that relates to cultural literacy as an ability to deal with several sorts of information, opinions and messages. It is regarded as the task of art to ponder, question and deal with matters that are difficult, complex, unreasonable or ethically disturbing in the society, school or personal life. Artistic freedom indicates the society's capability for self-reflection and contributes to the interaction in the civil society (Metsälä et al., 2022).

The transformative potential of arts is emphasised throughout *Vision EPA*. In EPA, children and young people can understand the reality by observing the societal faults in their living environment and dealing with political questions, hierarchical structures, and their operation mechanisms. EPA helps to imagine different worlds and possible futures. Art tempts us into asking impossible questions and trying impossible acts. It raises something that does not yet exist for us to discuss, scrutinise and express. These imaginings generate processes that act as cultural influencers in various communities (Metsälä et al., 2022). These ideas refer to the capability of arts to generate new knowledge and ways of knowing.

Similarly, the Observatory for Arts and Cultural Education underlines the societal impact of art education in its *National Working Programme 2023–2027*. It seeks "to strengthen the equal accessibility and impact of arts and cultural education and to improve the social position of the sector and research in the field" (Observatory for Arts and Cultural Education, 2023, p. 1). It

also aims “to promote arts education to support social stability and the prerequisites of individuals and communities to solve challenges and maintain functional capacity” (Observatory for Arts and Cultural Education, 2023, p. 1).

5.3.5 Summary

The policy documents call for access to and inclusion in education in performing arts (EPA). In *Vision Music*, accessibility is discussed in terms of making teaching and learning content easily accessible to all people and enabling equal opportunities to make and study music irrespective of their location and income level (Auramo et al., 2020). *Vision EPA* urges removing barriers of participation in EPA and making room for different ways of participation for all age groups across generations. The principles of safe space and norm critique are underlined for pursuing social justice. For promoting the participation of children and young people in EPA, a concrete tool is a cultural education plan that all municipalities should make for the entire duration of compulsory education (Metsälä et al., 2022).

The *National Working Programme 2023–2027* suggests that cultural education plans should become a binding part of the curriculum in formal education. The position of arts in the national core curriculum for basic education should be strengthened and the general upper secondary school diplomas in arts should be developed. The opportunities for engaging in arts and cultural services should also be developed within the care and wellbeing services (Observatory for Arts and Cultural Education, 2023). The *Programme for Parliamentary Elections 2023* demands increasing the funding for the BEA system to improve the regional accessibility of BEA in different art fields (Basic Art Education Association & The Conservatory Association of Finland, 2022).

According to *Vision EPA,* EPA involves multisensory and embodied encounters and artistic communication between people from diverse backgrounds, emphasising agency. Because the language of performing arts is broader than spoken or written language, EPA can enhance learning international and intercultural interaction. This, in turn, is explicitly said to develop cultural literacy. Art can be a channel to discuss diverse experiences of interculturality. Through art, it is possible to elaborate cultural meanings, cultural heritages, underlying forces of internationality, politics and hegemonies. *Vision EPA* reminds us that internationalisation also includes intercultural interaction one’s own environment, such as familiarising oneself with people from minority cultures or with different cultural backgrounds, studying languages and cultures, and respecting cultural diversity. The *UN Agenda 2030* (target 4.7 Education for sustainable development and global citizenship) is mentioned as a guiding document in the international and intercultural activities of EPA (Metsälä et al., 2022).

Vision EPA introduces the DEI work for diversity, equity and inclusion, which aims to promote representation and participation of various groups related to age, race, ethnicity, abilities, disabilities, genders, languages, religions, cultures and sexual orientations. The document demands that the leadership and decision-making should reflect the population structure through representation. Awareness of one’s own privileges and power relations can help change systems and conditions so that it benefits the excluded or oppressed persons and helps them to become the actors in the change. The goal is non-discriminatory and anti-racist culture which

is diverse and participatory and promotes everyone's sense of belonging (Metsälä et al., 2022).

In *Vision Music,* plurality pertains to organisations' recruitment principles and their approach to considering the cultures of minority groups in their operations. Inclusion is defined as a sense of belonging and of having the potential for influence. The vision document explicitly acknowledges that music education plays an important role in building an equal, non-discriminatory and cohesive society and contributes to an ecologically, socially and culturally sustainable future. Non-discrimination is defined as a principle that states that all people are treated equally regardless of gender, age, origin (ethnic, cultural or social), nationality, language, religion or beliefs, opinions, injuries, health, sexual orientation or any other personal attribute (Auramo et al., 2020).

According to the *National Working Programme 2023-2027*, one of the aims of arts and cultural education is strengthening the individual's cultural competence. The programme also underlines the possibilities provided by arts and cultural education to support the integration of children and young people from other countries (Observatory for Arts and Cultural Education, 2023, p. 1).

Vision EPA underlines the contribution of EPA to competences related to cultural literacy and intercultural interaction based on the interactive and dialogical nature of performing arts and the multisensory and embodied encounters at the core of performing arts. EPA can enable production of multivocal knowledge and perspectives to be used in societal action, debate and decision-making. EPA makes space for ideas and imagination, contesting boundaries, bringing forth difference, facilitating solutions to conflicts and generating societal trust. Performing arts provide a platform for change-making by giving a voice to various stories and addressing matters that are not previously elaborated. Through art, difficult and complex matters can be pondered in new ways, which can promote cultural literacy as an ability to deal with several sorts of information, opinions and messages. As such, EPA promotes democracy skills, as highlighted in *Vision EPA* (Metsälä et al., 2022).

The *National Working Programme 2023-2027* emphasises how the resources invested in arts and cultural education will strengthen national resilience amid societal crises and challenges. Sustainable development, eco-social education, and democracy and peace education are mentioned as the contents and methods of arts and cultural education. (Observatory for Arts and Cultural Education, 2023)

The transformative potential of arts is emphasised throughout *Vision EPA*. In EPA, students can observe the societal faults in their living environment and deal with political questions, hierarchic structures, and their operation mechanisms. EPA helps to imagine different worlds and possible futures, and these imaginings generate processes that act as cultural influencers in various communities. These ideas refer to the capability of arts to generate new knowledge and ways of knowing. Similarly, the *National Working Programme 2023–2027* recognises the ability of art education to support social stability and the prerequisites of individuals and communities to solve challenges and maintain functional capacity (Observatory for Arts and Cultural Education, 2023).

5.4 Strategies for Cultural Policy

The final section analyses two documents drawing guidelines for the national level cultural policy in Finland. *Strategy for Cultural Policy 2025*, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2017), describes the government duties in cultural policy, evaluates the current state of arts and culture and changes in the field as well as sets strategic targets. It mentions the need to reform the funding system for theatres, dance, circus and orchestras so that it can provide a basis for broad-based development of cultural activities, but performing arts are not further discussed. *Art, Culture and Diverse Finland* (Lummepuro, 2023) is an action plan commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Culture. It sets out to promote diversity in the arts and cultural fields. Performing arts are briefly mentioned in the context of promoting cultural diversity and the accessibility of performing arts.

5.4.1 Cultural Literacy

Strategy for Cultural Policy 2025, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2017), defines three strategic target areas of the cultural policy: Creative work and production; Inclusion and participation in culture; and Foundations and continuity of culture. The societal impact of the cultural policy can be assessed in connection with these target areas. The strategy lists several indicators within each area and mentions the terms cultural awareness and cultural literacy under Foundations and continuity of culture: “strengthening cultural awareness and expertise (arts and cultural education, teaching and training, cultural literacy, cultural policy research and knowledge base)” (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017, p. 37). These terms are not explained nor used elsewhere in the strategy. Media literacy is mentioned once as an essential skill in the transformed cultural debate and the new media scene (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017, p. 27).

The goal regarding art education defined in the strategy is to strengthen the position of the teaching of artistic and practical subjects in (formal) curricula and to improve access to (non-formal) basic education in the arts. Teaching, education and training in the cultural sector, including basic education in the arts, are seen as improving students’ ability to receive and understand arts and culture, which can be understood as an element of cultural literacy.

Art, Culture and Diverse Finland makes implicit references to cultural literacy as equal and intercultural interaction and as an ability to “read” cultural diversity since it seeks to draw guidelines for improving capabilities for recognising and acknowledging diversity and strengthening dialogue between cultures (Lummepuro, 2023). In this action plan, the term religious literacy is understood as a skill that can promote equality and social peace: “Open cooperation with different actors and skills such as religious literacy in matters related to religion and freedom of conscience promotes equality and social peace” (Lummepuro, 2023, p. 9). In addition, the action plan discusses media literacy and “new literacies” but does not specify whether and how they include aspects of cultural literacy (Lummepuro, 2023).

5.4.2 Diversity, Inclusion and Cohesion

In terms of inclusion and participation in culture, the goal in the *Strategy for Cultural Policy 2025* is to increase participation in cultural offerings and services as well as spontaneous

participation and narrow the differences in participation between different sectors of population. Especially the opportunities of children and young people to engage in arts and culture as a leisure are discussed: access to arts education and children's culture is to be improved by increasing cooperation with administrative branches responsible for sports, youth, education and training. The aim is also to improve the access to culture for the less active groups and migrants and to decrease regional inequalities in the availability of artistic and cultural activities and services. Migrants' integration can be promoted through their participation in cultural life, according to the strategy. The strategy sets inclusion and participation as one of the three target areas and discusses the access of children, young people and migrants, as well as access in regional and local contexts. In it, equal access can be interpreted as using culture as a means to foster greater social cohesion and inclusivity. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017.)

Objectives set in the *Strategy for Cultural Policy 2025* include "promoting creativity, diversity and inclusion in society at large" (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017, p. 13). In the strategy itself, this is addressed mainly by mentioning the chances of different groups to maintain and develop their own languages and culture as well as safeguarding cultural and linguistic rights. In addition, accessibility of culture is linked with civil society engagement and ensuring democracy. Public libraries, museums and digital services are discussed to realise the goals in practice.

Art, Culture and Diverse Finland is primarily focused on the questions related to encouraging the Finnish art and cultural policy to pay more attention to immigration-based cultural diversity but underlines that Finland has always been a culturally and linguistically diverse society and that its cultural heritage has evolved over time in interaction between cultures. Arts and culture are seen as instruments for promoting participation of people with a foreign background, creating intercultural dialogue between different population groups and advancing social inclusion in the context of cultural diversity. The action plan attempts to realise equality and non-discrimination and ensure everyone regardless of their background has the opportunity to increase their knowledge and skills, and to utilise them and their creativity in their work and leisure time (Lummepuro, 2023).

"Basic education in the arts" is one of the six subchapters in the section *Measures to promote diversity in the Ministry of Education and Culture's strategy work and funding of culture*. It is only one paragraph long and does not discuss performing arts or cultural literacy learning. However, it briefly mentions promoting equal access and accessibility as well as the perspective of promoting cultural diversity in the development of basic education in the arts (Lummepuro, 2023).

The action plan briefly mentions performing arts in the context of promoting cultural diversity and the national and regional availability of performing arts services as well as the accessibility of art to different population groups. The performing arts communities are encouraged to put culturally diverse content representing different cultural traditions on the stage. In addition, measures of fostering cultural diversity in the Finnish national opera and ballet and Finnish national theatre are discussed as well as central government transfers to performing arts. Performing arts are not discussed in other contexts (Lummepuro, 2023).

5.4.3 Summary

Strategy for Cultural Policy 2025 mentions strengthening cultural awareness and expertise as an indicator in one of its three strategic target areas ("Foundations and continuity of culture"). Strengthening cultural awareness and expertise includes here arts and cultural education, teaching and training, cultural literacy, cultural policy research and knowledge base, according to the strategy. The goal regarding art education defined in the strategy is to strengthen the position of the teaching of artistic and practical subjects in (formal) curricula and to improve access to (non-formal) basic education in the arts. Teaching, education and training in the cultural sector, including basic education in the arts, are seen as improving students' ability to receive and understand arts and culture, which can be understood as an element of cultural literacy (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017, p. 27).

Art, Culture and Diverse Finland seeks to draw guidelines for improving capabilities for recognising and acknowledging diversity and strengthening dialogue between cultures. In this action plan, the term religious literacy is understood as a skill that can promote equality and social peace (Lummepuro, 2023).

In terms of inclusion and participation in culture, the goal in the *Strategy for Cultural Policy 2025* is to increase participation in cultural offerings and services as well as spontaneous participation and narrow the differences in participation between different sectors of population. Especially access to arts education and children's culture is to be improved by increasing cooperation across administrative branches. The aim is also to improve the access to culture for the less active groups and migrants and to decrease regional inequalities in the availability of artistic and cultural activities and services. Different groups should have equal opportunities to maintain and develop their own languages and culture as well as safeguarding cultural and linguistic rights. Accessibility of culture is also linked to civil society engagement and ensuring democracy (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017).

In *Art, Culture and Diverse Finland*, arts and culture are seen as instruments for promoting participation of people with a foreign background, creating intercultural dialogue between different population groups and advancing social inclusion in the context of cultural diversity. The action plan briefly mentions promoting equal access and accessibility of BEA as well as the perspective of promoting cultural diversity in the development of BEA. Performing arts are briefly discussed in the context of promoting cultural diversity and the national and regional availability of performing arts services as well as the accessibility of art to different population groups. The performing arts communities are encouraged to put culturally diverse content representing different cultural traditions on the stage (Lummepuro, 2023).

5.5 Conclusions and Reflections

5.5.1 Findings in Light of the Theoretical Framework

One of the key topics in the policy documents analysed here is the goal of improving people's possibilities to participate in performing arts education regardless of their background. Promoting the equal access of performing arts education – or cultural education – can be seen as cultural democratisation, which seeks to increase the amount of people taking part in this

education and diversify the demographic range of participants. However, the policy documents analysed here discuss less cultural democracy, which would mean diversifying the cultural education services themselves through participation of various demographic groups and their various knowledges and ways of knowing.

Accessibility of performing arts education is the main context of addressing diversity, whereas diversity is less related to cultural literacy learning. Nevertheless, the authors of *Vision EPA* note that dialogic encounters in organisations, institutions and societal interaction produce multivocal knowledge and perspectives to be used in societal action and decision making. Institutions and organisations of EPA seek to actively connect with the surrounding community and thereby build public space, also showing how to influence society and societal debate with artistic approaches and acts (Metsälä et al., 2022, p. 18). This can be interpreted as learning cultural literacy and using it as a collective competence at organisational and societal level.

5.5.2 Decolonial Perspective

The ability of arts to produce new knowledge and ways of knowing was recognised particularly in *Vision EPA* (Metsälä et al., 2022, p. 18): through arts, we can ask impossible questions and address matters that are not yet recognised and articulated or that are difficult and complex. Therefore, EPA helps to imagine alternative worlds and futures. Some of the documents also discuss the ability of arts to tackle challenges at different levels. This indicates that the knowledge of arts is needed to complement (or perhaps replace) the predominant forms of knowledge. However, this is usually not elaborated further, for example, knowledges of indigenous arts are not discussed – even though the Sami, the only indigenous population in Europe, are living in Finland, in addition to only three other countries. Colonialism and its continuous consequences in Finland and beyond are not discussed and various divisions and categorizations are not questioned.

5.6 Commentaries

5.6.1 Comment from the Norwegian Consortium Member Nord University

The Finland policy analysis explores how cultural and educational policy documents engage with the arts, inclusion, and participation. The analysis highlights an important consideration: inclusion and participation are most effectively supported through proactive approaches. A strong emphasis is placed on accessibility, particularly through demographic outreach, digitalisation, and pedagogical adaptation. In the Finnish context, accessibility is framed as essential to ensuring cultural and educational rights, with attention given to removing barriers related to geography, language, income, and ability. It is understood not only as physical or technical access, but also as a perspective that recognises diverse needs and circumstances—ensuring that all individuals, regardless of background, have equitable opportunities to participate in and contribute to arts and cultural education. This broader understanding is linked to the idea of cultural democratisation, aiming to diversify participation and strengthen cultural involvement across society.

A similar emphasis on accessibility is found in the Norwegian context, where equitable access is often understood through institutional responsibility and broad participation goals. However,

in both countries, accessibility tends to be framed in structural or logistical terms, with less attention paid to how different ways of knowing, expressing, and learning are made accessible through the arts.

A less explicitly addressed dimension in both contexts is the need to recognise embodiment in arts and education practices as central to how we know, express, and learn, particularly in relation to cultural literacy. For example, the analysis of the *Let's Dance!* policy brief presents dance as a powerful means of fostering interaction, empathy, and openness to difference. These are core dimensions of cultural literacy, even though the term itself is not used. Instead, dance is positioned as a space where physical movement becomes intertwined with emotion, social participation, and cultural engagement. Similarly, in the Norwegian context, some policy documents recognise the social and emotional dimensions of aesthetic subjects but do not fully elaborate on their potential for cultural literacy and intercultural dialogue.

The significance of embodiment was a key theme discussed in the d@rts Literature Review (Mortimer, et al. 2024) and is increasingly being discussed and explored throughout other d@rts work packages. The Finland analysis prompts important questions about how policy might more intentionally support embodied, relational, and affective modes of engagement and participation. These are not only central to the arts but also to decolonial approaches that challenge dominant, Eurocentric notions of how we view and share knowledge. While the Norway policy analysis acknowledges the significance of embedding Sámi cultural expressions, and Finland's analysis points out the absence of Sámi perspectives altogether, both highlight the urgency of moving beyond access and preservation toward the inclusion and recognition of diverse ways of knowing and being.

As the d@rts project continues to explore the intersections between performing arts, cultural literacy, and social transformation, these policy analyses highlight the importance of framing inclusion not just in terms of who participates, but also how embodied experience, cultural practices, and forms of expression are shared and valued within and across cultural communities.

5.6.2 Comment from the Artist's Magic Wand Project (Riikka Hänninen, Project Leader)

The Cultural Association Finland's Eucrea is an organisation of disabled artists. Its project *The Artist's Magic Wand*, funded by the Kone Foundation, promotes equality in the arts field for deaf and disabled artists. This commentary highlights the importance of such work in the context of basic education in the arts (BEA), with a particular focus on equality and inclusion of disabled and deaf citizens.

Laes et al. (2018) rightly argue that basic education in the arts can play a crucial role in preventing exclusion. We have repeatedly witnessed how participation in arts education can significantly enhance a disabled child's or young person's self-esteem, confidence, and social skills. For many disabled children and youth, experiences of belonging or, conversely, exclusion are central to their everyday lives.

These benefits extend beyond the arts, potentially supporting future working life skills, even when the individual's career path does not directly involve the arts. Disabled people's employment rates are considerably lower compared with the general population. That is why all opportunities to develop creative skills and social capital are especially valuable. These are, indeed, the very "future skills" identified by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

However, realizing future skills for disabled children requires structural guarantees: practical opportunities must be ensured not only in BEA but also through social and health services.

Accessibility is more than an educational principle - it is a societal responsibility. The inclusion of disabled children in arts education depends on broader systemic conditions: Does society provide transport services for children who need them to attend lessons? Do children using sign language have access to interpretation services? Are the teaching facilities accessible and learning materials available in accessible formats? Are the doors - both literal and metaphorical - open for all?

Recent tendencies in policy decisions that frame disabled people as care recipients instead of equal citizens impact all areas of life, including access to arts education. This shift towards a care-based approach in disability services often neglects the recognition of disabled people as active agents and rights-holders, which undermines their equal participation in education, culture, and society at large.

If BEA providers are expected to remove barriers to participation, they must also be provided with sufficient resources to do so. However, current national policy includes major funding cuts to both the cultural sector and to third sector organizations, including disability associations that often serve as key partners and experts in promoting accessibility.

Accessibility must cut across all areas of arts education - from student admissions to recruitment and communications - and must be developed in close collaboration with disabled people themselves. For example, visibility of different embodiments and abilities should be reflected in public communication: seeing a wheelchair-using teacher or a sign language using pupil sends a powerful message about belonging.

Inclusion and equality must translate into concrete actions and adequate resources. Rhetorical commitments are not enough: words must be matched with practice. Otherwise, the principle of equal participation remains unfulfilled.

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6. Germany

Alperen Kalay and Julius Heinicke

In German-speaking countries, the term kulturelle Bildung is usually used for cultural literacy, which is not so easy to translate into English. Kulturelle Bildung refers to many contexts such as cultural education, arts education, performing arts education, pedagogy and *Bildung*. For more than 20 years, cultural education has been utilised particularly in informal settings to strengthen cultural competencies, focusing on self-reflection on the one hand, and the ability to navigate an increasingly diverse society on the other. The performing arts, including music, dance, and drama, also became an integral part of the integration strategies for refugees in Germany (MIZ, 2022). In recent years, kulturelle Bildung has also found its way into the formal sector. The practice of kulturelle Bildung is being applied in school contexts, and the municipalities are incorporating it into their school curricula. As kulturelle Bildung evidently plays a visible role in German cultural policy and educational policy contexts, we have decided to adapt kulturelle Bildung to address the context through its original conceptualisation.

Since the poor performance of German pupils in the 1999 PISA study, kulturelle Bildung has been increasingly used as a strategic cultural policy tool and promoted by the federal, state, and local governments. Since then, a large number of projects and funding programs have been developed and established, and cultural institutions and other civil society actors have been receiving public funding for years to embed cultural education more firmly. Different networks exist between art institutions, educational institutions, and socio-cultural centres, and various further education measures, training courses, and methods have been implemented. A link to kulturelle Bildung with the school system is visible, but primarily in relation to the informal spaces and spheres beyond the curriculum. This outcome is rather surprising, as the original purpose of strengthening cultural education was linked to the PISA study. However, projects such as *Kultur macht stark,* funded by the federal government, gave impetus to out-of-school alternatives regarding kulturelle Bildung in Germany.

Policy analysis in the case of the Federal Republic of Germany urges a look into three fundamental structural levels regarding the federal political system (*Kulturföderalismus*), which gives great authority to the state-level governments in Germany to establish educational and cultural policies. *Bund* (federal), *Länder* (state) and *Kommunen* (municipalities) level governments, on the other hand, all have their own ministerial systems which generate and contribute to cultural and educational policies in Germany. The role of the federal and state governments in Germany is characterised by a complex system of separation of powers, which is laid down in the Basic Law (1949) to decentralise the power in Germany after the Second World War and the Nazi regime. The federal government granted exclusive legislative powers in central areas such as foreign policy, defence, customs and currency, while the federal states gained authority for cultural matters, in particular school and education policy, local government and police law. This division enables the federal states to enact their own laws that supplement or concretise the federal legal framework. Federal and state ministries and local governments/city halls covering culture and cultural education differ significantly from one another,

and structures vary from state to state (Woyke, 2021). For instance, North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony have ministries of culture and science, while Hamburg and the Federal (*Bund*) government have offices for culture and media. Regional (City, district and county) authorities sometimes also offer strategies, which we will also look at. The selection of the particular Länder cases was communicated and decided together with the German curriculum analysis partner for overall consistency (Bayern, Hamburg, Niedersachsen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Sachsen). However, we have extended our research with the state of Thüringen, as they have recently published a relevant up-to-date policy paper during our analysis.

The analysis is divided into three chapters: federal, state, and municipal examples of kulturelle Bildung-related programs and policies in Germany. These programs and policies are not only offered by cultural ministries and authorities, but also by ministries covering education and science, as well as ministries for other branches, such as family, seniors, women, and youth. There are also partially public/governmental funded institutions, organisations, associations and actors in both federal and state levels, such as The German Federation for Arts Education and Cultural Learning (BKJ) and Federal Academies for Cultural Education in Wolfenbüttel and Remscheid, as well as *Bund* and *Länder* level active non-governmental (third sector) foundations. Some of these structures are rather complex, as non-governmental and governmental organisations mostly work or initiate programs together. Funding and strategies intersect between federal, state and municipal level structures. Moreover, third sector institutions also have different organisational structures (e.g., Bundesverband Soziokultur e.V. for addressing federal-level policies, and Landesverband Soziokultur Niedersachsen e.V. for the state of Lower Saxony). For this reason, we have marked every paper with governmental/non-governmental, according to who has given it. We have also marked whether the focus of the document is on formal or non-formal education or both, depending on the content of that particular paper, as it is sometimes rather complex to divide the formal and non-formal cultural education, cultural literacy and performing arts education (kulturelle Bildung) particularly in the case of Germany. We have used the most relevant keywords to find the most suitable documents that discuss cultural literacy, performing arts education, social inclusion and cohesion together.

Federal (Bund) Governmental

- *Rede von Kulturstaatsministerin Claudia Roth beim Runden Tisch Kulturelle Bildung* (Beauftragter der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien [BKM], 2023)
- *Kultur macht stark (2023–2027)* (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung [BMBF], 2023)
- *Richtlinien Kulturelle Jugendbildung* (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend [BMFSFJ], 2016)

Federal (Bund) Non-governmental

- *Stellungnahme: Öffentliches Fachgespräch zum Thema kulturelle Bildung – einschließlich Bundesprogramm "Kultur macht stark: Bündnisse für Bildung"* (Deutscher Kulturrat e. V., 2016)

- *Enquetebericht "Kultur in Deutschland": Zehn Jahre Referenzdokument* (Deutscher Kulturrat e. V., 2017)

- *Gute Praxis machen – Prinzipien der Kinder- und Jugendkulturarbeit: Woran man gute Angebote kultureller Bildung erkennt* (Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbildung [BKJ], 2020)

- *Bildung und Kultur in der Stadt: Positionspapier des Deutschen Städtetages zur kulturellen Bildung* (Deutscher Städtetag, 2019)

- *10 Jahre Kreativpotentiale: Erkenntnisse, Erfolge und Perspektiven* (Stiftung Mercator GmbH, 2022)

- Stellungnahme: Öffentliches Fachgespräch zum Thema kulturelle iBldung – einschließlich Bundesprogramm "Kultur macht stark: Bündnisse für Bildung" (Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband [DVV], 2016)

- *Auf den Punkt I/III Kulturort Schule: Bildungspolitische Handreichung* (Rat für Kulturelle Bildung e. V. [RFKB], 2020)

States (Länder)

- *Empfehlung der Kultusministerkonferenz zur Kulturellen Kinder- und Jugendbildung* (Kulturministerkonferenz [KMK], 2022) (governmental)

- Kulturstiftung der Länder Makura (n.d.) (non-governmental)

Nordrhein-Westfalen:

*Bericht "Diversität und Teilhabe in Kunst und Kultur stärken – Konzept des MKW" (*Ministerium für Kultur und Wissenschaft des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen [MKW], 2021) (governmental)

Niedersachsen:

- *Konzept von SCHULE:KULTUR!* (Niedersächsisches Kultusministerium [MK] & Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur [MWK], 2023). (governmental)

- Niedersächsisches Kulturfördergesetz [NKultFöG] (2022) (governmental)

Bayern:

- *Kulturelle Bildung reloaded: Perspektiven und Handlungsfelder* (Landesvereinigung Kulturelle Bildung Bayern e. V. [LKB: BY], 2021) (non-governmental)

Hamburg:

- *Zentrum für internationale Kulturelle Bildung* (Goethe-Institut Deutschland, 2024) (non-governmental)

- *Koalitionsvertrag 2020–2025: Kunst und kultur* (Senatskanzlei Hamburg, 2020 (governmental)

- *Kulturelle Bildung: Chancen schaffen, Nachwuchs fördern* (Stadtkultur Hamburg, n.d.) (non-governmental)

- *Kreativpotentiale verwirklichen – Schulentwicklung kulturell gestalten* (Calvert et al., 2021) (governmental)

Sachsen:

- *Richtlinie des Sächsischen Staatsministeriums für Wissenschaft, Kultur und Tourismus zur Förderung der kulturellen Bildung im Freistaat Sachsen (FRL kulturelle Bildung)* (Staatsministerium für Wissenschaft, Kultur und Tourismus [SMWK], 2022) (governmental)

- *Gesamtkonzept gegen Rechtsextremismus* (Sächsisches Staatsministerium für Soziales und Gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalt [SMS], 2023) (governmental)

Thüringen:

- *Empfehlungen zur kulturellen Bildung und Teilhabe in Thüringen* (Kulturrat Thüringen e. V., 2024) (non-governmental)

Municipalities / Regional

- *Bildungsregion Cuxland Inklusiv* (Landkreis Cuxhaven, n.d.) (governmental)

- *Kultur.Schulen* (Städteregion Aachen, n.d.) (governmental)

6.1 Federal (Bund) Governmental

6.1.1 Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien [BKM] / The Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media – Rede von Kulturstaatsministerin Claudia Roth beim Runden Tisch Kulturelle Bildung / Speech by Minister of State for Culture Claudia Roth at the Round Table on Kulturelle Bildung (2023) *Governmental + Non-formal*

Minister of State for Culture and Media, Claudia Roth strengthens the importance of kulturelle Bildung (cultural education, cultural literacy, performing arts education) for a diverse (immigration) society as the minister describes diversity in a very differentiated way (cultural, social diversity, integration, inclusion of people with disabilities, cohesion, equal participation etc). Claudia Roth emphasises the opportunities offered by kulturelle Bildung to adopt different perspectives and participate in society, highlighting its importance for personal development. The close connection to the arts is striking. Kulturelle Bildung is primarily understood in the context of the arts; in this respect, it supports the function of kulturelle Bildung for access to art spaces (e.g. *Kulturpass*). However, it fails to address the significance of kulturelle Bildung for school contexts (schools and educational policies do not fall within the remit of the Minister of State for Culture) (BKM, 2023).

> Culture, the knowledge of one's own as well as other cultures, is important for individual personal development, for creativity, for self-image and participation in a society.

> In an immigration society like ours, it is therefore also a key factor for inclusion, integration, belonging, cohesion and equal participation. (BKM, 2023, para. 4)[5]

6.1.2 Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung [BMBF] / Federal Ministry of Education and Research [BMBF] – Kultur macht stark Programme (2023 – 2027) *Governmental + Non-formal + formal*

This state-of-the-art project (*Kultur macht stark*) collaborates with various local program partners (*Bündnisse)* and it funds kulturelle Bildung related projects covering 99 per cent of all districts in Germany offering extracurricular (out-of-school) kulturelle Bildung activities for youth, including in schools. It has generated 46,000 projects with roughly 1,350,000 participants taking part in projects as of March 2024 report. The programs' target group is children and youth between the ages of 3 and 18 years, and projects are organised by educational specialists and artists (BMBF, 2024b, pp. 1-2). A wide variety of cultural areas that are available for funding are: *Alltagskultur* (everyday culture), literature, music, theatre, circus as well as digital games culture, film, museum, fine arts and more (BMBF, 2024b, p. 2).

In the third phase (2023–2027) of the federal *Kultur macht stark* programme (first phase began in 2013), a special focus is placed on people with a background on migration and refugee history (Migrations- und Fluchtgeschichte), as well as on discriminated, and young people in "difficult situations", whose educational opportunities are expected to be improved through the *Kultur macht stark* projects. The kulturelle Bildung projects supported by the programme are intended to contribute to greater "educational justice" (Bildungsgerechtigkeit). It primarily focuses on disadvantaged young people, in which the intentions must be made clear in the application process through addressing terms such as multiple discrimination (Mehrfachsdiskriminierung), low education (geringe Bildung), cosmopolitanism (Weltoffenheit), tolerance (Toleranz), equality (Gleichberechtigung), discrimination (Diskriminierung), discrimination-sensitive (diskriminierungssensibel), "supposedly underprivileged girls" (vermeintlich unterdrückte Mädchen), gender relations (Geschlechterverhältnisse), children from immigrant families (Kinder aus Einwandererfamilien) (BMBF, 2023; 2024a).

> *Kultur macht stark* contributes to greater educational equality. Throughout Germany, *Bündnisse für Bildung* (alliances for education) are working to ensure that children and young people who grow up in difficult circumstances have better access to education. In doing so, the alliances are taking on a major challenge: improving educational opportunities is a demanding endeavour and enables the younger generation to participate more. This is particularly true because children and young people who take part in *Kultur macht stark* projects are often exposed to multiple forms of discrimination. (BMBF, 2023, p. 1)[6]

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[5] Kultur, das Wissen um die eigene ebenso wie um andere Kulturen, ist wichtig für die individuelle Persönlichkeitsentfaltung, für Kreativität, für das Selbstverständnis und die Teilhabe an einer Gesellschaft. Sie ist in einer Einwanderungsgesellschaft wie unserer damit auch ein Schlüsselfaktor der Inklusion, der Integration, des Dazugehörens, des Zusammenhalts, einer Teilhabegerechtigkeit. (BKM, 2023, para. 4)

[6] "Kultur macht stark leistet einen Beitrag zu mehr Bildungsgerechtigkeit. In ganz Deutschland setzen sich Bündnisse für Bildung dafür ein, dass Kinder und Jugendliche, die in einer schwierigen Situation

6.1.3 Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend [BMFSFJ] / Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth – Richtlinien Kulturelle Jugendbildung / Guidelines for Cultural Youth Education (2016) *Governmental + Non-formal*

BMFSFJ in their guidelines for *kulturelle Jugendbildung* (cultural youth education), mention many of the terms that are significant to the project, emphasising inclusion and its relative terms (participation, access, gender mainstreaming, transculturality, multilingualism), although they do not mention social cohesion. Similar to the statement by the Minister of State for Culture (BKM, 2023), diversity is presented in a very differentiated way, such as people with disabilities and impairments (Beeinträchtigung), refugee experience (Fluchterfahrung), gender equality, and people with a migrant background.

Certain competences of cultural literacy and social cohesion are also mentioned like tolerance, respect, acceptance, learning the German language, inter- and transcultural learning, appreciation, promoting the opportunities of multilingualism (BMFSFJ, 2016, pp. 813-814). Reference is also made to the importance of international cultural youth work (Kulturjugendarbeit) (BMFSFJ, 2016, p. 813). The understanding of kulturelle Bildung in BMFSFJ guidelines encompasses different forms and disciplines of artistic, aesthetic and cultural practice. Furthermore, European and international youth work is seen and mentioned as an integral part of German foreign cultural and educational policy (AKBP) (BMFSFJ, 2016, p. 813).

> ***Inclusion of young people with disabilities and impairments***
>
> With its human rights approach, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities strengthens the right of people with disabilities or impairments to equal opportunities, equal participation in society and freedom of self-determination. This mandate for society as a whole also represents a major challenge for child and youth welfare services and must be proactively promoted together with the other legal sectors involved. The inclusion and participation of young people with disabilities and impairments are universal tasks in all areas of child and youth welfare. This requires barrier-free conditions in the broadest sense as well as a climate of appreciation, respect and acceptance of disabilities and impairments as part of human diversity. When implementing subsidised measures, it is important to ensure that disability and impairment are not exclusion criteria and that access and participation are guaranteed. (BMFSFJ, 2016, p. 811)[7]

aufwachsen, bessere Zugänge zu Bildung erhalten. Damit stellen sich die Bündnisse einer großen Herausforderung: Bildungschancen zu verbessern ist ein anspruchsvolles Vorhaben und ermöglicht der heranwachsenden Generation mehr Teilhabe. Das gilt besonders, weil Kinder und Jugendliche, die an “Kultur macht stark”-Projekten teilnehmen, oft Mehrfachdiskriminierungen ausgesetzt sind.” (BMBF, 2023, p. 1)

[7] **Inklusion junger Menschen mit Behinderungen und Beeinträchtigungen**
Mit ihrem menschenrechtlichen Ansatz stärkt die UN-Behindertenrechtskonvention das Recht von Menschen mit Behinderung bzw. Beeinträchtigung auf Chancengerechtigkeit, gleichberechtigte gesellschaftliche Teilhabe und Freiheit zur Selbstbestimmung. Dieser gesamtgesellschaftliche Auftrag stellt auch für die Kinder- und Jugendhilfe eine große Herausforderung dar und muss offensiv und

Inclusion of young people with a migration background

Participation and recognition are important prerequisites for the personal development and independent and autonomous living of all young people, regardless of their origin or the origin of their parents. Child and youth welfare services must take into account the cultural diversity of young people. It is necessary to remove barriers to access, to open up facilities and services interculturally and to further develop service profiles. The special needs of young people with a migration background and those who have experienced flight must be taken into account, the learning of the German language must be supported, the opportunities of multilingualism and transculturality must be promoted, and intercultural learning must be facilitated. (BMFSFJ, 2016, p. 811)[8]

6.2 Federal (Bund) Non-governmental

6.2.1 Deutscher Kulturrat / German Cultural Council – Stellungnahme / Position Paper (2016) *Non-governmental + Non-formal*

Deutscher Kulturrat argues that the concepts of inclusion and integration are essential for educational policy discussions. It emphasises the impact of kulturelle Bildung and the federal *Kultur für Alle* programme, as well as the importance of integrating refugees (Deutscher Kulturrat, 2016, pp. 4-5).

Kulturelle Bildung: for all people

Kulturelle Bildung should be open to all people. Issues of inclusion and integration play an important role in the kulturelle Bildung discussion. Kulturelle Bildung is particularly important in the current discussion on the integration of refugees. It is about filling the long period of waiting in refugee centres, it is about getting to know the new country, its culture and values. It is about coming to terms with traumatic experiences. It is

gemeinsam mit den anderen beteiligten Rechtskreisen vorangetrieben werden. Die Teilhabe und Partizipation junger Menschen mit Behinderungen und Beeinträchtigungen sind durchgängige Aufgaben in allen Handlungsfeldern der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe. Hierfür sind barrierefreie Bedingungen im weitesten Sinne erforderlich als auch ein Klima von Wertschätzung, Respekt und der Akzeptanz von Behinderung bzw. Beeinträchtigung als Teil der menschlichen Vielfalt. Bei der Umsetzung geförderter Maßnahmen gilt es zu berücksichtigen, dass Behinderung bzw. Beeinträchtigung keine Ausschlusskriterien darstellen und Zugang bzw. Teilhabe gewährleistet sind. (BMFSFJ, 2016, p. 811)

8 **Inklusion junger Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund**
Teilhabe und Anerkennung sind wichtige Voraussetzung für die Persönlichkeitsentwicklung sowie für eine selbstständige und eigenverantwortliche Lebensführung aller jungen Menschen, unabhängig von ihrer Herkunft bzw. der Herkunft ihrer Eltern. Angebote der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe haben die kulturelle Vielfalt unter jungen Menschen zu berücksichtigen. Notwendig sind der Abbau von Zugangshemmnissen, die interkulturelle Öffnung der Einrichtungen und Dienste und die Weiterentwicklung der Angebotsprofile. Dabei gilt es die besonderen Belange junger Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund und jener mit Fluchterfahrung zu berücksichtigen, das Erlernen der deutschen Sprache zu unterstützen, die Chancen von Mehrsprachigkeit und Transkulturalität zu fördern sowie interkulturelles Lernen zu ermöglichen. (BMFSFJ, 2016, p. 811)

> positive that the federal programme Kultur macht stark – Bündnisse für Bildung programme has been opened up to the new task of cultural work with refugees. (Deutscher Kulturrat, 2016, p. 5)[9]

6.2.2 Deutscher Kulturrat / German Cultural Council – Enquete Bericht "Kultur in Deutschland": Zehn Jahre Referenzdokument / Enquete Report "Culture in Germany": Ten Years of Reference Document (2017)

Non-governmental + Non-formal

The report of the Enquete Commission *Kultur in Deutschland* (Deutscher Bundestag, 2007), which was commissioned by the Bundestag, emphasises the importance of culture for society. However, the preamble speaks of culture as a foundation in the singular; *Vielfalt* and *Diversität* (both translates to diversity) still seem distant. However, in the statement of the Deutscher Kulturrat ten years later in 2017, culture in Europe and culture in the context of globalisation (p.1) are at least included (Deutscher Kulturrat, 2017, p. 1).

6.2.3 Die Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbildung [BKJ] e. V. / The German Federation for Arts Education and Cultural Learning – Prinzipien der Jugendkulturarbeit: Gute Praxis Machen – Prinzipien der Kinder – und Jugendkulturarbeit / Principles of Youth Cultural Work: Making Good Practice - Principles of Cultural Work with Children and Young People (2020) *Non-governmental + Formal + Non-formal*

In its 2020 principles, the BKJ emphasises diversity as the norm and inclusion as the standard (*Diversität als Normalfall und Inklusion als Standard*). This clearly shows a clear shift from the Enquete Commission's definition of culture (*Kultur in Deutschland*) from 2007. The reference to the 'processual nature' of education (cultural) is particularly striking (BKJ, 2020, p. 2). It is also clear that youth cultural work should be linked to schools and daycare centres (*Kita*), in addition to cultural education institutions (social institutions, cultural and educational venues, a variety of nonformal and formal spaces such as arts and music schools, youth centres, libraries, theatres). This is also evident in the skills required of those involved, who must have "pedagogical and artistic expertise" (BKJ, 2020, p. 3). Power structures are critically reflected (BKJ, 2020, p. 2).

> The practice is accessible and acceptable for all children and young people. This also includes communication about this practice. Different backgrounds and experiences,

[9] "**Kulturelle Bildung: für alle Menschen**
Kulturelle Bildung soll allen Menschen offenstehen. Fragen der Inklusion und Integration spielen in der kulturellen Bildungsdebatte eine wichtige Rolle. Insbesondere in der aktuellen Diskussion um die Integration Geflüchteter wird der kulturellen Bildung große Bedeutung beigemessen. Es geht hier darum, die lange Zeit des Wartens in Flüchtlingseinrichtungen zu füllen, es geht um das Kennenlernen des neuen Landes, seiner Kultur und Werte. Es geht um die Verarbeitung traumatischer Erlebnisse. Positiv ist, dass das Bundesprogramm "Kultur macht stark – Bündnisse für Bildung" für die neue Aufgabe der Kulturarbeit mit Geflüchteten geöffnet wurde." (Deutscher Kulturrat, 2016, p. 5)

different needs of the genders and age groups as well as individual abilities are met with openness and appreciation.

Discrimination is uncovered and resolutely combated.

The individuality and diversity of the children and young people involved form the basis of the joint cultural education process. Human rights and a focus on human dignity form the value basis of the practice. Trust, attentiveness and respect form the basis of our dealings with one another. Those responsible and those involved take each individual seriously in their independence and their expressions. Power relations and relationships are critically reflected upon. (BKJ, 2020 p. 2)[10]

BKJ principles is another example how kulturelle Bildung is perceived not only in formal places but also in nonformal spaces in Germany.

6.2.4 Deutscher Städtetag / German Association of Cities – Bildung und Kultur in der Stadt: Stellungnahme des Deutschen Städtetages zur Kulturellen Bildung / Education and Culture in the City: Position Paper of the Association of German Cities on Cultural Education (2019) *Non-governmental + Formal + Non-formal*

In 2019, the Deutscher Städtetag positioned itself in favour of a strong responsibility for kulturelle Bildung in a wide range of institutions and contexts and emphasised the links between cultural, educational, youth and school policies. Themes such as equal opportunities, inclusion, and participation (Partizipation, Teilhabe) are emphasised, as well as lifelong learning (lebenslanges Lernen) which in some sources are inseparable from the term kulturelle Bildung in German contexts, feeding into the complexity of this term.

The paper follows on and points to the lack of a clear definition of kulturelle Bildung (between culture and education) – which is a rather challenging definition even in its German context, but also in its translations such as cultural education, cultural literacy, and cultural competence. However, the paper defines culture in a narrow and broader sense and emphasizes that visual arts, literature, performing arts, music and applied arts in their diverse combinations are the usual focus of kulturelle Bildung (cultural education) but also emphasises the skills from both educational and cultural areas (cognitive, creative, social dimensions) (Deutscher Städtetag, 2019, p. 6).

[10] Die Praxis ist zugänglich und annehmbar für alle Kinder und Jugendlichen. Dazu gehört auch die Kommunikation über diese Praxis. Unterschiedlichen Hintergründen und Erfahrungen, unterschiedlichen Bedürfnisse der Geschlechter und Altersgruppen sowie individuellen Fähigkeiten wird mit Offenheit und Wertschätzung begegnet.
Diskriminierung wird aufgedeckt und entschieden bekämpft.
Die Individualität und die Unterschiedlichkeit der beteiligten Kinder und Jugendlichen bildet die Grundlage des gemeinsamen kulturellen Bildungsprozesses. Die Wertebasis der Praxis bilden die Menschenrechte und die Orientierung an der Menschenwürde. Vertrauen, Achtsamkeit und Respekt bilden die Grundlagen des Umgangs miteinander. Die Verantwortlichen und Beteiligten nehmen jedes Individuum in seiner Eigenständigkeit und seinen Äußerungen ernst. Machtverhältnisse und -beziehungen werden kritisch reflektiert. (BKJ, 2020, p. 2)

The regional and municipal cultural policy dimension of the paper is particularly interesting, as it argues: "The complex problems and requirements in education, such as improving the educational participation of educationally disadvantaged groups and migrants or the implementation of inclusion in schools, can best be tackled at the local level" (Deutscher Städtetag, 2019, pp. 2, 10-11).

> *Kulturelle Bildung* in Germany is characterised by a wide variety of actors and institutions. It falls within the remit of various policy areas: Education and school policy, youth and social policy and, last but not least, *kulturelle Bildung* is of course a central subject of cultural policy. (Deutscher Städtetag, 2019, p. 6)[11]

6.2.5 Stiftung Mercator – 10 Jahre Kreativpotentiale Mit Kultureller Bildung Lernen und Lehren in Schulen Gestalten / 10 years of Kreativpotentiale Shaping Learning and Teaching in Schools with Cultural Education (2022)

Non-governmental + Formal

Stiftung Mercator is a significant and important example of non-governmental, formal education initiative in Germany. The *Kreativpotentiale* program (program on creative skills) of Stiftung Mercator offers an ambitious cluster of research, developing formats and structures of kulturelle Bildung in close cooperation (with practice partners, teachers, artists, institutions) tailored to the needs and expectations of the particular *Länder*, offering different programs and strategies in every state in Germany except Saxony (Stiftung Mercator, 2022, p. 5). The program particularly collaborates closely with cultural ministries, educational institutions, and cultural centres with the main goal of introducing kulturelle Bildung approaches to schools to enhance cultural participation of children and young people as much as possible (Stiftung Mercator, 2022, p. 5).

6.2.6 Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband [DVV] / German Adult Education Association – Stellungnahme / Position Paper (2016) *Non-governmental + Non-formal*

Volkshochschulen (communal educational centres) in Germany are important educational actors in local communities. In their 2016 statement, DVV (Association for Volkshochschulen) defined their narrative on kulturelle Bildung from a broader perspective which focuses on personality development, strengthening social, communicative and creative skills, improvisation and more. Volkshochschulen also plays an important role on integration of refugees and immigrants in Germany as they offer language and integration courses. Importance of *interkulturelle Bildung* (intercultural education) for a multigenerational, multicultural society and immigrants and refugees to become a harmonious community is also mentioned, however, cultural inclusion is rather missing, and the perspectives are still from the host community (DVV, 2016, p. 3).

[11] Kulturelle Bildung in Deutschland ist gekennzeichnet durch eine große Vielfalt von Akteuren und Institutionen. Sie fällt in die Zuständigkeit verschiedener Politikfelder: Bildungs und Schulpolitik, Jugend- und Sozialpolitik und nicht zuletzt ist Kulturpädagogik natürlich ein zentraler Gegenstand von Kulturpolitik. (Deutscher Städtetag, 2019, p. 6)

> In times of growing integration requirements, *Volkshochschulen* are important places for communication between generations, nationalities and cultures. Intercultural education at *Volkshochschulen* helps immigrants and refugees to become citizens of a community.
>
> In line with their holistic approach to education, *Volkshochschulen* (communal educational centres) network their educational programmes and thus increase the effectiveness of education. For example, a cross-thematic educational programme consisting of language, health, socio-political, vocational and intercultural education is currently helping refugees to integrate into society and work. (DVV, 2016, p. 3)[12]

For the purpose of non-formal education discussion, it should be mentioned that even though the non-formal courses offered in these educational centres are voluntary, migration related courses, such as integration courses, might be mandatory and "formal" for people settling in Germany.

6.2.7 Rat für Kulturelle Bildung [RFKB] / Council for Cultural Education – Kulturort Schule / School as a Cultural Centre (2020) *Non-governmental + Formal*

RFKB in this policy guide paper, focuses on the aspects of kulturelle Bildung particularly in the context of schools as it links to successful general education (*Allgemeinbildung*), describes schools as a fundamentally designed cultural space and emphasizes the special need of aesthetic-artistic education. The paper argues that schools as a cultural space has a particular job to contribute and prepare the pupils to tackle daily problems of a culturally diverse and heterogenous society (RFKB, 2020, pp. 15-16). "The school as a place of culture is not an island", but part of a communal educational landscape with relationships and interactions to be actively shaped with local cultural locations and institutions as educational partners for lessons, extracurricular activities and extracurricular all-day programs. Furthermore, the paper mentions the culturally diverse society in Germany, however it does not mention social inclusion, cohesion or its relative terms (RFKB, 2020, pp. 15-17).

> Good *kulturelle Bildung* at school is therefore characterised firstly by the success of general education (enculturation), secondly by the fact that the school is fundamentally designed in all its aspects as a place of *kulturelle Bildung* (school as a cultural space) and thirdly by the fact that special attention is paid to aesthetic subjects and areas

[12] n Zeiten wachsender Integrationsanforderungen stellen Volkshochschulen wichtige Orte der Kommunikation von Generationen, Nationalitäten und Kulturen dar. Die interkulturelle Bildung an Volkshochschulen hilft Einwanderern und Flüchtlingen dabei, Bürgerinnen und Bürger einer Kommune zu werden.
Entsprechend ihrem ganzheitlichen Bildungsansatz vernetzen Volkshochschulen ihre Bildungsangebote und erhöhen damit die Wirksamkeit von Bildung. So hilft ein themenübergreifendes Bildungsangebot aus sprachlicher, gesundheitlicher, gesellschaftlich-politischer, beruflicher sowie (inter-)kultureller Bildung Flüchtlingen aktuell dabei, sich in Gesellschaft und Arbeit zu integrieren. (DVV, 2016, p. 3)

(artistic-aesthetic education). Good *kulturelle Bildung* strikes a productive balance between general basic education for all pupils in aesthetic subjects and areas and the promotion of individual artistic and cultural interests. (RFKB, 2020, p. 15)[13]

Schools as a cultural centre must make a contribution to living together in a heterogeneous, culturally diverse society and find an answer to the cultural challenges that pupils are confronted with on a daily basis and to which they must also find daily answers after leaving school. It is not only their own path in life that depends on this competence, but also the stability of society. (RFKB, 2020, p. 16)[14]

6.3 States (Länder)

6.3.1 Kultusministerkonferenz [KMK] – Empfehlung der Kultusministerkonferenz zur Kulturellen Kinder – und Jugendbildung / Recommendation of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs on Cultural Education for Children and Young People (2022) *Governmental + Non-formal + Formal*

The Conference of Culture Ministers of the Federal States emphasises the increasing role of kulturelle Bildung in countering the increasing diversity of German society (KMK, 2022, p. 4). On the one hand, it highlights the potential of kulturelle Bildung to foster skills such as tolerance of ambiguity, handling diverse controversies and transformation processes, and on the other hand, to provide spaces and approaches for this through the arts (KMK, 2022, pp. 4-5).

It is noticeable that, in addition to the “classic” arts subjects (music, visual arts and theatre), structural inclusion of extracurricular partners (music schools, adult education centres, libraries, community centres) is a sustainable and useful way to promote kulturelle Bildung especially in the area of all-day schools (*Ganztagsschule*) (KMK, 2022, p. 5). Referring to the required measures, it is interesting to note that the KMK paper envisages the use of formats in early childhood education, in schools, in cultural institutions, as well as specialist training at universities, colleges and universities of applied sciences, which enhances the cooperation formats between schools and cultural institutions, but also the transdisciplinary nature of the subject between the different arts, culture and education (KMK, 2022, p. 10).

[13] Gute Kulturelle Bildung in der Schule zeigt sich daher erstens darin, dass Allgemeinbildung gelingt (Enkulturation), zweitens darin, dass die Schule grundlegend in allen ihren Aspekten als Ort Kultureller Bildung gestaltet wird (Schule als Kulturraum) und drittens darin, dass den ästhetischen Fächern und Bereichen besondere Aufmerksamkeit zukommt (künstlerisch-ästhetische Bildung). Dabei findet gute Kulturelle Bildung eine produktive Balance zwischen allgemeiner Grundbildung für alle Schüler und Schülerinnen in den ästhetischen Fächern und Bereichen und der Förderung individueller künstlerischer und kultureller Interessen. (RFKB, 2020, p. 15)

[14] Der Kulturort Schule muss einen Beitrag für das Zusammenleben in einer heterogenen, kulturell vielfältigen Gesellschaft leisten und eine Antwort auf die kulturellen Herausforderungen finden, mit denen Schüler und Schülerinnen Tag für Tag konfrontiert sind und auf die sie auch nach ihrer Schulzeit tägliche Antworten finden müssen. Von dieser Kompetenz hängt nicht nur der eigene Lebensweg, sondern die Stabilität der Gesellschaft ab. (RFKB, 2020, p. 16)

> *Kulturelle Bildung* takes into account the diversity of society, promotes acceptance, has a comprehensive effect on sensitivity to discrimination and creates community. In this respect, *kulturelle Bildung* contributes to social participation and democracy building. (KMK, 2022, p. 5)[15]

On this way, KMK, addresses clearly the link between cultural literacy and social cohesion as kulturelle Bildung "promotes acceptance" and diversity. However, it remains to be seen to what extent the concept of art, culture and education is changing regarding the social transformation processes, and of what significance this phenomenon has for education and the design of more inclusive spaces.

6.3.2 Kulturstiftung der Länder / Cultural Foundation of the Federal States – Makura Portal *Non-governmental + Non-formal*

Online portal of Kulturstiftung der Länder, Makura offers various perspectives from Länder level, giving input and online access to important policy papers, projects of both the Kulturstiftung der Länder and also outside projects and programs. Kulturstiftung der Länder stays relevant to the discussion as it works in its funding programs such as supporting safe creative, and cultural spaces for Ukrainian children and youth through the Sonnen Stunden program, aiming to improve the framework conditions of kulturelle Bildung.

What is particularly interesting is that no kulturelle Bildung project is named for the state of Saxony, similarly to the *Kreativpotenziale* program of Stiftung Mercator. Figures shows that there is a clear isolation; state level block or lack of interest in kulturelle Bildung (cultural education) from the state of Saxony (Kulturstiftung der Länder, n.d.) while other states are addressed from their own point of view, how kulturelle Bildung is implemented or understood from these state levels (be that as it aesthetic practices, educational, formal or non formal formats).

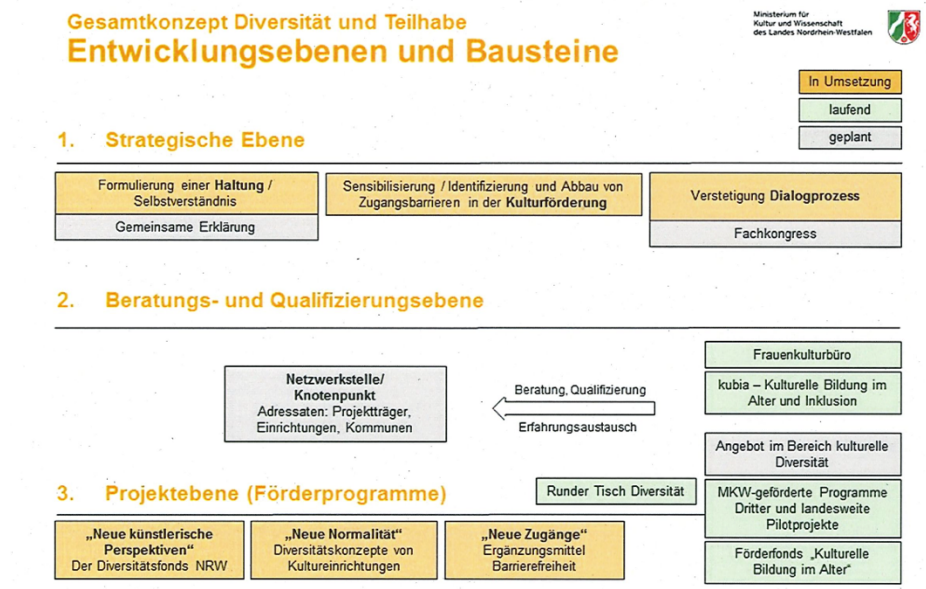
6.3.3 Nordrhein-Westfalen [NRW] / North Rhine-Westphalia

Ministerium für Kultur und Wissenschaft des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen [MKW] / Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia – Bericht Diversität und Teilhabe in Kunst und Kultur – Gesamtkonzept / Report Diversity and Participation in Art and Culture - Overall Concept (2021) *Governmental + Non-formal*

The report shared by the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), the Ministry of Culture and Science, addresses diversity and participation in the cultural scene as "normality" in Germany. This paper is critical regarding social inclusion in cultural education and its related concepts in Germany (MKW, 2021, pp. 2-4). The report also offers a structured "Diversity and Participation Concept" and defines diversity as a whole concept with different categories (skin color, origin, gender, disability, age, sexual identity; *Hautfarbe*, *Herkunft*, *Geschlecht*, *Behinderung*, *Alter*, *sexuelle Identität*) which shows strategic funding structures of current and

[15] "Kulturelle Bildung trägt der Diversität der Gesellschaft Rechnung, fördert Akzeptanz, wirkt umfassend auf die Diskriminierungssensibilität hin und stiftet Gemeinschaft. Insofern leistet Kulturelle Bildung einen Beitrag zur gesellschaftlichen Teilhabe und Demokratiebildung." (KMK, 2022, p. 5)

planned programs and concepts. Inclusion and diversity have been made very present in the concept (MKW, 2021, pp. 4-5).



(Report Diversity and Participation in Art and Culture - Overall Concept MWK, 2021)

It is essential to mention that this is not the only paper (also in BKJ, BMBF) that defines diversity as normality (*Vielfalt als Normalität*), which shows a clear tendency towards the transformational processes of Germany's transcultural society and efforts of social cohesion.

6.3.4 Niedersachsen [NDS] / Lower Saxony

Konzept SCHULE:KULTUR! / Concept School:culture (2023-2025) Governmental + Formal

Funding initiative of Stiftung Mercator *Kreativpotenziale*, *SCHULE:KULTUR! concept* is an example of kulturelle Bildung intersecting conjecture in Germany. In its first and second phase (2014-2022), the programme was sponsored by Stiftung Mercator and both Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur, Lower Saxony Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs [MWK], as well as Niedersächsisches Kultusministerium, Lower Saxony Ministry of Culture [MK], and since of 2023, exclusively funded by the state ministries. This shows the complexity of funding structures and collaborative interactions of governmental and non-governmental actors in kulturelle Bildung in Germany.

The project systematically implements kulturelle Bildung in classrooms, and throughout the day, and aims to establish long-term collaborations between schools and out-of-school cultural partners (*Ganztag* concept) to enhance and promote cultural participation and creativity of pupils in Lower Saxony by collaborations with actors. Local actors such as Bundesakademie für Kulturelle Bildung Wolfenbüttel e.V. [ba], the Landesvereinigung Kulturelle Jugendbildung e.V. [LKJ] of Lower Saxony, Landesinstitut für schulische Qualitätsentwicklung [NLQ] and the Regionales Landesämter für Schule und Bildung [RLSB] are also involved in the implementation of the project. SCHULE:KULTUR program takes an interdisciplinary approach on kul-

turelle Bildung, the concept tries to optimise long-term enhanced cultural participation in secondary schools, and methods through collaborations with artists, out-of-school partners such as theatre education centres, museums, socio-intercultural institutions and more.

Niedersächsischer Landtag / State parliament of Lower Saxony – Niedersächsisches Kulturfördergesetz [NKultFöG] / Cultural Promotion Act (2022) Governmental + Non-formal

Lower Saxony's state Law of Cultural Funding is a very significant example of how Länder-level governments are and can regulate kulturelle Bildung and cultural diversity with local perspectives. In this sense, Lower Saxony made a clear statement to preserve and strengthen local heritage, regional identity, and historical diversity of the state, but also regulated the protection of regional and minority languages (NKultFöG, 2022, §5, §9, §10). The Lower Saxon regulation not only focuses on local-host community but also acknowledges minorities and cultural diversity in Lower Saxony (NKultFöG, 2022, §2). It particularly emphasises that the cultural fundings must address cultural diversity, inclusive society (*inklusive Gesellschaft*), and should be discrimination-free, and barrier-free and should support cultural participation (*kulturelle Teilhabe*) of disabled people (NKultFöG, 2022, §4, §5).

Lower Saxony paper also defined kulturelle Bildung as a "lifelong learning" (*lebenslanges Lernen*) process (NKultFöG, 2022, §6), which adds to the German aspects of cultural literacy which took a significant turn from formal education (PISA aftermath), and evolved to a rather socio-cultural, more broader understanding of kulturelle Bildung. Nevertheless, all these non-formal focuses do not imply that the kulturelle Bildung is insignificant in school themes.

> ***§2 Cultural promotion as a task of the state***
>
> It stimulates new developments in culture, art and *kulturelle Bildung* and contributes to the maintenance and further development of the cultural infrastructure in Lower Saxony with its funding. In doing so, it endeavours to provide a needs-based offering in all regions that takes particular account of the interests of cultural diversity. The state supports cultural activities in the municipalities in accordance with the state's cultural policy objectives. (NKultFöG, 2022, p. 2)[16]
>
> ***§4 Principles***
>
> (1) The promotion of culture follows the principles of a democratic and pluralistic, integrative and inclusive society and contributes to its realisation in a sustainable manner.
>
> (2) Cultural funding should enable and strengthen cultural diversity and the non-discriminatory and barrier-free cultural participation of all people. (NKultFöG, 2022, p. 3)[17]

[16] "**§2 Kulturförderung als Aufgabe des Landes.** Es regt neue Entwicklungen in Kultur, Kunst und kultureller Bildung an und trägt mit seiner Förderung zur Pflege und Weiterentwicklung der kulturellen Infrastruktur in Niedersachsen bei. Hierbei wird ein bedarfsgerechtes Angebot in allen Regionen angestrebt, dass die Belange der kulturellen Vielfalt besonders berücksichtigt. Das Land unterstützt die kulturellen Aktivitäten in den Kommunen nach Maßgabe der kulturpolitischen Ziele des Landes." (NKultFöG, 2022, p. 2)

[17] "**§4 Grundsätze.** (1) Die Kulturförderung folgt den Grundsätzen einer demokratischen und pluralistischen, integrativen und inklusiven Gesellschaft und trägt nachhaltig zu ihrer Verwirklichung bei." (2) Durch die Kulturförderung sollen die kulturelle Vielfalt sowie die diskriminierungs- und barrierefreie kulturelle Teilhabe aller Menschen ermöglicht und gestärkt werden. (NKultFöG, 2022, p. 3)

§5 Objectives

(2) To enable artists living and working in Lower Saxony and educators working in *kulturelle Bildung* to develop freely as artists and educators and to offer them good and fair working conditions,

(3) to contribute to openness and understanding for artistic forms of expression and cultural diversity in society and to enable people to critically analyse culture, art and society,

(4) to help shape social and structural development in the regions, to strengthen regional identity and quality of life and thereby promote social cohesion and secure the future viability of the country, […]

(6) to strengthen the cultural participation of people with disabilities. (NKultFöG, 2022, p. 3)[18]

6.3.5 Bayern / Bavaria

Landesvereinigung Kulturelle Bildung Bayern [LKB: BY] / Bavarian State Association for Cultural Education – Kulturelle Bildung Reloaded: Perspektiven und Handlungsfelder / Cultural Education Reloaded: Perspectives and Fields of Action (2021) *Non-governmental + Formal*

In the Bavarian Position paper, kulturelle Bildung is described as an area in the jurisdiction of municipalities, local authorities, but also the role of independent organisations and independent freelance actors. The paper further describes kulturelle Bildung as "an integral part" of formal education; "school as a place of culture" but also a field of extracurricular education which gives another example of the complexity of case-by-case understanding of kulturelle Bildung in Germany. Words such as inclusion, cohesion, diversity as well as integration are not found in the paper. Although the clear positive impact of kulturelle Bildung regarding cultural resilience, transformation processes, sustainable development and migration is stated (LKB: BY, 2021, p. 2).

Interestingly, LKB mentions that this "Broad understanding" of kulturelle Bildung opens a potential for formal education in schools that could be also embedded in general school education rather than just focusing on arts education (such as sustainable development, digital education, media education) (LKB: BY, 2021, p. 3).

Kulturelle Bildung enables a new way of thinking about school education

[18] "**§5 Ziele.** (2) den in Niedersachsen lebenden und arbeitenden Künstlerinnen und Künstlern sowie den in der kulturellen Bildung tätigen Pädagoginnen und Pädagogen eine freie künstlerische und pädagogische Entfaltung zu ermöglichen und ihnen gute und faire Arbeitsbedingungen zu bieten, (3) in der Gesellschaft zu Offenheit und Verständnis für künstlerische Ausdrucksformen und kulturelle Vielfalt beizutragen und die Menschen zur kritischen Auseinandersetzung mit Kultur, Kunst und Gesellschaft zu befähigen, (4) die gesellschaftliche und strukturelle Entwicklung in den Regionen mitzugestalten, die regionale Identität und Lebensqualität zu stärken und dadurch den gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalt zu fördern und die Zukunftsfähigkeit des Landes zu sichern, (6) die kulturelle Teilhabe von Menschen mit Behinderungen zu stärken." (NKultFöG, 2022, p. 3)

> A broad understanding of *kulturelle Bildung* also opens up considerable potential for school education, as *kulturelle Bildung* not only emphasises the importance of art-related school areas, but can also be applied to all subjects as a principle of opening up cultural access to the world.
>
> *Kulturelle Bildung* provides the context in which pupils can develop cultural articulation, design and reflection skills and build cultural resilience. Just like education for sustainable development or digital education or media education, cultural education is a necessary and constitutive component of general (school) education. (LKB: BY, 2021, p. 3)[19]

6.3.6 Hamburg

Goethe Institut – Zentrum für Internationale Kulturelle Bildung Hamburg / Centre for International Cultural Education Hamburg *Non-governmental + Non-formal*

Five centres (in Bonn, Dresden, Hamburg, Mannheim, Schwäbisch Hall) for international kulturelle Bildung to empower resilience towards racism, antisemitism and right extremism is now funded by Auswärtiges Amt (Federal Foreign Office) which makes it an interesting case to mention the linkage between foreign cultural and educational policy (AKBP). As discussed above in the examples of BMFSF and Lower Saxony cases, that addressed the relativity to the AKBP with the internationalisation of kulturelle Bildung, this case with the Goethe Institut and the Federal Foreign Office might be interpreted as an opposite example of international branches in local involvement regarding the relations between kulturelle Bildung and *Auswärtige Kultur– und Bildungpolitik* (Goethe-Institut Deutschland, 2024).

Kunst und Kultur: Koalitionsvertrag / Art and culture: Coalition Agreement (2020-2024) *Governmental + Formal + Non-formal*

The coalition agreement between SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany) and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (Alliance 90/The Greens) shared their four programs, which includes sections on kulturelle Bildung (cultural education), youth culture and participation, promising to support kulturelle Bildung projects together with foundations (*Stiftungen*). Special needs of people with disabilities are recognised, and refugee artists are supported. The coalition mentions responsibilities from colonial times with postcolonial responses as well as acknowledges gender diversity in Hamburg (Senatskanzlei Hamburg, 2020).

Stadt Kultur Hamburg e.V. *Non-governmental + Non-formal*

[19] "**Kulturelle Bildung ermöglicht Neu-Denken schulischer Bildung.** Auch für die schulische Bildung eröffnen sich durch ein weites Verständnis von Kultureller Bildung beträchtliche Potenziale, da Kulturelle Bildung nicht nur die Bedeutung der kunstbezogenen schulischen Bereiche hervorhebt, sondern sich als Prinzip der Eröffnung kultureller Weltzugangsmöglichkeiten grundsätzlich auf alle Fächer beziehen lässt. Kulturelle Bildung bietet den Kontext, in dem Schüler*innen kulturelle Artikulations-, Gestaltungs- und Reflexionskompetenzen entwickeln und kulturelle Resilienz ausbilden können. Ebenso wie Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung oder Digitale Bildung bzw. Medienbildung ist Kulturelle Bildung ein notwendiger und konstitutiver Bestandteil von allgemeiner (schulischer) Bildung." (LKB: BY, 2021, p. 3)

Kulturelle Bildung is also described together with lifelong (*lebenslanges Lernen*) engagement through art and culture. Stadt Kultur Hamburg, looks at kulturelle Bildung in forms of a local, neighbourhood empowering and local educational landscape improvement through artists (Stadt Kultur Hamburg e.V., n.d.).

> ***Kulturelle Bildung*: *creating opportunities, promoting young talent***
>
> Through cultural education programmes, neighborhood culture enables a joint and lifelong engagement with art and culture. As a local expert and educational partner, neighborhood culture cooperates with schools and other stakeholders and helps to develop the local educational landscape. *Kulturelle Bildung* improves educational opportunities and promotes undiscovered potential. Budding artists receive training and space to develop and can try out their talents on the stages of the neighbourhood. (Stadt Kultur Hamburg e.V., n.d.)[20]

Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung [BSB] / Authority for Schools and Vocational Education – Kreativpotentiale: Verwirklichen – Schulentwicklung kulturell gestalten / Creative Potential: Realising - Shaping School Development Culturally (2021) Governmental + Formal + Non-formal

City state Hamburg's handout in collaboration with Stiftung Mercator particularly focuses on developing *kulturelles Schulprofil* (cultural school profiles), which offers interesting insights on the role of kulturelle Bildung with administrative inputs. There are five models for cultural development in schools in the handout, of which two are particularly important. One of the models (1. *Richtig guter Kunstunterricht* / Very good art lessons) emphasises a narrow understanding of "cultural education" through strengthening arts education (*ästhetische und küntslerische Fachbereiche – Kunstunterricht*) while another (3. *Richtig viel Kultur erleben* / Experience a lot of culture) states collaborating with out-of-school learning places (*außerschulische Lernorte*) that we see in many contexts of other kulturelle Bildung strategies in Germany (Calvert et al., 2021, p. 50).

Even in formal education contexts, focusing on kulturelle Bildung development in school, it is still visible that out-of-school collaborations plays a crucial role in of cultural education in Germany. This comes from the understanding of broader societal cultural participation (Calvert et al., 2021, pp. 33-36).

> *Kulturelle Bildung* not only strengthens pupils' artistic skills at an individual level, but also – within the framework of interdisciplinary lessons – their subject-specific skills in general as well as their methodological, social and personal skills, i.e. their overall personal development. The subject and strength orientation in the development of a

[20] "**Kulturelle Bildung: Chancen Schaffen, Nachwuchs fördern. Stadtteilkultur ermöglicht durch kulturelle Bildungsangebote eine gemeinsame und lebenslange Auseinandersetzung mit Kunst und Kultur.** Stadtteilkultur kooperiert dabei als lokale Expertin und Erziehungspartnerin mit Schulen und anderen Akteur*innen und entwickelt die lokale Bildungslandschaft mit. Kulturelle Bildung verbessert Bildungschancen und fördert unentdeckte Potenziale. Werdende Künstler*innen erhalten Qualifizierungen und Freiraum zur Entfaltung und können sich auf den Bühnen des Stadtteils ausprobieren." (Stadt Kultur Hamburg e.V., n.d.)

cultural school profile promotes emancipation, satisfaction, self-efficacy, self-education, life and career orientation and thus also self-confidence.

However, there are not only positive effects for the pupils, but also for the school as a whole: *kulturelle Bildung* contributes to the development of teaching quality, strengthens the school community, increases the attractiveness of the school, expands networks and thus contributes to opening up the school both internally and externally. Finally, at the level of society as a whole – as already mentioned several times – cultural participation is made possible beyond the school setting, ultimately reducing inequality of opportunity (see e.g. Braun et al. 2013; BKJ 2015, 2009; BKJ & Bundeselternrat 2016). (Calvert et al., 2021, p. 33)[21]

6.3.7 Sachsen / Saxony

Richtlinie des Sächsischen Staatsministeriums für Wissenschaft, Kultur und Tourismus [SMWK] zur Förderung der kulturellen Bildung im Freistaat Sachsen / Directive of the Saxon State Ministry of Science, Culture and Tourism [SMWK] for the Promotion of Cultural Education in the Free State of Saxony (2022) *Governmental + Non-formal*

There is no substantial discussions on gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in this state level funding directive that addresses, kulturelle Bildung in the state of Saxony. The understanding of kulturelle Bildung in Saxony is perceived to be indistinct and does not go far from traditional forms of music and arts schools. Transcultural society is not a priority at a state level (SMWK, 2022, p. 1). However, it is also important to mention that the concept supports the pupils to develop their own artistic skills, and state-wide collaborations are highlighted.

Legal basis, purpose of the grant

The purpose of the grant is to support the work of music schools and youth art schools and to strengthen cultural education for children and young people in the Free State of Saxony. The funding serves in particular to enable children and young people to participate in art and culture and aims to develop their artistic, cultural, social and sociopolitical skills.

Object of the funding

Funding is provided for measures in the following areas in particular:

[21] "Kulturelle Bildung stärkt auf individueller Ebene nicht nur die künstlerischen Kompetenzen der Schülerinnen und Schüler, sondern – im Rahmen fächerübergreifenden Unterrichts – auch die Fachkompetenzen im Allgemeinen sowie die Methoden-, Sozial- und Personalkompetenzen, also die gesamte Persönlichkeitsentwicklung. Die Subjekt- und Stärkenorientierung bei der Entwicklung eines kulturellen Schulprofils fördert die Emanzipation, Zufriedenheit, Selbstwirksamkeit, Selbstbildung, Lebens- und Berufsorientierung und damit auch das Selbstbewusstsein. Doch es zeigen sich nicht nur positive Wirkungen für die Schülerinnen und Schüler, sondern auch für die gesamte Schule: Kulturelle Bildung trägt zur Entwicklung der Unterrichtsqualität bei, stärkt die Schulgemeinschaft, steigert die Attraktivität der Schule, erweitert Netzwerke und trägt damit zur Öffnung der Schule nach innen wie nach außen bei. Schließlich wird auf gesamtgesellschaftlicher Ebene – wie bereits mehrfach angesprochen – kulturelle Teilhabe und Partizipation über den schulischen Rahmen hinaus ermöglicht und damit letztlich Chancenungleichheit verkleinert (siehe z. B. Braun et al. 2013; BKJ 2015, 2009; BKJ & Bundeselternrat 2016)." (Calvert et al., 2021, p. 33)

Music schools

Youth art schools

Network centres for cultural education in cultural areas

Kulturelle Bildung of state-wide importance. (SMWK, 2022, p. 1)[22]

More generic competencies, such as societal, socio-political, artistic, and cultural skills, are recognised as part of Saxony's cultural education program goals. Transcultural or intercultural dialogue as part of cultural literacy learning (kulturelle Bildung) that are acknowledged in other states are not visible.

Gesamtkonzept gegen Rechtsextremismus / Overall concept against right-wing extremism (2023) (Sächsisches Staatsministerium für Soziales und Gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalt [SMS] / Saxon State Ministry for Social Affairs and Social Cohesion) Governmental + Non-formal

Kulturelle Bildung is recognised as a lifelong process (*lebensbegleitender Prozess*). This paper also takes a broader perspective to explain the term. What is striking is that, even in a concept paper addressing right extremism related to the subject of kulturelle Bildung, it surprisingly fails to mention the importance of cultural diversity, transculturality, migration society, and inclusion. Concepts are rather outdated if we are to compare with perspectives coming from states of Nordrhein-Westfalen, Niedersachsen or Hamburg regarding inclusivity in kulturelle Bildung concepts (SMS, 2023, pp. 35-36).

Description

Kulturelle Bildung for children and young people refers to the self-education of people through with themselves, their environment and society. It promotes learning competence as well as social and cultural competence as key competences for lifelong learning. It has a positive influence on all areas of life (explicitly including those that are not artistic or cultural in the narrower sense). It encompasses active creative-artistic fields of activity. *Kulturelle Bildung* as a whole is a lifelong process to which all people should have access regardless of age, gender and other life circumstances. Systematically, cultural education for children and young people works on three levels, which often merge seamlessly: (1) the transfer of skills and knowledge, (2) personality development and (3) the transfer of social competence. (SMS, 2023)[23]

[22] "**Rechtsgrundlagen, Zuwendungszweck.** Zuwendungszweck ist die Unterstützung der Arbeit an Musikschulen und an Jugendkunstschulen sowie die Stärkung der Kulturellen Kinder- und Jugendbildung im Freistaat Sachsen. Die Förderung dient dabei insbesondere der Teilhabe von Kindern und Jugendlichen an Kunst und Kultur und zielt auf die Entwicklung von deren künstlerischen, kulturellen, sozialen und gesellschaftspolitischen Kompetenzen ab.
Gegenstand der Förderung. Gefördert werden Maßnahmen insbesondere in folgenden Förderbereichen: Musikschulen, Jugendkunstschulen, Netzwerkstellen für Kulturelle Bildung der Kulturräume, Kulturelle Bildung von landesweiter Bedeutung." (SMWK, 2022, p. 1)

[23] "**Beschreibung.** Kulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbildung bezeichnet die Selbstbildung des Menschen durch die Auseinandersetzung mit sich selbst, seiner Umwelt und der Gesellschaft. Sie fördert Lernkompetenz sowie soziale und kulturelle Kompetenz als Schlüsselkompetenzen für lebenslanges Lernen. Sie beeinflusst alle Lebensbereiche (explizit auch die nicht im engeren Sinne künstlerisch-

6.3.8 Thüringen / Thuringia

Kulturrat Thüringen e.V. / Thuringia Cultural Counsil – Empfehlungen zur Kulturellen Bildung und Teilhabe in Thüringen / Recommendations for Cultural Education and Participation in Thuringia (2024) *Non-governmental + Formal + Non-formal*

The most up-to-date paper of all, which was published in June 2024 from the state of Thüringen, offers critical insights into the kulturelle Bildung discussions in Germany. This recommendation paper on kulturelle Bildung and participation (cultural) covers and supports the undeniable linkage between non-formal and formal spaces regarding kulturelle Bildung and acknowledges the ever-increasing role of cultural institutions in the educational (formal) landscape (Kulturrat Thüringen, 2024 p. 10). It continues with arguments and quotes from actors such as BKJ and BMBF, that kulturelle Bildung is not just for youth and children but a lifelong and inclusive learning process (Kulturrat Thüringen, 2024, p. 12). The paper particularly touches on subjects such as *Inklusion* and *Diversität* (Inclusion and Diversity) and gives recommendations for the expansion and support of inclusive and diversity-sensitive kulturelle Bildung (Kulturrat Thüringen, 2024, pp. 22-23).

What is particularly striking for the discussion is the chapter "*Kulturelle Bildung in Schulen*" (kulturelle Bildung in schools), which acknowledges the role of communal cultural policy for kulturelle Bildung (cultural education) in schools (Kulturrat Thüringen, 2024, p. 31).

> Regardless of the type of school, *kulturelle Bildung* is an integral part of school life and school development. Subjects such as art, music, performance and design are firmly anchored in the timetables of Thuringian schools. According to Section 2 of the Thuringian School Act, the common mission of schools is to serve non-formal educational aspects in addition to formal educational aspects – such as the transfer of knowledge and skills or preparation for professional life. This includes empowering pupils to take on social responsibility and inspiring them with enthusiasm for culture and science: The school promotes the development process of the pupils in order to foster individuality, self-confidence and independent behaviour. It offers space to develop talents and to compensate for educational disadvantages. (Kulturrat Thüringen, 2024 p. 31)[24]

kulturellen) positiv. Sie umfasst aktive kreativ-künstlerische Betätigungsfelder. Kulturelle Bildung insgesamt ist ein lebensbegleitender Prozess, zu dem alle Menschen unabhängig von Alter, Geschlecht und sonstigen Lebensumständen Zugang haben sollen. Systematisch wirkt Kulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbildung auf drei Zielebenen, welche häufig fließend ineinander übergehen: (1) Die Vermittlung von Können und Wissen, (2) die Persönlichkeitsbildung sowie (3) die Vermittlung gesellschaftlicher Kompetenz." (SMS, 2016, p. 35)

[24] "Kulturelle Bildung ist, unabhängig von der Schulart, integraler Bestandteil des Schullebens und der Schulentwicklung. Fächer wie Kunst, Musik, Darstellen und Gestalten sind fest in den Stundentafeln der Thüringer Schulen verankert. Laut §2 des Thüringer Schulgesetzes liegt der gemeinsame Auftrag der Schulen darin, neben formalen Bildungsaspekten – wie beispielsweise der Wissens – und Kenntnisvermittlung oder der Vorbereitung auf das Berufsleben – auch non-formale Bildungsaspekte zu bedienen. Dazu zählt, die Schüler*innen zu gesellschaftlicher Mitverantwortung zu befähigen und sie für Kultur und Wissenschaft zu begeistern: „Die Schule fördert den Entwicklungsprozess der Schüler zur Ausbildung ihrer Individualität, zu Selbstvertrauen und eigenverantwortlichem Handeln. Sie bietet Raum zur Entfaltung von Begabungen sowie für den Ausgleich von Bildungsbenachteiligungen." (Kulturrat Thüringen, 2024, p. 31).

Some of the recommendations on kulturelle Bildung in schools quoted below continuously emphasises the role of cultural institutions and non-formal spaces in formal education.

> ***Ensuring and qualifying teachers***: The Thuringian Institute for Teacher Training, Curriculum Development and Media (ThILLM), among others, offers further education and training measures for teachers as well as opportunities for practical counselling for specialist staff (certified training opportunities). The cultural concept of the Free State of Thuringia from 2012 specifies various measures for the qualification of teachers. It should be examined to what extent the objectives of *kulturelle Bildung* (cultural education) have been included in the updating of curricula across the board, and how participation in further training on *kulturelle Bildung* can be made easier for teachers of all subjects. An interdisciplinary training programme could also provide new impetus. (Kulturrat Thüringen, 2024, p. 32)[25]
>
> ***Develop a contact point for school stakeholders***: The cultural agents of LKJ Thüringen e. V. act as a key interface between schools and culture. They advise and support schools in the initiation and implementation of artistic and cultural projects and organise regional network meetings between schools and culture together with the school authorities' cultural and political education officers. The Thuringian school portal provides information on further education and training, projects, funding and media education. In addition, the establishment of a central Thuringian contact point could further increase the effectiveness. (Kulturrat Thüringen, 2024, p. 33)[26]
>
> ***Expand the interfaces between kulturelle Bildung and schools***: At an organisational level, it is important for schools to be willing to engage in long-term networking and cooperation with cultural education partners so that creative and aesthetic processes can flow into everyday school and teaching life beyond subject teaching. Existing measures such as the cultural agents in Thuringia must be able to support and promote this process in the long term. In order to constantly realise this, the measure must be expanded in terms of personnel and structure and the amount of art funding for the projects must be increased overall. The increased demand confirms the success of the diverse network work. In addition to general education schools, vocational

[25] "**Sicherstellung und Qualifizierung von Lehrer*innen:** Fortbildungs- und Weiterbildungsmaßnahmen für Lehrer*innen sowie Möglichkeiten für eine Praxisberatung des Fachpersonals (zertifizierte Ausbildungsmöglichkeiten) werden u. a. vom Thüringer Institut für Lehrerfortbildung, Lehrplanentwicklung und Medien (ThILLM) angeboten. Das Kulturkonzept des Freistaates Thüringens von 2012 benennt verschiedene Maßnahmen für die Qualifizierung von Pädagog*innen. Es ist zu prüfen, inwiefern die Ziele der Kulturellen Bildung in die Fortschreibung der Lehrpläne flächendeckend einbezogen wurden und wie die Teilnahme an Fortbildungen zu Kultureller Bildung für Lehrer*innen aller Fächer erleichtert werden kann. Eine spartenübergreifende Ausbildungsmöglichkeit könnte zudem neue Impulse setzen." (Kulturrat Thüringen, 2024, p. 32).

[26] "**Eine Kontaktstelle für die schulischen Akteur*innen ausbauen:** Die Kulturagent*innen der LKJ Thüringen e. V. agieren als maßgebende Schnittstelle zwischen Schule und Kultur. Sie beraten und begleiten Schulen bei der Initiierung und Durchführung künstlerisch-kultureller Vorhaben und organisieren gemeinsam mit den Schulamtsreferent*innen für kulturelle und politische Bildung regionale Netzwerktreffen zwischen Schule und Kultur. Im Thüringer Schulportal stehen Informationen zu Fort- und Weiterbildungen, Projekten, Finanzierung und Medienbildung zur Verfügung. Darüber hinaus könnte die Einrichtung einer zentralen Thüringer Anlaufstelle die Wirksamkeit zusätzlich verstärken." (Kulturrat Thüringen, 2024, p. 33)

schools and other educational institutions such as kindergartens should also be given the opportunity to finance cultural projects with regional artists. The mobile cultural education organisation Kultur.Acker of the LAG Jugendkunstschulen Thüringen e. V. offers interdisciplinary cultural and educational projects - increasingly also in cooperation with general education schools. Together with the cultural agents, Thuringian schools and the LAG Jugendkunstschulen as well as other educational partners, the establishment of a network for decentralised, individually tailored educational programmes outside of the classroom could contribute to a richer extracurricular educational landscape. (Kulturrat Thüringen, 2024, p. 33)[27]

Advancing cultural school development in Thuringia: In its 2022 recommendations on *kulturelle Bildung* for children and young people, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs envisioned the following: "Lessons, all-day programmes and extracurricular activities complement each other and form the school as a place of culture. "A systematic implementation of *kulturelle Bildung* in schools enables, for example, cultural school profiles or so-called cultural schools. Cultural school development goes beyond the previous understanding of promoting cultural activities in schools. Rather, it means a planned, systematic and sustainable anchoring of *kulturelle Bildung* in the school programme. Aesthetic-artistic methods are systematically incorporated into non-artistic subject lessons. Initiated by the Stiftung Mercator's 10-year *Kreativpotentiale* programme, the federal states have already taken and tested measures to anchor cultural education as an integral part of learning and teaching in schools. In cooperation with the Thuringian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and the Thuringian State Chancellery, the Klassik Stiftung Weimar realised educational projects at schools in rural areas with extracurricular and regional partners in 2021-2022. Digital education and mediation formats were also trialled and training courses on cultural education were offered with teachers and cultural stakeholders. The two-year Kultur:Labor Thüringen was characterised by a focus on the cultural environment of schools when developing model projects. These experiences and the Mercator Foundation's transnational final report *Kreativpotentiale im Dialog* provide

[27] "**Die Schnittstellen zwischen Kultureller Bildung und Schule ausbauen:** Auf organisatorischer Ebene ist vonseiten der Schulen die Bereitschaft zur langfristigen Vernetzung und Kooperation mit kulturellen Bildungspartnern von Bedeutung, damit auch kreativ-ästhetische Prozesse über den Fachunterricht hinaus in den Schul- und Unterrichtsalltag einfließen können. Bestehende Maßnahmen wie die Kulturagent*innen in Thüringen müssen diesen Prozess dauerhaft begleiten und fördern können. Um dies konstant zu realisieren, muss sowohl die Maßnahme personell und strukturell ausgebaut als auch die Höhe des Kunstgeldes für die Projekte insgesamt angehoben werden. Der erhöhte Bedarf bestätigt den Erfolg der vielfältigen Netzwerkarbeit. Neben allgemeinbildenden Schulen sollten auch die berufsbildenden Schulen und weitere Bildungseinrichtungen wie z. B. Kindergärten die Möglichkeit zur Finanzierung von Kulturprojekten mit regionalen Künstler*innen bekommen. Die mobile Kulturvermittlung Kultur.Acker der LAG Jugendkunstschulen Thüringen e. V. bietet spartenübergreifende Kultur- und Bildungsprojekte an – zunehmend auch in Kooperationen mit allgemeinbildenden Schulen. Zusammen mit den Kulturagent*innen, Thüringer Schulen und der LAG Jugendkunstschulen sowie weiteren Bildungspartner*innen könnte der Aufbau eines Netzwerkes für dezentrale, individuell zugeschnittene Bildungsangebote außerhalb des Unterrichts zu einer reicheren außerschulischen Bildungslandschaft beitragen." (Kulturrat Thüringen, 2024, p. 33)

inspiring and instructive approaches for developing cultural school development in Thuringia as well. (Kulturrat Thüringen, 2024, pp. 33-34)[28]

6.4 Regional

6.4.1 Landeskreis Cuxhaven – Bildungsregion Cuxland Inklusiv [BiKu]

Governmental + Formal + Non-formal

Regional project initiative BiKu Cuxland is a significant example of regional responses to inclusivity. Its core focus includes lifelong learning for all citizens, participation, the future of schools in the region and how to provide additional supports to children and youth. The motto "Diversity as an opportunity" (*Vielfalt als Chance*) is chosen as a guiding principle. The visual concept on the webpage explains how regional actors (such as schools and local government) can work together (Landkreis Cuxhaven, n.d.).

The project has, however, other wording than kulturelle Bildung (cultural education) but rather *Bildung und Kultur* (education and culture) and focuses on how these mechanisms can collaborate and work together (Landkreis Cuxhaven, n.d.).

> The BiKu Cuxland project combines the aims of the educational landspace and the district's cultural register.
>
> The cultural landspace in the district is extremely diverse and is made up of a large number of cultural associations, initiatives, organisations and creative artists. One of the aims of the district of Cuxhaven is to preserve this varied diversity and to document it in detail and make it accessible to the public, A cultural register has been created.
>
> The educational region "Cuxland inclusive" aims to systematically support the individual educational biographies of our citizens. The inclusive idea of "diversity as an opportunity" should be the guiding principle.

[28] "**Die Kulturelle Schulentwicklung in Thüringen weiter voranbringen:** 2022 visionierte die Kultusministerkonferenz in ihren Empfehlungen zur Kulturellen Kinder- und Jugendbildung: „Unterricht, Ganztag und außerschulische Angebote ergänzen sich und formen den Kulturort Schule." Eine systematische Umsetzung von Kultureller Bildung in Schulen ermöglicht zum Beispiel kulturelle Schulprofile oder sogenannte Kulturschulen. Über das bisherige Verständnis, kulturelle Aktivitäten in den Schulen zu fördern, geht die Kulturelle Schulentwicklung hinaus. Sie meint vielmehr eine planmäßige, systematische und nachhaltige Verankerung Kultureller Bildung im Schulprogramm. Ästhetisch-künstlerische Methoden werden systematisch in den außerkünstlerischen Fachunterricht einbezogen. Angestoßen durch das 10-jährige Programm Kreativpotentiale der Mercator Stiftung haben die Bundesländer bereits Maßnahmen ergriffen und erprobt, um Kulturelle Bildung als festen Bestandteil des Lernens und Lehrens an Schulen zu verankern. In Kooperation mit dem Thüringer Ministerium für Bildung, Jugend und Sport und der Thüringer Staatskanzlei realisierte die Klassik Stiftung Weimar 2021-2022 Bildungsprojekte an Schulen in ländlichen Räumen mit außerschulischen und regionalen Partner*innen. Auch wurden digitale Bildungs- und Vermittlungsformate erprobt und Fortbildungen zu Kultureller Bildung mit Lehrkräften und Kulturakteur*innen angeboten. Der Blick auf das kulturelle Umfeld von Schulen bei der Entwicklung von Modellprojekten war prägend für das zweijährige Kultur:Labor Thüringen. Diese Erfahrungen sowie der länderübergreifende Abschlussbericht Kreativpotentiale im Dialog der Mercator Stiftung liefern inspirierende und lehrreiche Ansätze, um die Kulturelle Schulentwicklung auch in Thüringen zu entwickeln." (Kulturrat Thüringen 2024, pp. 33–34)

The education region has launched the BiKu Cuxland search engine in collaboration with those responsible for the cultural register and with the involvement of various working groups. Educational and cultural programs – whether large or small, loud or quiet – can be found here by topic region or age range.

The core questions of the education region are:

- Lifelong learning - how can good educational opportunities be organised for all citizens of our district?
- How can broad participation in our educational centres and offerings be achieved?
- What does the education of the future look like at our schools and in our region?
- How can we provide additional support for children and young people? (Landkreis Cuxhaven, n.d.)[29]

6.4.2 StädteRegion Aachen – Kultur.Schulen *Governmental + Formal*

Kultur.Schulen is a kulturelle Bildung (cultural education) initiative in the Aachen region, which aims to promote sustainable and enriching kulturelle Bildung in schools. It requires structures that support the intensive learning process, involving the school, parents, and children and young people. The school management must actively support, communicate and participate in the process. The previous "Aachener Model for *kulturelle Schulentwicklung*" has shown success in this regard. The Bildungsbüro offers schools in the Aachen region a tailored offer, in collaboration with the Arbeitsstelle Kulturelle Bildung in Schule und Jugendarbeit NRW and other experts.

The pilot phase of the "Aachener Model for cultural education" ended in 2016, and the network now includes 18 schools in the transfer phase. Four of six former cultural agent schools have

[29] "Das Projekt BiKu Cuxland vereint Ziele der Bildungslandschaft und dem Kulturkataster des Landkreises. Die kulturelle Landschaft im Kreisgebiet ist äußerst vielfältig und setzt sich zusammen aus einer Vielzahl kultureller Vereine, Initiativen, Einrichtungen und Kulturschaffenden. Diese abwechslungsreiche Vielfalt zu erhalten und für die Öffentlichkeit detailliert zu dokumentieren und zugänglich zu machen, ist ein Ziel des Landkreises Cuxhaven. So wurde ein Kulturkataster erstellt. Die Bildungsregion "Cuxland inklusiv" hat das Ziel, individuelle Bildungsbiographien unserer Bürgerinnen und Bürger systematisch zu unterstützen. Der inklusive Gedanke „Vielfalt als Chance" soll der Leitgedanke sein. So hat die Bildungsregion in Zusammenarbeit mit den Verantwortlichen für das Kulturkataster und unter Mitwirkung verschiedener Arbeitskreise die Suchmaschine BiKu Cuxland auf den Weg gebracht. Bildungsangebote und kulturelle Angebote - ob groß, ob klein, ob laut, ob leise - können hier nach Themen, Regionen oder Altersspannen gefunden werden. Die Kernfragen der Bildungsregion sind:
Lebenslanges Lernen - wie gestalten sich gute Bildungsangebote für alle Bürger unseres Landkreises?
Wie entsteht eine breite Teilhabe an unseren Bildungsorten und -angeboten?
Wie sieht die Bildung der Zukunft an unseren Schulen und in unserer Region aus?
Wie können wir zusätzlichen Unterstützungsbedarf von Kindern und Jugendlichen ermöglichen?" (Landkreis Cuxhaven, n.d.)

participated in the network, with all schools having control over the special development process. The *Kultur.Schulen* works on individual approaches and projects to offer more cultural offerings in the classroom and through projects and associations. Support is provided by the *Bildungsbüro* and through regular exchange among participating schools in the cultural education network and through networking within regional educational networks (StädteRegion Aachen, n.d.).



(Gesamtkonzept KuBiS Kulturelle Bildung in der StädteRegion Aachen Fortschreibung, 2024 p 9)

In the publication on the Aachener progress in 2024, the kulturelle Bildung network was involved, many aforementioned programs, particularly for kulturelle Bildung for schools. The network portfolio involves a musical elementary school, youth cultural festival (Rampenfieber) that involves music, theatre, literature, dance fine arts, as well as many structural and voluntary partnerships.

6.5 Conclusions and Reflections

Recent trends in Germany show, particularly in subjects of diversity, social cohesion and inclusion in its relevance to cultural literacy, took a significant turn with various similar slogans from Federal, State and Municipality levels (BKJ: *Diversität als Normalfall – Inklusion als Standard*; MKW: *Vielfalt als Normalität*; BMBF KuMasta: *Normalzustand;* Landkreis Cuxhaven: *Vielfalt als Chance*) as all of these papers promote social inclusion in a culturally diverse society of today's Germany. Many of the cultural policy (both governmental and non-governmental) programs, funding initiatives, and non-governmental and governmental papers analysed in this discourse are addressing Germany's diverse society and sensitivity on diversity, intersectionality and social inclusion.

It can be said that from a cultural and educational policy perspective, kulturelle Bildung is becoming increasingly visible and plays a crucial role at the local, state and federal levels of educational structures. Social inclusion and cohesion are clearly linked to kulturelle Bildung in these papers. The responsible ministries and authorities all have an agenda for the implementation and promotion of kulturelle Bildung (to their understanding), which is expressed in various strategy papers and funding programs. Associations, foundations, federations and third-sector institutions are also supported with public funds to promote and expand cultural education programs. Stiftung Mercator's *Kreativpotentiale* initiatives seem particularly vital for the kulturelle Bildung in schools, and are echoed repeatedly in both governmental and non-governmental programs and strategies in different states.

Last but not least, it is essential to note that the governmental and non-governmental levels cannot be precisely distinguished. Many foundations, institutions and organisations in the third sector that are perceived as non-governmental do not receive the majority of funding for their programs from the state, and representatives of the ministries are often represented on the boards of trustees and committees of these institutions, which help to decide on the thematic focus. More specific findings on this matter will be discussed in the theoretical framework below.

6.5.1 Findings in Light of the Theoretical Framework

There are many differences in definitions of kulturelle Bildung (concept of culture, concept of education, target groups as well as broader, and narrower sense) is still heavily linked to the non-formal educational sector. However, the recent trends imply that aspects and strategies regarding kulturelle Bildung progresses to a combination of the formal educational sector with the involvement of cultural institutions (as non-formal spaces). The governmental policy papers in Hamburg [BSB] and Lower Saxony (*Schule:Kultur*) already describes strategies of how to embed non-formal kulturelle Bildung strategies in school curricula. However, many ministries (Bundesministerien) at the federal level (Bund) still offer only non-formal inputs on kulturelle Bildung as the federal political system in Germany grants this (educational) authority solely to state (Länder) level governments. It is challenging to distinguish some cases at the legislative level, as policy structures also open possibilities for numerous interactions and collaborations between regional, state, and federal policymakers. The Kultusministerkoferenz [KMK] is an essential example of this in-between level interaction in Germany regarding kulturelle Bildung. The strategy of the town of Aachen (in collaboration with the state of NRW) is another example of these intertwining levels.

As interactions between non-governmental and governmental institutions as well as federal, state and municipality level collaborations become clear, the role of non-formal spaces (and actors) cannot be ignored and themes such as promotion of diversity, social cohesion and inclusion which are related to the very discussion, are often linked to these non-formal settings. Most of these non-formal spaces interact with different players from national, federal and local governments, civil societies, NGOs and foundations to promote the role of *lebenslanges Lernen* (Lifelong learning) to strengthen inclusion and social cohesion in non-formal contexts. Lifelong learning context, as it was stated in the EC framework “Key Competences for Lifelong Learning in the European Schools” (EC Schola Europaea, 2018), is quite visible in German policy papers. It appears that, similar to cultural education (kulturelle Bildung), Lifelong Learning is also customised to the non-formal settings in the German context. The question or even the challenge might be then how to connect and embed such non-formal strategies and spaces (in)to the formal education systems and arts education curricula, although inputs from Thüringen, Hamburg and some other examples have already started to cover this.

Regarding the importance of social cohesion, inclusion, and diversity, it can be seen that these concepts are anchored in very different ways across the variety of programs and strategies analysed above. It is noticeable that, with the exception of Saxony, all federal states (analysed in this paper), including the federal government, openly combine kulturelle Bildung with social cohesion and inclusion objectives. The clear focus on acquiring skills to deal with an increasingly diverse society in all its different facets shows that this is an important task ahead for

Germany. The majority of the society is somewhat addressed (included), but also specific programs for marginalised groups to use 'cultural education' as a means of self-positioning, and incorporating personal experiences, and particularities are mentioned. The breadth of aspects of diversity, intersectionality, and the definition of specific groups mentioned in this context (migration history, refugee history, disability, gender, social categories, etc.) is striking.

It is evident that kulturelle Bildung is weighted very differently against the background of formal and informal(non) education. While the cultural policy papers clearly proclaim kulturelle Bildung and support art and cultural institutions and organisations with various programs to implement kulturelle Bildung formats, education policies have long been reluctant to incorporate this into the curriculum. There are many initiatives to integrate cultural education (kulturelle Bildung) into the school environment, for example in after-school care, or to expand cooperation with cultural institutions or socio-cultural centres (e.g. *Kultur macht stark* program). However, these formats are often still excluded from formal educational spaces. The different concepts of *Ganztagschulen* could support the integration of kulturelle Bildung in formal curriculum in German educational systems. There have been calls in recent years, to integrate kulturelle Bildung into lesson planning and the curriculum in order to incorporate a transdisciplinary and diverse understanding of culture and arts into the formal teaching context. It remains to be seen to what extent this will be utilised and implemented as a strategy for promoting social cohesion and inclusion in cultural and educational policies. It is important to mention that evaluation tools on the success of kulturelle Bildung programs and aspects of social inclusion and cohesion are yet to be developed, as there is a research gap in this field.

Some of the German initiatives have significant input on dialogic models of cultural literacy (in federal, state, and municipal levels) as the discussions centered around inclusion and cohesion address different themes of cultural literacy (kulturelle Bildung). Diversity is defined as normality and is an integral part of cultural literacy projects and programs, except in some exceptions, like in the case of Saxony. While some examples (e.g. KuMaSta) mention specific age groups and target backgrounds, some definitions are rather broader, which makes it impractical to give a single answer for all kulturelle Bildung understanding in the German context. Is the dialogue mutual? Do the documents discuss the various contributions of people (from different backgrounds, age groups, etc.) to culture? E.g. in Deutscher Kulturrat, 2016?

6.5.2 Decolonial Perspective

Dynamic, dialogical and more inclusive approaches are needed in order to decolonise cultural education (kulturelle Bildung) further as these critical reflections are highlighted in D.1.1 of the d@rts project. Later in d@rts, in D.1.3, we will further explore co-creation mechanisms that places cultural literacy as a dialogical practice by taking into account decolonial perspectives, indigenous knowledge systems and practices. In framework analysis we ask questions such as how the decolonised performative arts education and inclusive art education in policy, in curriculum and in classroom settings would look like. How can we evaluate inclusive arts education in the classroom, curriculum and policy contexts? Which actors and decision-makers are involved in the processes of decolonising arts education? What obstacles or future tasks can researchers expect in embedding social cohesion and social inclusion in arts education? Questions alike will be addressed in the decolonial framework (T1.4).

6.6 Commentaries

6.6.1 Comment from the Italian Consortium Member University of Verona

The analysis of policies is both rich and complex, giving rise to numerous reflections. Engaging with an external analysis, particularly when one is not familiar with the structure of the German system, proves to be an insightful exercise, prompting considerations that also extend to the analysis of our own policy frameworks. The reflections collected are predominantly reflective questions aimed at identifying the points of connection within the documents carefully analysed by colleagues. The first is a reflection from a historical perspective: do the evolutions in policy represent a historical development of the concept of *Kulturelle Bildung*? How does this impact society and also the arts as an educational dimension? Your analysis suggests that the concept of *Kulturelle Bildung* has expanded and broadened to include an increasing number of elements, such as the concept of diversity, the concept of vulnerable groups and minorities, and the notion of participation as access. A further question that emerges is the following: to what extent should the concept be expanded, and what is still lacking—or might still be lacking—for it to fully engage with the challenges of contemporary German society? In some sections, as you have also highlighted, it becomes evident that Kulturelle Bildung tends to focus primarily on refugees, minorities, and vulnerable groups. From an intercultural perspective, this is a recurring feature observable across different national contexts. The ongoing, and arguably transnational, challenge is to conceptualise *Kulturelle Bildung* as an opportunity for all, rather than as a practice targeted exclusively at migrants, refugees, or specific vulnerable groups.

An interesting element is the connection that emerges between Kulturelle Bildung and arts as both education and a space of opportunity. One of the documents highlights the idea of providing opportunities for the emergence of talent, but also of art as a space of inherent multiculturalism. In practice, does this lead to the implementation of good practices? We have discussed this thought-provoking aspect: do good policies lead to good practices? Are the structure of policies, the language adopted (words, etc.), and the definitions of key concepts effectively understood to generate meaningful impacts in local communities?

From the analysis, it appears that certain contexts—such as the Thüringen —are generating interesting practices through policy, whereas others seem to be less effective. This fragmentation is similar to the situation in Italy, where small islands and isolated bubbles differ significantly without creating connections or positive contamination, especially with regard to positive aspects.

The interpretation of ‘arts’ and ‘arts education’ appears to prioritise certain elements, with a predominant focus on the performing arts—especially music—and a notable lack of presence, particularly in relation to dance. Are there specific historical, political, or economic reasons for this? In Italy, the scenario is very similar, and it is interesting to reflect on the reasons behind this hierarchy, as well as its potential consequences and their nature. Furthermore, it is worth exploring how policies themselves could contribute to addressing this gap.

A final reflection concerns the concepts of social cohesion, as well as citizenship, democracy, and participation (interpreted as the opportunity to share power and engage in activism), which

seem to be marginalised or perhaps undervalued. Where can the challenges for the future be identified? Or might these dimensions be present in policy discourses, but expressed through different terms or meanings?

These reflections may be primarily narrative and perhaps lack technical specificity, but they emerge from desire to seek connections, develop understanding, and generate novel insights that can also offer a deeper understanding of the national contexts we are more familiar with. In particular, they encourage a re-examination of Italian policies, opening up new lines of thought and reflection.

6.6.2 Comment from the German Associated Partner The Federal Academy for Cultural Education Wolfenbüttel / Bundesakademie für Kulturelle Bildung Wolfenbüttel

The Federal Academy, works as a place for art, culture and its mediators in the programme areas of visual arts, performing arts, cultural management, cultural policy, cultural studies, literature, museums and music (Bundesakademie für Kulturelle Bildung, n.d).

Following a brief review, the document was found to be well-structured and easy to follow, presenting a clear and coherent overall impression. In response to areas identified for improvement, several clarifications (i.e., the distinctions between *Kulturministerkoferenz and Kultusministerkonferenz*) have been made in the revised version following the exchange with the Federal Academy. The selection of federal states and the thematic focus on cultural education (KuBi) are now explained in greater detail to provide clearer context and rationale. The basis for choosing the regional examples has also been explicitly outlined (in introductions) to enhance transparency and understanding.

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7. Italy

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In the Italian context, few documents can be considered policy, especially for cultural literacy and intercultural education. Most governmental policies have an unbalanced focus on formal and non-formal education.

In Italy, there are no specific regulations for performing arts in non-formal contexts, although policies and practices that promote their use across the country can be identified. For example, cultural laws and local government cultural policies (municipalities, provinces, regions) can incentivise developing events related to the performing arts. Moreover, funding streams and calls for proposals support performing arts projects in non-formal settings, often focusing on inclusion, social cohesion, and community participation.

It should be specified that regulations in Italy only sometimes provide for the allocation of resources to carry out the planned activities. Therefore, even highly innovative laws and policies risk remaining unimplemented when there are no financial resources to support what is declared or intended by these regulations.

Moreover, even when funding is available, various factors influence how institutions (public or private) and regions can participate in these opportunities. For instance:

- ***Economic disparities:*** The North has a more robust economy and a more developed, diverse network of institutions. Likewise, cities tend to benefit from more significant investments, infrastructure, and support networks for participating in funding programs. At the same time, rural areas and small towns often lack the resources and specific know-how to compete effectively.
- ***Access to information and training:*** There are more resources for staying informed about calls for proposals and funding opportunities in cities and the North. Training, such as designing or responding to calls, is also more accessible in certain areas than others (large cities offer more training opportunities). This facilitates participation and enhances the quality of submissions.
- ***Administrative and entrepreneurial capacities:*** Local administrations in the North and large cities often have more resources to meet the demands of participating in funding calls. For example, they may benefit from more excellent technical and administrative support. In some rural areas, local administrations may be less equipped, with fewer resources to support local projects and participation in funding calls. Additionally, some places tend to have a greater propensity for innovation and risk than others.
- ***Collaboration and Networking:*** Cities and areas in the North have more support networks and tend to be better connected to national and international networks that foster collaboration on complex projects. This type of networking can facilitate access to funding opportunities and increase the chances of success. However, the need for solid networks can pose a challenge in more isolated areas.

Before proceeding with the analysis, it is helpful to provide some insights regarding how certain concepts are interpreted, particularly those of inclusion and minority.

Inclusion

In Italy, inclusion is often focused on disability due to historical, legislative, and cultural reasons. Firstly, numerous regulations (including Law 104/1992) strongly emphasize the rights of people with disabilities, leading to targeted policies and visible initiatives for this category. Specific policies and programs have been developed to ensure access to services, education, and employment for individuals with disabilities. These initiatives have consolidated the idea that inclusion is often related to this group.

Media attention, the work of sector associations, and public perception have also contributed to keeping the inclusion of disabled individuals as a primary topic. At the same time, other minorities have remained in the background. For example, the integration of immigrants and the fight against ethnic discrimination are managed through policies that vary significantly at local and regional levels, lacking the same legislative strength or unified focus found in disability policies. This results in a lesser recognition of the inclusion of other minorities as a central and priority issue.

Public perception and attitudes towards diversity have further influenced the importance of this specific form of inclusion. For instance, in Italy, *solidarity* often manifests through support for people with disabilities.

Minorities

In Italy, minorities are often considered vulnerable groups rather than simply groups to be protected. This is due to various social, economic, and cultural factors.

Minorities, such as migrants, specific ethnic communities, and religious groups, are often associated with economic and social disadvantages in Italy, including high unemployment rates, precarious employment, low income, and inadequate housing conditions. Alongside these phenomena, there are often episodes of discrimination, including institutional discrimination, which result in a lack of access to essential services. Other social phenomena, such as prejudice and discrimination, exacerbate this perception, preventing many minorities from fully participating in society. At the political and legislative level, Italy has often developed protection and support measures for groups perceived as vulnerable, marginalised, or particularly at risk.

This intertwining of social, cultural, and economic phenomena over time has contributed to the perception of minorities not only as groups to be protected to ensure equality but also as subjects that require support and assistance to overcome situations of vulnerability. Vulnerability is, therefore, associated with the systemic difficulties that minorities face, necessitating more excellent protection than what would be afforded to a simple numerical minority.

NOTE for the quotations: In the translation, an effort has been made to preserve the sense and meaning of each quotation while ensuring that specific terms and constructions of the Italian language are not overlooked.

Sources

Italy is characterised by a broad range of policies, with a higher number at the local level, which often need to communicate more effectively across the three levels: local, regional, and national. This fragmentation, which also affects the performing arts, prevents the development of a long-term and unified vision. The central government tends not to take responsibility for these aspects. Additionally, there is a lack of adequate public dissemination, which raises issues of accessibility, particularly regarding the numerous policies at the local level.

These factors have made the identification and selection of relevant sources challenging. To address this, the following principles were adopted to guide the analysis:
• Regulations providing an overview of how Italy addresses the arts
• National regulations applicable across the entire country
• Regulations representing all three arts under analysis (music, theatre, dance)
• Significant and relevant regulations, especially as examples at the local level (municipalities or regions)
• Regulations relevant to the target groups

The documents analysed stem from a wide range of sources, including collaborations between the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) and other ministries, as well as governmental bodies such as regional and municipal authorities and Parliament. They also include texts produced by non-governmental organisations[30], such as associations, committees, and professional networks, and in some cases, resolutions issued by local administrations or documents developed by independent entities, particularly in the field of performing arts.

Despite this diversity, they share a common purpose: to guide, regulate, or promote the arts and arts education. This plurality of sources reflects the complexity of the Italian context, where policy development in education is multifaceted and often decentralised.

All arts

- *Delega al governo e altre disposizioni in materia di spettacolo* (Senato della repubblica, Camera dei Deputati, 2013)
- *Disposizioni in materia di spettacolo e deleghe al Governo per il riordino della materia* (Presidente della Repubblica, 2017)
- *Norme sulla promozione della cultura umanistica, sulla valorizzazione del patrimonio e delle produzioni culturali e sul sostegno della creatività* (Presidente della Repubblica, 2017)

[30] Documents produced by NGO are:
- Manifesto Costitutivo (Tavolo Permanente Musica 0–6)
- Musica a scuola: il quadro didattico (Ferrari & Pilotti)
- Musica Attiva – Progetto di rete per l'inserimento della musica come elemento di inclusione e di lotta alla dispersione scolastica con percorsi differenziati per le diverse fasce di età (AIdSM et al.)
- Documento su formazione professionale (AIDAF)
- Audizione Danza AIDAP – ADEP – AIDAF (Comitato danza)
- Programma Triennale per la Trasparenza e l'Integrità (PTTI) 2014–2016 (Fondazione Nazionale della Danza)
- Povertà educativa: necessario un cambio di passo nelle politiche di contrasto. (Save the Children Italia)

- *Disegno di legge di delega al Governo per il riordino della materia dello spettacolo e per la modifica del codice dei beni culturali e paesaggio* (Presidenza del consiglio dei Ministri, 2019)
- *Interventi volti alla promozione dell'educazione alla cultura delle arti, della musica, della creatività, del cinema, del teatro e delle attività progettuali delle istituzioni scolastiche* (Ministero dell'Istruzione & Ministero della Cultura, 2021)
- *Piano triennale delle arti* (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2021)
- *Approvazione del Programma triennale della cultura per il triennio 2022-2024* (Consiglio Regionale del Piemonte [Assessorato Cultura e Commercio], 2021)

Specific

Music:

- *Documento a cura del Comitato Nazionale per l'apprendimento pratico della musica* (MIUR, 2006).
- *Fare musica tutti. Linee di indirizzo per un piano pluriennale di interventi relativi alla diffusione della pratica musicale nelle scuole di ogni ordine e grado* (Comitato Nazionale per l'apprendimento pratico della musica, 2009).
- *Delibera Comunale Roma – Misure per l'inserimento organico dell'apprendimento pratico della musica nelle scuole dell'infanzia comunali* (Comune di Roma, 2009).
- *Protocollo d'intesa tra MIUR e Forum per l'educazione musicale* (MIUR & Forum per l'educazione musicale, 2013).
- *Linee guida D.M. 8/11 – Formazione insegnanti di musica* (MIUR, 2013).
- *Proposta di Piano nazionale per la musica – Musica nella scuola per la formazione del cittadino* (Comitato Nazionale per l'apprendimento pratico della musica, 2013).
- *Manifesto Costitutivo* (Tavolo Permanente Musica 0–6, 2015).
- *Musica a scuola: il quadro didattico – Linee guida* (Ferrari & Pilotti, 2018).
- *Strumenti operativi per una didattica musicale inclusiva* (Regione Lombardia, 2018).
- *Norme in materia di sviluppo del settore musicale – Emilia-Romagna* (Regione Emilia Romagna, 2018).
- *Progetto Regionale Toscana Musica* (Ufficio scolastico per la Toscana, 2019).
- *Musica Attiva: Progetto di rete per l'inserimento della Musica come elemento di inclusione e di lotta alla dispersione scolastica con percorsi differenziati per le diverse fasce di età* (Associazione Italiana delle Scuole di Musica [AIdSM] et al., 2021).

Dance:

- *Misure urgenti a tutela e salvaguardia della danza, del balletto e dei corpi di* ballo (Senato della repubblica, 2008).
- *Protocollo di intesa tra Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca e Federazione Nazionale Associazioni Scuole di Danza* (Ministero dell'Istruzione dell'Università e della Ricerca & Federazione Nazionale Associazioni Scuole di Danza, 2009).
- *Programma triennale per la trasparenza e l'integrità 2014-2016, PTTI* (Fondazione Nazionale della Danza, 2015).
- *Documento su aggiornamento e formazione professionale* (Associazione Italiana Danza Attività di Formazione [AIDAF], 2019).

- *Audizione Danza AIDAP – ADEP – AIDAF Davanti alla VII Commissione del Senato della Repubblica* (Comitato di coordinamento delle attività di danza, 2019).

Theatre:

- *Decreto legislativo 22 gennaio 2004, n. 33, Modifiche ed integrazioni al decreto legislativo 29 gennaio 1998, n. 20, concernenti i compiti e l'organizzazione della fondazione "Istituto nazionale per il dramma antico"* (Presidente della Repubblica, 2004).

Other relevant document (target groups):

- *Povertà educativa: necessario un cambio di passo nelle politiche di contrasto*[31] (Save the Children Italia, 2022).
- *National Roma and Sinti Equality, Inclusion, and Participation Strategy (2021–2030): Implementation of the Council of the European Union Recommendation*. (Department for Equal Opportunities [PCM] et al., 2022).

NOTE: Since 2020, the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) has been split into two separate bodies: the Ministry of Education (MI) and the Ministry of University and Research (MUR).

7.1 Art in General

Regarding the arts in general, there are two primary documents: the *Protocollo di Intesa tra Ministero dell'Istruzione e Ministero della Cultura*[32] (Measures aimed at promoting education in the arts, music, creativity, cinema, theatre, and project-based activities in schools) and the *Piano Triennale delle Arti*[33], both from 2021.

The *Protocollo di Intesa tra Ministero dell'Istruzione e Ministero della Cultura* (2021) aims to promote cultural education in Italian schools through a series of interventions to enhance the arts, music, cinema, theatre, and creativity among students. The document discusses education in culture, the enhancement of Italy's cultural heritage, and the integration of the arts and culture into the Italian educational system. The central concept in this document is "arts education", which emphasises the educational rather than the performative dimension.

The initial part of the document speaks of:

> Initiatives aimed at: - promoting education in the culture of the arts, music, creativity, cinema, media production and dissemination of images and sounds, and theatre; - increasing knowledge of the territory and traditions of local realities through visits, in-

[31] Italian title: "Povertà educativa: necessario un cambio di passo nelle politiche di contrasto".
[32] Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture.
[33] National Arts Plan.

> cluding virtual ones, to museums, archaeological areas and parks, libraries, state archives, and other cultural sites.[34] (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Culture, 2021, p. 6).

One of the goals is to ensure that all students, including those with special educational needs or from disadvantaged backgrounds, have access to cultural opportunities: "The right to education also translates into the possibility, according to concrete principles of inclusion and integration, to make cultural and educational activities present in the territory accessible to all students"[35] (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Culture, 2021, p. 4).

Artistic and cultural education projects must be carried out through school-territory collaboration to make cultural heritage accessible and an integral part of school education:

> The MI [Ministry of Education n.d.r.] and the MiC [Ministry of Culture n.d.r.] intend, with this act, to promote collaborative contacts or enhance already adopted forms of cooperation between state museums, archives, libraries, public and private entities in the performing arts, cinema, and schools for the implementation of project activities[36]. (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Culture, 2021, p. 6)

The Piano Triennale delle Arti (2021) objectives are to foster students' artistic and creative skills, integrate the arts into the school curriculum, and promote knowledge of Italy's artistic and cultural heritage, forming conscious and participatory citizens. This plan funds artistic initiatives within schools, such as creative workshops and interdisciplinary projects, often due to collaborations with specialised bodies and local cultural agencies. Therefore, partnership with the territory is central: "Support for schools and school networks to implement a flexible and innovative organisational model, serving as a permanent laboratory for knowledge, practice, research, and experimentation in artistic knowledge and creative expression"[37] (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 2021, p. 11).

In this document, the school is seen as a place,

> where learning, practice, creation, historical-critical knowledge, and conscious enjoyment of various forms of expression and artistic-performative languages are given ample space, from music to dance, theatre to cinema, from graphic, pictorial, plastic, and

[34] Iniziative finalizzate a: - promuovere l'educazione alla cultura delle arti, della musica, della creatività, del cinema, dei media di produzione e di diffusione delle immagini e dei suoni, del teatro; - accrescere la conoscenza del territorio e delle tradizioni delle realtà locali, attraverso la visita, anche in modalità virtuale, di musei, aree e parchi archeologici, biblioteche, archivi di Stato, e altri luoghi della cultura (Ministero dell'Istruzione & Ministero della Cultura, 2021, p. 6).

[35] "L'esercizio del diritto allo studio si traduce anche nella possibilità, secondo i concreti principi di inclusione e integrazione, di rendere accessibili a tutti gli studenti e le studentesse le attività di carattere culturale ed educativo presenti sul territorio" (Ministero dell'Istruzione & Ministero della Cultura, 2021, p. 4).

[36] "Il MI e il MiC intendono, col presente atto, promuovere contatti di collaborazione ovvero potenziare forme di raccordo già adottate tra musei statali, archivi, biblioteche, soggetti pubblici e privati del settore dello spettacolo, cinema e istituzioni scolastiche per la realizzazione di attività progettuali. (Ministero dell'Istruzione & Ministero della Cultura, 2021, p. 6)

[37] "Sostegno alle istituzioni scolastiche e alle reti di scuole, per realizzare un modello organizzativo flessibile e innovativo, quale laboratorio permanente di conoscenza, pratica, ricerca e sperimentazione del sapere artistico e dell'espressione creative" (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2021, p. 11).

> multimedia arts to design, from poetry to other forms of writing that enhance the Italian language in its historical evolution, as well as its geographical identities and peculiarities[38]. (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 2021, p. 6)

The *Piano Triennale delle Arti* also speaks of education in artistic expression that "must be part of the educational path of all citizens" (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 2021, p. 6). Another central concept is creativity. The performing arts are included in what are referred to as the "themes of creativity" (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 2021, p. 10), which represent the guidelines for the projects to be realised, and include: musical-choreographic (historical-critical knowledge of music, musical practice, in the broadest sense of playing an instrument and singing, dance, and the conscious enjoyment of these arts); theatrical-performative (historical-critical knowledge and practice of theatrical or cinematic art or other forms of artistic-performative spectacle, and the conscious enjoyment of these arts); artistic-visual (knowledge of art history and practice of painting, sculpture, graphic arts, decorative arts, design, or other expressive forms, also connected with artistic craftsmanship and quality Italian creative productions, and the conscious enjoyment of artistic and visual expressions); linguistic-creative (logical-linguistic and argumentative skills and knowledge and practice of creative writing, poetry, and other similar forms of expression, the Italian language, its classical roots, and the languages and dialects spoken in Italy).

In the strategic priorities of the Plan, the arts are considered from different perspectives. One of these is their role as a means of developing transversal skills:

> Knowing and practising artistic-performative languages also allows personal forms of representing reality, activating sensory and intellectual faculties, identifying and reworking facts, works, and discoveries of human history, accessing symbolic frameworks and their dynamic systems of meaning, maturing critical-aesthetic evaluation skills and original thinking, consolidating the perception of the self-body about the environment, projecting towards a broader and more dynamic vision of reality[39]. (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 2021, p. 7)

They are also seen as a tool to foster a critical understanding of reality, to promote social inclusion, and to encourage active citizenship—key themes related to cultural literacy:

"Learning, practising, creating, historically and critically knowing, and consciously enjoying the arts guide students towards an increasingly active, participatory, and critical reading of reality,

[38] "in cui trovano ampio spazio l'apprendimento, la pratica, la creazione, la conoscenza storico-critica e la fruizione consapevole di varie forme di espressione e manifestazione dei diversi linguaggi artistico performativi, dalla musica alla danza, dal teatro al cinema, dalle arti grafiche, pittoriche, plastiche e multimediali al design, dalla poesia ad altre elaborazioni di scrittura che valorizzino la lingua italiana nella sua evoluzione storica ma anche nelle sue identità e particolarità geografiche" (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2021, p. 6).

[39] "Conoscere anche nella pratica i linguaggi artistico-performativi permette di elaborare forme personali di rappresentazione della realtà, attivando le proprie facoltà sensoriali e intellettuali, individuando e rielaborando fatti, opere e scoperte della storia dell'umanità, accedendo ai quadri simbolici e ai relativi sistemi dinamici di significato, maturando capacità di valutazione critico estetica e di pensiero originale, consolidando la percezione del sé-corpo in relazione all'ambiente, proiettando verso una visione della realtà più ampia e dinamica" (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2021, p. 7).

enabling cooperative and non-competitive relationships" (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 2021, p. 6)[40].

> […] promoting learning, practice, creation, historically and critically knowing, and consciously enjoying artistic languages as fundamental and indispensable curriculum requirements, also concerning the development of social and civic skills, European citizenship, inclusivity, and the enhancement of individual differences, also considering the contribution of "non-formal" and "informal" educational approaches[41]. (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 2021, p. 10)

At a regional level, a good example is the approval of the *Three-Year Culture Program for the 2022-2024* period[42], developed and approved by the Regional Council of Piemonte in 2022. The aim is to define strategies and objectives to promote cultural development in the Piemonte region. The program, developed in the wake of the 2019/20 pandemic, which particularly impacted the cultural sector, aims to support the growth of the cultural industry, enhance artistic heritage, and improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of cultural activities for all citizens. In this document, in line with regional law 11/2018, culture is understood in a cross-cutting sense as: "[…] an essential value and fundamental tool for human growth, free expression, and a means of social promotion and education"[43] (Regional Council of Piemonte, 2022, p. 14).

Dance, music, and theatre are defined as "live performance activities" alongside street performances and contemporary circus (Regional Council of Piemonte, 2022, p. 85). Great emphasis is placed on collaboration between public and private institutions, with the creation of partnerships between public bodies, private entities, and cultural institutions to expand funding opportunities and support local cultural initiatives:

"The Region, in implementing its cultural development policies in the Piedmont territory, considers it essential to create synergies with both public and private entities to support cultural activities deemed of public interest, in compliance with the regulatory framework"[44] (Regional Council of Piemonte, 2022, p. 25).

Attention is also given to inclusion and citizen participation and involvement:

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40 "L'apprendimento, la pratica, la creazione, la conoscenza storico-critica e la fruizione consapevole delle arti guidano gli studenti verso una sempre maggiore capacità di lettura attiva, partecipata e critica del reale, consentendo relazioni cooperative e non competitive" (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2021, p. 6).

41 "[…] promuovere l'apprendimento, la pratica, la creazione, la conoscenza storico-critica e la fruizione consapevole dei linguaggi artistici quali requisiti fondamentali e irrinunciabili del curricolo, anche in riferimento allo sviluppo delle competenze sociali e civiche e di cittadinanza europea, all'inclusività e alla valorizzazione delle differenze individuali, considerando anche l'apporto di approcci formativi "non formali" e "informali" (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2021, p. 10).

42 Reference: Approvazione del Programma triennale della cultura per il triennio 2022-2024 (2021). Developed by: Consiglio Regionale del Piemonte (Assessorato Cultura e Commercio).

43 "valore essenziale e strumento fondamentale di crescita umana, di libera espressione, mezzo di promozione ed educazione sociale" (Consiglio regionale del Piemonte, 2022, p. 14).

44 "La Regione, nell'attuare le proprie politiche di sviluppo culturale sul territorio piemontese, ritiene indispensabile creare sinergie anche con soggetti pubblici e privati per il sostegno di attività culturali ritenute di interesse pubblico, nel rispetto del dettato normativo (Consiglio regionale del Piemonte, 2022, p. 25).

> "The projects in question (buildings renovation, editor's note) have a distinctly socio-cultural aspect, as they promote social inclusion and cohesion across all population segments, becoming spaces for community and meeting. Investing in construction and setup projects for cultural spaces means enhancing the educational and cultural offerings for the benefit of the entire population"[45] (Regional Council of Piemonte, 2022, p. 21).

"The goal of expanding participation and involving citizens in cultural activities will also be one of the elements the Region intends to require from cultural bodies as a qualifying factor in their projects"[46] (Regional Council of Piemonte, 2022, p. 22).

Before reflecting on the connection of the performing arts with cultural literacy and social inclusion and cohesion, it is crucial to present the vision of the performing arts within the documents analysed.

7.2 Performing Arts

In policy, the performing arts are framed as serving different objectives, including the expression of local cultural traditions, the promotion of inclusion, and the encouragement of social aggregation:

"Public intervention in support of entertainment activities promotes, in particular, the conservation of the musical, theatrical and dance heritage, as well as of tradition of the scene and its crafts"[47] (Republic President, 2017a, p. 3).

"Music is a universal language; it is a factor for meeting, socialising, and preventing social alienation, combating early school leaving"[48] (Municipality of Rome, 2009, p. 2).

"The promotion of integration and inclusion, through activities training, as well as through the practice and enjoyment of entertainment activities in disadvantaged contexts"[49] (Republic President, 2017a, p. 4).

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45 "Gli interventi in oggetto (riqualificazione degli edifici e recupero e ammodernamento dei luoghi della cultura) hanno un risvolto di natura più marcatamente socio-culturale, in quanto finalizzati a favorire l'inclusione e la coesione sociale di tutte le fasce di popolazione, diventando luoghi di comunità e di incontro. Investire attraverso il sostegno a interventi edilizi e di allestimento sui luoghi della cultura significa potenziare l'offerta formativa e culturale a beneficio dell'intera popolazione" (Consiglio regionale del Piemonte, 2022, p. 21).

46 "L'obiettivo dell'allargamento della partecipazione e del coinvolgimento dei cittadini nelle attività culturali costituirà altresì uno degli elementi che la Regione intende richiedere agli enti culturali partecipati come fattori qualificanti delle loro progettualità" (Consiglio regionale del Piemonte, 2022, p. 22).

47 "L'intervento pubblico a sostegno delle attività di spettacolo favorisce e promuove, in particolare: la conservazione del patrimonio musicale, teatrale, coreutico, nonché della tradizione della scena e dei suoi mestieri" (Presidente della Repubblica, 2017a, p. 3).

48 "La Musica è linguaggio universale, è fattore di incontro, di socializzazione e di prevenzione nei confronti del disagio sociale e della lotta alla dispersione scolastica" (Comune di Roma, 2009, p. 2).

49 "La promozione dell'integrazione e dell'inclusione, attraverso attività formative, nonché mediante la pratica e la fruizione delle attività di spettacolo anche in contesti disagiati" (Presidente della Repubblica, 2017a, p. 4).

"Private dance schools contribute substantially to the promotion, development, and diffusion of culture in our country and carry out an activity of primary importance on a social and aggregative level for young people"[50] (AIDAF, 2019, p. 3).

"The Region recognises music as a tool for cultural education, social aggregation, and inclusion"[51] (Emilia-Romagna region, 2018, p. 1).

In addition, the performing arts are conceptualised as contributing to fostering a sense of common identity and belonging, as well as supporting cultural identity and promoting intercultural dialogue:

"The promotion and support of entertainment in all its forms as a tool for preserving and enriching the cultural identity and spiritual heritage of society, as well as universal forms of expression and communication"[52] (Chamber of Deputies, 2022, p. 4).

"An element of cohesion and national identity, a tool for disseminating knowledge of Italian culture and art in Europe and the world, as well as a component"[53] (Republic President, 2017a, p. 2).

"Access to the enjoyment of the performing arts is understood as an opportunity for cultural development for all citizens, with particular attention to new generations of audiences from childhood"[54] (Republic President, 2017a, p. 2).

Lastly, the performing arts are understood as a means to foster critical thinking and stimulate creativity:

> The design of educational institutions makes use of the synergy between artistic languages and between these and new technologies, as well as research and innovation experiences, enhancing intertextual skills and critical thinking. It is realised within the framework of the components of the curriculum, also vertical, called 'creativity themes,' which cover the following areas: a) musical-choreutic, through the historical-critical knowledge of music, musical practice, in the broadest sense of the practice of the instrument and singing, dance and through the conscious enjoyment of the before mentioned arts; b) theatrical-performance, through the historical-critical knowledge and practice of the theatrical or cinematographic art or other forms of artistic-performance

50 "Le scuole private di danza contribuiscono in modo sostanziale alla promozione, allo sviluppo e alla diffusione della cultura nel nostro Paese e svolgono un'attività di primaria importanza a livello sociale e aggregativo per i giovani" (AIDAF, 2019, p. 3).

51 "La Regione, riconoscendo la musica quale strumento di formazione culturale, di aggregazione sociale e inclusion" (Regione Emilia-Romagna, 2018, p. 1).

52 "La promozione e il sostegno dello spettacolo in tutte le sue forme quale strumento per preservare e arricchire l'identità culturale e il patrimonio spirituale della società, nonché quali forme universali di espressione e comunicazione" (Camera dei deputati, 2022, p. 4).

53 "Un elemento di coesione e di identità nazionale, strumento di diffusione della conoscenza della cultura e dell'arte italiane in Europa e nel mondo, nonché quale componente dell'imprenditoria culturale e creativa e dell'offerta turistica nazionale" (Presidente della Repubblica, 2017a, p. 2).

54 "L'accesso alla fruizione delle arti della scena, intese come opportunità di sviluppo culturale per tutti i cittadini, con particolare attenzione alle nuove generazioni di pubblico, fin dall'infanzia" (Presidente della Repubblica, 2017a, p. 2).

> and through the conscious enjoyment of the arts mentioned above[55]. (Republic President, 2017b, art. 3)
>
> This agreement is also intended to send out a signal on the importance of promoting musical culture, not only in schools, around schools, in out-of-school activities, and in venues where teenagers and young people meet, as an element of quality of life, social cohesion, the development of talents and creativity, and the recovery of our national identity and its cultural expressions[56]. (MIUR & Forum for Music Education, 2013, p. 4)

Related to the broader vision of the performing arts, music in particular is considered a powerful tool for promoting Italian cultural identity, enhancing social cohesion and the quality of relationships, fostering inclusion, and supporting intercultural dialogue:

"In Italy, the musical tradition contributes greatly to defining the identity of our Country and represents a cultural heritage appreciated and enjoyed by the whole world"[57] (National Committee for Practical Learning of Music, 2013, p. 1).

"For the younger generation, music represents both a pervasive language enjoyed through social networks, live listening, and active production and a tool for communication, inclusion,

"The Ministry and the Forum for Music Education, signatories to this protocol, undertake to promote activities that can achieve concrete positive actions for the integration of 'people with disabilities and able-bodied people'[58], children, and adolescents"[59] (MIUR & Forum for Music Education, 2013, p. 8).

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55 "La progettazione delle istituzioni scolastiche si avvale della sinergia tra i linguaggi artistici e tra questi e le nuove tecnologie, nonché' delle esperienze di ricerca e innovazione, valorizzando le capacità intertestuali e il pensiero critico. Essa si realizza nell'ambito delle componenti del curricolo, anche verticale, denominate 'temi della creatività', che riguardano le seguenti aree: a) musicale-coreutico, tramite la conoscenza storico-critica della musica, la pratica musicale, nella piu' ampia accezione della pratica dello strumento e del canto, la danza e tramite la fruizione consapevole delle suddette arti; b) teatrale-performativo, tramite la conoscenza storico-critica e la pratica dell'arte teatrale o cinematografica o di altre forme di spettacolo artistico-performativo e tramite la fruizione consapevole delle suddette arti" (Presidente della Repubblica, 2017b, art. 3).

56 "Un accordo destinato anche a lanciare un segnale sull'importanza di promuovere la cultura musicale, oltre che nella scuola, attorno alla scuola, nell'extrascuola, nelle sedi di aggregazione di adolescenti e giovani, come elemento di qualità della vita, di coesione sociale, di sviluppo di talenti e di creatività, di recupero della nostra identità nazionale e delle sue espressioni culturali". (MIUR & Forum per l'educazione musicale, 2013, p. 4).

57 "In Italia la tradizione musicale contribuisce in modo determinante a definire l'identità del nostro Paese e rappresenta un patrimonio culturale apprezzato e goduto dal mondo intero" (Comitato Nazionale per l'apprendimento pratico della musica, 2013, p. 1).

58 Literally translated from the original document. Some more respectful and inclusive wording would be: people with disabilities and non-disabled people, people with and without disabilities, or people of all abilities.

59 "Il Ministero e il Forum per l'educazione musicale firmatari del presente protocollo si impegnano a promuovere attività che possano realizzare azioni positive concrete per l'integrazione di bambini e adolescenti diversamente abili e normodotati" (MIUR & Forum per l'educazione musicale, 2013, p. 8).

"The Region promotes and supports musical literacy activities [...], as well as band and choral formations, aimed at promoting a widespread, differentiated, and inclusive musical culture and fostering intercultural dialogue"[60] (Emilia-Romagna region, 2018, p. 2).

Some of the interpretations mentioned above overlap with those of intercultural education, such as "intercultural dialogue" or "critical thinking". In intercultural education, intercultural dialogue is a process of communication and interaction between people from different cultures to promote understanding, collaboration, and negotiation skills. Critical thinking is assessing and interpreting in a way that allows one to recognise stereotypes, biases, and power structures that influence interactions between different cultures. In the documents analysed, the idea emerges that through the performing arts, it is also possible to develop critical thinking and intercultural dialogue, although guidelines on 'how to do so' still need to be provided.

7.3 Connection and Relations between Cultural Literacy, Performing Arts Education, and Social Cohesion and Inclusion

In the policy documents, performing arts play a significant role in fostering cultural literacy, particularly by promoting knowledge and appreciation of Italian cultural heritage:

> The three-year arts plan has the following strategic priorities: [...] valuing the tangible, intangible, digital and environmental cultural heritage in its various dimensions, facilitating its knowledge, understanding, and participation by all, guaranteeing linguistic pluralism and attention to minorities and local popular traditions.[61] (Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 2021, p. 10)

"The valorisation of the music of the Italian popular tradition, also in a contemporary key, with artistic-cultural projects of regional and local value"[62] (Republic President, 2017a, p. 5).

> The Municipality of Rome recognises and considers music a fundamental instrument of human and cultural growth, artistic expression, education, and social promotion. It has irreplaceable social and formative value, especially for younger generations. Music is a qualifying part of our country's cultural and social heritage.[63] (Municipality of Rome, 2009, p. 1)

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60 "La Regione promuove e sostiene le attività di alfabetizzazione musicale [...], nonché dalle formazioni di tipo bandistico e corale, mirate a promuovere una cultura musicale diffusa, differenziata e inclusiva e a favorire il dialogo interculturale" (Regione Emilia-Romagna, 2018, p. 2).

61 "Il Piano triennale delle arti si pone le seguenti priorità strategiche: [...] valorizzare il patrimonio culturale materiale, immateriale, digitale nonché ambientale nelle sue diverse dimensioni, facilitandone la conoscenza, la comprensione e la partecipazione da parte di tutti, garantendo il pluralismo linguistico e l'attenzione alle minoranze e alle tradizioni popolari locali" (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2021, p. 10).

62 "La valorizzazione delle musiche della tradizione popolare italiana, anche in chiave contemporanea, con progetti artistico-culturali di valenza regionale e locale" (Presidente della Repubblica, 2017a, p. 5).

63 "Il Comune di Roma riconosce e considera la Musica come strumento fondamentale di crescita umana e culturale, di espressione artistica, mezzo di promozione ed educazione sociale, di insostituibile valore sociale e formativo soprattutto per le giovani generazioni. La Musica è parte qualificante del patrimonio culturale e sociale del nostro Paese" (Comune di Roma, 2009, p. 1).

Specifically, cultural heritage is also seen as a meeting point between different cultures, recognising the mutable and plural nature of cultures:

> The theme of promoting knowledge of Roma and Sinti art, music, history, and culture becomes a key element of this strategic document for fighting discrimination and antigypsyism. The contribution of Roma and Sinti to European history, music, and art represents, for Italy, an experience of recognising the creative and intercultural dimension of the Roma and Sinti communities.[64] (Department for Equal Opportunities, 2022, p. 72)

The performing arts are also conceptualised as contributing to developing a sense of European citizenship and fostering intercultural dialogue, supporting a broader understanding of cultural diversity grounded in the recognition of individual and collective cultural identities:

Cultural awareness and expression (Key competence for lifelong learning n.8) - Scholastic and educational success."[65] (School Office for Tuscany, 2019, p. 6)

"The Region promotes and supports musical literacy activities [...], as well as band and choral formations, aimed at promoting a widespread, differentiated, and inclusive musical culture and fostering intercultural dialogue"[66] (Emilia-Romagna region, 2018, p. 2).

> Among them, we highlight the one relating to "cultural awareness and expression", defined as awareness of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a wide variety of media, including music, the performing arts, literature and the visual arts. [...] "understanding and respecting how ideas and meanings are creatively expressed and communicated in different cultures and through a range of arts and other cultural forms".[67] (Chamber of Deputies, 2022, p. 6)

"Aims of the Toscana Musica Regional Project - Dissemination of musical culture in all its aspects;

> Furthermore, music planning can help to organise the appropriate conditions for the valorisation, expression, and meeting of the different cultural identities of the pupils in

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64 "Il tema della promozione della conoscenza dell'arte, della musica, della storia e della cultura rom e sinti diventa un elemento chiave di questo documento strategico per combattere la discriminazione e l'antigipsismo. Il contributo dei Rom e dei Sinti alla storia, alla musica e all'arte europee rappresenta, per l'Italia, un'esperienza di riconoscimento della dimensione creativa e interculturale delle comunità Rom e sinti" (Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità, 2022, p. 72).

65 "Finalità del Progetto Regionale Toscana Musica – Diffusione della cultura musicale in tutti i suoi aspetti - Cittadinanza europea: Consapevolezza ed espressione culturale – Successo scolastico e formative" (Ufficio Scolastico Regionale per la Toscana, p. 6).

66 "La Regione promuove e sostiene le attività di alfabetizzazione musicale [...], nonché dalle formazioni di tipo bandistico e corale, mirate a promuovere una cultura musicale diffusa, differenziata e inclusiva e a favorire il dialogo interculturale" (Regione Emilia-Romagna, 2018, p. 2).

67 "Tra queste sottolineiamo quella relativa alla 'consapevolezza ed espressione culturale', definita come 'la comprensione e il rispetto di come le idee e i significati vengono espressi creativamente e comunicati in diverse culture e tramite tutta una serie di arti e altre forme culturali'. Presuppone l'impegno di capire, sviluppare ed esprimere le proprie idee e il senso della propria funzione o del proprio ruolo nella società in una serie di modi e contesti" (Camera dei Deputati, 2022, p. 6).

> the school: some teachers have successfully experimented with the use of music as a tool to promote multiculturalism[68] (School Office for Lombardia, 2018, p. 8).

"In Italy, the musical tradition contributes decisively to defining the identity of our country and represents a cultural heritage appreciated and enjoyed by the whole world"[69] (National Committee for Practical Learning of Music, 2013, p. 1).

> The article in question attributes the following further actions to the Republic: the promotion and support of entertainment in all its forms as a tool for preserving and enriching the cultural identity and spiritual heritage of society, as well as universal forms of expression and communication […].[70] (Chamber of Deputies, 2022, p. 4)

Concerning the **connections between performing arts, inclusion, and social cohesion, social inclusion** in Italian policies seems to be related to the accessibility and inclusion of people considered vulnerable (or minorities), while social cohesion emerges as a more general concept. The concept of inclusion is also repeatedly mentioned in terms of *accessibility* to cultural activities and (performing) art, including for people from groups considered vulnerable:

> Public intervention in support of entertainment activities favours and promotes, in particular: theatre and other forms of entertainment for children, encouraging production qualified and research; e) access to the enjoyment of the performing arts, understood as opportunities for cultural development for all citizens, with particular attention to new one's generations of audiences, from childhood.[71] (Republic President, 2017a, p. 2)

"Accessibility, understood as both the physical accessibility of cultural buildings and the ability for all users to enjoy them, is one of the key areas of intervention in the future regional planning"[72] (Regional Council of Piemonte, 2022, p. 20).

> A second interpretation of the term accessibility concerns the participation of citizens in cultural activities: towards this goal, the Region will work through interventions and projects aimed at audience development for cultural organisations. [...] The goal of

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68 "Inoltre, la progettazione musicale può contribuire ad organizzare le condizioni adeguate per la valorizzazione, l'espressione e l'incontro tra le diverse identità culturali degli allievi presenti nella scuola: alcuni docenti hanno sperimentato con successo, infatti, il ricorso alla musica come strumento di promozione della multiculturalità" (Ufficio Scolastico Regionale per la Lombardia, p. 8).

69 "In Italia la tradizione musicale contribuisce in modo determinante a definire l'identità del nostro Paese e rappresenta un patrimonio culturale apprezzato e goduto dal mondo intero" (Comitato Nazionale per l'apprendimento pratico della musica, 2013, p. 1).

70 "Inoltre, l'articolo in esame attribuisce alla Repubblica: la promozione e il sostegno dello spettacolo in tutte le sue forme quale strumento per preservare e arricchire l'identità culturale e il patrimonio spirituale della società, nonché quali forme universali di espressione e comunicazione (…)" (Camera dei deputati, 2022, p. 4).

71 "L'intervento pubblico a sostegno delle attività di spettacolo favorisce e promuove, in particolare: il teatro e altre forme dello spettacolo per ragazzi, incentivando la produzione qualificata e la ricerca; e) l'accesso alla fruizione delle arti della scena, intese come opportunità di sviluppo culturale per tutti i cittadini, con particolare attenzione alle nuove generazioni di pubblico, fin dall'infanzia" (Presidente della Repubblica, 2017a, p. 2).

72 "L'accessibilità, intesa come accessibilità fisica degli edifici culturali e come possibilità di fruizione da parte di tutti gli utenti, è uno degli assi di intervento della futura programmazione regionale" (Consiglio Regionale del Piemonte, 2022, p. 20).

> broadening participation and involving citizens in cultural activities will also constitute one of the key elements that the Region intends to require from the publicly funded cultural organisations as a qualifying factor in their projects.[73] (Regional Council of Piemonte, 2022, pp. 21-22)

"The Region recognises music as a tool for cultural education, social aggregation, and inclusion"[74] (Emilia-Romagna region, 2018, p. 1).

> The musical practice course [...] involves the users in performance occasions, in the school, and within the territory, which constitute opportunities to verify their individual and collective identity and create links with the social community in which they are inserted.[75] (MIUR, 2013, p. 11)

> The Republic promotes and supports the performing arts, in its many different forms and expressions, as an indispensable factor for the development of culture and an element of cohesion and national identity, a tool for disseminating knowledge of Italian culture and art in Europe and in the world, as well as a component cultural and creative entrepreneurship and the national tourist offer.[76] (Republic President, 2017a, p. 2)

> This agreement is also intended to send out a signal on the importance of promoting musical culture, not only in schools, around schools, in out-of-school activities, and in venues where teenagers and young people meet, as an element of quality of life, social cohesion, the development of talents and creativity, and the recovery of our national identity and its cultural expressions.[77] (National Committee for Practical Learning of Music, 2013, p. 4)

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73 "Un secondo livello di lettura del termine accessibilità riguarda il tema della partecipazione dei cittadini alle attività culturali: su questo obiettivo la Regione lavorerà con interventi e progetti a favore dell'*audience development* delle organizzazioni culturali. (...) L'obiettivo dell'allargamento della partecipazione e del coinvolgimento dei cittadini nelle attività culturali costituirà altresì uno degli elementi che la Regione intende richiedere agli enti culturali partecipati come fattori qualificanti delle loro progettualità" (Consiglio Regionale del Piemonte, 2022, pp. 21-22).

74 "La Regione, riconoscendo la musica quale strumento di formazione culturale, di aggregazione sociale e inclusione" (Regione Emilia-Romagna, 2018, p. 1).

75 "Il corso di pratica strumentale [...] coinvolge gli utenti in occasioni di performance, nella scuola e sul territorio, che costituiscono altrettante opportunità di verifica della propria identità individuale e collettiva e creano legami con la comunità sociale in cui si è inseriti" (MIUR, 2013, p. 11).

76 "La Repubblica promuove e sostiene lo spettacolo, nella pluralità delle sue diverse espressioni, quale fattore indispensabile per lo sviluppo della cultura ed elemento di coesione e di identità nazionale, strumento di diffusione della conoscenza della cultura e dell'arte italiane in Europa e nel mondo, nonché quale componente dell'imprenditoria culturale e creativa e dell'offerta turistica nazionale" (Presidente della Repubblica, 2017a, p. 2).

77 "Un accordo destinato anche a lanciare un segnale sull'importanza di promuovere la cultura musicale, oltre che nella scuola, attorno alla scuola, nell'extrascuola, nelle sedi di aggregazione di adolescenti e giovani, come elemento di qualità della vita, di coesione sociale, di sviluppo di talenti e di creatività, di recupero della nostra identità nazionale e delle sue espressioni culturali" (Comitato Nazionale per l'apprendimento pratico della musica, 2013, p. 4).

7.4 Conclusions and Reflections

7.4.1 Summary of Findings

From the analysis of documents on Italian policy, it is possible to draw some considerations and reflections on performing arts, cultural literacy, and their connection.

As revealed by the analysis of curricula, the primary references in arts policies also concern **music**, followed by dance, and finally, theatre. In documents produced at the ministerial and governmental levels, the central focus is often educational (art education, cultural education, education in artistic expression), whereas in documents created by professional associations, the performative (and formative) dimension of the arts is also considered.

In these documents, the ability for citizens (all citizens) to enjoy the arts seems to be regarded almost as a **right** (like cultural rights). This implies a formal commitment from institutions to ensure everyone has access to it. Specifically, some regulations include provisions for financial support to families to guarantee that everyone can have experiences with the arts, even as spectators (attending concerts, performances, etc.).

Unlike curricular analysis, where there is almost no mention of **economic sustainability**, policy documents seem to attribute greater relevance to the economic dimension, as observed in the recurring references to funding schemes and institutional planning. For example, the Arts Plan provides for the disbursement of two million euros each year through specific annual notices aimed at implementing the measures of the Plan. These measures seem to indicate an institutional recognition of the need to financially support initiatives to promote the historical-cultural identity, which would otherwise struggle to survive, is recognised. The goal is to highlight the artistic value without reducing it to a purely economic market logic.

The connection **between performing arts and social cohesion** is presented in the analysed documents as emerging from the knowledge of the artistic heritage and the enhancement of local cultural heritage (national and local). In these documents, promoting awareness and respect for art, history, and shared traditions is seen as essential to contributing to the construction of a sense of collective identity and belonging, reducing social divisions, and fostering greater integration and civic participation. In this way, art becomes a means to stimulate dialogue, engagement, and solidarity within a community. However, there are no clear indications regarding what should be included in the concept of cultural heritage. The analysis reveals a persistent ambiguity regarding the distinction between the traditions and cultural products of the majority and the cultural expressions of minorities. For example, the ways in which minority cultures could be integrated are neither explicitly addressed nor clearly defined. This lack of clarity is a recurring feature in the documents examined and risk producing reductive representations of minority cultures, reducing them to folkloristic or exotic elements.

Moreover, the policies analysed show limited attention to the active involvement of local communities, emerging cultural actors, and minority groups in the processes of defining and valorising cultural heritage. As a result, the concept of cultural heritage is often framed in a top-down and partial way, which tends to exclude living, dynamic, and everyday forms of cultural production, thus limiting the truly inclusive and participatory potential of the performing arts. Finally, it remains unclear how cultural heritage can serve as a concrete foundation for the

construction of collective belonging: although this function is frequently ascribed to heritage, the process through which such construction should occur is never explicitly articulated.

Policies often call for **collaboration** between schools, institutions (including cultural ones), and the territory. This call for collaboration is a consistent theme across the policy documents analysed. In this sense, the school is not seen as separate from its territory (as is often the case in Italy). Thanks to artistic activities, pathways, and projects, the school becomes an open space to promote inclusion and dialogue through initiatives developed in synergy with local institutions. In this sense, artistic activities facilitate interaction between students, teachers, and the community, creating a shared cultural and social growth space. This role is consistently highlighted in the documents reviewed. Art becomes a bridge between formal education and the broader social context, strengthening the sense of belonging and active participation in community life.

Shifting the focus to the **gaps** that emerge from the analysis of the documents, it is possible to identify constants that cut across all documents. We present them through three reflections.

First, these documents also frequently refer to the arts (including the performing arts) as a multifunctional tool that facilitates orientation, prevents bullying, combats school dropout, aids integration with the local area, and allows the expression and communication of ideas, feelings, values, etc. This requires specific preparation and sensitivity from those conducting the activities, but the training/update paths indicated in the programs do not always foresee the development of such skills. Moreover, there are few references on how to do this concretely and how to build such activities. For example, which methods, approaches, and tools can help use dance as a tool to promote emotional expression?

Second, children and young people often appear as consumers of artistic experiences (visiting museums, libraries, works of art in general, going to see a theatre performance, etc.), thus in a somewhat passive role as recipients. What is missing is the perspective that considers children and young people (and citizens in general) as producers of culture and, therefore, as individuals who can actively contribute to the growth of the cultural-artistical heritage, including through the performing arts (agency).

Third, the almost constant reference to including specific groups considered vulnerable (youth, older people, people with disabilities, individuals from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, etc.) is rarely accompanied by suggestions, precautions, or methodological guidelines on how to do this concretely. While accessibility is at least addressed with a general reference to “removing physical as well as socio-economic barriers”, there is no mention of how to implement activities and projects that are genuinely inclusive.

7.4.2 Findings in Light of the Theoretical Framework

Looking at the analysis and results in the light of the theoretical framework drawing from the literature review (D1.1)[78] it is possible to identify some key insights regarding cultural literacy and policy. As a first point, analysed Italian policies promote «cultural inclusion, social cohesion, and a broader appreciation of diverse cultural perspectives» (p. 40, D1.1). However, this

[78] In this paragraph, citations refer to the document produced in WP1, D1.1 Literature review.

occurs through individual references within the texts rather than as an explicit choice by the legislator or the entity that drafted the document. There is no evidence of normative intentionality in this regard.

Furthermore, policies related to the performing arts and those concerning intercultural education do not interact. There are no explicit references to a common framework, but the relationship can be traced through individual elements and references within the texts.

Lastly, as previously highlighted, Italian policies do not address cultural accessibility in terms of equal access to cultural education for all socioeconomic groups. Similarly, they do not address marginalized groups' exclusion from higher artistic education or professional artistic development opportunities (p. 44, D1.1), nor do they aim to address historical power imbalances and incorporate the perspectives of marginalized groups (p. 47, D1.1).

These policies generally need a central focus on integrating decolonial perspectives into cultural literacy and policymaking. Specifically, it is challenging to find references to a «critical re-evaluation of existing frameworks, challenging the dominance of Western educational models and promoting a more inclusive and equitable educational system» (p. 48, D1.1).

Regarding the role of performing arts in education, in line with the findings from WP 1, the findings suggest that that the performing arts «can create spaces where intercultural competence and cultural literacy can be fostered» (p. 52, WP 1). Although the concept is rarely explicitly expressed, components of cultural literacy intertwined with the performing arts can be identified in many documents, most notably in policies. However, the focus is frequently placed on the inclusive function and the appreciation of differences, overlooking the development of intercultural competence (or cultural literacy).

In Italy, as previously mentioned, the main focus is on music, often presented as a "tool for Cultural Expression and Inclusion" (p. 58, D1.1) without references to adequate training pathways or the necessary skills to achieve this goal. Mentions of the decolonial approach (even implicit ones) are virtually absent, as is its potential to support the performing arts and intercultural education in addressing historical injustices, integrating cultural diversity, and creating spaces for genuine cultural expression (p. 59, D1.1).

Finally, Italy's significant tradition of social theatre (p. 59, D1.1) is rarely reflected in the analysed documents. While the inclusive power of the performing arts is acknowledged, there is almost no emphasis on "giving voice" to participants, and theatre is seldom highlighted for its role as a tool for fostering participation. Similarly, the crucial role of the performing arts as an instrument of change for the broader community has yet to emerge in curricula or policies, where other aspects are more frequently emphasized.

7.4.3 Decolonial Perspective

Adopting a decolonial lens in the analysis of Italian policy documents allows for a critical examination of how the arts—and the cultural expressions of minority groups in particular—are represented, valued, and positioned within institutional discourse.

When referring to the arts, particularly music, in some documents, there is a distinction between what is classical and what is popular/folkloric, which is combined with the distinction

between professional and voluntary. The risk is to interpret the arts of minorities (understood as both social groups and genres/types of art) in a narrowly folkloristic sense and to hierarchise artistic-cultural expressions (e.g., art produced by professionals, in line with what the majority considers classical, is seen as more important than art created by volunteers, representing a minority).

In documents related to Italian policies, minorities, like vulnerable groups, are mostly mentioned as recipients of accessibility to the arts. Although some minorities have been part of Italian history and are recognised by the Italian Constitution (for example, linguistic minorities), they are not involved in developing these documents. They often appear as groups to be 'protected or safeguarded' rather than as active participants (creators) in the cultural life of society and local communities. One of the main risks associated with this process/vision is seeing society as homogeneous without considering that minorities and differences are part of society itself. Moreover, there is a risk of creating a hierarchy between cultures, where the dominant culture (majority) is viewed as more important than minority cultures.

The analysis of the documents shows that the arts (both performing and non-performing) are often mentioned as a valuable tool for promoting intercultural dialogue. How? The analysed documents repeatedly recommend integrating artistic proposals from "different cultures." In this sense, dialogue is interpreted multiculturally (as knowledge of different cultures). The underlying idea is that of a static, unchanging culture, not subject to cultural cross-fertilisation. This concept ignores the relational and exchange dimensions inherent to cultures, people, and the performing arts. Furthermore, this implicitly defines one culture as the reference point (the standard culture), with others seen as different, creating a hierarchy between cultural expressions (where the reference culture is the most important).

7.5 Commentaries

7.5.1 Comment from the German Consortium Member University of Hildesheim

Italy policy analysis offers a vast number of policy papers from non-governmental and governmental organisations. The arts play a significant role in policies related to cultural literacy. The highlight on economic disparities is particularly interesting, and helps the reader to understand the sociopolitical differences between the industrial north and south. The regional focus of the policy documents, such as Lombardia, Tuscany, Emilia-Romagna, Piemonte, provides a clear conceptualisation of North Italian policies towards the arts, social cohesion, and inclusion. The regional focus bears a resemblance to the German case selections as well.

A hierarchical approach to culture, intercultural dialogue, and "othering" reminds us of the need for new decolonial approaches in Italian cultural policies, but also many positive concepts, such as cultural heritage being part of the school education, or diversity of arts, are highly commendable. The highlight of "host culture" and a lack of multiperspectivity in policy-making reminds us of another challenging concept in Germany, called *Leitkultur,* which translates to guiding culture or leading culture. This concept also raises concerns about accessibil-

ity and social inclusion, as it creates hierarchies between the “dominant host culture” and minority groups. Compared to the German context, cultural identity is very interesting as well and there are lots of parallels. From this comparison, we can observe that similar semantic issues arise in interculturalism and hierarchies within cultural policies, which may lead to the underdevelopment of social inclusion for minority and vulnerable groups, hindering their access and participation in cultural programs. This may be the challenge ahead, not just for Italy and Germany, but perhaps a challenge for the whole of Europe to ensure that all voices and cultures are fairly represented in policies.

7.5.2 Comment from Puntozero Società Cooperativa on the Analysis of Italian Cultural Policies

Puntozero Società Cooperativa is a cultural organisation based in Udine, actively working across the domains of multimedia arts, performing arts, community engagement, creative direction, event curation, consultancy, and cultural management. Since our foundation, we have promoted inclusive, innovative, and participatory practices within the cultural field through projects that intertwine artistic languages and social processes. Our portfolio includes long-term initiatives such as TERMINAL, TEEN TO TEEN, MICROFESTIVAL, DIMMI, and CASAMIA among others, where arts become a space for dialogue, empowerment, and community transformation. We collaborate with diverse publics—youth, migrants, people with disabilities, and residents of marginalised areas—while fostering horizontal relationships between artists, educators, and citizens. This positioning deeply informs our reading of the findings emerging from the analysis of Italian policy documents on cultural literacy and performing arts.

The report rightly highlights a key contradiction between the aspirational and operational layers of policy. While principles such as inclusion and participation are often cited, concrete mechanisms, tools, and methodologies to realise them are frequently absent. This resonates with our experience: in projects like CAPOVOLGERE ALL’INFINITO or TIGRI, we have found that truly inclusive processes require long-term investment in co-design practices, training, and care. These aspects are almost entirely missing in policies, which tend to frame inclusion through access rather than authorship. We believe participation must go beyond audience development and instead recognise communities as co-creators of cultural meaning.

A recurrent issue in the policy documents is the lack of attention to agency, especially of young people and minority groups. This limitation is evident in the positioning of youth as passive recipients of artistic offerings rather than as cultural agents. Our initiative TEEN TO TEEN was conceived precisely to challenge this perspective: placing teenagers at the centre as curators, content creators, and active interpreters of their social context through multimedia languages. These experiences demonstrate how young people can embody and produce cultural literacy—not only by ‘consuming’ culture, but by reshaping it through their own lenses and expressions.

From a decolonial perspective, the findings critically underline the persistent framing of minority cultures as folkloristic or peripheral. This is an issue we constantly grapple with. In EXXPLORERS and TRASDUZIONI – PTSM, for example, we attempted to subvert this hierarchy by centring minority narratives and promoting hybrid, transcultural practices. However, the lack of recognition of these approaches in policy discourse often results in systemic barriers

to funding and visibility. There is a pressing need for cultural policies to abandon the static, essentialist notion of culture and adopt relational, dynamic understandings that reflect real societal complexities.

Moreover, the absence of a decolonial or intercultural framework in policymaking, as the report suggests, is a critical limitation. The potential of performing arts to foster cultural literacy, civic participation, and critical engagement is vast—but it requires intentional strategies that acknowledge historical asymmetries and foster equitable cultural ecosystems. In projects such as DIMMI and CASAMIA, we have witnessed how theatre and collective storytelling can become acts of reclaiming space and voice, particularly for those often marginalised in mainstream narratives. This transformative potential, however, remains largely unaddressed in existing curricula and policy texts.

Lastly, we strongly align with the analysis that underscores the school's potential as a cultural hub connected to its territory. Through partnerships between schools, artists, and local institutions—as implemented in THANKS GOD IT'S MONDAY—we observed how schools can become laboratories for artistic exploration, identity-building, and collective responsibility. This potential is acknowledged in policy, but not fully exploited in practice due to fragmented implementation and scarce intersectoral coordination.

In conclusion, the findings of the analysis echo many challenges we face on the ground. While policy documents express noble intentions regarding inclusion, accessibility, and cultural literacy, they fall short of articulating actionable frameworks, particularly regarding intercultural competence, co-creation, and decolonial thinking. Our experience at Puntozero highlights the importance of integrating lived cultural practices into policymaking—not only as inspirational case studies but as structural references to redefine the role of the arts in society. We advocate for policies that not only support access but foster agency, creativity, and justice in cultural participation.

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8. Norway

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The focus of this analysis is on examining Norwegian cultural and educational policy documents to understand how the interconnections between cultural literacy (intercultural competence), performing arts (namely music, dance, drama/theatre), and social cohesion and inclusion are addressed. Specifically, this analysis aims to elucidate the roles, interpretations, and interrelationships of the concepts as articulated in these policies. It provides an assessment of how each document effectively supports cultural literacy/intercultural competence and social inclusion through the performing arts. The analysis considers a total of 14 policy documents, divided into governmental and non-governmental policies. The documents reviewed are briefly introduced below. The analysis after that explores first the individual policy documents and then makes an overarching scrutiny of all 14 policy documents.

Educational Policies

- *Act on Primary and Secondary Education 2024 (Education Act).*[79] The Norwegian Education Act provides a comprehensive legal framework for primary and secondary education in Norway, establishing rights and responsibilities for students, educators, and educational institutions.
- *Regulations on the framework curriculum for teacher education in practical and aesthetic subjects for grades 1–13.*[80] These Regulations, issued by the Norwegian Ministry of Education (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2020), establish guidelines for educating future teachers in fields such as music, dance, drama/theatre, and visual arts.
- *National guidelines for teacher education in practical and aesthetic subjects for grades 1–13.*[81] The National Guidelines (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021) provide a framework for training teachers in subjects such as dance, music, drama, and visual arts for grades 1–13.
- Strategy: Creativity, engagement and exploration – Practical and aesthetic content in kindergarten, school and teacher training programmes.[82] This strategy was developed by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). It focuses on enhancing practical and aesthetic subjects in early childhood, school education, and teacher training.

[79] "Lov om grunnskoleopplæringa og den vidaregåande opplæringa 2024 (opplæringslova)".
[80] "Forskrift om rammeplan for lærerutdanning i praktiske og estetiske fag for trinn 1–13" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2020).
[81] "Nasjonale retningslinjer for lærerutdanning i praktiske og estetiske fag for trinn 1–13" (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021).
[82] "Strategi: Skaperglede, engasjement og utforskertrang Praktisk og estetisk innhold i barnehage, skole og lærerutdanning" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019).

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Cultural Policies

- *Act on public authorities' responsibility for cultural activities 2007 (the Culture Act)*.[83] Authored by the Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Equality (Kultur- og likestillingsdepartementet, 2007), *The Culture Act* establishes the responsibility of public authorities in Norway to promote and support a wide range of cultural activities. It aims to ensure that all citizens have the opportunity to participate in cultural activities and experience diverse cultural expressions.
- *Meld. St. 8 (2018–2019) Report to the Storting (white paper) – The Power of Culture. Cultural Policy for the Future*. This white paper, authored by the Norwegian Ministry of Culture (2019), outlines Norway's cultural policy and highlights the role of art and culture in building a vibrant, inclusive, and democratic society.
- *Experience, create, share – Art and culture for, with and by children and young people.*[84] This white paper, issued by the Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Equality (Kultur- og likestillingsdepartementet, 2021), outlines the government's strategy for enhancing access to arts and cultural activities for children and young people across Norway.
- *Report No. 8 (2007–2008) to the Storting – A Cultural Rucksack for the Future*. The Cultural Rucksack program, outlined in this white paper by the Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs (2008), aims to provide students in Norway with access to high-quality artistic and cultural experiences. The initiative, a collaboration between the cultural and education sectors, focuses on introducing students in primary, lower secondary, and eventually upper secondary schools to professional-level artistic performances and cultural activities, spanning music, theatre, visual arts, literature, and cultural heritage.
- *Strategy 2022–2024: We open doors to art and the future for all children and young people in Norway!*[85] This strategy paper by Kulturtanken (which is part of the Ministry of Culture and Equality) (2021) outlines a plan for 2022–2024 aimed at providing children and young people in Norway with high-quality arts and cultural experiences.

Other

- *White Paper no. 12 (2020–2021) – National minorities in Norway – A comprehensive policy*. This white paper by the Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation (2021) outlines the government's comprehensive policy toward the five national minorities in Norway: Kvens/Norwegian Finns, Jews, Forest Finns, Roma, and Romani/Tater people. The policy aims to ensure that these groups can actively participate in society, maintain and develop their languages and cultures, and receive fair and equivalent services.
- *Briefing note – Truth and reconciliation – Pillar 3: Culture and cultural heritage*[86]. This document, prepared by the Sami Parliament (Sámediggi, 2024), outlines the first review of the report by the Norwegian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, focusing on Pillar 3, which addresses culture and cultural heritage.

[83] "Lov om offentlege styresmakters ansvar for kulturverksemd 2007 (kulturlova)".
[84] "Meld. St. 18 (2020-2021). Oppleve, skape, dele – Kunst og kultur for, med og av barn og unge" (Kultur- og likestillingsdepartementet, 2021).
[85] "Strategi 2022-2024: Vi opnar dører til kunsten og framtida for alle barn og unge i Noreg!" (Kulturtanken, 2021).
[86] "Saksfremlegg – Sannhet og forsoning – Pilar 3: Kultur og kulturminner" (Sámediggi, 2024).

- *Articles of association for Stiftelsen Fargespill*.[87] Stiftelsen Fargespill (2011) is a foundation with the primary purpose of creating artistic performances involving children and young people from around the world. The foundation aims to foster interaction and understanding between different ethnic and religious groups through artistic expression, particularly through music, song, and dance.
- *Dansit's Ethical Guidelines*. DansiT is a center for dance and choreography located in Trondheim, Norway. DansiT's mission is to foster an inclusive and sustainable environment for dance by promoting diversity, equality, and innovation in the field of choreography. DansiT's (2024) Ethical Guidelines outline the core values and principles that guide the organization's artistic and administrative work.
- *Schools of Music and Performing Arts for all – SMPAs Council's strategy for diversity, inclusion and inclusiveness*.[88] This document outlines the Norsk Kulturskoleråd's (2022) strategy for diversity, inclusion, and social integration within Norway's Schools of Music and Performing Arts.

8.1 Analysing the Individual Policy Documents

8.1.1 Governmental Policies

Educational Policies

The *Norwegian Education Act 2024* includes key provisions: Right to Education (All children in Norway have the right and obligation to attend primary school, grades 1–10, and the right to secondary education, grades 11–13); Inclusivity (The act prioritizes creating an inclusive learning environment); Cultural and Language Rights (The law acknowledges the importance of cultural literacy by incorporating provisions for teaching in Sami, Kven, and sign language, while also promoting understanding of Norwegian and international culture); Student Participation and Well-Being; Vocational Education. While the act emphasizes inclusivity and cultural understanding through language rights and education, it does not extensively address the role of performing arts (music, dance, drama/theatre) as tools for fostering cultural literacy or intercultural competence. The focus remains on general education, although the promotion of cultural understanding and inclusion is implicit in various sections. The law could benefit from more explicit integration of the arts to further promote social cohesion and inclusion through cultural and artistic experiences.

The *Regulations on the framework curriculum for teacher education in practical and aesthetic subjects for grades 1–13* (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2020) emphasize the importance of integrating practical and aesthetic subjects into school education, highlighting their role in developing creativity, critical thinking, and emotional engagement. The program is designed for students in grades 1–13 and aims to foster high-quality professional development for teachers who will contribute to the holistic development of young people. Key points include: Interdisciplinary Learning (The curriculum promotes connections between practical, aesthetic, and ac-

[87] "Vedtekter for Stiftelsen Fargespill" (Stiftelsen Fargespill, 2011).
[88] "Kulturskole for alle – Norsk kulturskoleråds strategi for mangfold, inkludering og innenforskap. Strategidokument med kunnskapsgrunnlag og prioriterte satsingsfelt" (Norsk Kulturskoleråd, 2022).

ademic subjects, encouraging creativity and reflective learning); Cultural and Historical Context (Teacher education is expected to integrate knowledge of cultural heritage, societal challenges, and international perspectives); Inclusivity (The framework stresses the importance of inclusive education, ensuring that all students, regardless of background or ability, can engage with aesthetic subjects). The curriculum supports cultural literacy and intercultural competence by incorporating elements of cultural history and diversity within the training of future teachers. It highlights the role of performing arts (music, dance, drama/theatre) as essential tools for fostering creativity and social cohesion among students.

The *National guidelines for teacher education in practical and aesthetic subjects for grades 1–13* (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021) aim to enhance the quality of practical and aesthetic education, ensuring that teachers can promote creativity, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary learning. The document emphasizes the importance of these subjects in fostering holistic development and creating inclusive, motivating learning environments. Key features include: Interdisciplinary Approach (Encouraging the integration of practical and aesthetic subjects with other areas of learning); Inclusive Education (Focusing on how practical and aesthetic subjects can cater to diverse student needs and backgrounds); Cultural and Historical Awareness (Emphasizing the role of arts education in understanding cultural heritage and contemporary societal challenges). The guidelines provide a strong foundation for developing cultural literacy and intercultural competence by integrating cultural and social perspectives into the curriculum for practical and aesthetic subjects. The role of performing arts (music, dance, drama) is central to fostering creativity and understanding of diverse cultural expressions.

The *Strategy: Creativity, engagement and exploration – Practical and aesthetic content in kindergarten, school and teacher training programmes* (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019) promotes creativity, exploration, and engagement through hands-on learning in subjects such as music, art, drama, and physical education. Key objectives include: Strengthening practical and aesthetic education (Emphasizing the importance of creative and practical subjects in fostering critical thinking and problem-solving); Inclusivity and Engagement (Ensuring that all students, regardless of background, have opportunities to engage with creative subjects); Professional Development (Enhancing teacher competencies in practical and aesthetic education through specialized training programs and resources). The strategy indirectly supports cultural literacy and intercultural competence by promoting the value of creative subjects, including performing arts (music, drama, dance), as essential tools for engagement and expression. However, the document does not explicitly focus on how these subjects contribute to social cohesion and inclusion.

Cultural Policies

The *Culture Act 2007* emphasizes the role of both national and local governments in creating conditions that foster cultural production, distribution, and preservation, as well as developing cultural knowledge and competence. Key points include: Public Responsibility; Access and Inclusion (The act mandates that cultural activities be accessible to all, ensuring that citizens can engage in and benefit from cultural experiences); Cultural Heritage. The *Culture Act* supports cultural literacy by promoting access to a diverse range of cultural activities, including

performing arts (music, dance, theatre), though it does not explicitly address intercultural competence or social cohesion/inclusion in detail.

The *Power of Culture: Cultural Policy for the Future* white paper (Norwegian Ministry of Culture, 2019) presents art and culture as a resource for an inclusive and democratic society. Key objectives include: Artistic and Cultural Quality (Promoting high-quality cultural and artistic expressions while ensuring access to diverse forms of cultural engagement for all citizens); Cultural Heritage (Safeguarding and disseminating Norway's cultural heritage as a foundation for societal development); Education and Critical Reflection (Encouraging education through the arts and promoting critical reflection as a means of fostering democratic participation and societal cohesion); Inclusion and Representation (Ensuring that cultural offerings represent Norway's diverse population, with particular emphasis on inclusivity across social, cultural, and ethnic lines); International Impact and Intercultural Understanding (Promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding through international cultural exchanges and collaborations). The document explicitly connects cultural literacy and intercultural competence with the role of art and culture in fostering inclusivity and social cohesion. It highlights how performing arts, including music, dance, and drama, can create shared experiences that unite people across diverse backgrounds, promoting mutual understanding. The paper emphasizes the importance of intercultural dialogue both within Norway and internationally, thus aligning closely with the goals of promoting social cohesion and inclusion through the arts.

The *Experience, create, share – Art and culture for, with and by children and young people* white paper (Kultur- og likestillingsdepartementet, 2021) aims to ensure that children from diverse backgrounds can experience, participate in, and create high-quality artistic and cultural expressions. The main objectives are: Accessibility and Quality (Ensuring that all children, regardless of their background, have access to diverse, high-quality cultural experiences, both in schools and in extracurricular settings); Inclusion and Participation (Encouraging children and young people to actively engage in cultural production, fostering a sense of belonging, self-expression, and social inclusion); Collaboration (Promoting cooperation between schools, cultural institutions, and community organizations to create inclusive cultural environments). The document directly supports cultural literacy and intercultural competence by promoting inclusive access to diverse cultural experiences and encouraging participation in performing arts (music, dance, drama/theatre). It highlights the role of the arts in fostering social cohesion and inclusion by providing platforms for children and young people to engage creatively, interact across cultural lines, and develop mutual understanding.

The *A Cultural Rucksack for the Future* white paper (Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs, 2008) considers the Cultural Rucksack initiative a key part of Norway's cultural policy, aiming to promote inclusivity and lifelong cultural engagement among younger generations. Key goals of the program include: Equal Access to Culture (Ensuring that all students, regardless of background, have access to arts and culture); Cultural Appreciation (Encouraging the development of an understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural expressions among young people); Quality and Diversity (Promoting high artistic quality and a wide range of cultural forms across regions). The Cultural Rucksack program strongly supports cultural literacy and intercultural competence by providing students with diverse cultural experiences, including performing arts (music, dance, drama/theatre). It fosters social cohesion and inclusion by offering a platform for students to engage with a variety of artistic and cultural forms, helping

them understand different cultural perspectives, thus promoting inclusivity in Norwegian society.

The *We open doors to art and the future for all children and young people in Norway!* strategy paper by Kulturtanken (2021) includes key objectives like enhancing creativity, engagement, and exploration within both school settings and leisure time. Key goals of the strategy are: Empowerment of youth voices, Strengthening the Cultural Rucksack (DKS), Sustainability. The strategy focuses on creating a diverse and inclusive cultural landscape while fostering collaboration, innovation, and research to support arts education. The strategy supports cultural literacy and intercultural competence by fostering participation in performing arts (music, dance, drama) and creating spaces for young people to engage with diverse cultural expressions. The emphasis on inclusivity and collaboration contributes to social cohesion and inclusion, aligning with the goals of promoting cultural dialogue and mutual understanding through arts education.

Other

The *National minorities in Norway – A comprehensive policy* white paper (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2021) includes the following key objectives: Cultural and Language Preservation (The policy emphasizes the preservation and promotion of minority languages and cultures, with significant government support for education, cultural institutions, and language revitalization initiatives); Social Inclusion and Participation (Ensuring that minorities can engage in public decision-making processes and are integrated into broader society without losing their unique cultural identities); Combating Discrimination (Active efforts are in place to prevent racism, discrimination, and hate speech targeting these minorities, including specific measures against antisemitism and racism towards Roma). The document explicitly addresses cultural literacy through its focus on preserving minority languages and cultural heritage, fostering intercultural competence by promoting understanding and dialogue between minorities and the broader population. However, the role of performing arts (music, dance, drama/theatre) in achieving social cohesion and inclusion is not a central focus of the paper. While the paper highlights cultural activities, these are largely framed within the context of cultural preservation rather than as a tool for fostering intercultural dialogue through the arts.

The *Briefing note – Truth and reconciliation – Pillar 3: Culture and cultural heritage* (Sámediggi, 2024) emphasizes the challenges faced by Sami communities due to historical assimilation policies (fornorskning) and highlights efforts to preserve and promote Sami cultural expressions, including arts, media, and religious practices. The document emphasizes the need for stronger cultural policies and measures to protect and revitalize Sami heritage, both material and immaterial, as part of the broader truth and reconciliation process. The document has clear connections to cultural literacy and intercultural competence by addressing the need for understanding and preserving Sami culture. While it emphasizes the revitalization of Sami cultural expressions, including performing arts like joik, it does not specifically focus on using these arts as tools for social cohesion and inclusion beyond the Sami context. However, the emphasis on restoring cultural heritage implicitly contributes to broader intercultural dialogue and inclusion within Norwegian society.

8.1.2 Non-governmental Policies

The *Articles of association for Stiftelsen Fargespill* (Stiftelsen Fargespill, 2011) reflect the foundation's commitment to promoting social cohesion through the performing arts and creating a space where diverse cultural expressions can be celebrated. Fargespill has strong connections to cultural literacy and intercultural competence as it promotes understanding and interaction between diverse groups through performing arts (music, dance, drama). The foundation's activities directly contribute to social cohesion and inclusion by using artistic expression to bridge cultural divides and foster mutual respect and appreciation among participants from various backgrounds.

DansiT's Ethical Guidelines (DansiT, 2024) emphasize the importance of diversity, inclusion, equity, and sustainability in the realm of dance and choreography. DansiT is committed to creating an artistic community that welcomes people from various backgrounds, including different nationalities, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, and social classes. DansiT's guidelines align closely with the goals of cultural literacy and intercultural competence by fostering inclusivity and addressing intersectional issues in dance and choreography. The emphasis on creating spaces for diverse artistic expressions through performing arts (dance, choreography) contributes to social cohesion and inclusion by challenging traditional ideas of who can participate in the arts and ensuring that all voices are represented.

The Schools of Music and Performing Arts Council's *Strategy for diversity, inclusion and inclusiveness* (Norsk Kulturskoleråd, 2022) is part of the broader vision of creating a "Cultural School for All", focusing on providing high-quality educational opportunities in the arts for children and young people, regardless of their background. The core goals include: Promoting diversity and inclusion, Sustainability, Collaboration. The strategy aligns closely with the concepts of cultural literacy and intercultural competence by providing equal access to performing arts (music, dance, drama) and promoting diverse cultural expressions. The focus on inclusion and collaboration also supports social cohesion and inclusion, as it seeks to break down barriers and provide opportunities for students from different cultural backgrounds to engage in the arts together.

8.2 Overarching Analysis

The following section is based on the analysis of all 14 policy documents and examines their relation to the key concepts of cultural literacy/intercultural competence, performing arts and social cohesion/inclusion. As examples, individual policy documents are examined in more detail by quoting and discussing passages from them.

8.2.1 Target Audience and Influence Strategies

The primary target audiences for the analysed policies are educational institutions, cultural organizations, and local municipalities. The *Kulturlova* (Kultur- og likestillingsdepartementet, 2007) assigns responsibilities to both state and local authorities to ensure broad participation in cultural activities, highlighting the role of municipalities in facilitating access to cultural ex-

periences. The strategies employed include providing financial support, promoting collaboration between cultural and educational sectors, and developing infrastructure that supports cultural activities.

However, the policies are less explicit about how they intend to influence specific demographic groups, such as minority communities or marginalized populations, in terms of cultural literacy and intercultural competence. There is a general expectation that broad access will lead to inclusion, but the mechanisms for ensuring that marginalized groups benefit equitably are not well articulated.

In addition to the educational institutions and cultural organizations, there are other stakeholders whose roles could be better defined within the policies. For example, community-based organizations and non-governmental entities that work closely with minority and indigenous communities are often instrumental in facilitating cultural participation. However, their potential contributions are not clearly recognized or supported within the existing policy framework. Greater emphasis on partnerships with these organizations could help bridge gaps in access and ensure that cultural initiatives are more inclusive and representative of Norway's diverse population.

Furthermore, the influence strategies currently outlined in the policies rely heavily on formal institutional channels. While these are important, there is a need for more flexible and grassroots-level approaches that can reach marginalized populations more effectively. Informal cultural networks and community-driven initiatives can play a significant role in promoting cultural literacy and should be integrated into the broader policy strategies. Such an approach would ensure that cultural literacy initiatives are not limited to formal educational settings but are also embedded in the everyday cultural practices of various communities.

The *Articles of Association for Stiftelsen Fargespill* emphasize using arts to bridge cultural divides: "Stiftelsen Fargespill shall promote interaction and understanding between different ethnic and religious groups through artistic expression"[89] (Stiftelsen Fargespill, 2011). This reflects the role of non-governmental initiatives in contributing to cultural literacy and social cohesion, particularly in reaching audiences that may not be adequately served by government policies.

8.2.2 Conceptual Definitions and Context

The concepts of "cultural literacy," "inclusion," and "social cohesion" are often implied rather than explicitly defined in the Norwegian policy documents. The *Culture Act*, for instance, refers broadly to "a diversity of cultural expressions"[90] (Kultur- og likestillingsdepartementet, 2007), which suggests an understanding of cultural literacy as engagement with and appreciation of various cultural forms. However, the term "cultural literacy" itself is not explicitly used, and its conceptual boundaries remain somewhat ambiguous.

Similarly, "inclusion" is addressed implicitly through the emphasis on participation in cultural activities regardless of background. The *Creativity, engagement and exploration* document,

[89] "Stiftelsen Fargespill skal fremme samspill og forståelse mellom ulike etniske og religiøse grupper gjennom kunstnerisk uttrykk" (Stiftelsen Fargespill, 2011).
[90] "eit mangfald av kulturuttrykk" (Kultur- og likestillingsdepartementet, 2007).

for instance, mentions that cultural and creative activities should "facilitate all children experiencing joy and mastery in social and cultural communities"[91] (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). This indicates a focus on inclusion but lacks a comprehensive definition or framework for evaluating inclusive practices.

The *White Paper No. 12 (2020–2021) – National Minorities in Norway* (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2021) further elaborates on inclusion, specifically in relation to the country's national minorities, including the Kvens, Jews, Forest Finns, Roma, and Romani people. It emphasizes the importance of cultural preservation and ensuring equal opportunities for cultural participation: "The government facilitates national minorities to preserve and develop their culture, language, and identity"[92] (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2021). This highlights a commitment to inclusion but is primarily framed in terms of cultural preservation rather than intercultural exchange or dialogue.

The *Briefing note – Truth and reconciliation – Pillar 3: Culture and Cultural Heritage* prepared by the Sámediggi (2024) emphasizes the importance of cultural heritage in the reconciliation process for the Sami people. It discusses the historical challenges faced by the Sami due to assimilation policies and the importance of revitalizing Sami cultural expressions. The document states: "Cultural reconciliation requires acknowledgment of historical injustices and active support for cultural revitalization"[93] (Sámediggi, 2024). This highlights the role of cultural literacy in addressing historical wrongs and fostering intercultural understanding, yet it does not provide explicit mechanisms for integrating these insights into broader social cohesion initiatives.

The lack of explicit definitions for key concepts such as cultural literacy and social cohesion can lead to varied interpretations among stakeholders, which in turn affects the implementation of related policies.

Other Relevant Concepts

In addition to the core concepts of cultural literacy, intercultural competence, inclusion, and social cohesion, several other related concepts are discussed within the policy documents. One of the most prominent is the concept of "cultural heritage." Many of the policies, including the *White Paper No. 12 (2020–2021)* (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2021) and the *Briefing Note – Truth and Reconciliation – Pillar 3: Culture and Cultural Heritage* (Sámediggi, 2024), emphasize the importance of cultural heritage preservation as a foundation for building a cohesive society. Cultural heritage is presented as a means of fostering identity, pride, and continuity, which in turn contributes to cultural literacy and social cohesion.

Another related concept is "democratic engagement". Several documents, such as *Meld. St. 8 (2018–2019) – The Power of Culture* (Norwegian Ministry of Culture, 2019), link cultural participation with the development of democratic values and civic engagement. The document

[91] "leggje til rette for at alle barn får oppleve glede og mestring i sosiale og kulturelle fellesskap" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019).
[92] "Regjeringa legg til rette for at nasjonale minoritetar kan bevare og utvikle sin kultur, sitt språk og sin identitet" (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2021).
[93] "Kulturell forsoning krev anerkjenning av historiske overgrep og aktiv støtte til kulturell revitalisering" (Sámediggi, 2024).

states that cultural activities "provide schooling in the civic participation that is a prerequisite for a viable democracy". This suggests that cultural literacy is not only about understanding cultural expressions but also about engaging with and contributing to the cultural and democratic life of society.

"Creativity" is also a recurring theme, particularly in the educational policies. The *National Guidelines for Teacher Education in Practical and Aesthetic Subjects* (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021) emphasize the role of creativity in fostering students' ability to innovate and adapt to a changing world. Creativity is seen as a crucial component of both cultural literacy and intercultural competence, as it allows individuals to explore and express diverse cultural narratives in imaginative ways. The emphasis on creativity underscores the transformative potential of performing arts education in promoting cultural understanding and social cohesion.

Finally, the concept of "well-being" is highlighted in several policies, particularly in relation to children's education. The *Creativity, engagement and exploration* (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019) document emphasizes the role of practical and aesthetic subjects in promoting both physical and mental well-being. By fostering a sense of mastery and providing opportunities for positive self-expression, performing arts contribute to students' overall well-being, which is intrinsically linked to their ability to engage meaningfully with others and participate in cultural activities.

8.2.3 Contribution of Performing Arts to Cultural Literacy and Social Inclusion

The scholarly literature underscores the role of performing arts in fostering cultural literacy, intercultural competence, and social cohesion (Mortimer et al., 2024). According to the literature, performing arts facilitate shared cultural experiences, foster self-expression, and enhance mutual understanding across cultural boundaries. The analysis of Norwegian policies reveals similar sentiments in the descriptions of cultural and educational objectives.

For instance, the *Culture Act 2007* emphasizes "everyone should have the opportunity to participate in cultural activities and experience a diversity of cultural expressions"[94] (Culture Act, § 1). This suggests an inclusive approach that implicitly supports cultural literacy through active engagement in cultural activities.

Similarly, the strategy document *Creativity, engagement and exploration* (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019) highlights the significance of practical and aesthetic subjects in both schools and kindergartens as a means to foster creativity, cultural understanding, and inclusion. It states: "Practical and aesthetic subjects are particularly well suited to developing children's social competence, providing a sense of mastery within safe boundaries, and promoting good mental and physical health"[95] (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). This aligns with the view that performing arts contribute to social cohesion by fostering social skills and well-being.

[94] "at alle kan få høve til å delta i kulturaktivitetar og oppleva eit mangfald av kulturuttrykk" (Kulturlova 2007, § 1).

[95] "De praktiske og estetiske fagene og arbeidsformene er særlig godt egnet til å utvikle barn og elevers sosiale kompetanse, til å gi dem mestringsopplevelser innenfor trygge rammer og til å fremme god psykisk og fysisk helse" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019).

Furthermore, performing arts serve as a medium through which individuals can express and explore their cultural identities. Participation in music, dance, and drama provides a platform for people to engage in cultural narratives and practices, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of both one's own culture and that of others. This is particularly relevant in multicultural societies, where fostering mutual respect and intercultural dialogue is key to ensuring social cohesion. The *Culture Act 2007* and related policy documents emphasize that cultural engagement is not merely about consumption but also about active participation, which can lead to empowerment and a sense of belonging. In this context, the arts become an essential vehicle for bridging cultural divides and promoting intercultural competence.

The *Experience, Create, Share* white paper explicitly discusses the role of arts in children's development: "Children and young people must be able to actively participate in art and cultural life on their own terms. The cultural offer should facilitate good meeting places that build community and are an inclusive arena"[96] (Kultur- og likestillingsdepartementet, 2021). This statement reflects a commitment to inclusivity and emphasizes the transformative role that performing arts can play in building cultural literacy and promoting social inclusion.

The importance of performing arts in contributing to social cohesion is further supported by the *National Guidelines for Teacher Education in Practical and Aesthetic Subjects*, which emphasize: "Teacher education in practical and aesthetic subjects shall promote an understanding of cultural diversity and contribute to the development of intercultural competence among students"[97] (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021). These guidelines highlight the significant role that educators play in fostering cultural literacy through performing arts education, providing a foundation for students to appreciate and understand cultural diversity.

8.2.4 Policy Support for Cultural Literacy through Performing Arts Education

The policy frameworks appear to provide foundational support for cultural literacy through performing arts, but there are notable gaps. While the *Culture Act 2007* and educational strategy documents emphasize the importance of broad cultural participation, there is limited specificity regarding the mechanisms for integrating performing arts into the broader educational curriculum to achieve intercultural competence. The *Creativity, engagement and exploration* (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019) document, for example, underscores the value of creative subjects but lacks explicit strategies for leveraging these subjects to enhance intercultural learning or systematically address cultural diversity.

The *National Guidelines for Teacher Education in Practical and Aesthetic Subjects* (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021) highlight the necessity of preparing teachers to engage with cultural diversity (see above). This demonstrates an awareness of the importance of cultural

[96] "Barn og unge må aktivt kunne delta i kunst- og kulturlivet på eigne premissar. Kulturtilbodet skal leggje til rette for gode møteplassar som byggjer fellesskap og er ein inkluderande arena" (Kultur- og likestillingsdepartementet, 2021).

[97] "Lærerutdanningen i praktiske og estetiske fag skal fremme forståelse for kulturelt mangfold og bidra til at studentene utvikler interkulturell kompetanse" (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021).

education; however, the guidelines fall short of providing concrete frameworks to ensure effective implementation in classrooms.

One critical limitation identified is the lack of targeted initiatives aimed at ensuring equitable access to performing arts education across different demographic groups. Although there is a general emphasis on participation, the absence of structured programs or incentives to include marginalized communities suggests a potential barrier to achieving the intended inclusivity.

Another issue is the limited articulation of the role of educators and cultural practitioners in fostering cultural literacy through performing arts. The success of performing arts education in promoting cultural literacy and intercultural competence largely depends on the educators' ability to facilitate meaningful cultural exchanges. However, Norwegian policies provide minimal guidance on professional development or capacity building for educators to effectively use performing arts as a tool for intercultural learning. A more robust framework that includes training and resources for educators could enhance the potential impact of performing arts education on cultural literacy.

The *Act on Primary and Secondary Education 2024 (Education Act)* acknowledges the importance of inclusivity in education: "Education shall provide insight into cultural diversity and show respect for individual beliefs. It shall promote democracy, equality, and scientific thinking"[98]. However, while the act stresses inclusivity and cultural understanding, it does not explicitly recognize the performing arts as a means of achieving cultural literacy or intercultural competence. Incorporating performing arts into the curriculum as an explicit tool for fostering these competencies could significantly enhance the inclusivity and cultural understanding envisioned by the act.

Furthermore, the *White Paper No. 8 (2007–2008) – A Cultural Rucksack for the Future* (Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs, 2008) emphasizes the importance of providing students with access to high-quality cultural experiences through initiatives like the Cultural Rucksack program. This initiative aims to introduce students to diverse cultural forms, including performing arts, and foster an appreciation for cultural heritage. It explicitly states: "All students shall have access to a varied cultural offering of high quality, regardless of where they live"[99] (Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs, 2008). This commitment to providing equitable cultural opportunities supports the broader goals of cultural literacy and inclusion, although the focus remains more on access rather than on integrating these experiences into intercultural competence development.

8.3 Conclusions and Reflections

The analysis of Norwegian cultural and educational policy documents reveals a recognition of the potential of performing arts to foster cultural literacy, intercultural competence, inclusion, and social cohesion. However, while there is an implicit acknowledgment of these roles, ex-

[98] "Opplæringa skal gi innsikt i kulturelt mangfald og vise respekt for den enkelte si overtyding. Ho skal fremje demokrati, likestilling og vitskapleg tenkjemåte" (opplæringslova, 2024).

[99] "Alle elevar skal ha tilgang til eit variert kulturtilbod av høg kvalitet, uavhengig av kvar dei bur" (Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs, 2008).

plicit frameworks and mechanisms to systematically leverage performing arts for these purposes are often lacking. The policies provide a strong foundation in terms of promoting broad cultural participation and inclusivity, but gaps remain in the specific integration of performing arts into curricula and targeted initiatives to ensure equitable access for marginalized communities.

There is also a notable absence of explicit definitions for key concepts such as cultural literacy, intercultural competence and social cohesion. This ambiguity can lead to varied interpretations among stakeholders, which in turn affects the consistency and effectiveness of policy implementation.

Overall, while the policies analysed provide a supportive environment for cultural engagement, more focused efforts are needed to harness the full potential of performing arts as tools for fostering cultural literacy and in turn social cohesion. This includes targeted initiatives, capacity building for educators, and more explicit policy guidelines that emphasize the role of the arts in intercultural dialogue and inclusion.

8.3.1 Findings in Light of the Theoretical Framework

The findings of this analysis can be contextualized within the broader theoretical framework of cultural literacy and intercultural competence. The d@rts literature review (Mortimer et al., 2024) highlights the role of performing arts as a powerful medium for cultural learning, identity formation, and fostering social cohesion. Performing arts provide opportunities for individuals to engage with diverse cultural narratives, thereby enhancing their understanding of both their own culture and that of others. This aligns with the concept of cultural literacy as the ability to interpret and engage with cultural meanings, practices, and expressions.

The policy documents analysed reflect an understanding of these roles, particularly in the emphasis on participation in cultural activities, creativity, and well-being. However, the lack of explicit mechanisms for integrating these elements into educational and cultural programming suggests a gap between theoretical ideals and practical implementation. The theoretical framework emphasizes the importance of structured and intentional approaches to cultural education, where performing arts are systematically used as tools for fostering intercultural competence. The Norwegian policies, while supportive, fall short of providing these structured approaches, which limits their effectiveness in achieving the broader goals of cultural literacy and social cohesion.

The ambiguity of key concepts, such as “cultural literacy,” “inclusion,” and “social cohesion,” found in the policy analysis is also evident within the literature review (Mortimer et al., 2024). In both, these terms often either lack precise definitions or are defined in different ways, leading to varied interpretations that impact the coherence and application of cultural literacy initiatives. Mortimer et al. (2024) argue that achieving genuine social cohesion and cultural literacy requires frameworks that explicitly define these concepts and incorporate diverse perspectives, including indigenous knowledge and decolonial approaches. This alignment suggests that both policy and literature would benefit from a more coherent approach, ensuring consistent understanding and inclusive practices across cultural contexts.

Additionally, the concept of democratic engagement, which is highlighted in several policy documents, aligns with the theoretical notion that cultural literacy is not only about cultural understanding but also about active participation in the cultural and civic life of society. This connection between cultural engagement and democratic participation is an important aspect of the theoretical framework that is partially reflected in the policy documents but could be further strengthened through more explicit initiatives and programs.

8.3.2 Decolonial Perspective

From a decolonial perspective, the analysis reveals both strengths and limitations in the Norwegian policy documents. The emphasis on inclusivity, cultural heritage, and the recognition of minority cultures, such as those of the Sami people and other national minorities, reflects an awareness of the importance of cultural diversity and the need to address historical injustices. The *Briefing Note – Truth and Reconciliation – Pillar 3: Culture and Cultural Heritage* (Sámediggi, 2024), for example, acknowledges the impact of historical assimilation policies on the Sami and emphasizes the need for cultural revitalization as part of the reconciliation process. This aligns with decolonial principles that call for the recognition and restoration of marginalized cultures and the addressing of historical wrongs.

However, the policies often lack a deeper decolonial critique of the structures and power dynamics that have historically marginalized certain cultural groups. While there is an emphasis on cultural preservation and inclusion, there is little discussion on how existing power structures within cultural and educational institutions may continue to perpetuate inequalities. A decolonial perspective would call for a more critical examination of these structures and the implementation of policies that actively work to dismantle them.

Furthermore, the focus on cultural participation and access, while important, does not fully address the need for agency and empowerment of marginalized communities. Decolonial perspectives emphasize the importance of giving voice and agency to those who have been historically silenced. In this regard, the policies could benefit from more explicit initiatives that empower marginalized groups to not only participate in cultural activities but also to shape and lead cultural narratives. This includes creating spaces for minority and indigenous communities to have greater control over cultural programming and decision-making processes.

In conclusion, while the Norwegian policies reflect a commitment to cultural diversity and inclusion, a decolonial perspective reveals the need for more transformative approaches that address underlying power dynamics and promote true agency and empowerment for marginalized communities. By incorporating these decolonial principles, the policies could more effectively promote cultural literacy, intercultural competence, and social cohesion in a way that is equitable and just for all cultural groups in Norway.

8.4 Commentaries

8.4.1 Comment from the Finnish Consortium Member University of Jyväskylä

The Norwegian policy analysis focuses on educational, cultural and other policies given by both governmental and non-governmental actors. Three of the documents, in particular, directly focus on practical and aesthetic subjects at various levels of education from early childhood education to teacher training. These documents highlight the significance of art education, including performing arts education, and thus give strong national-level support for developing these contents in educational institutions.

The analysis shows that in the documents, cultural literacy is primarily discussed implicitly by using terms such as cultural and historical awareness, cultural knowledge and competence, intercultural competence, and cultural appreciation. Based on the analysis, the emphasis is slightly more on understanding and interpreting various meanings and expressions than on producing them. However, creativity is one of the core notions in the documents' discussions on arts education, which makes a clear reference to active construction of meanings. Moreover, practicing performing arts together implies sharing and exchanging meanings.

Based on the analysis, some of the policies recognize the potential of performing arts to unite people across diverse backgrounds by fostering shared experiences. This refers to the role of performing arts in developing competences for appreciating diversity and operating in a constructive manner in the context of diversity. However, the analysis points out that the role of performing arts education in this context is not addressed in a systematic way in the documents.

According to the analysis, the transformative potential of the arts is acknowledged at least in some of the policies. They underline that education needs to offer children and young people opportunities for active engagement in cultural production. Education through arts can develop critical reflection and democratic participation, and cultural activities provide schooling in civic participation and democracy. Arts education thus supports students' agency at school and beyond. Equal and inclusive participation, in turn, can foster participants' sense of belonging and contribute to making communities and societies more cohesive. Cultural activities can also provide an inclusive arena for addressing historical injustices and existing structures and power dynamics creating inequality.

The emphasis on participation is crucial, but it needs to be asked: participation in what? Often the focus of educational and minority policies remains on the individual or community level. While some of the documents analyzed here do stress the importance of participation of minorities in public decision-making processes, the analysis concludes that more attention should be paid to opportunities of marginalized population groups to shape and lead cultural narratives and have control over cultural programming and decision-making processes.

While the analysis brings forth that the documents do not always name demographic groups that the policies are expected to concern, some groups are explicitly discussed, perhaps more so than in the policy documents from Finland. Importantly, the analysis notes how the docu-

ments sometimes discuss preservation and revitalization of minority cultures without connecting them to intercultural exchange and dialogue. Such discourses do not advance the active role of minorities and marginalized groups in society but instead label their position as separate. The analysis makes another important remark that community-based organizations and non-governmental entities working closely with minority, marginalized and indigenous groups should have a more central role in policies: in addition to formal and institutional channels, more flexible and grassroots-level approached are needed.

The question about the central actors entwines with the question of access and participation. The analysis brings forth that a common goal in the policies is to broaden access to cultural activities, and this is conceived as a way of enhancing inclusion. However, the analysis points out that the mechanisms for ensuring that marginalized groups benefit equitably are not well articulated. The actors closer to the grassroots may have the required competences for enabling broad, equal and active cultural participation as well as supporting various groups in producing citizen-driven cultural practices. Such actors should be involved in designing policies, and they should also have secure resources for their activities, but based on the analysis, this is not vocal in the documents.

8.4.2 Comment from the Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts (Norsk kulturskoleråd)

We are an organisation that represents Norwegian municipalities as owners of municipal schools of music and performing arts. Our activities include advocacy, guidance, competence development for schools and municipalities, as well as the provision of statistics and other relevant support. Furthermore, the Council is responsible for the national Framework Plan for the Schools of Music and Performing Arts, which serves as an advisory document for municipalities.

The analyses in this chapter (as well as chapter 17) highlight how the performing arts can foster cultural literacy and promote social inclusion. Municipal schools of music and performing arts can utilise relevant policy documents to work toward these goals. Through their own Framework Plan, these schools can complement the primary school curriculum by offering focused practice sessions and opportunities for artistic performance. This goes far beyond the notion of “after-school music.” It represents a comprehensive arts education programme that sharpens pupils’ creativity, critical thinking, and cultural insight — all of which are core aims of the national primary school curriculum. National laws, EU guidelines, and the d@rts framework can serve as valuable tools for quality assurance and planning.

By aligning their work with the competence aims outlined in the Framework Plan, municipal arts schools can demonstrate their contribution to interdisciplinarity, inclusion, and democratic participation. In short, the municipal school of music and performing arts is not merely a venue for extracurricular lessons. It is a vital part of the local educational ecosystem, offering a coherent and structured pathway in the arts. By offering both broad introductions and opportunities for deep artistic engagement, the municipal arts schools help primary schools meet cultural and social learning objectives. At the same time, they enhance pupils’ well-being, motivation, and cultural awareness — benefitting both individuals and the wider community.

In light of these remarks, we find that the descriptions and analyses in the report are in line with our understanding of how the field is organised and operates.

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9. Serbia

Ivan Pravdić, Milan Vračar & Svjetlana Pravdić

During the 1950s, each municipality had to organize a “social-cultural community” (*društveno kulturna zajednica*). Wherever a post office was, a culture centre had to be established. In recent years, some of these spaces have lost their cultural use, but in most municipalities, they actively gather people to create theatre, play and sing music, perform folk dances and recite poetry.

In the region of Vojvodina only, where around 2 million people live, 250,000 amateurs are creatively included in society through 1,800 organizations involving visual arts, dance, theatre and music (Susav Serbia, 2019). This means that every 8th inhabitant is creatively engaged in community. These organisations connect through gatherings and competitive festivals of theatre, folk dances, traditional music and choirs, in age categories of younger primary schoolers (7 to 10 years old), older primary schoolers (11 to 14 years old), high schoolers (15 to 18 years old), and adults. Ethnically different yet usually mixed artistic and cultural organisations gather and compete. For example, at this year’s festival of amateur theatres of Vojvodina, out of 10 performances, the 1st and the 3rd place (and the participation in state competition) were won by Slovak theatres that performed in minority Slovak language. Around 42,000 Slovaks live in Serbia – roughly 0,66% of Serbia population and 2% of the population in Vojvodina (Republički zavod za statistiku, 2023). The plays presented were based on the texts of world classics, domestic classics and contemporary domestic texts. They are mostly comedies and are regularly performed in front of an audience. Topics include issues of feminism, family breakdown, identity politics, economic exploitation, unhealthy ambitions, personal and social violence, eroticism and war. This level of inclusion was the direct consequence of the policy where municipalities had the autonomy to create programs with local people who expressed their own needs and ideas.

Unfortunately, Serbia's cultural policies do not reflect their reality. The cultural policy instruments remain abstract with regard to the reality of peoples’ needs, and the realities of specific cultures and sub-cultures lifestyles. Strategy without an understanding of what obstacles are (such as economical, ecological and colonizing/exploitative by investment capital), only propagates its goals, thus making policies irrelevant and subjected to irony and rejection. These written strategies can fulfil criteria they are written to satisfy, but their application is a complex matter. Local communities level policies differ from state policies, especially when it comes to small communities, since they often include and valuate opinion and research of local communities. According to the research conducted by the Institute for the Study of Cultural Development (2010), most citizens rated the cultural offerings in their cities as insufficiently diverse. The study identified significant differences between different social groups and proposed that this indicates a need for more inclusive approaches in cultural policy (Institute for the Study of Cultural Development, 2010, p. 22). While individual artists have been using arts to talk about human rights, equality, inclusion, like Festival of Arts and Human Rights organized by Dah Theatre, these themes are not connected to artistic practices in the documents analysed here.

Serbia has a strong tradition of community-based amateur arts that already foster social cohesion, intercultural exchange, and active participation across diverse communities. However, this existing cultural potential is only partially reflected in national policy documents, which recognise inclusion and diversity in principle but rarely connect them explicitly to the transformative role of performing arts and cultural literacy.

9.1 The Law on National Councils of National Minorities

The Law on National Councils of National Minorities outlines the roles and responsibilities of these councils. This made a framework for national minorities councils, authorizing them to manage cultural programs and activities and establish educational institutions. The words “inclusion” and “cultural literacy” are not mentioned, but the world “cultural” and “culture” are mentioned over 30 times. The word “equality” is mentioned 8 times, mostly in context of voting and referring to “equality between members of a national minority and citizens belonging to the majority population” (The Government of Serbia, n.d., p.4)

Serbia's adoption of the Law on National Councils of National Minorities demonstrates a commitment to upholding minority rights, a fundamental aspect of EU accession criteria. Specifically, this aligns with the EU's expectations under Chapter 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights) and Chapter 26 (Education and Culture), which emphasize the protection of minority rights and multiculturalism, which is the European Parliament's resolution of 11 March 2015.

9.2 Strategy-making of National Councils of National Minorities in Serbia as a Tool of Community Building

In 2023, “Strategy-making of National Councils of national minorities in Serbia as a tool of community building” by ENTAN (European Non-Territorial Autonomy Network) was published, underlining that the state must take an active role in training national minority councils (Beretka, 2023) However, ENTAN is not NGO, but a funding agency under the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) framework. This document also emphasizes that “the official and shadow reports are equally important, indicating that undertaking fieldwork by the councils themselves and affiliated organisations (e.g. educational, cultural institutions co-founded or NGOs supported by the councils) or persons (e.g. external consultants, individual community organisers) is necessary” (Beretka, 2023, p. 6). This document fails to include words such as “inclusion”, “equality”, “cultural literacy”, but it criticizes “all-inclusive measures equally applicable to all national minorities”, emphasizing the limitations of existing national minority strategy in Serbia.

9.3 National Strategy for the Youth 2015–2025; 2023–2030

The National Strategy for the Youth (2015–2025) was published by Government of Serbia, but with contributions from various stakeholders, including NGOs. The strategy emphasizes the development of aesthetic competences and creativity among young people, supporting non-formal education and informal learning in culture and the arts.

In this 76-page long document by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia (2015), music, dance and drama are not mentioned at all. Theatre is only mentioned in the devastating statistics of how many young people visit these institutions. Tolerance and solidarity are mentioned only 5 times. Culture appears more than once on every page, but diversity is not mentioned even once. Interculturality is mentioned a single time as intercultural learning:

> Expected results and planned implementation activities:
>
> Programs of work with young people on socio-cultural, religious, sexual and other differences have to improve:
>
> Define guidelines that will improve work programs with young people on socio-cultural, religious and other differences;
>
> Support training programs for teachers and youth workers on socio-cultural, religious and other differences;
>
> Support research, activities and programs that include the most common stereotypes and prejudices in society and find ways for young people to overcome/suppress them;
>
> Develop communication and cooperation programs between different social groups to which young people belong;
>
> Support peer education and intercultural learning programs that promote tolerance, understanding and anti-discrimination;
>
> develop integrative models of information that show minorities as part of a wider social group, not isolated. (Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia, 2015, p. 45)

Despite these clear and positive expected results, out of 37 competencies, not one is cultural, while democracy appears four times only. Inclusion is mentioned 80 times, while literacy exists merely as financial, informational and digital.

The new version of the document is from 2023 (2023–2030). The terms such as music, dance, drama, theatre are not explicitly mentioned in the strategy, but the term “culture” appears many times, primarily in the context of “cultural participation”, “cultural heritage”, but not related to artistic disciplines. “Diversity” is mentioned once in the context of promoting diversity and inclusion in youth policies. Again, word “literacy” is only mentioned within context of digital, financial and informational literacy, but not as “cultural literacy”. The word that is mostly present is “inclusion”, mentioned over 80 times, presenting strong emphasis on inclusive policies for youth.

The 2023–2030 National Youth Strategy maintains a strong focus on inclusion and youth participation. However, similar to the previous strategy, it lacks emphasis on cultural competencies and specific artistic disciplines. While words like “diversity”, “interculturality”, “tolerance”, “social inclusion” and “solidarity” are present, lack of words such as “cultural literacy” showcases the need for more comprehensive integration of cultural and artistic dimensions in youth policies.

9.4 Strategy for the Development of Adult Education in the Republic of Serbia

On 18 pages of the Strategy for the Development of Adult Education in the Republic of Serbia, dance, theatre, music are not mentioned at all – neither is equality. Openness is used only once in a social context, that education should be:

> *open to different social groups and population categories: the poor, refugees, adults with special needs, members of minority groups, long-term unemployed, young adults without qualifications, women*, older workers who face the risk of job loss, the highly educated who become unemployed, as well as other categories of highly educated adults who need vocational training improvement. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2006, p. 7)

Tolerance is mentioned only once in goals: "*understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity and the need for tolerance"* (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2006, p.11)**.** This is also the only culturally contextualised use of diversity in the document. The word "culture" is mentioned three times in this document, related to the "institutions of culture" as well as defining the adult educational strategy as "a call to create a culture of learning, social organizations and economies based on knowledge and the improvement of abilities and achievements adult people" (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2006, p. 2).

The word "dialogue" is used neither as social nor intercultural dialogue. Marginal is used in the following contexts:

"The basic function of these programs is the reduction of qualitative and quantitative imbalances between supply and demand on the labour market, i.e. improvement of access to the labour market or preparing people to return to the system of work. In addition, these programs have aim to reduce gender and generational differences and help specific categories of the population in monitoring structural changes (women, refugees, members of the military, special marginal and ethnic groups, etc.)" (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2006, p. 1)

Education of adults is directed to prevention of poverty and social marginalization. As an instrument for socio-economical transformation and development, the education of adults should prevent social exclusion and marginalization as well as foster social cohesion and sense of belonging and identity.

9.5 Law on Higher Education

On the 70 pages of the Law on higher education, dance, music, theatre and performance are not mentioned at all, neither is dialogue, interculturality, (social) inclusion, and tolerance.

The law outlines key principles for higher education, which reflects aspects of cultural competence. These include academic freedom, institutional autonomy, academic integrity, the integration of teaching with research, artistic and innovative activities, professional engagement, and collaboration with pre-university education.

The law aligns EU values, for example, with the "European system of higher education and improvement of academic mobility of teaching and non-teaching staff and students; participation of students in management and decision-making, especially concerning issues that are important for the quality of teaching; respect for humanistic and democratic values of national and European traditions and values of cultural heritage; respect for human rights and civil liberties, including the prohibition of all forms of discrimination" (Law on higher education, Art. 4).

Perhaps the mentioning of European values twice more than the national reflects a political prerequisite for the expected ideological values. Cultural policy has to remain open to other cultures, especially among multicultural countries: "Involvement in international culture and exchange is an essential element of a rich and confident national cultural life", as Matarasso and Landry (1999, p. 34) point out. On the other hand, a lack of ideological norms, no matter how important they are, shows some level of academic autonomy.

9.6 Regulations on Standards and Procedure for Accreditation of Study Programmes

In the 28-page long document on the Regulations on Standards and Procedure for Accreditation of Study Programmes, dance is not mentioned at all. Music is present only in connection with music faculties, drama the same, and theatre only as a space. Standard 2 defines the purpose of the study program, where we can find competencies together with the social context:

> The study program has a clearly defined purpose and role in the educational system, accessible to the public.
>
> 2.1 The purpose of the study program is to educate students for recognizable and clear professions and occupations. The study program ensures the acquisition of competencies that are socially justifiable and useful. (National Council of Higher Education, 2019, p. 8)

In the Instructions for applying standard 3, we can find what competencies are:

> 3.1 The goals of the study program include the achievement of competencies and academics skills as well as methods for their acquisition. Objectives may also include the development of creative abilities and the mastery of specific practical skills needed to perform the profession. (National Council of Higher Education, 2019)

Social or any kind of cohesion, social inclusion, tolerance, culture, diversity, respect, empathy, dialogue are not mentioned. However, the word communication can be found in "4. Competences":

> 4.1 By mastering the study program, the student acquires the following general abilities:
>
> - analysis, synthesis and prediction of solutions and consequences:
> - mastering research methods, procedures and processes;

- development of critical and self-critical thinking and approach;
- application of knowledge in practice;
- development of communication skills and dexterity, as well as cooperation with the wider social and international environment;
- professional ethics. (National Council of Higher Education, 2019, p.12)

However that is not surprising because it is a professional procedural, not an ideological text.

9.7 Strategy for the Development of Education and Upbringing in the Republic of Serbia until 2030

The Strategy for the Development of Education and Upbringing in the Republic of Serbia until 2030 was published by the Government of the Republic of Serbia in 2021. In this crucial 125-page document, dance, theatre, and drama are not mentioned, and music is present only through the terms “Music Education” and “Music School”, which reinforces the bureaucratic programmatic nature of the Strategy.

This document connects social inclusion and cultural literacy. It stresses the right to education and equality and availability of education for all children, students and adults, based on social justice and equal opportunities, without discrimination. Support is underlined for learners of Roma nationality, children with developmental disabilities and learning difficulties, children in a disadvantaged position, living in Roma settlements, from low socioeconomic families. It aims to improve access to quality education in rural areas and small towns must be improve especially for vulnerable groups.

The goal is an accessible, fair and open education system, which provides support for various vulnerable groups, such as students from families of low socio-economic status, children with developmental disabilities and disabilities and Roma population and among them especially girls. Ensuring that every child, regardless of origin, ethnicity, functional and psycho-social disabilities, gender and other personal characteristics, has access to quality and inclusive education can prevent segregation and prevent early school leaving. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021)

The Strategy itself was written upon EU policy platforms, including The Pillar of Social Rights of the EU and the corresponding Action Plan, The European Skills Agenda and The European Digital Strategy and Action Plan for Digital Education 2021–2027. It refers to the European area of higher education and the Bologna process and their underpinning values such as freedom of expression, autonomy of institutions and independent student associations. The Strategy also mentions EU’s strategic framework for Roma until 2030. Multi-sectoral instruments are introduced for promoting education and employment. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021)

The discourse of the strategy follows the policies designed at the European level. For example, the Reference Framework for Competences for Democratic Culture of the Council of Europe is also referred to (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021, p. 40). Moreover, most textbooks for primary and secondary schools are written by authors and published by publishers

from the European level. The Government and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development seek to foster quality education for all through openness, fairness, accessibility and democracy of education. However, democracy does not necessarily imply pluralism or diversity, which were not discussed in the Strategy. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021)

We can recognize the absence of pluralism and diversity also in the imperative of establishing one state distance learning in primary schools and another in high school (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021). Distance learning is recognized under Serbian law, as well as homeschooling, as long as they follow the national curriculum defined by the Ministry of Education. This law allows flexibility in education, accommodating to various needs and circumstances. Allowing only one online state primary and secondary school also opens the possibility of releasing (almost) all teachers from their jobs. This is putting the autonomy of education, as well as the developing expertise of teachers and professors, severely under threat, which is contra-productive for education (unless we plan for all education to be performed by AI). Actually, AI is part of the Strategy:

> […] improving the Standard of general cross-curricular competencies for the end of secondary education and upbringing by defining the role of artificial intelligence in cross-curricular competencies; development of teacher competencies, especially for a cross-curricular, multidisciplinary approach to teaching and learning. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021, p. 67)

Different competencies are mentioned in two different contexts: non-violence and information-communication-technology as a means of digital literacy. These competencies are more directed towards teachers than pupils.

One of the priorities is the prevention and protection of children from violence, including for example multi-sector (education, health, social policy, etc.) trainings on non-violent communication, tolerance for diversity, anti-discrimination, gender equality, constructive and non-violent education, positive discipline, child trafficking, recognizing the risk of violent extremism and prevention of violence against children with developmental disabilities. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021)

The strategy for the development of digital skills emphasizes the continuous improvement of digital competencies by aligning teaching and learning programs with 21st-century skills. The strategy for the development of the public information system involves learning media literacy and digital media literacy within formal education. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021)

The role of inclusion is highlighted, as indicated by the establishment of the Group for Social Inclusion (later the Group for Minority Education, Social Inclusion and Protection from Violence and Discrimination) in 2015, seeking to develop and coordinate the implementation of inclusive education (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021).

The notions on inclusivity proposed by the group include improving the accessible facilities for children and students with disabilities in regular schools and promoting inclusion and provision of quality education for them. In addition, the National Strategy for Youth aims at equal access to education to young people from vulnerable social groups. The support instruments include

programs for the prevention of early school leaving and identifying young people at risk of leaving school as well as developing training programs for teachers on the principles of inclusive education. Furthermore, the strategy for the social inclusion of Roma men and Roma women emphasizes full inclusion of children and young people from the Roma community in all education levels. It highlights mechanisms to fight against discrimination and achieve the conditions for the enjoyment of all minority rights for Romani population in the education system. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021)

Inclusivity is, as contrary to exclusivity, a notion repeated plenty of times. Criteria to monitor inclusivity defined in the document include "the number of employees in education and training who have improved their competencies for working in an inclusive environment; percentage of students with developmental disabilities included in regular primary education; percentage of students with developmental disabilities included in regular secondary education" (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021, p. 86). This can also be recognized by the need to recognize and measure the number of trainings for teachers and professional associates in schools aimed at raising their sensitivity and competence to recognize students with exceptional abilities within regular classes and regular school activities and the number of attendants in these trainings. Furthermore, measuring the number of model-institutions with good practice in working with students with exceptional abilities (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021) may lead to isolating highly talented children to special places, preparing talented children and later promoting them into some level of 'elite' which would be and feel like being objectively separated from all others. This is also related to dilemmas of cultural policy concerning the choice between prioritizing cultural democracy or democratization of culture. Should we make culture and education affordable and accessible to everyone or rather empower other groups, value their cultural expression and let them define culture and education on their own terms?

9.8 Strategy for the Development of Culture in Republic of Serbia from 2020 to 2029

In the 112-page Strategy for the Development of Culture in Republic of Serbia from 2020 to 2029, crucial to the cultural policy of Serbia, dance is mentioned 48 times, music 30, theatre 75, but not as a means for social and political agendas. Individuality is not mentioned at all, while equality is mentioned 20 times (15 time as equality of all citizens, and 5 as gender equality). Pluralism is mentioned once, where it is recognized as already present in Serbia's multi-polar identity: "The priorities and goals proposed in the Strategy are based on a precise analysis of the present conditions in the culture of the Republic of Serbia, respecting its identity plurality and development potentials" (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2020, p. 9).

Interculturality is mentioned 5 times. The first time relates to the definition of the domains of culture, among which intercultural dialogue is one "priority interdepartmental areas of culture, recognized in the provisions of the Law on Culture are: education in culture; culture in education; for life learning; cultural tourism; cultural rights; intercultural dialogue; scientific research; and international cooperation" (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2020, p. 38). This means that cultural literacy is discussed implicitly.

When it comes to the relationship between the culture and education sectors, the long-term goal is the next one:

> the development of culture in education and education in culture through strategic linking culture and education, and their networking. Interdepartmental cooperation in this field is important because development of creativity and critical thinking, better acquaintance with one's own culture tradition, intercultural dialogue and respect for different cultures and identities communities as well as individuals. That is why it is especially important to emphasize the importance of development and establishing cultural roles of the school. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2020, p. 39)

Serbian cultural identity is proclaimed as "basis for intercultural and transcultural cooperation" (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2020, p.31), which is a core area of cultural literacy. Interculturality appears also in connection of adjusting cultural policy with UNESCO and Creative Europe, who are actively in financial support for domestic cultural organizations, including public and civil sector (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2020).

Inclusion appears 39 times in few important contexts (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2020):

- "of the special wealth of our country, which includes both the creativity of national minorities and all social groups, as well as the possibility of different identity choices";
- "enhancement of mutual understanding and equal inclusion of vulnerable groups in cultural life";
- "opening public discourse and cultural institutions towards inclusive practices and social sensitive groups".

An additional mentioning describes:

> The importance of the civil sector in this domain is great, because it plays a key role in mapping of needs and development of those cultural activities that are not in public programs from the institutions of culture. The civil sector contributes to the development of innovative approaches to the sensitive groups, opens space for dialogue, advocating inclusive policies and practices. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2020, p. 56)

That makes inclusivity a main, or more precisely the,

> […] special goal of encouraging and developing production in culture and equal participation of citizens in cultural life is oriented towards continuous support for contemporary cultural creativity, creation of a stimulating environment, favorable and stimulating conditions for creativity in culture and the inclusion of as many members of the social community as possible in cultural life. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2020, p. 77)

The term tolerance appears two times, firstly: "Creativity is of special value in ethnically mixed environments of national minorities, which contributes to the diversity of culture and the improvement of dialogue and tolerance in society" (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2020,

p. 84). Linking tolerance with dialogue and diversity brings it close to cultural literacy understood a dialogic practice. Furthermore, the role of creative activity for these notions is here recognized.

The second time tolerance is mentioned is together with multiculturalism, in a very specific context:

> Objectives of improving the restoration of cultural heritage protection in the area of AP (Autonomous province) Kosovo and Metohija are: Maintaining comparative and equal cultural identities as a foundation for pacification tension and creation of conditions for strengthening regional stability, in accordance with European principles of tolerance and multiculturalism. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2020, p. 72)

Activity around cultural heritage is here presented as a way of building connections and understanding, which aligns with the understanding of cultural literacy as building bridges and the potential of cultural activity to contribute to this.

Democracy is present 4 times in a neutral context, while discrimination, migrants and other sensitive groups appear together in mentioning of 'Strategy of Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination', where nine sensitive groups are singled out in particular, national minorities, women, LGBT persons, persons with the disabled, the elderly, children, refugees, internally displaced persons and others at risk, migrant groups, members of small religious communities and religious groups and persons whose state of health can be the basis of discrimination (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2020, p.105).

This strategy is included in the drafting of other government documents concerning culture.

9.9 Law on Culture

Before the Law on Culture (2021), there was no such governmental strategic document. It was preceded by a draft strategy of development of the culture of the Republic of Serbia from 2017 to 2027, which was never put into further legal procedure because of conflicting public debate. The accepted document did not go through public debate.

In the 35 pages of the Law on Culture, dance, theatre and music are mentioned only in the definition of activities and not in the context of methodological connection with social values. Interculturalism, democracy and diversity are mentioned together in the principles:

Inclusion and tolerance are present in contribution to the humanistic values of the social community, such as "solidarity, tolerance, inclusion, education, environmental awareness" (Law on Culture, 2021, p. 4).

This very short and general document enables many interpretations and diverse uses, yet the main problem is who decides to whom to give money for projects, especially because of Serbia's extremely low budget for culture (less than 1%) out of an extremely low budget for the state (less than 20bn euros total).

9.10 Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women in Republic of Serbia for the Period 2022–2030

Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women in the Republic of Serbia for the Period 2022–2030 does not mention dance in its 108 pages, which is unusual because it is an integral part of Roma culture. The same applies to theatre and performance. Music appears only two times, although not in a very positive context – i.e. as a description of what Roma people mostly do. The insistence that a part of the autochthonous culture of the Roma, which is music, is belittled, shows that the Strategy missed the medium and therefore the message.

The goal of the strategy states:

> With this measure, it is necessary to strengthen the capacities of Roma men and Roma women through cultural, informative and educational activities that will increase awareness of rights and access to rights and services, primarily in the public sector, and strengthen the cultural and national identity and self-awareness of Roma men and Roma women. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2022, p. 74)

Although as a concrete step it does mention:

> In this process, the recognition of significant Roma men and women in the field of cultural activity and art is very important. Also, to preserve the cultural identity and cultural heritage, it is necessary to establish cultural institutions, modelled on the existing institutions of other national minorities (institutes, cultural centres, etc.). (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2022, p. 28)

While this sounds positive, Roma people do not live cohesively but are mixed in almost all communities. The below is already taking place:

> Given that it has already been established that the potential of Roma men and women's culture, as part of European and Serbian culture, should be used in the existing legal and institutional conditions as a means to overcome prejudices against Roma men and women, the use of existing capacities and opportunities is also a significant direction in which it is necessary to plan activities for the preservation and promotion of Roma culture as an integral part of the cultural scene of the Republic of Serbia. In this sense, it is good to examine the possibilities of Article 12 of the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities, which states: Museums, archives and institutes for the protection of cultural monuments founded by the Republic, autonomous provinces or local self-government units will ensure the presentation and protection of cultural and historical heritage of special importance for national minorities in the territory for which they are responsible. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2022, p. 5)

Although 'representative councils' are not created by communities themselves but are appointed by NGOs or the ruling political parties, the strategy states that representatives of their

national councils participate in deciding on the ways of presenting cultural and historical heritage (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2022). The process of making this happen is already active in Serbia in many municipalities:

> Cultural institutions whose founder is a local self-government unit, which in the sense of the law governing local self-government is considered a nationally mixed local self-government unit, will provide their work programs with contents, measures, activities or manifestations that preserve and promote the cultural identity and traditions of national minorities traditionally settled in its territory. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2022, p. 74)

What may be missing is a collective initiative from the Roma community to participate as a group identity. One aspect to this is that Roma individuals who pursue education often come to identify more with Serbian or European identities rather than a distinct Roma identity. Promoting change from 'above' or 'outside' to some group, to some social, national or cultural identity is oppression and shows an imperialistic colonial mentality no matter how enlightened, civilized or helpful it represents itself.

Cultural competencies are mentioned once:

> Through activities to this extent, it is necessary to improve the professional competencies of employees for working with Roma men and women, to improve their competencies for the implementation of measures and activities in the protection of the Roma population through the improvement of *culturally competent* practice in the social protection system, through attending accredited training, but also in other relevant ways. (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2022, p. 91)

Diversity, on the other hand, as well as cohesion are not mentioned at all, but inclusion appears more than 300 times, about three times on each page.

All human beings deserve equal opportunities to explore and develop their noble interests and contribute to the society in individual and collective ways, as well as to appreciate, respect and accept that our different personal and group views, beliefs and models of behaviours enrich us all.

9.11 Non-governmental Policies

Unofficial policies on culture and arts tend to be merely 'wish lists' or short manifestos that copy/paste certain ideological discourses. Their implementations are non-binding to anyone, and their audiences mostly consist of people who wrote those policies, and maybe those who financed their creation. One exception could be the Strategic Plan of the Association Independent Cultural Scene of Serbia 2021–2025.

Even though they are not a policy-making body, the Gay Lesbian Info Centre plays a significant role in promoting LGBTQI+ rights. According to their website, their work mostly includes analysis of LGBT media content. They also organize Merlinka International Queer Film Festival and publish the Optimist magazine, contributing this way to cultural literacy. Alongside their

activity, Pride in Belgrade encourages institutions to do their job and demand, such as “Education for youth about sexual orientation and gender identity, recognition of the LGBT+ community in local action plans, adoption of Law on same-sex unions, adoption of the Law on gender identity and the rights of intersex persons and an improvement in services available to trans people”. (Pride, 2025, para.2) They have also published the book “From Demedicalisation to Same-Sex Marriage: A Contemporary LGBT History of the Western Balkans”, which is not really a policy or document, but rather a book written to mark the 30th anniversary of the removal of homosexuality from the World Health Organization list of diseases (Gavrić, Čauševič, 2021, p. 173). Even though their demands have stayed the same throughout the years and the implementation of the law hasn't happened, this initiative is an important instrument of cultural policy and policy in general for society's inclusivity, cultural participation and equality. In Serbia, national minority councils have the authority to participate in decision-making in culture and education, developing strategies to preserve and promote their culture, history and practices.

Furthermore, there have been Roma Education Initiatives by various NGOs in promoting Roma education. Most prominent is The Roma Education Fund, which has published reports on improving educational outcomes for Roma communities. On their website, many documents related to the integration of the Roma population are available to the public.

Strategic plan of the association of the independent cultural scene of Serbia 2021–2025 sounds like an important document. However, it falls short of even mentioning any art disciplines. Independent Cultural Scene of Serbia is defined as a:

> […] collaborative platform of organizations, initiatives and informal groups in the field of contemporary art practice that represents the understanding of culture as social and accessible to all good, develops practices of solidarity, inclusiveness, cooperation, participation and culture building community and works to improve working conditions in culture, especially in civil society sector in culture. (Asocijacija nezavisna kulturna scena Srbije, 2021, para.1)

9.12 Conclusions and Reflections

9.12.1 Findings in Light of the Theoretical Framework

Through literary review and the lens of combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology, an analysis of the concepts *of “cultural literacy,” “performing arts,”* and *“social cohesion and inclusion”* was conducted about *current cultural and educational policies and curricula* (Mortimer et al., 2024). At the beginning of the process, the absence of the term *“cultural literacy”* in Serbian education and cultural policy documents reflected broader limitations in participative cultural practices and cultural policy instruments. While the term itself is missing, related goals, such as multicultural understanding, tolerance, and inclusion are occasionally, but not directly related to arts education.

While analyzing these policies alongside artistic practices, it is crucial to consider cultural policy dilemmas, particularly around ambiguity and ideological bias. Integration and inclusion policies themselves often face a paradox: implementing diversity can also risk fragmentation and

hierarchies if not carefully balanced. “Policy-makers are not expected to choose between extremes, but rather to consider where their current approach lies or should lie on the spectrum of cultural options”, as Matarasso et al. point out (1999, p. 22).

Organizations such as 5A3Art**,** Center for Drama in Education and Art (CEDEUM**)**, and Bitef Theatre’s educational programs offer accredited and accessible extracurricular initiatives, promoting artistic participatory practices and intercultural learning. While Pride is not a policy-making body per se, their demands were noted by some politicians, giving a hope for better future for LGBTQI+ communities and their rights. Making an official strategic plan and recommendation of the Law on same-sex unions, Law on gender identity and the rights of intersex persons would be a crucial step in proceeding and developing further instruments of cultural policy. From work of such organizations, we can see the difference in state level and local level policies.

9.12.2 Decolonial Perspective

Everything that tends to be under the guidance of the state is more prone to corruption than individual and small group endeavours. Strong anticolonial and emancipatory ideas and practices exist in people more than in institutions. Although Serbia is considered to be run by conservative politicians, even right-wing, the vast majority of schoolbooks are printed by foreign publishers. In the last almost 200 years, university programs were defined by historical colonizers of Serbia. Therefore, we need to be careful of the “recolonisation” of dominant groups and the decolonisation of minorities.

For instance, we can take a decolonial look at the following example of policy discourses: “The diversity within the Roma national community is also taken into account, in order to address the specific challenges of women, children, LGBT+ persons, young people, the elderly and others in an appropriate manner” (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2022, p.3). Is this a colonialist policy of divide and rule, where the unifying identity is fragmented and the divisions radicalized, which destabilizes communities and cultural uniqueness and authenticity? Why are we unwilling to accept Romas’ high birth rate and teenage motherhood as Romas’ identity? Why don’t we accept Romas’ non-compliance to ‘common’ social norms and public education (these facts were pointed out as disturbing in the Strategy)? Does the insistence on inclusion contradict the preservation of cultural specificity and authenticity? Can we recognize that proclaimed inclusivity reveals a colonising mindset that we wish them to accept our system of values, and that we are disrespecting and belittling Roma’s social, historical and economic/ecological function? However, in the light of these questions, we also need to think about diversity within the community itself, about individuals and the essence of Roma culture.

Many Roma individuals advocate for an intersectional understanding of identity, resisting both stereotypical and mainstream assimilation. Promoting change to minority groups might lead to interfering with their social, national and cultural identity. Through research, it was noted that there is a recognition of the Roma population's inclusion in Serbian education, but the integration of Roma literature is still very limited. There are efforts from NGOs, like the Roma Education Fund, but significant challenges in ensuring access to education for the Roma population still exist. The existing education seems to lack reflection of their own cultural heritage

and history, making it distant and unclear to their population. Strategy without an understanding of what obstacles are (and they are economical, ecological and colonizing/exploitative by investment capital), only propagates its goals, thus making policies irrelevant and subjected to irony and rejection. Any further inclusion policy should lack colonialist logic of control, fragmentation and hierarchy, and avoid stereotypical representation of any minority, accepting their values, principles and culture.

9.13 Commentaries

9.13.1 Comment from the German Consortium Member University of Cologne

The chapter presents a compelling analysis, particularly from a German perspective, given that Serbia has a much longer history of multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multilingual coexistence. This historical context informs a distinct approach to questions of diversity and social cohesion. The chapter is also noteworthy for its ideology-critical lens, offering a nuanced critique of the language used in official policy documents.

Rather than relying solely on frequency counts of terms such as *tolerance* or *inclusion*, the analysis demonstrates that a more sophisticated approach is required—one that attends to the ways in which such language may obscure rather than reveal substantive commitments. The chapter is marked by a keen sensitivity to empty rhetoric, superficial aspirations, and what is described as a "copy-paste" adoption of EU discourses without meaningful contextualization.

Importantly, the critique extends to a potential “colonial gesture” implicit in external demands for democracy and inclusion, particularly when the perspectives of minorities are marginalized or when local value diversity is overlooked. This is a significant observation that invites self-reflection within the dialoguing@rts project itself. It highlights the importance of genuine dialogue and mutual recognition as foundations for social cohesion, emphasizing that inclusion requires amplifying all voices and acknowledging existing power hierarchies.

9.13.2 Comment from the Practitioner Consortium Member Kulturanova

As an NGO, Kulturanova supports disadvantaged groups throughout many activities, including:

• Invisible Lives Project: An international project that aims to tell the stories of disadvantagedinalized groups, especially LGBTQI+ individuals. The project was supported by the European Commission through the Creative Europe progam and the City of Novi Sad.

• Gender Equality Generates Cultural Diversity: This project was supported by the UNESCO International Fund for Cultural Diversity, aiming to create preconditions for a fairer approach for women as creators of cultural expressions in Serbia.

• DROM: This is a theater project about the movement of Roma from Serbia to Germany. The Governments are discussing the political and economic consequences of these migrations,

but relatively little is done at the level of social education. The project has spawned collaboration between Per Aspera productions (Berlin, Germany), Kulturanova (Novi Sad, Serbia), Pro Progressione (Budapest, Hungary) and Roma artists. Through our activities, projects, and work, we realized difficult conditions faced by disadvantaged groups.

However, despite Kulturanova's ongoing commitment to promoting European values through various projects, political interest and engagement have remained notably low. Our hope has always been to contribute to a better future for all and to inspire policymakers to consider meaningful change. Unfortunately, the government's consistent lack of interest in cultural participation and the development of cultural literacy has made it clear that such efforts often fall to individuals and NGOs. While they may not hold formal policymaking roles, NGOs play a vital part in promoting social cohesion, amplifying the voices of marginalized communities, and building networks across diverse groups. Through their projects, they continue to foster intercultural understanding and connections.

The non-formal sector—especially NGOs, minority councils, and youth cultural organizations—has shown strong potential in developing participatory and inclusive methodologies. These initiatives demonstrate the transformative power of performing arts in engaging marginalized communities, fostering empathy, and cultivating active citizenship. Despite these successes, challenges persist. Many non-formal initiatives rely on project-based funding and face difficulties maintaining continuity and impact. Public funding is often sporadic or limited to infrastructure rather than program development. Strategic documents provide a supportive but fragmented policy landscape without operational frameworks.

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10. Uganda

Sylvia Antonia N. Nannyonga-Tamusuza

Uganda's performing arts education is shaped not only by governmental policies but also by advocacy statements promoted by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based groups. This review is double-edged. First, this review examines the interconnection of cultural literacy, performing arts education, social cohesion, and inclusion in policies established by the Government of Uganda and non-governmental organisations. Second, this review explores the contributions of various NGOs to the development and promotion of performing arts education, cultural literacy, social cohesion, and inclusion. Statements, such as mission statements and program strategies, function as informal yet influential educational policies. Third, some policies are not written documents; access to them is often through oral narrations, which are defined and owned by specific groups of people. The oral cultural policies illustrate the legitimacy of **indigenous knowledge systems** in decolonising literacy based on the exclusive ability to read and write. I will examine government policies first, then the contribution of NGOs to policy-like frameworks, before reviewing a proverb from Buganda, central Uganda, as an example of alternative literature that shapes cultural literacy and performing arts education.

10.1 Government Policies

The Government of Uganda's legal frameworks, which inform the policies addressing cultural literacy, social cohesion, and inclusion in the performing arts education, include Acts of Parliament, policy guidelines, rules, regulations, and strategic plans. Although some policies are not written documents, access to them is often through oral documentation, which is defined and owned by specific groups of people.

Uganda has a cultural diversity not only in ethnicities and languages but also in the performing arts (music, dance, drama/theatre, storytelling, spoken word, comedy, and film), also referred to as public entertainment. Uganda has sixty-five (65) ethnic groups with unique performing arts. The *Uganda National Cultural Policy* articulates this diversity through its definition of the performing arts as "dance, drama, music, theatre, motion pictures, opera, traditional sports and the marching arts such as brass bands" (Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, 2006, p. 8). The Department of Performing Arts and Film at Makerere University embraces this broad definition.

Due to this diversity, it is not possible to speak of a singular "Ugandan" culture. It is safer to talk of about the culture of/in/from Uganda. Besides, the historical foreign actors, who have continually reshaped and redefined Uganda's cultural landscape, complicate this cultural diversity. The British colonised Uganda between 1894 and 1962. Although it gained its independence in 1962, the colonial legacies continue to haunt not only education and cultural policies but also various aspects of the lives of the people of Uganda. Some policies are a rewrite of colonial policies; a case in point is *The Stage Plays and Public Performance Act,*

1943, and *The Stage Plays and Public Performance Rule 2019*, as will be presented later in this analysis.

General to all policies, "while the Constitution, policies and other laws provide a framework specifically outlining the roles, responsibilities and privileges of such institutions, these are not widely known or uniformly interpreted" (The Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda [CCFU], 2014, p. 3). Further, people can only be included if they have access to these policies. Indeed, to benefit from Uganda's legislative framework "the relevant laws and policies need to be easily accessible to the direct beneficiaries" (CCFU, 2014, p. 3). They are not accessible not only in terms of availability but also in the language in which these policies are written. All the policies are in English, meaning that only those trained to write and read English may have access to these policies, with their limitations in translating cultural nuances. Moreover, existing policies do not directly address cultural literacy, inclusion, and cohesion in the performing arts. This analysis considers four (4) related national policy documents, including *The Uganda National Culture Policy* (Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, 2006), *The Stage Plays and Public Entertainments Rule* (Ministry of Information and Communications Technology and National Guidance, 2019), the *National Intellectual Property Policy* (Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, 2019), and the *Uganda National Development Plan IV* (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 2024).

10.1.1 The Uganda National Culture Policy (2006)

While *the Uganda National Culture Policy* [UNCP] was reviewed in 2019, it has since remained in draft form. The 2006 version, authored by the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development in Uganda, is considered in this context. It aims to preserve and promote Uganda's diverse cultural heritage, including performing arts. As such, it speaks to fostering inclusion in a diverse country of 56 ethnic cultures.

It recognises that performing arts are vital to cultural heritage and development and advocates for promoting traditional and contemporary arts through education and community-based cultural initiatives. The contentious definitions of these terms notwithstanding, embracing the traditional and contemporary arts is an appreciation of the need to be inclusive. Older people tend to be attracted to traditional arts, while younger people in Uganda prefer contemporary arts.

Under the Cultural Policy Institutional Framework in Section 8, the Policy advocates for including cultural education, such as performing arts, in the educational institutional curriculum and cultural festivals (Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, 2006, p. 27), which nurtures cultural literacy among the population. This Policy enhances public awareness of Uganda's diverse cultural heritage, allowing people to appreciate the value of their traditions and those of others. At the same time, bringing cultural education to institutions where diverse groups of people converge enhances cohesion in diversity.

The National Cultural Policy advocates for the development and promotion of the performing arts (Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, 2006, Section 7.6) as a source of identity and a tool for sensitising and mobilising communities. One key intervention in this regard is promoting "performing arts in formal and informal institutions" (Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, 2006, Section 7.6.1).

The Uganda National Culture Policy is not explicit about the role of performing arts in promoting cultural tourism. However, the Policy implies cultural tourism in two of its interventions to improve the status of performing arts in Uganda, namely: "Ensure the preservation of traditional performing arts"; and "Build capacity of practitioners in business-related fields and Intellectual property rights." (Section 7.6.1, pp 23). It emphasizes the importance of preserving and showcasing both traditional and modern performing arts to attract tourists and generate income.

Furthermore, the Policy recognizes community musicians as key players in cultural transmission and performing arts education, primarily through informal and apprenticeship systems. It calls for the promotion of performing arts in both formal and informal settings, support for artists, and capacity building in business and intellectual property rights, as well as advocating for the establishment of "a mechanism to recognise and support performing arts/artists." This approach values community musicians as cultural educators and contributors to national development through music and performance.

10.1.2 The Stage Plays and Public Entertainments Rule (2019)

The Ministry of Information and Communications Technology and National Guidance authored *The Stage Plays and Public Entertainments Rule 2019*. It is primarily a cut-and-paste document, with a few reviews of the *Stage Plays and Public Entertainments Act 1943*, which the British colonizers authored. Some reviews include replacing the Broadcasting Council with the Uganda Communications Commission, established under the *Communications Act 2003*. This policy is a clear example of the continued colonial presence in Uganda. The gatekeeper is generally politically appointed here.

The Rule defines a stage play as "any tragedy, comedy, farce, opera, burletta, interlude, melodrama, dialogue, epilogue or other dramatic entertainment or any part of it" (Ministry of Information and Communications Technology and National Guidance, 2019, section 4, p. 2827). This definition is somewhat foreign to Uganda's context, as these terms typically refer to genres found in Britain rather than Uganda.

It requires permits to access stage plays and public entertainment, which are assessed based on the safety, health, and convenience of the audience and the performers. This Rule has the potential to be abused for political control.

Furthermore, there is a requirement to submit the script of the stage play and a description of the public entertainment to the Uganda Communications Commission. Section 2 (a, b, and c) explains the reason for this submission as follows: "(a) permits for performance of stage plays; (b) permits for staging public entertainments; and (c) advertising the performance of stage plays and exhibition of public entertainments." As part of the package for the performance and advertising permit application, the Communication Commission requires the applicant to submit a "certificate of Censorship by the Media Council" (Section 7(2)(d)).

Requiring prior approval of all scripts and granting authorities having the power to alter, reject, or revoke performance permits, the Act imposes a level of oversight that may constrain artistic freedom. Although the Act aims to ensure that all participants in the performance are safe,

these requirements risk undermining the Act's potential to control content, through the Commission's seizure of scripts or the abrupt cancellation of performances. This Act can lead to self-censorship, limiting the use of the performing arts as a platform for civic engagement and social commentary. In this case, there is a control of creativity, which results from improvisation, as the performances must adhere to the submitted script or description of the entertainment. Free improvisation defines most ethnic performing arts, and the restriction to scripted performance is a control over people's creativity.

Moreover, the Rule requires that if the stage play is in one of the ethnic languages, it must be translated into English, accompanied by a translation certification. It seems to be adhering to inclusion: "No person shall be excluded from the public performance or presentation of stage play on grounds of race, ethnic background, gender, religious or social beliefs" (Ministry of Information and Communications Technology and National Guidance, 2019, p. 2830). However, the requirement to translate the script into English limits access to staging plays to only those who can read and write in English.

10.1.3 National Intellectual Property Policy (2019)

The Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs authored the *National Intellectual Property Policy 2019* [NIPP]. It reviews the *Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act, 2006*, which protects the intellectual property of creators and owners of creative productions, including those in the performing arts. The act protects copyright for original works such as musical compositions, plays, and dance performances. The policy also outlines strategies for building the infrastructure and capabilities needed to help inventors and creative industries safeguard, enhance, and capitalise on their inventions and innovations (Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, 2019, p. 6).

It highlights the importance and benefits of public performance contracts in preventing the exploitation of creators, performers, or agents by ensuring their music, dramatic works, or dramatic-musical pieces are only performed publicly with fair compensation and proper recognition.

The policy emphasises the protection of cultural expressions and traditional knowledge, essential aspects of the performing arts. Securing the rights of artists and performers ensures that their works are protected from exploitation and misappropriation, thus promoting respect for cultural heritage and creativity.

Further, the policy fosters cultural literacy by ensuring that artists and the general public are educated on the importance of IP rights (Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, 2019, p. 32). Training and awareness programs help individuals understand how to protect and manage their creative works, promoting a more informed and culturally literate society.

10.1.4 Uganda National Development Plan IV (2024)

Although the *Uganda National Development Plan IV* [NDP IV] is not focused on performing arts, it offers insights into how performing arts promote cultural literacy, inclusion, and cohesion. The *NDP IV* categorizes the performing arts as a form of creative arts and recognizes

them as contributors to socio-economic development (Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, 2024, p. 43). It presents critical interventions, including strengthening the capacities of professionals within the creative industry. By enhancing the skills of professionals within the creative sector, the plan promotes cultural literacy by ensuring that individuals are well-versed in the diverse cultural practices and expressions that shape the creative economy.

Further, developing infrastructure that fosters the creative economy and offers shared facilities for those involved in cultural and creative industries. It promotes cohesion by creating spaces where different groups can exchange ideas and showcase their work. Additionally, it emphasizes that expanding access to financing tailored to the industry's needs is crucial.

Furthermore, the plan aims to enhance talent identification and skills development, ensuring the workforce can thrive in the ever-evolving cultural and creative industries. This level of support promotes inclusion by removing financial barriers that often prevent underrepresented groups from participating in the creative economy, thereby ensuring equal opportunities for all. Identifying and developing talent ensures that a diverse range of individuals, regardless of their background, have the chance to excel in the creative industries. The NDP IV fosters cultural literacy by enhancing understanding of various cultural forms and practices.

Moreover, the plan promotes the efficiency of leadership and institutional structures within the culture and creative industry to ensure better coordination and effectiveness. These efforts will collectively contribute to Uganda's more robust and sustainable creative economy (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 2024, p. 43).

10.2 Non-governmental Policies on Performing Arts Education

In contexts where national performing arts education policies are limited, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have come in as de facto cultural policymakers. I have identified two ways in which NGOs contribute to non-formal policies: 1) some NGOs contribute through research and generation of policy briefs; 2) Through their missions, visions, values, and activities, some NGOs define and implement non-formal policy frameworks that shape cultural life, participation, and artistic development in the communities they operate.

10.2.1 Cross-cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU)

The Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU) is a non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting the recognition of culture as vital for sustainable development, identity, and social cohesion. Through its policy briefs, CCFU advocates for the integration of performing arts—such as music, dance, and drama—into Uganda's education policy, highlighting their role in cultural preservation, civic engagement, and holistic learning. Some of them are reviewed here.

The ***"Citizenship: the role of the performing arts in Uganda"*** brief examines how the performing arts—traditionally integrated into the Performing Arts and Physical Education (PAPE) syllabus—encourage citizenship, teamwork, and cultural identity among young people. It highlights the reintroduction of PAPE in schools. It provides case studies involving institutions such

as the Ndere Foundation and Watoto Child Care Ministries, demonstrating how the formal and informal performing arts reinforce civic values.[100]

Another key document, the ***"Legal Instruments related to Culture and Cultural Institutions in Uganda"*** policy brief, presents the legal foundations that support the integration of the performing arts into educational policy. It emphasizes the role of cultural institutions and arts training as formal contributions to community empowerment and heritage preservation[101]

The brief titled ***"Support the Cultural Rights of Indigenous Minority Groups in the Ruwenzori Sub-Region"*** emphasizes the integration of indigenous cultural knowledge, including traditional music and dance, into educational programs. It argues for affirming cultural identity through classroom and community-based learning, thereby legitimizing traditional performing arts within formal curriculum structures.[102]

In its ***"Endangered Musical Heritage"*** brief, CCFU documents traditional musical practices of diverse ethnic groups. It underscores the need for policy interventions that support the documentation, inclusion in curriculum, and educational transmission of conventional music, essentially, the performing arts, before they are lost.[103]

Lastly, while not limited to the performing arts, the ***"Cultural Entrepreneurship Project"*** outlines how traditional music, dance, and drama can be leveraged by youth and women from indigenous communities for cultural expression and economic livelihood. This approach reinforces the value of performing arts education and encourages its support through culturally informed entrepreneurship programs.

These policy briefs collectively underscore the importance of the performing arts as a vital component of Uganda's cultural and educational framework. By linking cultural heritage with education policy, CCFU continues to champion a more inclusive, identity-driven, and socially empowering approach to learning.

10.2.2 Community-based Arts Non-governmental Organizations

NGOs have played a crucial role in shaping policy frameworks that promote the arts, cultural inclusion, and social cohesion, particularly in contexts where formal government policies are missing or inadequate. Through grassroots interventions, creative projects, and strategic advocacy, these NGOs not only provide art education but also help create spaces that facilitate access to diverse artistic cultures. The NGOs serve as field-based policy instruments that reflect how performing arts education can support social and emotional learning in crisis contexts.

[100] crossculturalfoundation.or.ug+10utafitionline.com+10researchgate.net+10.
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[103] https://crossculturalfoundation.or.ug/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Endangered-Musical-Heritage-the-A-case-of-the-Albertine-Graben-in-Uganda-%40CCFU2023-compressed.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

While Uganda contributes significantly to providing safety to people from several countries, including those from South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Sudan, among others, its policies on performing arts education are silent about refugees or immigrants. In this context, several NGOs have, through their visions, missions, and program activities, informally provided guidance that has shaped how the arts are accessed, taught, and utilized. These organizations go beyond delivering services; they introduce structured frameworks that influence social inclusion, healing, and educational practice through artistic engagement. Drawing on organizational reports and digital archives—sources often overlooked in academic discourse—this review examines how community-driven initiatives can informally serve as a form of cultural policy, particularly in humanitarian contexts where state intervention is limited.

An example is Sina Loketa (SINAL),[104] one of the refugee-led organizations operating in the Bidibidi Refugee Settlement. SINAL's mission is "to develop the creative capacities of refugee and host-community youth in northern Uganda. Through weekly music education and dance activities, we are working to unleash the creative potential of youth from all backgrounds, using music as a tool to build peace among the diverse ethnic populations in the region." Through its Bidi Bidi Performing Arts Centre, it runs a music program titled *Salaam*[105] (a Swahili word that means, all is well"), which it partners with Playing Change Foundation.[106] In this program, the youth (both refugee and host communities) are trained to use music and drama to promote healing and integration among displaced communities, fostering both emotional recovery and communal cohesion. The program also uses artistic practice to promote healing, build social cohesion, and encourage intercultural dialogue. Sina Loketa's mission demonstrates how performing arts education is integrated into broader goals of psychosocial recovery and community development. Such a program underscores the impact of arts-based programs on informal educational and psychosocial policies, particularly within humanitarian contexts (Turner, 2020). The center promotes the idea of cultural expression as a fundamental right and employs music and dance to facilitate healing, intercultural dialogue, and peace-building among diverse populations. Their public mission statements articulate an implicit policy connecting cultural education with human rights and post-conflict rehabilitation (Playing for Change, 2023).

In the absence of formal state policies targeting performing arts education for refugees, Sina Loketa's work effectively outlines a grassroots policy model built on participation, resilience, and cultural expression.

Also working in close partnership with Sina Loketa, Artolution[107] is an international nonprofit that implements long-term arts programs across various crisis-affected settings, including Bidibidi. Artolution collaborates with marginalized and crisis-affected communities to promote healing, inclusion, and economic resilience through participatory art-making and creative education. It facilitates collaborative art-making activities, such as mural-making, dance workshops, public performances, and the creation of an art center. These programs not only provide performing arts education but also address mental health, social integration, and economic empowerment. The organization's values, emphasizing self-empowerment, respect,

[104] https://sinaloketa.org
[105] https://sinaloketa.org/project/salam-music/
[106] https://playingforchange.org/salam-music-program/
[107] https://www.artolution.org/

and transformation, guide these activities and serve as an informal framework for approaching cultural participation in the communities it serves. As such, Artolution positions art as a vehicle for both personal transformation and community advocacy. Its guiding principles—centered on self-empowerment and inclusivity—function as a kind of ethical roadmap, shaping how cultural engagement unfolds in practice. In doing so, Artolution defines cultural priorities, provides access to the arts, and strengthens community identity —roles that mirror those of a formal cultural policy. This review demonstrates how non-governmental organizations can serve as de facto policymakers in areas where state involvement in the performing arts education sector is minimal or non-existent.

10.3 Proverbs as Oral Cultural Policies

The Luganda phrase *"owe nnyimba obi, ayimbira mu babe"*, loosely translating to "a singer sings among their own," encapsulates a profound cultural philosophy that bridges performing arts with community, identity, and inclusion. In the context of performing arts education, this expression reflects the idea that true artistic expression—especially through song—is deeply rooted in one's cultural and social environment. It implies that literacy is not only about reading and writing in the conventional sense but also includes cultural literacy: the ability to understand and communicate through the symbols, languages, and expressive forms of one's community. This proverb emphasises that authentic expression and learning are most potent when they occur within a supportive, culturally familiar environment, one's community.

Several scholars have emphasized the value of proverbs in education. Avoseh (2012) and Magoma and Nyerere (2013) highlight how proverbs function as theoretical frameworks that carry educational values, ethics, and social norms. Babazade (2024) further demonstrates that incorporating proverbs into teaching can facilitate cultural transmission, foster critical thinking, and promote deeper engagement. Therefore, proverbs should not be seen merely as folkloric elements but as robust documentation to inform cohesion and inclusivity in performing arts education. Integrating proverbs into scholarly analysis is not only a methodological choice but a decolonizing act—one that elevates marginalized voices and affirms non-Western modes of knowing. Such inclusion ensures that policies and pedagogies reflect a more holistic, culturally responsive approach to education and literacy. Furthermore, using proverbs as a source for the analysis on performing arts education in Uganda signals a deliberate shift toward valuing indigenous epistemologies and oral traditions as legitimate sources of scholarly insight. This approach challenges Western-centric frameworks and promotes a decolonized, culturally grounded understanding of literacy, inclusion, and educational policy.

10.4 Conclusions and Reflections

The analysis of Uganda's performing arts education policies reveals a complex interplay between formal legislation and informal, community-rooted expressions of cultural governance. National government policies—including the Uganda National Culture Policy, the Stage Plays and Public Entertainments Rule, the National Intellectual Property Policy, and the Uganda National Development Plan IV—collectively frame the state's vision for cultural preservation,

inclusion, and development. However, these policies perpetuate colonial legacies by promoting the English language structure, making it a site of access for many, and inadequately addressing the practical realities and diversities of cultural expressions.

This review has further illustrated that NGOs and community-based groups informally fill critical gaps in the formal policy frameworks through their mission statements and strategic programming. These unofficial policies serve as flexible and responsive mechanisms that validate indigenous knowledge systems and promote cultural literacy and inclusion more effectively than formal statutes usually do. Moreover, oral traditions—such as proverbs—serve not only as carriers of cultural values but as legitimate, localized policy tools. They advocate for community-centered frameworks of inclusion and education that challenge conventional, literacy-bound definitions of policy.

Ultimately, any meaningful advancement in performing arts education policy in Uganda must adopt a pluralistic approach—one that values both written and oral traditions, as well as both institutional and grassroots contributions. Only through such a comprehensive lens can policy frameworks support truly inclusive, culturally literate, and socially cohesive performing arts education systems.

10.4.1 Findings in Light of the Theoretical Framework

The findings from this review call for a decolonial, inclusive, and pluralistic approach to understanding literacy in the context of performing arts education. A review of arts education policies in Uganda reveals how proverbs serve as legitimate forms of cultural knowledge that shape both informal education and community values. For example, the Luganda proverb "*ow'ennyimba obi, ayimbira mu babe*" encapsulates how artistic expression and learning are grounded in culturally familiar environments, reinforcing the argument that cultural literacy extends beyond print-based literacy to include performative and relational modes of knowing. In addition, the Uganda report provides a compelling critique of formal state policy frameworks, particularly their linguistic and structural alignment with colonial legacies. The continued reliance on English in official cultural policies excludes large portions of the population, replicating the same exclusions they intend to overcome. Moreover, the findings highlight how community-based organizations, such as Sina Loketa and Artolution, function as de facto cultural policymakers through their arts-based initiatives in refugee and marginalized communities. These examples affirm that meaningful cultural literacy often emerges through grassroots practices rather than formal institutions. The Uganda findings also underscore the epistemological value of performing arts, not simply as communication tools, but as core ways of knowing and learning. As such, this analysis underscores the ethical obligation to acknowledge and engage with the sources of knowledge in inclusive and non-exploitative ways. The review of Uganda's policies on performing arts education raises critical questions about access, ownership, and representation. Moreover, this analysis emphasizes the importance of reflection as one gathers, interprets, and presents the data, advocating for an approach that centers on community agency and challenges hierarchical knowledge systems.

10.4.2 Decolonial Perspective

From a decolonial perspective, this analysis challenges the dominance of Western epistemologies that equate literacy with written texts and academic publications (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2019; Smith, 2012). It calls for an epistemic shift that recognizes indigenous knowledge systems, oral traditions, and embodied practices as equally legitimate forms of literature and scholarship (Dei, 2016; Chilisa, 2012). The analysis of Uganda's policy landscape reveals the enduring presence of colonial legacies, particularly through the continued use of English and the replication of legal frameworks inherited from colonial rule, structures that often marginalize local languages, expressions, and cultural epistemologies (Ngũgĩ, 1986). Formal state policies rarely accommodate the needed diverse and dynamic nature of Uganda's performing arts, instead privileging rigid textual frameworks that undermine improvisation, oral transmission, and communal participation.

In contrast, grassroots initiatives by organizations such as Sina Loketa and Artolution represent decolonial practice in action. These organizations facilitate intergenerational learning, promote healing through collective creativity, and validate performance as a central mode of knowledge transmission. Their work repositions cultural expression not as supplementary to education but as foundational, offering models of policy and pedagogy rooted in lived experience. A decolonial approach allows and requires rethinking the politics of knowledge production: what counts as knowledge, who produces it, and how it is validated (Tuck & Yang, 2012). This perspective affirms that knowledge may be embodied in performance, transmitted through oral narratives, and sustained within communities. Cultural literacy, therefore, must be understood as embedded in social practice rather than confined to print-based or institutional formats.

10.5 Comment from Dr. Dominic Makwa, an Ethnomusicologist and Lecturer at Makerere University

The review conveys a great deal about how the performing arts are represented through these policies. I just wanted to add something about the National Culture Policy and how it articulates the role of performing arts in fostering cultural tourism. How does this policy talk about the role of educational institutions like universities in this regard? And how does it relate to the mandate of the Uganda Tourism Board?

The second issue relates to community musicians and their role in promoting performing arts education in Uganda. What does the Uganda Culture Policy say about these?

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11. Policy Analysis: Summarising Discussion

Katja Mäkinen

This chapter brings together the main observations from the policy analyses in Aotearoa New Zealand, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Serbia, Uganda as well as the EU and the CoE. The findings will be briefly introduced with examples from various policies in different countries. They include the ability of arts to promote social cohesion and citizens' participation in culture and beyond. Key findings also involve equality, accessibility and inclusivity of performing arts education and cultural literacy learning. Also the role of the beneficiaries of the policies will be addressed.

People turn to arts for various reasons. For example, the analysis from Aotearoa New Zealand found that arts "help people understand, interpret and adapt to the world", which can be interpreted as cultural literacy. According to the analysis, cultural literacy can also be understood as "understanding and engaging with indigenous worldviews, values and cultural practices". The analysis from Uganda indicated how cultural and performing arts education in both formal and informal institutions is advocated as a way of nurturing cultural literacy and enhancing cohesion. A document about performing arts education from Finland explicated how embodied and multisensory artistic communication enhances learning international and intercultural interaction, which develops cultural literacy. However, often the embodied and multisensory character of cultural literacy was bypassed.

Several policies acknowledged the ability of arts-based practices and arts education to increase cohesion. The analysis from Aotearoa New Zealand identified how the relevance of arts in creating social cohesion became evident in the COVID-19 pandemic. The arts contribute to social inclusion and cohesion by connecting people and communities, as summarised in a policy document from Aotearoa New Zealand. Policies in Aotearoa New Zealand mentioned several ways in which arts can bring about social cohesion, such as building stronger connections between the arts community and the wider society and bringing artists at the centre of decision-making. Moreover,

> The arts allow communities to come together and express shared values and beliefs. They help build social cohesion, community resilience and the rejuvenation of communities suffering from long-term economic deprivation, population decline and following natural disasters. The arts work for our businesses and economy by creating jobs, promoting spending and attracting people to our communities. They also help to make our communities more inclusive and explore our connection to the natural environment (Creative New Zealand, 2016, p. 8).

The ability of engaging with arts to promote civic participation was recognised as a way of building more cohesive communities for example in Italy and Aotearoa New Zealand. Access to producing and developing culture enables safeguarding cultural and linguistic rights and is also linked to civil society engagement and ensuring democracy, according to a policy document from Finland. Engagement with arts can stimulate dialogue and solidarity within community and reduce social divisions. This was also underlined in some of the EU and CoE policies analysed here. Education has a central role here, as brought forth by the analysis from Italy:

art can function as a bridge between formal education and the broader social context and strengthen the sense of belonging and active participation.

Performing arts education has transformative potential in promoting cultural understanding and social cohesion, because participation in music, dance, and drama provides a platform for engaging in cultural narratives and practices, as the analysis from Norway reminded. Indeed, creativity is a crucial component of cultural literacy, allowing us to explore and express diverse cultural narratives in imaginative ways, the Norwegian analysis underlined. The analysis from Finland confirmed that performing arts education helps to imagine alternative worlds and futures through addressing difficult, complex and not yet recognized matters. Performing arts education can pursue social justice by following principles of safe space and norm critique, according to a policy document from Finland.

The analysis from Finland found out that in designing policies and practices of performing arts education for promoting social cohesion and inclusion, it is more beneficial to take proactive measures than to retroactively resolve problems related to exclusion. A practical tool proposed in a policy document in Finland is cultural outreach work, which is proactive and anticipatory and offers opportunities for cultural participation to children and young people who are at risk of becoming excluded from the existing cultural services. Activities are to be produced and developed together with children and young people, according to the document.

Performing arts education should be part of lifelong learning, accessible considering the demographic structure of society, to guarantee equitable opportunities for cultural participation regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability, ethnic, religious or cultural background or regional and economic factors. A concrete suggestion to make this happen in Finland was to encourage municipalities to make cultural education plans in cooperation between education, cultural and youth services. Indeed, several policies for example in Germany and Finland discussed accessibility of cultural education. The analysis from Germany revealed that accessible cultural education also plays an important role in the integration of refugees. It should be available in formal and non-formal education contexts, as the analysis from Germany underlined. The analysis from Finland reminded that promoting access strengthens cultural participation and involvement in the society and advances the equal realisation of cultural and educational fundamental rights. Access to producing and developing culture enables safeguarding cultural and linguistic rights and is also linked to civil society engagement and ensuring democracy, according to a policy document from Finland.

The role of marginalised groups was addressed in several education and cultural policies in different countries. However, policies were usually less explicit about naming any specific demographic groups and, as the analysis from Norway states, about how they intend to influence them. The analysis from Aotearoa New Zealand found out claims that marginalised communities should not only be seen as participants but leaders in defining the future of cultural expressions in New Zealand. This can be achieved for example by supporting indigenous-led initiatives and creating spaces for underrepresented voices. Making more space for cultural expressions by the marginalised groups themselves can help challenge and change dominant narratives of the nation, for example. Intersecting economic and social disadvantages may make the position of minorities vulnerable, and it is also important to pay attention to the systemic difficulties faced by minorities, as underlined in the analysis from Italy.

Some but not all policies brought forth the inequal power relations in the context of cultural diversity. This may involve imbalance regarding various resources that influence in opportunities to produce and participate in culture. The inequalities in making use of policy opportunities may concern economic disparities, access to information and training, administrative and entrepreneurial capacities collaboration and networking as well as regional differences, as explained in the analysis from Italy. Similarly, the analysis from Uganda noted that policies are not always accessible because they are written in English, which all potential beneficiaries do not necessarily know. A policy document from Aotearoa New Zealand acknowledged different capitals that different partners can have: “the imbalance and lack of equity in a relationship where one partner has most resources, skills and industry knowledge working with less-experienced Pacific organisations or community groups who have a wealth of Pacific arts cultural expertise” (Creative New Zealand, 2023a, p. 18).

One way of balancing the power relations is to include the marginalised groups in decision-making and policy-making. For example, the analysis from Aotearoa New Zealand identified a desire to involve Māori and Pasifika people in the policy making process at all stages. The analysis from Finland noted that the leadership and decision-making in education and cultural policies should reflect the population structure through representation and the excluded or oppressed should become the actors in the change. In many policy documents analysed here, such ideas were not much discussed in education and cultural policies.

In addition and related to inequal power relations, the relations between various population groups may be problematic due to past or current conflicts and oppression. The analysis from Uganda revealed that the colonial legacies can be visible in differing conceptions of culture and performing arts. The analysis from Aotearoa New Zealand observed a desire for reparation between population groups in differing positions. In general, few policies discussed these questions in detail.

Some country chapters discussed the role of the beneficiaries of the policies analysed here. It would be important to perceive children, young people and all citizens as active learners and producers of culture rather than passive recipients. In particular, minorities and marginalised groups should not be seen as automatically vulnerable groups to be protected and safeguarded, as reminded for example in the analyses from Italy and Norway.

While cultural diversity was usually seen as an asset in the policies analysed here, the analyses showed how important it is to pose the question ‘whose culture’ and recognise various cultural hierarchies. Rather than depicting one culture as a reference point (and presenting society as homogeneous), culture should be seen as relational and hybrid, being constantly constructed through exchange and cross-fertilisation, as noted in the analysis from Italy. Equal dialogue is needed for maintaining and supporting cultural diversity.

Analyses from education and cultural policies revealed that sometimes art is seen as a cure for everything. For example, in the policy documents from Italy, arts were depicted as a multifunctional tool that prevents bullying, combats school dropout and aids integration at the local level. Many more examples were found in the policies in other countries as well. While arts have strong potential for promoting positive developments in various sectors, it is important to

remember that arts, or education, alone cannot solve all problems. Cross-sectoral collaboration with several actors is needed to strengthen the position of performing arts education and change structures that prevent using the full potential of arts for building a better society.

Scholars have observed inconsistency between policy objectives and praxis (Mortimer et al., 2024, pp. 40-41). More research is needed on policies and strategies at all levels, including funding and other resources. In d@rts, the organisation level and various practices as well as collective competences will be scrutinised in other work packages, which will shed more light on the relations between policies and their implementation.

12. Reflections: Why Does Policy Analysis Matter

All the authors of the analysis were invited to reflect upon the significance of the policy analysis based on the question *Why does policy analysis matter*. To enhance dialogue, we agreed to share our reflections with each other and publish them in this deliverable. The reflections below pay attention to the value of policy analysis for making informed decisions and designing new policies and programmes. Cross-national policy analysis enables sharing knowledge and practices across various contexts. This, in turn, fosters dialogue between different actors and different sectors. Authors also point out that policy analysis helps to identify areas in need of improvement, problems, and solutions. Furthermore, it enables identifying gaps between policies and their implementation and the surrounding contexts. Policy analysis matters because policies produce and distribute categorizations, conceptions and priorities about what and who is important.

The analysis of New Zealand's arts education and related policies reflects a growing recognition of the importance of cultural inclusivity, social cohesion, and decolonial perspectives in art practice. Aotearoa is a constitutionally bi-cultural nation, with a multi-cultural outlook, and its arts policy documents across CNZ, MCH, and Auckland Council acknowledges Māori (Indigenous) cultural perspectives and integrates them into all aspects of the arts policy. Alongside this, Māori Performing Arts are recognized as a distinct discipline. In funding strands at CNZ specific art forms are sometimes siloed into domain specific categories. Similar to what our curriculum analysis uncovered, there are Western (Pākehā) disciplinary divisions of arts forms (e.g. dance, music, drama) within some funding structures, which can contrast with Māori perspectives where the arts are seen as interconnected rather than distinct. However, within CNZ funding structures some art form categories, for example Interarts, may embrace cross-pollination between artistic forms.

Despite this, the flexibility afforded to artists in terms of how they deliver (specifically independent) art practice, has a manageable degree of responsiveness and malleability, supported by inclusive and culturally responsive policy development. This reflects a larger commitment within Aotearoa's government departments to foster broad social inclusion, equity, and respect for Māori and Pasifika arts practices. The arts policy documents matter in Aotearoa because arts are one of the ways we define our identity as a nation. The arts are integral to indigenous cultures and the people that live here, and contribute to our wellbeing as a nation.

(Reflection by Ralph Buck and Sarah Foster Sproull)

Policy analysis is important because educational policies shape the framework and practices of curricula. Policies reflect the societal, cultural, and political goals of a country, and analysing them allows us to understand the context within which curricula are developed and implemented. The Norwegian policy documents emphasize values such as inclusion, democracy,

and cultural diversity, which directly influence how these themes are addressed in the curricula. Analysing policies helps identify the alignment (or lack thereof) between policy objectives and educational practices, highlighting areas for improvement and ensuring that education contributes positively to cultural literacy and social inclusion goals.

(Reflection by Jens Knigge and Kristie Mortimer)

Policy analysis is an essential tool to understand the dynamics behind policy decisions. It is both a practical and strategic activity because it identifies crucial information that leads to informed decisions and encourages changes and improvements in public policies and social projects. The results of this type of analysis are fundamental in supporting informed decisions, fostering possible changes, and improving the decision-making process.

Following the logic of the d@rts project, we have identified the following main considerations:

Sharing knowledge, good practices and competencies

Policy analysis favours the creation of a knowledge network on cultural literacy and performing arts. It involves experiences, information, and best practices gathered through analysis that can be made accessible to all citizens. In this context, its practical effects are of fundamental importance. Social operators, NGOs, and policymakers can benefit from information, tools, and approaches reinforcing their competencies. Examining solutions adopted elsewhere may allow the import and adoption of virtuous models, reducing the risk of inefficiencies and improving local policies. Access to positive experiences adopted in different contexts can inspire innovative projects and interventions (innovation is also knowing how to import tools and practices into a different context).

Finally, sharing this knowledge promotes an ongoing dialogue between different contexts and branches/sectors (formal, non-formal, NGOs, government…). This fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and the identification of global solutions and strategies.

Decision-making support and guidance

Policy analysis offers an overall view of cultural literacy and performing arts, as well as underlying approaches, priorities, and gaps at both national and international levels. Social operators or leaders of small local entities (e.g., small municipalities) often lack the technical training needed to analyse policies independently. The results of such analyses thus become an accessible foundation for guiding operational and strategic decisions (for instance, planning local interventions). Even without technical or specific know-how, the findings from these analyses can guide policymakers, social operators, and NGOs in decisions related to the analysed topics.

Finally, it is possible to use those findings to implement one's ability to participate in projects and calls for proposals (nationals and internationals) related to the themes of the d@rts project. In this way, it becomes possible to plan without relying on intuition or improvised approaches, reducing the risk of errors and increasing the impact of interventions on the territory.

Otherwise, the findings can also guide bids and tender notices toward interventions coherent with the insights derived from the analysis.

Identifying the gap between theory and reality

As emerged from the comparison between Univr and Hildesheim, the results of policy analysis can also help compare what was planned or assumed in a policy with concrete results. This is a process of critical evaluation that allows for identifying deficiencies or inefficiencies in the implementation of policies. The ability to identify and reduce the gap between theory and practice represents a crucial step for the continuous improvement of public policies. Starting from this 'gap', it is possible to guide those who need (or can) make corrections or reformulate strategies in order to achieve different results, aiming at the constant improvement of political strategies.

(Reflection by Cristina Balloi and Elisa Maria Francesca Salvadori)

Policy documents have performative power and they can bring about action. This power is based on their conceptual choices, so it is crucial to analyse policies and their conceptualisations. While most of the population seldom read policy documents, they touch our lives when they are implemented – and even if they were never implemented. Ideas presented in policy documents move to other policy documents and modify the conceptions and patterns of thinking. They produce categorisations and naturalise some ideas and ignore others. They shape perceptions of problems and solutions and define who are central actors. Eventually these conceptions move to practices as well.

(Reflection by Katja Mäkinen)

B. Curriculum Analysis

Funded by the European Union

13. Aotearoa New Zealand

Ralph Buck and Sarah Foster Sproull

The following analysis will focus on how the interconnections of cultural literacy, performing arts education (dance, drama, music), social cohesion and inclusion are articulated in current education curriculum in New Zealand/Aotearoa (NZ). The Ministry of Education, New Zealand/Aotearoa: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga has created three curriculum documents that articulate learning and teaching content and standards. The three curricula included in this analysis of how performing arts education supports the development of cultural literacy are:

1. Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga. (2017a). *Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa. Early childhood curriculum.*
2. Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga. (2017b). *The New Zealand curriculum: The arts.*
3. Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, (2024a). *Senior curriculum NCEA (National certificate of educational achievement).* New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

The above curricula focus this review on early childhood, primary and junior secondary education, and senior secondary education. Within each curriculum the analysis will examine how the performing arts (dance, drama, music) supports a learner's development of cultural literacy, social cohesion, and inclusion collectively. This approach recognises the tight inter-play between an education in cultural literacy and the development of intercultural understandings. Indigenous and de-colonial perspectives are drivers of the following analysis given an overarching aim of the d@rts project is to look beyond the dominance of Eurocentric research.

This analysis firstly offers an introduction to year levels of study and indicative ages of learners as they move through the education system in New Zealand. Early childhood education is optional from birth to 5 years old. All children must begin school when they turn 5 years old, and the learner enters year 1. Primary school goes from year 1- year 6 and typically a learner leaves primary school age 10. Secondary school includes years 7 to 13 with a learner typically exiting secondary school at age 17 or 18 years old. The final three years of secondary school (years 11, 12, 13) are also called senior secondary, and students complete the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA).

Within New Zealand Aotearoa, the arts inclusive of dance, drama, music, and visual arts are core curriculum areas within early childhood and primary school sectors. That is, all children are to receive an education in all the arts up to the end of primary school. The breadth, depth and scope of the arts experiences offered in each classroom is decided by each school and to an extent each classroom teacher. The arts are taught by the generalist early childhood teachers and primary school teachers. Schools may buy in expertise through Artist in Schools programmes, offer localised residencies for artists, and or include community members with skill and or cultural expertise in the different arts forms.

Funded by the European Union

The secondary school curriculum is an extension of the primary School curriculum and are included in the one document. At secondary levels not all the arts need to be taken by learners. Schools may offer a range of arts subjects; however, learners must select one arts subject to the end of junior secondary (Year 10). Also, they can do more than one arts education subject if they wish and the school provides for this.

Senior Secondary School Arts Curriculum (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2024a) is known as the National Certificate for Education Achievement (NCEA). Senior Secondary includes years 11,12,13 and are the final three years of school. All learners select their course of study, which may or may not include an arts subject. Every senior secondary school independently chooses which arts subjects they will offer. The options broaden and become more specialised, for example visual arts is broken up into different subject areas such as photography, painting, mixed media etc. At NCEA level dance, drama, music and Māori performing arts are offered as university entry subjects and taught by subject specialists. A student can select several art forms to study and use a suite of these as their pathway into university. All students must do maths and English and then they are free to choose three other subjects according to their interest and study futures.

13.1 Pre-primary Education

Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa – Early childhood curriculum (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017a) provides a clear and distinct bi-cultural frame for early childhood education in NZ.

> Te Whāriki expresses our vision that all children grow up in New Zealand as competent and confident learners, strong in their identity, language and culture. It emphasises our bicultural foundation, our multicultural present and the shared future we are creating. (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017a, p. 2)

The document has come from extensive community, parent and early childhood teacher's consultation, drawing extensively upon traditional Māori concepts underpinning the philosophy of *Kohanga reo*. The curriculum honours *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (The Treaty of Waitangi) as New Zealand's founding document. This curriculum has a clear indigenous, inclusive and cultural vision and philosophy. It is clearly decolonial in nature and intent and aspires to a social vision of inclusion and cohesion for all learners. The curriculum follows the expectation and tradition of interpreting and valuing the Treaty of Waitangi/ Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the foundation for building equal relations between Māori and Pakeha and other diverse cultures within Aotearoa New Zealand. As the curriculum states,

> Te Tiriti o Waitangi | the Treaty of Waitangi is New Zealand's founding document. Signed in 1840 by representatives of Māori and the Crown, this agreement provided the foundation upon which Māori and Pākehā would build their relationship as citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand. Central to this relationship was a commitment to live together in a spirit of partnership and the acceptance of obligations for participation and protection. Te Tiriti | the Treaty has implications for our education system, particularly in terms of achieving equitable outcomes for Māori and ensuring that te reo Māori not only survives but thrives. Early childhood education has a crucial role to play here, by

> providing mokopuna with culturally responsive environments that support their learning and by ensuring that they are provided with equitable opportunities to learn. The importance of such provision is underscored throughout Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa Early childhood curriculum. New Zealand is increasingly multicultural. Te Tiriti | the Treaty is seen to be inclusive of all immigrants to New Zealand, whose welcome comes in the context of this partnership. Those working in early childhood education respond to the changing demographic landscape by valuing and supporting the different cultures represented in their settings. (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017a, p. 3)

The curriculum is structured around four principles and five strands that are woven horizontally and vertically. It is written for three age groups: Infants, Toddlers and Young Children. The curriculum reiterates the stands and principles at each age level.

The four principles are:

1. Empowerment/*Whakamana* (Empowering children to learn and grow).
2. Holistic Development/*Kotahitanga* (Reflecting the holistic way children learn and grow).
3. Family and Community/*Whanau Tangata* (recognising the wider world of family and community as integral to learning and growing).
4. Relationships/*Nga Hononga* (valuing responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places and things as children learn and grow).

The five Strands are:

1. Wellbeing/*Mana Atua*: “The health and wellbeing of the child are protected and nurtured” (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017a, p. 26).
2. Belonging/*Mana Whenua*: “Children and their families feel a sense of belonging” (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017a, p. 31).
3. Contribution/*Mana Tangata*: “Opportunities for learning are equitable and each child’s contribution is valued” (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017a, p. 36).
4. Communication/*Mana Reo*: “The languages and symbols of children’s own and other cultures are promoted and protected” (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017a, p. 41).
5. Exploration/*Mana Aoturoa*: “The child learns through active exploration of the environment” (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017a, p. 46).

Cultural Literacy underpins the whole document. The relationship between cultural literacy and the arts disciplines is most explicit in the Strand of Communication. Terms like “develop competence” are likened to developing literacy, likewise the term “languages” is seen in terms of a literacy.

> Languages are the means by which we think and communicate with each other. We typically think of languages as consisting of words, sentences and stories, but there are also languages of sign, mathematics, visual imagery, art, dance, drama, rhythm, music and movement. One of the major cultural tasks for children in the early years is

> to develop competence in and understanding of language. At this time they are learning to communicate their experience in different ways; they are also learning to interpret the ways in which others communicate and represent experience. They are developing increasing competence in symbolic, abstract, imaginative and creative thinking. (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017a, p. 41)

Throughout the document dance, drama, music (and visual art) are referenced as means for developing cultural literacy and teachers' pedagogies and resources are implicated in how inclusion is fostered. As noted in the curriculum, skill development underpins aspects of developing cultural literacy: "Skills with multiple media and tools, such as crayons, pencils, paint, blocks, wood, musical instruments, movement and educational technologies that can be used for expressing moods or feelings or representing information" (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017a, p. 42).

The pedagogical interweaving of what learners learn and how they learn maintains a holistic view of the child and respects diversity as a reality in each classroom. Of the three NZ curriculum, the *Te Whariki Early Childhood Curriculum,* most explicitly and comfortably articulates a de-colonial curriculum: "Understanding and familiarity with music, song, dance, drama and art from a range of cultures and recognition that these media can amuse, delight, comfort, illuminate, inform and excite and that they may suit particular cultural occasions" (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017a, p. 42).

The consistent use of and interweaving of Te Reo Māori (indigenous) and English languages provide a document that opens eyes to different world views and respects diverse teachers and parents who are using this document. The curriculum clearly honours the *Treaty of Waitangi* and a practical hands-on way that makes policy real. I very much appreciate how the curriculum values diverse ecologies of knowledge in respect to forms of knowing, ownership of knowledge, agency and pedagogies. Also, how the curriculum advocates for school leadership to recognise the role of performing arts in defining the learning environment in respect to diverse cultures,

> The environment is rich in signs, symbols, words, numbers, song, dance, drama and art that give expression to and extend children's understandings of their own and other languages and cultures…The setting offers a range of arts-related resources that support children to discover and develop different ways to be creative and expressive (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017a, p. 45).

Finally, the curriculum structures move beyond siloed disciplines of knowledge yet value distinct disciplines as means to building knowledge.

13.2 Primary and Secondary Education

The New Zealand Curriculum includes the following learning areas: English, The Arts, Health and Physical Education, Learning Languages, Mathematics and Statistics, Science, Social Sciences, and Technology (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017b). This curriculum articulates expected learning outcomes from Year One (first year of school, age 5) to Year 13 (final year of schooling, typically 18 years old). Underpinning the whole curriculum,

inclusive of The Arts (Dance, Drama, Music- Sound Arts, and Visual Arts), are governing statements that articulate the NZ Ministry of Education's vision, principles, values, key competencies, languages and pedagogies. All of these governing and definitional statements articulate the curriculum expectations (inclusive of performing arts) in respect to cultural literacy and social cohesion. As *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017b) notes, "Why study the arts? Arts education explores, challenges, affirms and celebrates unique expressions of self and community and culture. It embraces toi Māori, valuing the forms and practices of customary and contemporary Māori performing, musical and visual arts" (p. 20).

It is clear that this curriculum is based firmly on principles of inclusion, diversity and cultural respect, though it refers to performing arts collectively and not the individual disciplines of dance, drama and music.

The arts curriculum is proactive in de-colonising the curriculum by purposefully not placing any culture's arts form or genre above any other: "An understanding of Māori visual culture is achieved through exploration of Māori contexts. The arts of European, Pasifika, Asian and other cultures add significant dimensions to NZ visual culture" (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017b, p. 21).

The curriculum is clear that the performing arts develop cultural literacy through development of literacies in the arts: "Why study the arts?: Through the development of arts literacies, students, as creators, presenters and viewers, and listeners, are able to participate in, interpret, value, and enjoy the arts throughout their lives" (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017b, p. 20).

All cultures, all art forms, all histories are equally referred to within the national curriculum. How this equity is transferred into schools and then into each classroom context is another issue mostly informed by local learners' contexts and teachers' skills and attitudes. The expression and making of community and family (*whanau*) is often noted, with pedagogical power being more located in the community context than the national context: "What are the arts about? The arts are powerful forms of expression that recognize, value and contribute to the unique bi-cultural and multicultural character of Aotearoa NZ, enriching the lives of all New Zealanders" (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017b, p. 20).

It is clear that the curriculum invited indigenous perspectives in drafting this document with full explanation of the different languages used and also inclusion of a glossary defining meanings of Māori terms. The document is written in plain language and aimed at teachers who are to use the document as a guide in developing school curriculum.

The vision of the document is well stated and it is clear that a focus is making education accessible to all students so that they can achieve as well as they can. The people teaching this curriculum are qualified educators, though they have the capacity and scope to bring in community experts to support their teaching. Final classroom decisions are always made by teachers. The curriculum, the monitoring of the curriculum and the delivery of the curriculum is funded by the national government through the Ministry of Education, which must by law respect and evidence intent of a bi-cultural society as articulated within the *Treaty of Waitangi*.

The vision of the document is to provide a comprehensive introduction and development of arts education as a meaningful component of the full curriculum. All learners from year 1 (age 5) to year 6 (approx. age 10) must have access to an arts education, though how much and to what depth is mostly decided by schools and teachers. The arts curriculum is a compulsory part of schooling within formal school hours. The curriculum is focused on four strands that speak to skills, creativity and understanding. It is inclusive of all learners without favoring skill over expression or cultural understanding. There is an equitable account for different ways of knowing in, through and about the arts. Terms like literacy, diversity, inclusion, participation and access are common, and having taught to this curriculum, these terms have genuine intent and meaning. For example,

> Students develop literacy in dance as they learn about and develop skills in performing, choreographing and responding to a variety of genres from a range of historical and contemporary contexts…In dance education students integrate thinking, moving, and feeling. They explore and use dance elements, vocabularies, processes and technologies to express personal, group and cultural identities, to convey and interpret artistic ideas and to strengthen social interaction (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017b, p. 20).
>
> By means of the drama that they create and perform, students reflect and enrich the cultural life of their schools, whanau, and communities…Music is a fundamental form of expression, both personal and cultural. Value is placed upon the musical heritages of New Zealand's diverse cultures, including traditional and contemporary Māori musical arts (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2017b, p. 21).

Assessment is not articulated fully, but through the outlining of learning objectives one can see that individual achievement is more readily sought than group achievement. It is also clear when you see the full pipeline of the curriculum that the career endpoints are diverse. The curriculum does not make assumptions about the gender, race, ability of the students, nor the teachers. Rural schools and urban schools are funded equally, and theoretically rural schools are not worse off than urban schools.

13.3 Senior Secondary Education

The senior secondary school curriculum for the years 11-13, *Senior Curriculum NCEA* (Ministry of Education, 2024a), includes dance, drama and music- sound arts as university entrance subjects. That means that these subject areas have had their curriculum content reviewed both the Tertiary Education Commission and the Ministry of Education.

The content of each arts discipline is structured around "Big Ideas" and these are noted in each discipline of dance, drama and music- sound arts. The analysis of the NCEA Arts Curriculum reveals to this reader that each of the arts subjects purposefully and in a fulsome manner offers a de-colonialised curriculum that very much recognises diversity and especially the indigenous language, culture and practices within Aotearoa New Zealand.

13.3.1 Dance

The dance curriculum (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2024b) describes dance as,

> Dance is an embodied language. In dance education ākonga learn to communicate through movement and interpret meaning from movement. Learning in Dance supports ākonga to expand the ways they express ideas, feelings, values, and beliefs, as well as how they understand those of others […] at the same time, ākonga will also develop confidence and deeper awareness in their own identities. (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2024b, p. 1)
>
> Dance is shaped by culture and represents culture. Ākonga can express and share their culture through movement. Dance is a way to access and benefit from mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori, and Pacific knowledges, worldviews, and values. Through Dance, ākonga can connect with and appreciate different ideas and beliefs, and build connections across cultures. (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2024b, p. 2)

As such, dance as articulated in the senior secondary curriculum aims to foster dialogue between teachers and learners, and between cultures. While not explicitly stated, developing cultural literacy is a perceived aim and outcome. This is evidenced by a focus on learning skills (literacies) that enable communication through movement, and interpretation of meaning from movement across cultures.

The five big ideas that inform the content of the dance curriculum include:

- *He atua, he tipua, he tangata* — dance is a descendant of culture: That is, dance is shaped by culture and represents culture.
- Dance nurtures *whanaungatanga*: That is, dance helps us to build, explore, and take care of relationships
- Dance is embodied cognition: That is, in Dance, *ākonga* build understandings through movement and show these understandings through movement.
- Dance develops creative and critical thinking skills: That is, dance gives ākonga opportunities to find and use their voice through curiosity and exploration.
- Dance uses iterative processes: That is, movement-making involves ongoing cycles of action, response, and revision.

Through these ideas, the interactive and dialogical nature of dance is again highlighted. Dance education is seen as a contribution to cultural literacy learning by developing critical thinking, using voice and building understandings. Place based embodied ways of knowing are valued as a means to speak about local culture and local history (Reihana, 2023). Decoloniality respects past relationships and descendants who establish ‘lore’ and laws upon which akonga (learners) build contemporary literacies. The framing of dance in this curriculum suggests that dance was and remains a powerful carrier of cultural meanings. Dance in the curriculum is a culturally meaningful embodiment of knowledge that asks learners to develop skillsets in performing, creating, and reading dance, inclusive of culturally specific dances.

13.3.2 Drama

Drama (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2024c) values indigenous and pakeha (European) perspectives, stating,

> Drama is for everyone. We all have kōrero, pūrākau, and stories to share. Drama helps us to understand diverse cultural perspectives and worldviews and connect with our community. It allows us to recognise the uniqueness of our place in the Pacific, the identity of Aotearoa New Zealand, and the rich cultural histories and traditions from all over the world that are expressed through performance…Drama provides opportunities for ākonga to express their identities and heritages, and explore the heritages of others, creating empathy and understanding for the experiences and whakapapa of people from diverse backgrounds…Ākonga engage with the creative process through the concept of taonga tuku iho (wisdom passed down through whakapapa), manawa tuku iho (the traits and skills one develops or inherits), and pumanawa tuku iho (creating ideas and bringing them to life). Ākonga can explore kōrero, pūrākau, and ideas from our past to contribute to the stories that carry forward into the future. (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2024c, p. 1)

The drama curriculum profiles a focus on dialogical learning and building of dialogical understandings of culture. This conceptualising of drama education places the emphasis on an inclusive construction of meaning and cultural literacy. The drama curriculum recognises the reality of diverse cultures, diverse perspectives, diverse knowledges, within diverse communities, and provides education opportunities to critique and recreate such meanings and identities of key players. The outcome of fostering empathy to others supports decolonial education aims and further evidences the decolonial aspiration of the arts education curriculum.

The content of the Drama curriculum is defined by four big ideas:

- *Titiro whakamuri, kokiri whakamua* – Drama is influenced by whakapapa and is a way to respond to and share identity, culture, and perspectives
- *Mā whero, mā pango, ka oti ai te mahi* – Drama is a collaborative, creative process
- Poipoia te kakano kia puawai – Drama communicates through storytelling and creative expression to nurture and nourish people
- *Te whāriki kia mōhio ai tātou ki a tātou* – Meaning in performance is created through whanaungatanga (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2024c, p. 1)

Implicit within much of drama education as outlined in the New Zealand Arts curriculum is the achievement of 21st century competencies in collaboration, teamwork, leadership, creative thinking, and problem solving. The drama curriculum has a focus on dialogical collective and creative processes. This focus evidences humanistic and culture-based pedagogies that value culturally diverse voices and enables in depth and enacted sharing and construction of critical meanings and perspectives.

13.3.3 Music – Sound Arts

Of interest is that the music curriculum (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2024d) has a focus on music and sound arts. This purposeful broadening of terminology welcomes diverse aural soundscapes from diverse cultures. Music- sound arts is described as,

> Ākonga can learn about music as a language, with its own structures, elements, and symbols. They will build an understanding of how music forms and musical engagement within te ao Māori are guided by tikanga. Similarly, music forms and musical engagement by Pacific peoples are informed by Pacific worldviews and values. They will also learn to express and interpret ideas within diverse creative, technological, and cultural frameworks. This can include exploring music concepts related to various music contexts…Students of Music will think about how people's diverse experiences and ideas enable the ongoing creation of rich and varied musical outputs across cultures.
>
> Students of Music will:
>
> - reflect on how music can elicit different feelings and sensations from the people who make it and those who listen to it;
> - understand how other people create and experience music;
> - gain insight into how audiences engage with music, and develop understanding of how listeners are a valuable part of musical experience. (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2024d, p.1).

The purposeful inclusion of the nomenclature 'music- sound arts' proactively widens learners' engagement with music-sound arts. The New Zealand music curriculum acknowledges the cultural reality that diverse music forms and musical systems exist and that they can be understood as diverse literacies. Being aware of the skillsets that underpin mastery of different musical literacies is a conceptual foundation of the musical curriculum. It is perceived that cultural literacy is developed through comprehension of musical affect, experience in creating and sharing music, and understanding technological and cultural frameworks.

The five big ideas informing the music curriculum content are:

- Music is an expression of, and a way of connecting with, culture, identity, place, and time: That is, music is created, experienced, and understood in relation to cultural, social, historical, and environmental contexts.
- Music is a sensory language that organises sound and can be visually represented with signs and symbols: That is, as a sound art, music is a form of communication that has its own concepts and whakapapa.
- Music is a craft that can be continually developed and refined: That is, music is a creative artform that is expressed through the application of music literacies.
- Music expresses emotions and communicates ideas and intent: That is, music is a waka for musicians to express and communicate feelings, ideas, stories, and knowledges.

- Music evokes emotions and responses: That is, although music is a sound art, it can also be experienced through multiple senses (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2024d, p. 2).

The above big ideas advocate for interactive and multi-sensory ways of knowing and music making. Reading and sharing diverse meanings of music, fosters a wider engagement with diverse communities, such that contemporary musical literacy is ongoingly fostered.

13.3.4 Māori Performing Arts

Māori Performing Arts (Ministry of Education: Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga, 2024e) focus on skills and knowledge in Māori art forms such as *mōteatea* and *haka*. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority's [NZQA] Māori Qualification Services aim to promote, support and develop the growth and use of mātauranga Māori and for learners to begin to have basic knowledge of *te reo* (Māori Language), "There is an expectation that basic knowledge of te reo, appropriate pronunciation of kupu Māori, and tikanga will be used during the teaching and assessment of this unit standard" (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2024a, n.p.). Further the *Māori Performing Arts curriculum* has a focus on integration of Māori and non-Māori disciplines, for Example,

> Māori dance disciplines may include – haka, waiata ā-ringa, waiata, poi mōteatea, whakaraka. Examples of non-Māori dance disciplines may include – ballroom, ballet, contemporary dance, hip-hop, jazz, line dancing, Polynesian, rock'n'roll, tap, TikTok. Body conditioning disciplines are also accepted as dance disciplines and may include – aerobics, martial arts, mau rākau, pilates, yoga. (NZQA, 2024a, n.p.)

The integration of Māori music and with other genres is also a feature of the *Māori Performing arts curriculum*, which aims to capture the rich and diverse vocal traditions and Māori instrumental traditions. As the curriculum states: "It has vast and dynamic vocal traditions, profound traditional Māori instrumental traditions (taonga pūoro), and performance. It incorporates vocal traditions of various devices available to composers for kaupapa Māori" (NZQA, 2024b, n.p.).

The *Māori Performing Arts Curriculum* is currently being re-written, and the following are the only examples of units of work offered. Each of these Units illustrate specific features of Māori Performing Arts:

- Demonstrate knowledge of new Māori dance.
- Perform new Māori dance.
- Choreograph and present new Māori dance.
- Demonstrate knowledge of new Māori music.
- Perform a new Māori music composition.
- Demonstrate the essential skills of new Māori Music.
- Perform new Māori music compositions with expression.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the development of new Māori Music.
- Perform new Māori music compositions form start to finish.

It is very clear that there is a strong respect for diverse cultures in this document across all art forms, especially indigenous cultures of Aotearoa NZ and the nations in the South Pacific region. The *Māori Performing Arts Curriculum* is clear in its position towards advocating for

social cohesion, inclusion and development of cultural literacy. A key role of dance is the making of community and the development a critical awareness of the relationship of dance/movement to understanding social contexts. An example may be found within Pacific and Māori dance traditions such as Kapa Haka and Siva Samoa that require a community to form in order to enliven the dance. Community, embodiment and story making are requisites for the enlivenment of the dance, the song, and the expression of the place. The interplay between the expressive and cultural arts, and indigenous society is a given. The role of the group or commune or supports the development of *Whakawhanaungatanga* which creates safe learning environments to take artistic risks and critically think of the BIG ideas driving the curriculum. Drama places much emphasis on the relationship between actor and audience, speaking to the cultural expression and understanding necessary for dialogue to occur. Music speaks to the symbols, senses, skills and emotions developed and used in music education.

13.4 Conclusions and Reflections

It is clear from the documents that the different arts place slightly different emphasis on vision and competencies to be achieved. However by and large they are all aiming for similar outcomes in terms of skill development, attitudinal development, development of soft skills across a range of artistic traditions and cultures. The curricula are open and focus on access and inclusion fostering diverse career opportunities. There are no assumptions in respect to achievement and careers in terms of gender, race, sexuality and age. The curricula are student centred with the teacher seen as an essential partner in the educative act.

The interplay and connections between concepts of cultural literacy, intercultural competencies and inclusion (including diversity) are apparent throughout each curriculum document. It is clear that the development of cultural literacy is regarded as an evolving and dialogic process that is reiterated in the early childhood, primary and secondary, and senior secondary documents. The core skills, attitudes and values are re-visited and deepened as the learner moves through the New Zealand education system. This is most apparent in respect to recognising and fostering NZ/Aotearoa's bi-cultural society wherein Māori (indigenous) values, pedagogies, language is reinforced.

Relational, interactive and dialogic learning and teaching is implicit throughout each curriculum. As such the how of learning and teaching dance, music and drama education is as relevant as the what in the curriculum. Again, the arts curricula are clear in their intent to develop competencies in teamwork, empathy, tolerance of diversity and holistic wellbeing (emotional, cultural, social and physical wellbeing).

All three curriculum documents analysed here could not have been written without comprehensive inclusion of a range of arts educators and artists including indigenous arts educators. The curriculum is for teachers to use and interpret as a map for directing their classroom practices and assessments. It is perceived that multiple voices are included in this curriculum.

13.4.1 Findings in Light of the Theoretical Framework

The arts foster social cohesion and inclusion. Within the above curricula the consistent valuing of community, place, whanau, languages, artistic traditions and expression fosters inclusion and the building of social cohesion. Developing cultural knowledge through music, drama, dance and Māori performing arts engages community expertise and in turn enables the safeguarding of cultural and linguistic rights which is closely associated with democratic values in relation to voice, freedom and agency. The arts curricula arguably present the means for building social cohesion as they speak to values, structures, vision and pedagogies that foster understandings of self and others in the classroom and others at the school gate.

Dance, music, drama and Māori performing arts promote cultural understanding and cultural literacy through the foregrounding of cultural narratives and practices in imaginative ways. Moreover, the arts across all three curricula analysed make space for culturally marginalised voices, be they indigenous or refugee communities. The strands within the early childhood curriculum, the structures forming the New Zealand Curriculum, and the big ideas articulated in the Senior Secondary Curriculum all explicitly speak to valuing languages and symbols of learner's own and other cultures. This valuing of and advocacy for the inclusion of diverse cultural stories, artistic practices and artistic product can be seen as a way of fostering tolerance and understanding of otherness, and in so doing may advocate for empathy and social cohesion (Fonseca et al., 2019).

What is included in a curriculum requires choices, and is driven by educational visions, values and contexts that shape what is doable and aspirational. The above curricula are focusing upon fostering participation in and access to learning. The focus of arts education across all levels of education in Aotearoa New Zealand is making school relevant to all learners. One can also observe that the curricula make these choices at risk of excluding some other opportunities. The curricula don't dwell on excellence and winning. They don't ignore high achievement, but in fostering breadth of knowledge, the curricula in reality may be reducing time for skill development, and some content. Arts teachers are required to manage this balance and to read their local context and support learners as best they can.

As stated however, fostering diverse learners' sense of belonging in the classroom is well stated in the three curricula. There is an emphasis on inclusion, mutual respect of cultures, and collaboration.

13.4.2 Decolonial Perspective

The three documents at the heart of this curricula review, being, Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa, Early childhood curriculum; The New Zealand curriculum; and Senior curriculum NCEA (National certificate of educational achievement) are conscious of indigenous, diverse and dominant constructions of knowledge. The consistent use of Māori language, local content and the profiling of diverse Pacific cultures evidence that the curriculum are specific to this place in Oceania (Pigram, Swain and Reihana, 2023). The curriculum structures do not mandate specific content within dance, drama, music genres, but allow local teachers and their communities, to have input and take the lead in teaching content relevant to the local community. The curricula offer structure and freedom. The valuing of language and place are key and important aspects of decolonial theory. Tuhiwai-Smith (1999),

Melchior (2011) and Pigram, Swain and Reihana (2023) speak to the vital role of respecting local languages, cultural pedagogies, and the place where people identify with. It is perceived that the curricula welcome equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and respect, echoing the aspiration of the UNESCO Convention of on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression (UNESCO 2005).

13.5 Commentaries

13.5.1 Comment by the Ugandan Consortium Member University of Makerere

Both the curriculum document and analysis of policies capture the essences of cultural literacy, social cohesion and inclusion, and celebration of diversity. Expressed different because of the nature of their orientation, the two documents project application of these ideas in the practice of music, dance, and drama. While 'bi-cultural' is still being used in the documents, the outlook shows that Aotearoa/New Zealand has transitioned into a more multicultural country. This transition is reflected in how the documents capture ethnic diversities between Maori and White Settler communities. We think that the analyses can problematize 'bi-cultural' more in the context and contestation of the existing diversities. Furthermore, we question whether mentioning the diverse cultures in the document is in itself tantamount to de-coloniality. We are saying this because even what is being decolonized is not adequately articulated. A contextual coverage of the colonization and colonizing aspects as lived in New Zealand can give a reader a snapshot of where the de-coloniality you are talking about is situated.

Response to Makere University comments

We appreciate the supportive response gained from Makere University's reading of our critical review of arts policies and arts education curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand. By way of continuing the conversation and providing more context we respond to key points made regarding the bi-cultural status of Aotearoa New Zealand, but in no way do we give a deep historical or conclusive response as this is beyond the scope of this review document.

Aotearoa New Zealand is a country operating within and under the Treaty of Waitangi: a bi-cultural treaty between pakeha (European cultures) and Māori (the indigenous people of Aotearoa) signed in 1840 at Waitangi, Northland Aotearoa New Zealand. The Treaty is an articulation of how the colonising peoples of United Kingdom defined as 'the Crown' and the indigenous owners of Aotearoa New Zealand – Māori, work in partnership and ideally respect each other's rights and perspectives. The treaty theoretically set Māori and Pakeha on a path to understand how our two worlds co-exist. It is on the one land recognising and respecting each other's differences, responsibilities, laws, cultures, values and needs without destroying each other. The treaty is ongoingly contested by political entities and Māori Iwi (communities), as

each generation of leaders re-build their understandings and interpretations of the Treaty. The following websites provide more detailed insights.

https://nzhistory.govt.nz/page/treaty-faqs

https://www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/en/publications/education/tow-past-and-present/new-section-page-5

Aotearoa New Zealand's demographic make-up has diversified since the signing of the Treaty. Aotearoa New Zealand has become a much more plural society with large communities from Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Korea, China, India, Australia, Croatia to name a few. These communities have deep roots in Aotearoa New Zealand and call it home.

Arts policies and arts education curriculum in Aotearoa acknowledges the contemporary plural demographics; however, these documents and governing laws remain ideologically and constitutionally focused upon honouring the original indigenous owners of the land, the Māori. Given this, the documents purposefully refer to the bi-cultural construct of Aotearoa New Zealand while also implicitly recognising that it is not a simple 'bi-cultural' social landscape.

Within the arts education curriculum and arts policies, the purposeful use of Te Reo (Māori language), recognises and honours indigenous rights and needs, and to directly support Māori communities who have been disadvantaged through the process of colonisation (https://www.nzgeo.com/stories/the-treaty-today-what-went-wrong-and-what-are-we-doing-about-it/). The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture are mindful of colonisation and the need to counter these paradigms through policy, curriculum and funding support. For example, within the arts curriculum proactively acknowledging diverse teaching and learning processes, skills, needs and content knowledge speaks to a process of decolonisation of the curriculum and the classroom. The aim being to maximise success for all learners in the classroom.

Decoloniality in Aotearoa New Zealand is an ongoing social and political discussion which is shifting and morphing in response to political ideologies, wider society conversations and aspirations and Māori Iwi expectations (https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c8je9013m0ro). The critical reading of the aforementioned arts policies and arts education curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand arts reveal current interpretations of the Treaty of Waitangi and the current democratic directions.

13.5.2 Comment from the Dance Aotearoa New Zealand (DANZ) Prepared by Executive Director Sheryl Lowe

DANZ has examined the two chapters on Curriculum and Policy recently prepared by Professor Ralph Buck and Dr Sarah Foster-Sproull, Ngā Akoranga Kanikani Dance Studies, Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland, as part of their contribution to the Horizon Europe research work on dialogical arts education. We find the analysis presented to be comprehensive, robust and fair in respect of both the national education curriculum policy documents and the arts sector funding, operational, and strategic policy documents selected for review. While the national education curriculum setting process is relatively linear, the arts policy ecosystem is arguably more complex and dynamic with multiple actors. In view of the latter, we consider

the authors made an excellent decision to include documentation emanating from different levels of the arts policy, sector development and funding hierarchy.

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14. Finland

Katja Mäkinen

This analysis first focuses on formal education, and then in the last section before conclusions, non-formal education in the arts is analysed. In formal education, the analysis focuses on core curricula for all education levels from early childhood education and care to upper secondary education. In Finland, *early childhood education and care* [ECEC] covers the period from age 0 to 6, including specific pre-primary education for 5- and 6-year-olds. ECEC is available for all children in Finland but is not compulsory. However, pre-primary education, which is provided during the year before a child starts primary education, is compulsory for all children. It is organized both in ECEC centres and schools. Primary education is compulsory, and all children receive the same basic education. Primary education in Finland covers grades 1–9, and children begin in August of the year they turn seven. Grades 7–9 are called lower secondary education. The grades 1–3 are always the same for everyone. From the fourth grade, some primary schools offer special classes emphasizing music, and students need to apply for these classes.

Upper secondary education in Finland used to be optional, but as of August 2021, the compulsory education age has been extended to 18 years. This means that students are now required to continue their education until they turn 18 or complete an upper secondary qualification. Students can choose between general upper secondary education, i.e. high school (3–4 years) and vocational education. The entrance admission to upper secondary education is based on the grades obtained in primary education. In some of the high schools, students can apply for special tracks emphasising performing arts (or other subjects, such as sports or maths). High schools offering tracks specialising in music are more common than those specialising in dance or drama.

All levels of education from the ECEC onwards are provided by public schools maintained and regulated by municipalities. Private ECEC centres and some private primary schools (such as Steiner and Christian schools) also exist. However, these private institutions are regulated by municipalities and follow the national guidelines for the core curricula. All teachers in Finland, from ECEC to pre-primary, primary, and upper secondary education, are required to have university-level teacher training. ECEC teachers are required to have a BA degree in early education and the heads of ECEC centres must have an MA. Primary school teachers (grades 1–6) must have an MA degree in primary education. Teachers at other levels must have an MA degree in their subject along with pedagogic qualifications.

The Finnish National Agency for Education designs the core curricula at all educational levels, and local curricula are prepared in compliance with them at the municipal, school, or ECEC centre level. The national core curricula for ECEC and for pre-primary education are quality handbooks that determine the framework for the implementation of uniform and equal ECEC and pre-primary education. Compliance with the core curricula ensures that every child's right to receive the same quality of ECEC and pre-primary education is fulfilled regardless of a family's cultural, educational, geographical or economic background.

This means that the core curricula discuss matters in rather abstract and general way, while the local curricula designed by the teachers provide more concrete and context-specific guidelines for the implementation of education. The core curricula cover all the subjects of the syllabus as well as more general questions such as the guiding values and the transversal competence areas. The ideas related to cultural literacy, social cohesion and inclusion are mainly referred to in the general sections of the curricula, hence the analysis also focuses primarily on them.

In the early childhood education and care [ECEC] as well as in pre-school, various fields of the arts are frequently used, including music, dance and drama. Their role diminishes in later stages of formal education. Drama and dance are not instructed as individual subjects in formal education, besides vocational education aiming at specific degrees in these fields. In primary education, music is one of the subjects at all grades from the first to the ninth. In the general upper secondary education (high school), music together with visual arts comprise of six compulsory credits (2+4 or 4+2) when the minimum number of credits in the degree is 150 credits. In addition, both have four optional credits. It is also possible to make an optional diploma in music, dance and drama.

14.1 Pre-primary Education

14.1.1 Early Childhood Education and Care

The core curriculum for the early childhood education and care [ECEC] defines six interconnected transversal competence areas: Thinking and learning; Cultural competence, interaction, and self-expression; Taking care of oneself and managing daily life; Multiliteracy; Digital competence; and Participation and involvement. (In the Finnish version of the curriculum, the last title is Participation and influence, which implies a more active and impactful role for the child.) Transversal competence consists of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and will and includes an ability to apply knowledge and skills. Three of the transversal competence areas – Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; Multiliteracy; and Participation and involvement – are particularly significant with regards to cultural literacy learning.

The competence area of *Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression* is contextualised in the cultural diversity.

> The children are growing up in a culturally, linguistically, and ideologically diverse world. This puts emphasis on the significance of social and interaction skills as well as cultural competence. Competence includes the ability to listen, identify and understand different perspectives as well as to reflect on one's own values and attitudes. Interaction skills and the ability to express oneself and understand others have a major significance to the individual's identity, functional capacity, and well-being. Good interaction with people with diverse cultural backgrounds and worldviews requires familiarity with and respect for one's own cultural background and worldview as well as those of others. (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 22)

In the living environment characterised by cultural, linguistic and ideological plurality, *Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression* are understood as positive encounters with people, languages, cultures and worldviews. This brings this competence area close to the idea of cultural literacy. For example, "ability to listen, identify and understand different perspectives as well as to reflect on one's own values and attitudes" (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 22) is one of the core abilities in cultural literacy, as defined by d@rts (Mortimer et al., 2024, p. 24–25). Similarly, empathy, multiperspectivity and constructive conflict-solving are crucial in cultural literacy, and the ECEC core curriculum identifies "putting themselves in the place of others and seeing things from different perspectives as well as in solving conflicts constructively" (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 22) as one of the learning goals in this competence area. The fact that cultural competence is grouped with these learning goals refers to the ability of cultural practices to foster cultural literacy. This competence area seeks to support children's building of cultural identities and sharing experiences of different traditions and customs (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 22–23). It also aims to "strengthen the child's ability to adopt, use and change culture" (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 22), which implies a vision of the child as an active agent capable of creating and changing culture as well as an understanding of culture as something that is changing.

The competence area of *Multiliteracy* deserves attention in the context of cultural literacy, because the idea of cultural literacy as a dialogical competence in the context of diversity and difference builds on the notion of multiliteracy (Maine et al., 2019).

> Multiliteracy is a core competence from the viewpoint of interaction and understanding culturally diverse messages and the surrounding world. Multiliteracy refers to skills in interpreting and producing various types of messages. Multiliteracy is founded on a broad conception of text according to which different texts may be, among others, written, spoken, audiovisual or digital. Multiliteracy comprises different types of literacy, such as visual literacy, numerical literacy, media literacy and basic literacy. [...] In order to develop their multiliteracy, children need an example provided by an adult and a rich textual environment, culture produced by children and cultural services appropriate for children. (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 23)

In the core curriculum for ECEC, multiliteracy means the ability to interpret and produce messages in multimodal texts. These messages are described as culturally diverse. Culture is mentioned as an instrument for learning multiliteracy, including "culture produced by children", which again underlines children's active agency in creating culture rather than only using it. Since multiliteracy is not only needed in the everyday life but also in "participation in the society" (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 23), it can be seen as an element in active citizenship and democracy and thus also in cohesive and inclusive society.

Participation and involvement is a competence area of its own in the ECEC core curriculum.

> Active and responsible participation and involvement create a foundation for a democratic and sustainable future. This requires skills and a desire in the individual to participate in the activities of the community and trust in their own possibilities of making a difference. The right to be heard and involvement in issues affecting one's own life are enshrined in the rights of the child. ECEC shall respect these principles central to

> the implementation of democracy. The task of ECEC is to support the child's gradually developing skills for participation and involvement and encourage a child to take initiative. (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 24)

The aim of this competence area is to develop children's abilities to make a difference and take initiative in the activities of the community. It can be seen as a contribution to citizenship education and thereby a supporting factor for an inclusive and cohesive society, as it is connected to the willingness to take action and defined as a precondition for civic activity as a member of a community. "Participation and involvement" are closely linked to democracy, but the questions of equality, cultural diversity and difference are not discussed here, although they are crucial for democratic participation and involvement as well as for inclusion and cohesion.

None of the three competence areas discussed here are explicitly linked to performing arts. Instead, performing arts are discussed in the context of the key objectives and contents of pedagogical activities in ECEC. These are grouped in five intertwined categories: Rich world of languages; Diverse forms of expression; Me and our community; Exploring and interacting with my environment; I grow, move, and develop (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 39). The category of "Diverse forms of expression" includes the development of children's musical, visual, crafts as well as verbal and physical expression. Experiencing and practising these forms of expression advance children's abilities to explore, interpret, and create meanings and to understand and structure the surrounding world, according to the core curriculum. As such, it can promote core skills included in cultural literacy. This category also aims to familiarise children with different art forms and cultural heritage, which, together with the various forms of expression, supports children's competence in the areas of multiliteracy and participation and involvement. The document connects art and culture to children's identities and their ability to adopt, use, produce and change culture.

Musical expression is part of the "Diverse forms of expression". This is connected to moving to music and dance, as "[c]hildren are encouraged to use their imagination and express their thoughts and emotions stirred by music, for example by explaining them verbally, visually or through dance" (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 42). Drama, dance and play are seen as channels of verbal and bodily expression, which provide children with opportunities to expression and communication, and theatre, dance and circus can be used in these creative processes (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 43). This can be seen as an implicit contribution to cultural literacy as understood as constructive interaction and dialogue.

Another category of key objectives and contents of pedagogical activities in ECEC, "Me and our community", is clearly connected to diversity and active participation: "The mission of ECEC is to develop children's capabilities of understanding the diversity of the local community and practise acting in it" (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 43). As such, it is significant for the cultural literacy learning and the building of inclusive and cohesive society. Music and drama, among other things, can be used in the learning activities. This category is approached from four perspectives: ethical thinking; worldviews; the past, the present and the future of the local community; as well as the media.

Children's ethical thinking skills are supported by reflecting together on ethical questions, such as justice. In the worldview education, the children are familiarised with different worldviews and related traditions with the aim "to promote mutual respect and understanding of varying worldviews as well as to support the development of the children's cultural identities and worldviews" (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 44). In the discussions on "the past, the present and the future of the local community", diversity in the children's growth environments is observed, for example in terms of people, genders and families: "The goal is to educate children to understand that people are different but equal" (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 44). The education includes discussing current topics that concern or interest the children and reflections on how to "influence the realisation of a favourable future" (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 44) through imagining future worlds. Also the media education seeks "to support the children's possibilities for being active and expressing themselves in their communities" (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022, p. 45). The education provides children with opportunities to practice source and media criticism and consider the reliability and truthfulness of media related to the children's lives. These perspectives can be seen as supporting cultural literacy learning and children's active role in building culturally diverse, inclusive and cohesive society. This is discussed throughout the curricula of different levels of education. However, the contribution of performing arts education is not underlined in them.

14.1.2 Pre-primary Education (pre-school)

Pre-primary education, during the final year before the child starts school, includes six interconnected transversal competence areas defined in a similar manner as in ECEC. Under the *Cultural competence, interaction, and self-expression*, one of the goals is to explore the cultural diversity of the living environment and to guide children to respect traditions and customs of their own families and others' families. The various fields of *Multiliteracy* are defined as core skills in "interaction, society, citizenship and professional life" (Opetushallitus, 2024, p. 9, translation K.M.)[108], which connects them to the construction of cohesive and inclusive society. In the competence area of *Participation and involvement*, the task of pre-primary education is to support children's skills of participation and involvement, which are seen as a foundation for the democratic and sustainable future.

The key objectives and contents of pedagogical activities in pre-primary education consist of five intertwined categories, similarly to ECEC. In "Diverse forms of expression", children are provided with opportunities to explore, interpret and express themselves and the world by practicing various skills of expression. This will give them pre-requisites for structuring the surrounding world. Moreover, "learning to know various forms of culture and expression strengthens children's skills of participation and involvement as well as the development of multiliteracy" (Opetushallitus, 2024, p. 17, translation K.M.)[109]. Usage of various forms of expression can bring forth cultural diversity, according to the core curriculum for pre-primary

[108] "ihmisten keskinäisen vuorovaikutuksen, yhteiskunnan, kansalaisuuden ja työelämän" (Opetushallitus, 2024, p. 9)

[109] "Kulttuurin ja ilmaisun eri muotoihin tutustuminen vahvistaa lasten osallistumisen ja vaikuttamisen taitoja sekä monilukutaidon kehittymistä" (Opetushallitus, 2024, p. 17).

education. Music is one part in the category of “Diverse forms of expression”, while drama and dance are mentioned in the context of verbal and physical expression within this category.

14.1.3 Summary

In the core curriculum for ECEC, three of the six transversal competence areas are particularly significant with regards to cultural literacy learning: Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; Multiliteracy; and Participation and involvement. Cultural diversity – characterised as cultural, linguistic and ideological plurality – is depicted as the context for the competence area of *Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression*. This competence area seeks to support cultural literacy learning by developing empathy, multiperspectivity and constructive conflict-solving as well as the ability to listen, identify and understand different perspectives and to reflect on one’s own values and attitudes. Cultural practices such as traditions and customs are implicitly seen as ways to foster cultural literacy. *Multiliteracy* means the ability to interpret and produce culturally diverse messages in multimodal texts, and culture is mentioned as an instrument for learning it. The aim of *Participation and involvement* is to develop children’s abilities to make a difference and take initiative in the activities of the community. This can be seen as an element in the building of an inclusive and cohesive society, but questions of equality, cultural diversity and difference are not discussed in this context. None of the three competence areas discussed here are explicitly linked to performing arts.

Instead, performing arts are discussed in the context of the key objectives and contents of pedagogical activities in ECEC. These are grouped in five intertwined categories: Rich world of languages; Diverse forms of expression; Me and our community; Exploring and interacting with my environment; I grow, move, and develop. Together with visual, crafts as well as verbal and physical expression, musical expression is part of the “Diverse forms of expression”, which is also connected to moving to music and dance. Drama, dance and play are seen as channels of verbal and bodily expression, which provide children with opportunities to expression and communication, and theatre, dance and circus can be used in these creative processes, according to the core curriculum. Experiencing and practising these forms of expression advance children’s abilities to explore, interpret, and create meanings and to understand and structure the surrounding world, according to the core curriculum. As such, it can promote core skills included in cultural literacy. This category also aims to familiarise children with different art forms and cultural heritage, which, together with the various forms of expression, supports children’s competence in the areas of multiliteracy and participation and involvement. The document connects art and culture to children’s identities and their ability to adopt, use, produce and change culture.

Another category of key objectives and contents of pedagogical activities in ECEC, “Me and our community”, is connected to diversity and active participation. As such, it is significant for the cultural literacy learning and the building of inclusive and cohesive society. Music and drama, among other things, can be used in the learning activities. This category is approached from four perspectives: ethical thinking; worldviews; the past, the present and the future of the local community; as well as the media. The contribution of performing arts education is not underlined in them.

Pre-primary education, during the final year before the child starts school, includes six interconnected transversal competence areas defined in a similar manner as in ECEC. Under the *Cultural competence, interaction, and self-expression*, one of the goals is to explore the cultural diversity of the living environment and to guide children to respect traditions and customs of their own and others' families. The key objectives and contents of pedagogical activities in pre-primary education consist of five intertwined categories, similarly to ECEC. In "Diverse forms of expression", children will acquire pre-requisites for structuring the surrounding world by practicing various skills of expression. Using and learning to know various forms of culture and expression strengthens children's skills of participation and involvement as well as multiliteracy and can bring forth cultural diversity, according to the core curriculum. Music is one part in the category of "Diverse forms of expression", while drama and dance are mentioned in the context of verbal and physical expression within this category.

14.2 Primary Education

The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014 is a national regulation issued by The Finnish National Board of Education, in compliance with which the local curricula are prepared. It is formulated pursuant to the Basic Education Act and Decree and Government Decrees that specify the goals of education and the distribution of lesson hours. It covers the entire basic education, i.e. grades 1–9 (7–16 years old). It includes all the subjects of the syllabus of the primary education: mother tongue and literature, second national language, foreign languages, mathematics, environmental studies, religion, ethics, music, visual arts, crafts, physical education, guidance counselling, history, social studies, biology, geography, physics, chemistry, health education and home economics. In addition, it discusses more general questions such as the local curriculum process, operating culture of comprehensive basic education, organisation of schoolwork aiming to promote learning and well-being, assessment, support in learning and school attendance and pupil welfare.

14.2.1 The Guiding Values

The values guiding primary education include values relevant from the perspective of cultural literacy and social cohesion and inclusion, such as democracy and active agency in civil society, equality and equity. One of them is "Cultural diversity as a richness" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 15). In this context, education is supposed to support the pupils in building their cultural identity and agency, promote their interest in other cultures and respect for cultural diversity, and foster interaction within and between cultures. Implying the notion of cultural literacy, interaction across differences and multi-perspectivity are mentioned: encounters with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds enable pupils to look at issues from the perspectives of other people's life situations and circumstances. Using the term citizenship refers to the membership in a community, democracy and equality. In the curriculum, it is connected to encouraging the pupils to act for positive change, which emphasises participation and agency. These meanings can be seen as a reference to social cohesion and inclusion. According to the curriculum, "[b]asic education lays the foundation for global citizenship" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 15), which locates citizenship and its dimensions in an international and intercultural context.

Similarly, the educational, social, cultural and future-related tasks of basic education defined in the mission of basic education relate to cultural literacy and social cohesion and inclusion. The educational task includes reinforcing the pupils' identity as community members, promoting participation and growth as a member of a democratic society and educating the pupils to know, respect and defend human rights. The appreciation of human rights and, in particular, the rights of the child are underlined throughout the core curriculum. The social and cultural tasks of education discuss topics relevant for cultural literacy, inclusion and cohesion:

> The social task of basic education is to promote equity, equality and justice. […] The mission of basic education is to prevent inequality and exclusion and to promote gender equality. […] The cultural task of basic education is to promote versatile cultural competence and appreciation of the cultural heritage, and to support pupils in building their own cultural identity and cultural capital. It promotes understanding of cultural diversity and helps the pupils to perceive cultures as a progression of the past, the present and the future where everyone can have agency. (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 17)

The future-related task of education is to help pupils to encounter changes openly, assess them critically and make responsible choices that build the future. In this context, global education is mentioned as part of basic education: it "contributes to creating preconditions for fair and sustainable development in line with UN development goals" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 17). Basic education can contribute to positive change in society at the national and the international level (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 17).

14.2.2 Principles of the School Culture

The curriculum defines seven principles that guide the development of the school culture. Three of them especially discuss matters that are central in cultural literacy.

"Cultural diversity and language awareness" is a principle that locates the school as "part of a culturally transforming and diverse society where the local and the global overlap [and d]ifferent identities, languages, religions and worldviews coexist and interact" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 27). Internationalisation at home is seen as a resource for learning, and cultural, linguistic, religious and philosophical diversity in the school and in its environment is appreciated and utilised, including the Sámi culture and other minorities. According to this principle, the school recognises the right to one's own language and culture as a fundamental right and seeks to promote understanding and respect between individuals and groups as well as responsible action. It helps the pupils "become acquainted with cultural traditions, constructively discuss different ways of thinking and acting, and create new ways of acting together" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 27), which are core elements of cultural literacy. Multilingualism is taken up as one example of cultural diversity, meaning that the use of various languages in the school is appreciated and attitudes towards languages and linguistic communities are discussed.

The principle of "Participation and democratic action" refers to dialogical practices and the building blocks of social cohesion. It refers to such a school culture in which a learning community constructs its operating methods together, providing the pupils with experiences of being heard and appreciated as community members. The community encourages democratic

dialogue and participation for example through student association activities and interaction in the entire school community, but students' participation in making decisions about school matters is not mentioned here. Cooperation with other societal actors is expected to expand the pupils' ideas of the society and action in a civic society. Contacts with schools in different countries improve skills in acting in a globalised world, which implies the notion of intercultural competence. Promoting participation, realising human rights and operating democratically in school are perceived as supporting pupils' growth into active citizens.

Third principle, "Equity and equality", includes everybody's fundamental rights and opportunities for participation as well as appreciation of human diversity. Other principles guiding the development of school culture introduced in the curriculum are A learning community at the heart of the school culture; Well-being and safety in daily life; Interaction and versatile working approach; and Environmental responsibility and sustainable future orientation.

14.2.3 Transversal Competence Areas

The core curriculum for primary education defines seven transversal competence areas: Thinking and learning to learn; Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; Taking care of oneself and managing daily life; Multiliteracy; Information and communication technology competence; Working life competence and entrepreneurship; Participation, involvement (in the Finnish version: influencing) and building a sustainable future. Transversal competence crosses the boundaries of individual subjects and consists of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and will. Three of the transversal competence areas – Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; Multiliteracy; Participation, involvement and building a sustainable future – are of particular significance regarding cultural literacy learning.

Cultural Competence, Interaction and Self-expression

In the context of *Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression*, the world is depicted as culturally, linguistically, religiously and philosophically diverse. Acting and leading a "culturally sustainable" life in this diverse environment requires "cultural competence based on respect for human rights, skills in appreciative interaction and means for expressing oneself and one's views" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 20). Thus the need for cultural literacy is acknowledged without using the term itself. Indeed, the contents of *Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression* defined in the core curriculum consists of such knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that can be conceived as elements of cultural literacy. For example, the pupils are "supported to recognise how cultures, religions and philosophies exert influence in society and daily life and how the media shapes the culture" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 20). Hence, cultural competence and cultural literacy also mean recognising the use of cultural power.

In addition to reading and interpreting cultural meanings, cultural competence also includes producing them: pupils are supported to "learn to communicate, modify and create culture and traditions" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 20), which emphasises their active agency in terms of culture. The aim is to learn to use various means of interaction and expression, such as drama, music and movement, among others, which refers to the significance of performing arts in learning cultural literacy. Imagination, creativity and aesthetic val-

ues are mentioned as learning goals. Ethical acting, empathy and multi-perspectivity are underlined in this context: the "pupils are guided in putting themselves in the place of another person and examining issues and situations from different viewpoints" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 20). The transversal competence area of *Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression* also includes respectful and trusting attitudes towards other groups of people and peoples, respectful encountering and the conception of cultural diversity as a "fundamentally positive resource" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 20).

In grades 1–2, *Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression* means for example agency and influence with regards to culture: "It is important to discuss with the pupils how they can influence their surroundings and the related culture" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 104). Music and drama are mentioned as tools in this competence:

> The pupils are encouraged to enjoy progressing in their manual and physical skills and to practice different forms of presentation and performance. Imagination, creativity, and self-expression are supported, for instance, through play, adventures, music, drama, story crafting, media presentations, visual expression, handicrafts, building projects, and other handiwork. (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 104)

In grades 3–6, cultural change of the school community, local region and the cultural environment are acknowledged in this transversal competence area, again implying that culture is not static and given. The understanding of culture as changing can be interpreted as an important aspect of cultural literacy. Pupils' "tak[ing] part in creating new culture" is also highlighted, thereby constituting their cultural agency and active influence. (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 167).

In grades 7–9, the students learn about participation in maintaining and renewing cultural heritage, which further develops their agency. Arts are mentioned as a channel of involvement: "By cooperating with partners outside school, the school provides the pupils with diverse opportunities for expressing their cultural competence and for becoming involved, for example by means of arts" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, pp. 323–324).

Multiliteracy

Multiliteracy is defined as a competence to interpret, produce and make a value judgement across a variety of different texts with diverse modes of presentation, including verbal, visual, auditive, numeric and kinaesthetic symbols and their combinations. It means abilities to obtain, combine, modify, produce, present and evaluate information in different modes, contexts and situations, and by using various tools. As such, it seeks to support the development of critical thinking and the reflection of ethical and aesthetic questions. Using texts that are meaningful to the pupils allows supporting the pupils' participation and involvement. *Multiliteracy* is connected to cultural literacy: "The pupils need multiliteracy in order to interpret the world around them and to perceive its cultural diversity" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 22).

Films and music are mentioned as texts that are used in learning multiliteracy in grades 1–2. Using the term "critical literacy" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 168), the core curriculum emphasises the importance of utilising cultural contexts that are meaningful

for the pupils, since enjoying texts – both in the role of an interpreter and a producer – promote the development of multiliteracy.

The term cultural literacy is explicitly used in the context of learning multiliteracy in grades 7–9: "The emphasis is on practising the pupils' analytical, critical, and cultural literacy […] Cultural, ethical, and environmental literacy are supported in teaching and learning" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 324). The pupils are reinforced to use all of their sensory faculties and different ways of knowing diversely in their learning. Moreover, they are "encouraged to use their multiliteracy when participating and being involved in their own surroundings, the media, and the society" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 324), which refers to active agency and participation.

The term "cultural multiliteracy" is used in a chapter in the core curriculum that is dedicated to special questions of language and culture.

> The objective is to guide the pupils to appreciate different languages and cultures and to promote bilingualism and plurilingualism, thus reinforcing the pupils' linguistic awareness and metalinguistic skills. […] The knowledge that the pupils and their guardians and communities have of the nature, ways of living, history, languages and cultures in their own linguistic and cultural areas are drawn upon in the instruction. Cultural multiliteracy can be strengthened by means of media education and by taking the media culture of the pupils and their families into account. (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 91)

Cultural multiliteracy can be interpreted in this context as an ability to "read" and produce various types of messages in different fields based on plural linguistic and cultural background. It is connected to media culture, in particular. Indeed, due to the close connection between language and culture, ideas related to cultural literacy, although without the term itself, come up in the sections dealing with learning mother tongues (Finnish, Swedish, Sami, Roma, sign language) and other languages in the core curriculum. The goal is to support each pupil's linguistic and cultural identity and to create knowledge, understanding and respect for each citizen's right to their own language and culture protected under the Constitution.

Participation, Involvement and Building a Sustainable Future

Participating in civic activity is perceived as a basic precondition for an effective democracy in the core curriculum. According to it, the mission of the school is to reinforce the participation of each pupil and to provide competences "for the pupils' growth into active citizens who use their democratic rights and freedoms responsibly" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 24). Furthermore, "[t]he school respects their right to participate in decision-making as indicated by their age and level of development" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 24), which means in practice that the pupils participate in planning, implementing, assessing and evaluating their own learning, joint school work and the learning environment. Hence, the pupils learn by experience about involvement, decision-making and responsibility. They practise cooperation, negotiation skills, arbitration and conflict resolution and learn to understand the significance of rules, agreements and trust. The student council is mentioned as a concrete channel for participation in decision-making at school.

The pupils are offered opportunities to gather knowledge and experiences of the systems and methods for participation and involvement in civic society and communal work outside the school. They develop capabilities for examining issues critically and evaluating both their own and their community's and society's operating methods and structures. The pupils are encouraged to consider proposals from the perspectives of equality of the different parties and fair treatment. They are guided to understand the significance of their choices, way of living and actions not only to themselves but also to their local environment, society and nature. They are also supported to change them if needed and to reflect on various alternative futures. The idea that participation and involvement make an impact in building the future is ingrained in this transversal competence area.

For example, in grades 1–2, the students "become acquainted with the rules and practical implementation of democratic activity" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 106). "Together with the teacher, the pupils consider what a fair and sustainable future in their own country and in the world means to them and how they can contribute to building such a future" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 106), which can be seen as a contribution to a cohesive and inclusive society and an intervention against marginalisation and polarisation.

Questions related to sustainable development, peace, equality, and democracy as well as human rights, especially the rights of children, are reflected on with the pupils in grades 3-6. The pupils are guided to see the impacts of media in the society and to practise using media as a means of involvement. Other practical actions through which the pupils can contribute to a positive change and practice their skills in participation are considered together, such as student council, club activities, environmental activities or other forms of action offered by the school and the local community. The core curriculum recognises the significance of the opportunities for and positive experiences of participation and involvement in the school for enhancing the togetherness in the school. Similarly, experiences of equality, inclusion and togetherness create trust, according to the core curriculum. This refers to the mechanisms of generating cohesion in the society (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 169).

In grades 7-9, the experiences of participation in school are expected to teach the pupils involvement in practice and help them see possibilities for societal involvement for example through the arts as well as a range of other channels, such as the media, the public sector, non-governmental organisations, political parties, peer supporter activities, environmental activities, and volunteer work. They also teach competences related to cultural literacy, such as expressing views constructively, search for solutions in cooperation with others, and consider justifications for different ways of acting from various perspectives.

14.2.4 Music

Music is one of the subjects of primary education at all grades from the first to the ninth. Moreover, musical activities are seen as a part of integrative learning in the daily school life and in school festivities as well as linked to physical education in the curriculum. Key content areas related to the objectives of music as a subject are Making music together; Components of music, Music in the pupil's life, community, and society; and Repertoire.

> The task of the subject of music is to create opportunities for versatile musical activities and active cultural participation. The pupils are guided to interpret the multiple meanings of music in different cultures as well as in the activities of individuals and communities. […] The teaching and learning of music guide the pupils to appreciate and be curious about music and cultural diversity. (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 153)

Music as a subject seeks to promote pupils' musical activities and active cultural participation, which can strengthen their agency and sense of membership in various groups, communities and society. One of the tasks is to guide pupils to interpret the multiple meanings of music, which implicitly refers to cultural literacy. Music is understood as a social and cultural phenomenon, since music and its meanings are located in different cultures and activities of individuals and communities. Teaching and learning music can foster intercultural competence by guiding the pupils to appreciate and be curious about cultural diversity. Among other things, teaching and learning of music seeks to promote the development of the pupils' holistic growth, cooperation skills and expression skills.

In grades 1–2, the teaching and learning of music allows the pupils to experience how musical activities can create a sense of togetherness, thus making a reference to social cohesion. One of the objectives is "to encourage the pupil to explore his or her musical heritage through play, song, and movement as well as to enjoy the aesthetic, cultural, and historical diversity of music" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 154). This is located in the learning area of Cultural understanding and multiliteracy, which comes close to the idea of cultural literacy in the context of cultural diversity. Many of these aims recur in the higher grades.

In grades 3–6, the pupils learn to approach each other's experiences openly and with respect. One of the objectives is to encourage the pupils to express music, images, stories, and emotions through movement using their whole body, which may include dance. Within the key content area "Repertoire", attention is paid both to the pupils' own cultures and cultural heritage and broadening their cultural understanding, which indicates the core aspects of cultural literacy.

In grades 7–9, music is linked to the concept of critical literacy: "the pupils are guided to interpret meanings in music and to structure emotions and experiences related to music. Teaching and learning also helps develop the pupils' critical literacy of music cultures" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, pp. 502-503). Under "Cultural understanding and multiliteracy", the goal is to guide the pupil to examine music as an art form and to analyse and evaluate how music is used as a means of communication and involvement in different cultures. All these skills can be seen as contributing to cultural literacy. Within the key content "Music in the pupil's life, community, and society", music is linked to various societal phenomena such as consumption and social sustainability, which may refer to social cohesion and inclusion.

14.2.5 Drama and Dance

While drama is not an independent subject in the curriculum, it is mentioned in it nearly a hundred times. Drama and theatre as an art form is part of the curriculum in mother tongue

and literature. Drama strengthens the functional, experiential, and aesthetic nature of the subject, according to the national guidelines of the core curriculum. Based on a broad definition of text, the aim is to encourage the pupils' enthusiasm for a wide range of cultural contents, such as literature, media, drama and theatre. Role play, drama and theatre are to be used for exploring language playfully. A concrete way of using drama in cultural literacy learning is mentioned in the syllabus in Swedish language and literature in grades 1–2:

> The pupils practice communicating in groups in different textual environments. The use of communication exercises and drama, role-playing and playful theatre enables the pupils to practise analysing children's literature, stories, narratives, nursery rhymes, non-fiction texts, media texts, and games. (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 115)

Similar uses of drama in learning about interaction and various cultural texts are mentioned in the syllabus in Finnish, Sámi and Roma language and literature. Although the curriculum in mother tongue and literature includes ample relevant contents for cultural literacy learning, the role of drama in cultural literacy learning is not further highlighted. Learning about cultural and linguistic diversity, interaction and cultural and intercultural competence is also a central part of other languages in the curriculum. However, this is not connected to performing arts education.

Drama is also expected to be used as a way of learning interaction. In addition, it is mentioned as a learning method in other subjects, such as music, physical education, and environmental studies. In social studies, it is seen as an interactive, experiential, and functional working method in creating knowledge, together with simulations, discussions and debates. These working methods can be used to practise communal action, participation, and involvement in the local community.

Drama and other forms of artistic expression as working methods are expected to promote constructive interaction with different people and groups. The potential of drama to promote competences related to cultural literacy is thus acknowledged. The potential of drama to deal with topical themes is also recognised in the curriculum: "The pupils are guided towards all-round expression and utilising the modes of drama to address topical subjects, themes, and literature" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 176). Dance is mentioned in the curriculum only twice, within physical education as a form of exercise.

14.2.6 Optional Studies

The amount of lesson hours of performing arts education is not high, but through optional studies it can be increased a little. The Government Decree lays down the minimum numbers of lesson hours reserved for core instruction in each artistic and practical subject (music 8, visual arts 9, crafts 11, physical education 20, home economics 3). In addition, a total of five annual weekly lessons in grades 1–6 and six in grades 7–9 are reserved for instruction in these subjects as optional lessons.

At minimum, a total of nine annual weekly lessons (one annual weekly lesson equals 38 lessons) are allocated to optional subjects during grades 1–9. Applied optional subjects may

contain elements of several subjects or transversal competences, such as artistic and practical subjects, global education or drama studies.

14.2.7 Summary

The values guiding primary education include values relevant from the perspective of cultural literacy and social cohesion and inclusion, such as democracy and active agency in civil society, equality and equity. For example, in the context of "Cultural diversity as a richness", the pupils will be supported in building their cultural identity and agency, promote their interest in other cultures and respect for cultural diversity, and foster interaction within and between cultures. Encounters with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds enable pupils to look at issues from the perspectives of other people's life situations and circumstances. The emphasis on participation and agency can be seen as a reference to social cohesion and inclusion.

The educational, social, cultural and future-related tasks of basic education defined in the curriculum as a mission of basic education relate to cultural literacy and social cohesion and inclusion. Especially the social and cultural tasks of education discuss topics relevant for cultural literacy, inclusion and cohesion, such as equity, equality, justice, cultural identity, cultural capital, cultural diversity and agency. The future-related task of education is to help pupils to encounter changes openly, assess them critically and make responsible choices that build the future at the national and the international level. The appreciation of human rights and the rights of the child are underlined throughout the core curriculum.

Three of the seven principles of the school culture defined in the core curriculum relate to cultural literacy. In the context of "Cultural diversity and language awareness", cultural, linguistic, religious and philosophical diversity in the school and in its environment is appreciated and utilised, including the Sámi culture and other minorities. The principle of "Participation and democratic action" refers to dialogical practices and the building blocks of social cohesion. Third principle, "Equity and equality", includes everybody's fundamental rights and opportunities for participation as well as appreciation of human diversity.

Three of the seven transversal competence areas defined in the core curriculum are of particular significance regarding cultural literacy learning: Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; Multiliteracy; Participation, involvement and building a sustainable future.

In the context of *Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression*, the world is depicted as culturally, linguistically, religiously and philosophically diverse. The need for cultural literacy is acknowledged without using the term itself: acting and leading a "culturally sustainable" life in this diverse environment requires "cultural competence based on respect for human rights, skills in appreciative interaction and means for expressing oneself and one's views" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 20). Among others, drama, music and movement are mentioned as means of interaction and expression to be learned in this context, which refers to the significance of performing arts in learning cultural literacy.

Learning goals include imagination, creativity, aesthetic values, ethical acting, empathy and multi-perspectivity. This competence area also includes respectful and trusting attitudes towards other groups and peoples and the conception of cultural diversity as an asset. Arts are articulated as a channel of involvement.

Multiliteracy is defined as a competence to interpret, produce and make a value judgement across a variety of different texts with diverse modes of presentation, including verbal, visual, auditive, numeric and kinaesthetic symbols and their combinations. It means abilities to obtain, combine, modify, produce, present and evaluate information in different modes, contexts and situations, and by using various tools "to interpret the world around them and to perceive its cultural diversity" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 22). As such, it seeks to support the development of critical thinking and the reflection of ethical and aesthetic questions. Films and music are mentioned as texts that can be used in learning multiliteracy.

The terms analytical, critical, and cultural literacy as well as cultural, ethical, and environmental literacy are used in the context of learning multiliteracy in grades 7–9, while the core curriculum for the grades 1–2 uses the term critical literacy. Performing arts are not mentioned here, but the pupils are reinforced to use all of their sensory faculties and different ways of knowing diversely in their learning. The core curriculum also uses the term cultural multiliteracy as an ability to "read" and produce various types of messages in different fields based on plural linguistic and cultural background. Ideas related to cultural literacy mostly come up in the sections dealing with learning mother tongues (Finnish, Swedish, Sami, Roma, sign language) and other languages.

In the transversal competence area "Participation, involvement and building a sustainable future", the mission of the school is to reinforce the participation of each pupil and to provide competences active citizenship and responsible use of democratic rights and freedoms. Through participation in planning, implementing, assessing and evaluating their own learning, joint schoolwork and the learning environment, the pupils learn by experience about involvement, decision-making and responsibility. Questions related to sustainable development, peace, equality, and democracy as well as human rights, especially the rights of children, are reflected on with the pupils. The idea that participation and involvement make an impact in building the future is ingrained in this transversal competence area. As such, it makes a contribution to a cohesive and inclusive society and an intervention against marginalisation and polarisation.

Music is one of the subjects of primary education at all grades from the first to the ninth, and musical activities are seen as a part of integrative learning in the daily school life and in school festivities as well as linked to physical education in the curriculum. Music as a subject seeks to promote pupils' musical activities and active cultural participation, which can strengthen their agency and sense of membership in various groups, communities and society. The tasks include promoting the pupils' cooperation skills and expression skills as well as guiding pupils to interpret the multiple meanings of music and to recognize how music is used as a means of communication and involvement in different cultures. Teaching and learning music can foster intercultural competence by guiding the pupils to appreciate and be curious about cultural diversity. In grades 7–9, teaching and learning music helps develop the pupils' critical literacy of music cultures when the pupils interpret meanings in music and structure emotions and experiences related to music.

While drama is not an independent subject in the curriculum, it is mentioned in it nearly a hundred times. Drama and theatre as an art form is part of the curriculum in mother tongue

and literature. Drama strengthens the functional, experiential, and aesthetic nature of the subject, according to the national guidelines of the core curriculum. Uses of drama in learning about interaction and various cultural texts are mentioned in the syllabus in Finnish, Swedish, Sámi and Roma language and literature. Drama is also expected to be used as a way of learning interaction and as a learning method in other several subjects. Dance is mentioned in the curriculum only twice, within physical education as a form of exercise.

14.3 Secondary Education

14.3.1 General Upper Secondary Education (high school)

The subjects included in the general upper secondary education (hereinafter high school) are mother tongue and literature, second national language (Swedish and Finnish, four different syllabi in each), foreign languages, mathematics, biology, geography, physics, chemistry, history, social studies, religion (Evangelic-Lutheran, Orthodox, Catholic, Islam, Jewish, other), worldview studies, health education, physical education, music, visual arts, guidance counselling and thematic studies.

The national core curriculum defines the mission of the high school education as follows:

> High quality education, diverse contacts with the world around them, a communal and participatory school culture as well as life management skills that support well-being and self-knowledge develop the students' emotional intelligence. As stated in the Act on general Upper Secondary Education, the aim is to support the students in growing into good, balanced and enlightened persons and active members of society. A key objective for the individual and society alike is attaining the classical ideals of education striving for truth, goodness and beauty. (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 9)

The term "emotional intelligence", used in the quote above, is a translation of the Finnish term *sydämen sivistys*, which means knowledge, education, enlightenment or civilization of the heart, translated literarily, and associated with attitudes and values in the curriculum, rather than only education.

The mission of high school is to strengthen transversal general knowledge and ability, which improves individuals' capacity of critical and independent thinking, responsible and compassionate action and self-development. Linked to the underlying values of high school, general knowledge and ability mean that individuals and communities are capable of making decisions based on putting themselves in the place of another person as well as ethical reflection and consideration based on knowledge. Moreover, they include feeling empathy, taking care of one another as well as compassionate and ethical problem-solving. These goals refer the core elements of cultural literacy as constructive and empathetic dialogue.

The underlying values of the National core curriculum for high school are built on democracy and the Finnish ideal of education, in which studying and learning are deemed to regenerate society and culture. General knowledge and ability are manifested as open-mindedness and being committed to acting for positive change. Other values within the ideal of high school education are striving for truth, goodness, beauty, justice and peace.

The instruction is based on respect for life and human rights, enabling the students to form a structured conception of the ways of acting that promote these rights. The education develops value-related competence by encouraging reflection on the students' personal values and dealing with tensions between publicly expressed values and the reality. This is crucial from the perspective of cultural literacy, which involves skills for self-reflection and recognising one's own values, perspectives, positions, etc. but also for reading the environment and the potential differences and contradictions between the explicit and the implicit.

High school education seeks to promote equity, gender equality, democracy and well-being. It encourages the students to consider the opportunities, alternatives and shortcomings of Finnish society and international development. "General upper secondary education encourages responsible agency as well as engagement in international cooperation and global citizenship in keeping with the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 13). The notion of global citizenship comes close to cultural literacy as an intercultural competence. International and global operational environment is frequently mentioned in the core curriculum in different contexts, such as professional life.

Each school is seen as a community, which is described in a way that implies cultural literacy learning. In the school community, according to the core curriculum, people from different backgrounds have an opportunity to identify and reflect on common values and principles of a good life and learn to work together. Human and cultural diversity are considered a richness and a source of creativity. Cultural heritages are reinforced by providing, evaluating and regenerating information and competence related to them. Creativity, participation, agency and togetherness are emphasised in all activities, and learning is interactive, situational, cultural, linguistic, embodied and multisensorial, according to the core curriculum.

The curriculum defines the following themes as starting points for developing the school culture: A learning community; Participation and togetherness; Well-being and sustainable future; Equality and equity; and Cultural diversity and language awareness. In the themes concerning "A learning community" and "Participation and togetherness", students' participation in building the activities and well-being of the school community as well as its decision-making is emphasised. The students are encouraged to express their opinions, participate in decision making and act responsibly in communities and the society. According to the curriculum, "[p]articipation and democratic activity lay the foundation for the students' growth into active citizenship" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 17).

In the framework of "Well-being and sustainable future", students are encouraged to act for a fair and sustainable future. In the interaction of the school community, transparency, caring and mutual respect are underlined, which refer to the competences of cultural literacy. "Equality and equity" can be seen as core elements in an inclusive and cohesive society. Based on the laws on equality between men and women as well as on non-discrimination, the core curriculum gives the education providers the responsibility to ensure that the schools make an equality plan and a non-discrimination plan that can be included in the local curricula.

Finally, in the context of "Cultural diversity and language awareness", it is explained how the high school education seeks to support the coexistence and interaction of different languages, religions and worldviews. A learning community draws on the country's cultural heritage and

national and minority languages as well as diversity of cultures, languages, religions and worldviews in the community itself and its surroundings. Languages are understood as crucial for learning, interaction, identity construction and socialisation.

International competence

International competence is one area that needs to be covered in high school according to the law.

> Internationality in general upper secondary education diversifies the students' experiences, broadens their perception of the world, and builds their capabilities for acting ethically in a globalised world full of challenges and opportunities. The UN's Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, and especially its Goal 4.7 describing the characteristics of global citizenship, are taken into account in competence development. (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 22)

In this context, the core curriculum mentions several aspects of cultural literacy: a global citizen's attitude, international competence, cultural skills, language proficiency, cooperation and team skills as well as openness for encountering new dimensions and opportunities. Indeed, advancing cultural knowledge and awareness is one of the ways to build students' international competence, according to the curriculum, together with international mobility, visits and projects. Of the transversal competences (introduced in the following section), international competence is supported especially by interaction competence, societal competence and global and cultural competence.

Transversal competences

The national core curriculum for high school defines six transversal competences: Well-being competence; Interaction competence; Multidisciplinary and creative competence; Societal competence; Ethics and environmental competence; and Global and cultural competence. Comprising the common objectives of all subjects, they form an entity of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and will that characterises a good, balanced and civilised human being.

To develop transversal competences, the students examine complex cultural and societal phenomena as well as their links and interdependencies. In all these areas, the idea is that students learn to seek elements for building a good future, express their justified views of desirable changes, work for ethically sustainable solutions in their daily lives and society and challenge their comfort zone and produce ideas and solutions together. Some of their contents entangle closely with the ideas included in cultural literacy, cohesion and inclusion.

In the *Interaction competence*, emotions are seen as a resource in interaction: "The starting point for good communication is empathy, which enables experiences of meaningfulness" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 51). Respect, listening and multiliteracy are closely linked to interaction in this context. Studies seek to develop students' capabilities for cultural literacy and "improve their skills in encountering disputes and conflicts constructively" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 51). The students also reflect the notion of freedom of expression and gain experiences of conveying messages and meanings across linguistic and cultural boundaries. They learn how significant constructive interaction and inter-cultural understanding are for a sustainable future, democracy and peace.

Multidisciplinary and creative competence supports the students' reflection on their ethical and aesthetic values. The studies seek to advance students' multiliteracy, based on a broad conception of text. The students examine complex problems and try to find sustainable solutions and alternative future scenarios. While multiliteracy and various types of text can involve various art forms, arts are not explicitly discussed. Artistic activities are characterised by creative thinking that produces alternatives and foresees changes, but the artistic, or cultural, dimension of the alternative future scenarios, mentioned in the core curriculum, is not recognised here. This means that creative competence, which is mentioned in the title of this transversal competence area, is not linked to artistic activities.

The students' diverse experiences of and reflection on participation, involvement and work lay the foundation for *Societal competence*, and the studies develop their understanding of their possibilities to contribute to the realisation of democracy, according to the core curriculum. Student's agency in building an inclusive and cohesive society is underlined.

> The students learn to understand and appreciate the operating principles and structures of a democratic and fair society built on equality and equity. They understand how social capital is formed and how it can be increased. The students adopt active citizenship and agency skills. They are motivated to take a stand on societal issues as well as to submit and promote initiatives on local and international cooperation. The importance of the students' own work in building a good future is made visible. (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 52)

Civic engagement is also mentioned in *Ethics and environmental competence.* The students reflect ethics, responsibility and ecological, economic, social and cultural sustainability from the perspectives of civic engagement and sustainable action in various communities.

In *Global and cultural competence,* the goal is that the students strengthen their international competence and multiliteracy by drawing on culturally and linguistically diverse networks, media and reference materials, which implicitly makes a reference to cultural literacy. The students learn to recognise and reflect on different types of cultural heritage, values and other elements of cultural identities and daily lives in Finland and beyond. They learn to appreciate individual's and communities' right to cultural identity and to act for cultural diversity. Mentioning the notion of global citizenship in the context of this transversal competence indicates the close link implicitly made between global citizenship and cultural literacy:

> The students are offered versatile opportunities for investigating, practising, and improving their global citizenship and ethical skills in line with the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They also learn to analyse internationalisation and globalisation as phenomena. The students build their knowledge of human rights and their agency in promoting human rights, equity, justice, and ethically responsible ways of living. They identify and learn to use opportunities for multilateral, creative cooperation aiming to build a good future. (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 53)

As the quote shows, this competence area can be seen as supporting students' ability to advance societal cohesion and inclusion. Performing or other arts are not mentioned as part of global and cultural competence or any other competence areas defined here.

Mother tongue and literature

The core curriculum for mother tongue and literature explicitly uses the terms “critical and cultural literacy” and “multiliteracy” (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 55). “Critical and cultural multiliteracy” is a core aim in the objectives related to the learning goals concerning interpreting and producing texts (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 63). In the learning goal about development of language and cultural awareness, the objective is that the students understand the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity for identities and deepen their critical and cultural literacy. Matters related to cultural literacy are typically studied in the modules on media and society as well as language and culture (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, pp. 63102).

Music

In high school education, the task of teaching and learning music is to promote students’ active musical agency and participation. The instruction provides the students with the opportunity to explore the world in a multi-sensory way, especially through hearing. The meanings of musical concepts are studied through physical learning as auditive, visual and motor experiences. Studying music is about developing bodily, motor, cognitive and expression skills in social interaction. Using different types of texts refers to multiliteracy and through it also cultural literacy.

The music instruction seeks to deepen the students’ understanding of music as a societal phenomenon and develop their civic participation: “Musical and other artistic work provides the students with capabilities for musical civic engagement, cultural and societal involvement (influence) as well as critical evaluation of media and the aural environment” (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 327).

The potential of music education for cultural literacy learning is recognised, although without mentioning cultural literacy:

> Playing music together is a unique form of group activity which reinforces interaction and communication skills. Constructive interaction and coordination broaden the student’s horizons concerning music and other arts as well as cultural valuations and hierarchies while developing such skills as creative and critical thinking. (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 327)

Studying music helps the students to understand themselves and others:

> Through musical and other artistic activity, the students learn to understand other people’s thoughts and feelings, which is a precondition for developing empathy and the ability to put yourself in another person’s position. [...] Musical activity guides them to understand that imagination and an ability to use it are important human traits which support them in seeing things differently, thinking outside the box, and solving practical problems. [...] However, the essential aspect of arts and creative production is that they help the students see other people in their full humanity, including their skills, knowledge, experiences, and emotions. (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 327)

Music is seen as a way to learn empathy, multiperspectivity and imagination, which are central elements in cultural literacy. According to the curriculum, these skills contribute to ecological imagination and aesthetic judgement. Through arts, we can learn to know others in a holistic way and thereby connect with each other.

Music education is seen as promoting the transversal competences of global and cultural competence and societal competence. In this context, music education is discussed in a way that makes a strong reference to cultural literacy as a dialogical, intercultural competence.

> Global and cultural competence as well as the development of societal competence are naturally linked to the objectives of music instruction. Music opens windows to the human condition and society. Music and other arts broaden and expand thinking, the inner eye, which helps the students see behind different barriers and encounter conflicts. Musical activity develops the students' skills in evaluating critically the meanings attributed to things and produced as part of expression. This enables the students to, if necessary, oppose thinking that relies on undemocratic values, denigrating human dignity or, for example, other cultures. Music teaches the students to act responsibly and together for a common goal, also with those whose starting points are different from their own. The means of music and other arts make it possible to deal with even difficult themes in life. Music is a cultural phenomenon, and the ways of making music are also culturally determined. This is why studying music advances the students' understanding of cultures and cultural heritage, not only in their own but also in other countries. Studying music can thus reinforce respect for cultural diversity and dialogue between groups. (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 328)

Aspects of cultural literacy, such as critical thinking, cultural diversity and collaboration across perceived differences are underlined here. While music certainly can be understood as a culturally determined phenomenon supporting critical evaluation of meaning-making, as the quote points out, approaching all subjects through this perspective would increase students' general understanding of how everything is constructed by the spatial-temporal activities and meaning-making of human beings and thus support their cultural literacy. Music is not more cultural than any other subject.

The general objectives of music instruction are divided in four categories: Musical versatility; Musical creative thinking; Meanings of music and musical interaction; as well as Music and democracy. Within the "Meanings of music and musical interaction", the goals include learning an open-minded and appreciative attitude towards different cultures and learning to have empathy for many types of experiences and life situations. Within "Music and democracy", the goals include a capability to use musical and other artistic ways of expression for the societal involvement as well as understanding and questions of freedom of expression.

One of the optional courses, titled "Genre – Global curiosity", deals with the understanding of music as a culturally determined art form and interconnections between cultures. It seeks to enable students to recognise both the opportunities and challenges of reciprocity between cultures. While such a course can be very useful for creating intercultural dialogue, it can also present different 'cultures' as rigid entities and ignore their internal diversity.

General Upper Secondary School Diplomas in music, dance and drama

High school diplomas are optional thematic studies that can be available for the students in the local curriculum. The diplomas can be obtained in different subjects or subject groups, such as home economics, visual arts, crafts, physical education, media, music, dance and theatre. The scope of the diplomas is two credits. In the core curriculum, the diplomas are not explicitly linked to cultural literacy learning. The purpose of the diploma in music, dance and theatre is to give the students an opportunity to demonstrate their competence and interest in these fields.

The diploma in music can be a project or a portfolio of student's musical studies and activities. It can involve different methods and areas of implementation but is has to include the assessors' judgement. The diploma in dance includes a solo or a group work, in which the student takes part as a dancer or choreographer, accompanied by a written assignment. The diploma also includes also a study and a written description of their study path and development related to dance. The diploma in theatre seeks to strengthen the students' dramatic and theatrical expression skills and improve their interaction and self-assessment skills. It includes a performance in some area of theatre, selected by the student, as well as a related portfolio complied by the student. The central contents involve mastering the work process, skills in assessing the artistic process, understanding the artistic entity, devices of theatre and cooperation and interaction skills.

14.3.2 Vocational Education

Related to the vocational education in the field of performing arts, the national core curricula cover vocational qualification in dance and music (including three competence areas: musician, music technologist, piano tuner), further vocational qualification for music producers (comprising three competence areas: music production, songwriting and music management) and in stage and theatre technology (comprising four competence areas: stagecraft, stage and performance work, stage and event technology, and puppetry) as well as specialist vocational qualification in stage and theatre technology. Discussion on cultural literacy, inclusion and cohesion is almost non-existent in these documents, especially in the further and specialist vocational qualification.

Aspects of cultural literacy and social cohesion and inclusion are present in the value foundation of vocational education, defined in the core curricula about vocational qualification in dance and vocational qualification in music. Ethical and critical deliberation and taking other's position are mentioned as individuals' and communities' ways of making solutions. Involvement, active agency and togetherness are emphasised. Vocational education is said to promote equality, non-discrimination, well-being and democracy. Respecting human rights, tolerance, difference and cultural diversity are seen as richness, which are to be actualised in the education. Openness, safety and trust are also mentioned as important values.

In vocational qualification in dance, aspects of cultural literacy are implicitly present in the learning area of the applied usage of dance, which aims at acknowledging the experiential and interactive potential of dance, among other things. Within art and creative expression, objectives of learning include recognising the meaning of cultures and art for the well-being as well as recognising examples of local and national culture and art. All other references to

cultural literacy in the core curriculum are in other subjects than dance, such as communication and interaction in mother tongue, communication and interaction in a foreign language and expertise on the society and working life.

In vocational qualification in music, within the learning area on developing performing and collaboration skills, one of the goals is to promote the working of the group and appreciating others' viewpoints, which can be seen as an aspect of cultural literacy as a dialogical practice. Within art and creative expression, objectives of learning include recognising the meaning of cultures and art for the well-being as well as recognising examples of local and national culture and art. Other references to cultural literacy in the core curriculum are in other subjects than music, such as communication and interaction in mother tongue and communication and interaction in a foreign language.

14.3.3 Summary

In the high school education, international competence is a prominent learning area, which makes the connection to cultural literacy, intercultural competence and cultural diversity. The topics related to cultural literacy are discussed in the context of several of the six transversal competences defined for high school, especially Interaction competence, Societal competence, and Global and cultural competence. Since these areas are discussed in the framework of all subjects, cultural literacy topics are rather visible throughout the curriculum. However, they are connected to performing arts only in the subject of music. Questions related to cultural literacy, social inclusion and cohesion are mostly studied in mother tongue and literature. They are also explored in subjects such as music, religion, philosophy and geography. In foreign languages, language and culture are scrutinised as tools of creative expression and influence.

Music is mentioned in the national core curriculum for high school 139 times, of which 16 times outside of the subject itself. Dance is mentioned eight times, all under the optional diploma in dance. Theatre/theatrical performances are mentioned 32 times. In addition to the optional diploma in theatre, the terms are used when discussing multiliteracy. For example "the students advance their multiliteracy by discussing literature, cinema, music, theatre, visual arts or the media and they familiarise themselves with different text genres" (e.g. The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 117). Drama is mentioned eight times, for example as part of the studies in Sámi and Roma language: "The students advance their knowledge of the literature, narrative tradition, visual culture, music and drama of their cultural area" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 361).

Cultural literacy is mentioned 22 times in the curriculum, nine of them in the subject of religion: "develop their cultural literacy related to religions and world views" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 273). Formulated as "critical and cultural literacy", it is discussed thirteen times within mother tongue and literature. The term cultural multiliteracy is used once in the curriculum: "Visual arts advance the students' cultural multiliteracy, which also helps develop their multidisciplinary and creative competence" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2019, p. 332). In the form "critical and cultural multiliteracy" it appears twenty times within mother tongue and literature as well as second languages.

Discussion on cultural literacy, inclusion and cohesion is almost non-existent in the national core curricula of vocational qualifications in music, theatre and dance, especially in the further

and specialist vocational qualification. However, aspects of cultural literacy and social cohesion and inclusion are present in the value foundation of vocational education, defined in the core curricula about vocational qualification in dance and vocational qualification in music. This includes ethical and critical deliberation, taking other's position, involvement, active agency, togetherness, equality, non-discrimination, well-being and democracy. Respecting human rights, tolerance, difference and cultural diversity are seen as richness, which are to be actualised in the education. Openness, safety and trust are also mentioned as important values.

The vocational qualification in dance acknowledges the experiential and interactive potential of dance, among other things. In vocational qualification in music, within the learning area on developing performing and collaboration skills, one of the goals is to promote the working of the group and appreciating others' viewpoints, which can be seen as an aspect of cultural literacy as a dialogical practice. In both dance and music, objectives of learning include recognising examples of local and national culture and art.

14.4 Non-formal Education

The basic education in arts (BEA) is non-formal education for all age groups in architecture, visual arts, crafts, media arts, music, literary arts, circus art, dance and theatre. It is provided outside school hours by trained professionals in the field in local art schools. About 86 % of municipalities offer opportunities for basic education in the arts across the country. Although completely optional, BEA reaches more than 120 000 students, which exceeds the amount of high school students in Finland. Steered by the Act and Decree on Basic Education in the Arts, it is goal-oriented and tied to a national curriculum. (Taiteen perusopetusliitto, 2019.)

The Finnish National Agency for Education has published two documents that lay the guidelines for BEA: National core curriculum for basic education in arts for basic studies (Opetushallitus, 2017a) and National core curriculum for basic education in arts for broad studies (Opetushallitus, 2017b). According to both documents, BEA is embedded not only in the art forms themselves but also in the broader cultural and societal context. In instruction, the social and societal perspective is expected to be brought as part of the studies through various cooperation projects with actors and organisations from different fields.

According to the core curriculum in both basic and broad studies, the mission of BEA is to build a socially and culturally sustainable future, which highlights the societal role of art. The education is based on cultural heritage that is described as pluralistic and renewing. The value foundation of the two core curricula consists of respect of human rights, equality, non-discrimination and cultural diversity as well as a conception of the uniqueness and dignity of each human being as an individual and as a member of communities. Cultural diversity is also mentioned as an aspect of the everyday practices in instruction, together with linguistic awareness.

Teaching in BEA seeks to promote gender equality and respect gender pluralism. Based on the legislation on equality between men and women as well as on non-discrimination, the core curriculum gives the education providers the responsibility to ensure that the schools offering basic art education make an equality plan and a non-discrimination plan. They can be included in the curricula.

The contribution of arts education to cultural literacy is explicitly mentioned in both of the core curricula: "basic education in arts strengthens the construction of the pupils' identities and the development of cultural literacy" (Opetushallitus, 2017a, p. 10; Opetushallitus, 2017b, p. 10). The studies support pupils' skills in independent expression, creative thinking and involvement. Both core curricula also make the connection between arts and multiliteracy, which is linked to critical thinking as well as scrutinising, interpreting and making value judgements of the culturally diverse reality with the means of arts (Opetushallitus, 2017b, p. 11). Moreover, pupils are guided to investigate their field of art as a historic, social and topical phenomenon.

In addition, discussion on different ways of producing knowledge typical for different art fields refers implicitly to the notion of multiliteracy, according to which different fields produce and use different types of 'texts'. The two curricula also make an implicit reference to the value-component of cultural literacy. According to them, the questions on aesthetics, ethics and ecology inherent in art guide us to ponder and evaluate what is significant and valuable in life.

The notion of cultural involvement is discussed as an objective of BEA in both core curricula. In the operational culture of the education organisations, inclusive and collaborative practices can create an experience of involvement. According to the curricula, arts education supports pupils' cultural involvement and building a good life in the community. The social role of art and art education is thereby recognised.

In the core curriculum for basic studies, BEA is seen as a way to encourage pupils to influence their own living environment with the means of art (Opetushallitus, 2017a, p. 11). Similarly, in the core curriculum for broad studies, "[t]he students are inspired to use art also as a tool of cooperation, influence and participation" (Opetushallitus, 2017b, p. 11, translation K.M.)[110]. The discussions on cultural involvement, participation and influencing relate to the development of active agency not only at individual but also societal level. This, in turn, can be seen as a contribution to construction of social cohesion and inclusion.

14.4.1 Dance

The discussion of cultural involvement continues in the core curriculum for dance.

> The basic studies in dance support student's holistic growth, creativity, artistic expression skills and cultural involvement. The student gets support in acquiring the abilities needed in dance drawing from their own personal and cultural points of departure. […] The instruction broadens the pupil's conception of the versatility of dance both as art and as a cultural and societal phenomenon and supports their growth into a civilised and tolerant citizen who respects everyone's difference. (Opetushallitus, 2017a, p. 56; 2017b, p. 64, translation K.M.)[111]

[110] "Oppilaita innostetaan käyttämään taidetta myös yhteistyön, vaikuttamisen ja osallistumisen välineenä" (Opetushallitus, 2017b, p. 11).

[111] "Tanssin laajan oppimäärän opetus tukee oppilaan kokonaisvaltaista kasvua, luovuutta ja taiteellista ilmaisukykyä. Oppilasta ohjataan kehittämään tanssissa tarvittavia valmiuksia tasapainoisesti ja ottamalla huomioon oppilaan yksilölliset ja kulttuuriset lähtökohdat. Opintojen myötä oppilas oppii yhä paremmin huolehtimaan kokonaisvaltaisesta hyvinvoinnistaan ja toimimaan ryhmän ja yhteisön jäsenenä. Opetus kannustaa oppilasta osallistumaan erilaisiin tanssi- ja taidetapahtumiin ja esityksiin sekä esiintyjänä että katsojana. Opetus avartaa oppilaan käsitystä tanssin monimuotoisuudesta niin

Dance instruction is seen as supporting pupils' growth as citizens. Tolerance and respect for difference are mentioned in this context. Cultural diversity is implicitly referred to: "topical phenomena and the demographic and cultural development of the region" are to be taken into account in dance instruction. In this context, the aim is to

> open and diversify the contents of the basic education of art in dance in such a way that all – regardless of gender or ethnic background, for example – have the opportunity to experience involvement with regards to the contents and offerings of the instruction. (Opetushallitus, 2017a, p. 58, translation K.M.)[112]

In instruction, "attention is paid to recognising and changing gendered attitudes and practices" (Opetushallitus, 2017a, p. 59; 2017b, p. 65, translation K.M.)[113].

The objectives are divided in three categories: Well-being and corporeality; Interaction and cultural competence; and Skill and art. The objectives in "Interaction and cultural competence" include competences that are central in cultural literacy: listening to others and observing one's environment, contributing to the teamwork in a constructive manner, and appreciating and respecting others' individuality and views. In "Skill and art", the aims include to familiarize oneself with the forms and genres of dance and their cultural background and to gain versatile cultural and artistic influences.

14.4.2 Music

In the basic studies, the objectives are divided in four categories: Playing and singing; Performing and expressing; Listening and perceiving music; and Cross-artistic competence. In the broad studies, the categories of the objectives are: Performing and expressing; Rehearsal and learning to learn; Listening and perceiving music; and Composing and improvisation.

The contents of music studies include versatile development of cultural competence, aesthetic experience, creative thinking and producing, searching for new solutions and social and interaction skills. Through them, the pupils can locate their hobby as a part of "living and acting music culture and the entire field of arts" (Opetushallitus, 2017a, p. 41; 2017b, p. 47, translation K.M.)[114]. These contents can be seen as aspects of cultural literacy as a social practice and competence to interpret the surroundings as well as one's own activities and dispositions.

taiteena kuin kulttuurisena ja yhteiskunnallisena ilmiönä sekä tukee hänen kasvuaan sivistyneeksi, suvaitsevaiseksi ja jokaisen erilaisuutta kunnioittavaksi kansalaiseksi." (Opetushallitus, 2017a, p. 56; 2017b, p. 64)

[112] "Opetuksessa otetaan huomioon oppilaiden erilaiset vahvuudet ja kiinnostuksen kohteet, paikalliset resurssit, ajankohtaiset ilmiöt sekä alueen väestöllinen ja kulttuurinen kehitys. Tavoitteena on avata ja monipuolistaa tanssin taiteen perusopetuksen sisältöjä siten, että kaikilla esimerkiksi sukupuoleen tai etniseen taustaan katsomatta on mahdollisuus kokea osallisuutta suhteessa opetuksen sisältöihin ja tarjontaan." (Opetushallitus, 2017a, p. 58)

[113] "Opetuksen toteutuksessa kiinnitetään huomiota sukupuolittuneiden asenteiden ja käytänteiden tunnistamiseen ja muuttamiseen." (Opetushallitus, 2017a, p. 59; 2017b, p. 65)

[114] "Oma musiikkiharrastus asettuu osaksi elävää ja toimivaa musiikkikulttuuria sekä koko taiteiden kenttää." (Opetushallitus, 2017a, p. 41; 2017b, p. 47.)

14.4.3 Theatre

The concepts of societal involvement and cultural competence are used in the curriculum of theatre. Theatre studies are said to provide abilities for societal involvement. Strengthening pupils' cultural competence through developing their skills and knowledge in manifold ways is defined as the aim of theatre studies. However, related topics such as intercultural competence, cultural diversity or inclusion are not discussed in the context of these concepts.

The objectives are divided in four categories: performing and interacting skills, theatre performance, own artistic process, and theatre art as a part of society. Some of the objectives include topics that relate to cultural literacy as a competence to 'read' the surrounding culture. For example, the aim is to encourage pupils to observe theatre as an art form, as a part of their own life and as a societal phenomenon.

The objectives include elements that are significant for cultural literacy learning. The instruction seeks to encourage pupils to broaden or change perspectives and think curiously, critically and through questioning. It also seeks to guide the pupils to observe themselves and phenomena and reality around them through different senses as well as by following the media. Moreover, it seeks to guide pupils to analyse critically what they experience and see, "also from the perspective of the societal and involvement" (Opetushallitus, 2017b, p. 73, translation K.M.)[115]. The instruction also includes activities that can be seen as elements of multiliteracy, such as using plays, poems, fairy tales, films, media texts, images, sounds or biographies.

14.4.4 Summary

According to the core curriculum in both basic and broad studies, the mission of BEA is to build a socially and culturally sustainable future. Cultural diversity is part of the value foundation of the two core curricula, and it is also mentioned as an aspect of the everyday practices in instruction, together with the linguistic awareness. Teaching in BEA seeks to promote gender equality and respect the gender pluralism. Based on the legislation, the core curriculum gives the education providers the responsibility to ensure that the schools offering basic art education make an equality plan and a non-discrimination plan, which can be included in the curricula.

Both of the core curricula explicitly state that "basic education in arts strengthens the construction of the pupils' identities and the development of cultural literacy" (Opetushallitus, 2017a, p. 10; 2017b, p. 10). The studies support pupils' skills in independent expression, creative thinking and involvement. Both core curricula also make the connection between arts and multiliteracy, which is linked to critical thinking as well as scrutinising, interpreting and making value judgements of the culturally diverse reality with the means of arts. Questions on aesthetics, ethics and ecology are inherent in art, and different art fields have different ways of producing knowledge. The social role of art and art education is recognised through the notion of cultural involvement; art can be used as a tool of cooperation, influence and participation.

Dance instruction is seen as supporting pupils' cultural involvement and growth as citizens. Tolerance and respect for difference are mentioned in this context. Diversity of the contents

[115] "ohjata oppilasta analysoimaan kriittisesti kokemaansa ja näkemäänsä, myös yhteiskunnallisuuden ja osallisuuden näkökulmasta" (Opetushallitus, 2017b, p. 73.)

of the basic education of art in dance is suggested so that all can experience involvement with regards to the instruction regardless of gender or ethnic background. The objectives include "Interaction and cultural competence", defined through competences that are central in cultural literacy: listening to others and observing one's environment, contributing to the teamwork in a constructive manner, and appreciating and respecting others' individuality and views. Aims also include familiarizing oneself with the forms and genres of dance and their cultural background and to gain versatile cultural and artistic influences.

The contents of basic education in music include versatile development of cultural competence, aesthetic experience, creative thinking and producing, searching for new solutions and social and interaction skills. These contents can be seen as aspects of cultural literacy as a social practice and competence to interpret the surroundings as well as one's own activities and dispositions.

The aim of the basic education in theatre is strengthening pupils' cultural competence. Some of the objectives include topics that relate to cultural literacy as a competence to 'read' the surrounding culture. For example, the aim is to encourage pupils to observe theatre as an art form, as a part of their own life and as a societal phenomenon. Theatre studies are also expected to support students' abilities for societal involvement. The instruction seeks to encourage pupils to broaden or change perspectives and think curiously, critically and through questioning and to guide the pupils to observe themselves and phenomena and reality around them through different senses. The instruction also includes activities that can be seen as elements of multiliteracy, such as using plays, poems, fairy tales, films, media texts, images, sounds or biographies.

14.5 Conclusions and Reflections

14.5.1 Findings in Light of the Theoretical Framework

The term cultural literacy is used only a couple of times in the core curricula for ECEC, pre-primary and primary education in Finland. Instead, *Multiliteracy* is one of the transversal competence areas in ECEC and pre-primary and primary education. While the formulations of multiliteracy in the Finnish curricula include aspects that come close to cultural literacy, multiliteracy is not tightly connected to topics related to cultural diversity. Rather, it is the ability to act with different types of texts and multimodal expressions. Another transversal competence area defined in the core curricula that refers to cultural literacy is *Cultural competence, interaction and expression*. Here cultural diversity is conceptualised as a richness. In the national core curriculum for high school, terms cultural literacy and cultural multiliteracy are used frequently, mainly in the context of mother tongue and literature.

The potential of formal education to generate social cohesion is recognised in the core curricula: equality, inclusion, involvement and participation are explicitly underlined throughout them. School democracy is practiced in all levels from pre-school to high school. However, performing arts education is seldom seen as a channel for promoting participation and cohesion.

In non-formal education, curricula for dance, music and theatre emphasise interactive and collaborative learning and working practices, which refers to the potential of performing arts to enable cultural literacy as a dialogical practice of constructive interaction. However, cultural diversity or intercultural relations are not discussed much in the national core curricula for BEA for basic and broad studies.

In formal education, the role of creative and arts-based learning, using for example music, dance and drama, is greatest in the early childhood education and care as well as pre-school, and diminishes gradually after that. Music is one of the subjects of primary and secondary education, whereas dance and drama are not. At all education levels, music gets much more attention in the core curricula than dance and drama. Based on the core curricula, the potential of performing arts education in cultural literacy learning or learning to build a cohesive and inclusive world is not fully recognised at any of the education levels in formal or non-formal education.

14.5.2 Decolonial Perspective

The decolonial approach to performing arts education taken in d@rts means paying attention to the deconstruction of existing conceptions, classifications, and power hierarchies. Change and transformation are thus central in it. In the Finnish core curricula for formal education, change is a recurrent topic from ECEC to high school. Students' potential for agency, influence and making a change is underlined.

In the core curricula, culture is often understood as something that is changing instead of static and given. In the core curriculum for ECEC, the aim is to support children's identities and their ability to adopt, use, produce and change culture. The child is seen as an active agent capable of creating and changing culture rather than only using it. In instruction, culture produced by children will be used which underlines children's active agency in creating culture.

Similarly, in primary education, cultural competence includes producing cultural meanings in addition to reading and interpreting them: the goal is to learn to modify and create culture and traditions, which again emphasises pupils' active and transformative agency in terms of culture. For example, the core curriculum fosters pupils' participation in "creating new culture" (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2014, p. 167) and in maintaining and renewing cultural heritage. Cultural change of the school community, local region and the cultural environment is acknowledged.

In the core curriculum for primary education, pupils are encouraged to act for positive change, emphasising participation and agency, which refers to community, democracy, equality and social cohesion and inclusion. One of the core tasks defined for primary education is the future-related task, which seeks to help pupils to encounter changes openly, assess them critically and make responsible choices that build the future. Basic education can contribute to positive change in society at the national and the international level, according to the core curriculum. In instruction, practical actions through which the pupils can contribute to positive change and practice their skills in participation are considered together.

The core curriculum for primary education advocates the idea that participation and involvement make an impact in building the future, and the pupils are supported to reflect on various

alternative futures. Arts are mentioned as a channel of involvement, among others, but not further discussed. However, prior studies have shown that art is a suitable platform for transformative practices since it is creative and develops imagination and reflection of unforeseen ideas. As embodied, multisensory, creative, interactive and dialogical activity, it allows different ways of knowing and producing knowledge, which is essential for the decolonial critique and transformation. With regards to non-formal education, the core curricula of basic education in arts recognise that different art fields have different ways of producing knowledge.

14.6 Commentaries

14.6.1 Comment from the Norwegian Consortium Member Nord University

The Finnish curriculum analysis makes an important contribution to the d@rts project by identifying how cultural literacy and inclusion are addressed through transversal competences and value-based principles. From a Norwegian perspective, it is particularly relevant to note the shared Nordic commitment to educational equity and holistic learning. However, the analysis also reveals some limitations that merit further reflection.

A critical observation in the Finnish case is that while the potential of performing arts education for promoting cultural literacy, societal cohesion, and inclusion is present, it is rarely made explicit in the curriculum. This implicitness raises concerns about whether the full educational value of music, drama, and dance is sufficiently recognised, particularly in relation to the development of dialogical and intercultural competences as defined in Deliverable 1.1 (Mortimer et al., 2024). The literature review in d@rts reconceptualises cultural literacy as a dialogical practice, emphasizing empathy, mutual recognition, and negotiation of meaning in diverse cultural contexts. These elements are only partially captured in the Finnish curriculum, and often remain at a general level.

From the Norwegian perspective, one may see both alignment and divergence. Like Finland, Norway integrates performing arts primarily at the primary level, often through cross-disciplinary approaches. Yet both countries also tend to marginalise certain forms of artistic expression—particularly dance and drama in secondary education—which may unintentionally (?) narrow the cultural and expressive repertoire available to students.

A notable difference appears in the way indigenous cultures are treated. Norway has made explicit efforts to include Sámi music and art forms in both general and specialised arts curricula, thereby embedding minority perspectives within the cultural canon and affirming their role in national identity. The Finnish analysis, while acknowledging multilingualism and the presence of Swedish and Sámi as national languages, does not detail to the same extent how these minority cultures are incorporated into performing arts education. This difference suggests a potential area for further development in the Finnish context.

In terms of policy ambition versus actual practice, it is crucial to acknowledge the distinction between curriculum documents and educational realities. While curricula in both countries signal inclusive intentions and acknowledge the societal role of education, the actual implementation of these principles through performing arts education must be empirically investigated.

As the d@rts project rightly emphasizes, it remains an open question whether performing arts education genuinely fulfills its potential to foster cultural literacy and social inclusion. This is an empirical task to be addressed in the next phases of the project, particularly in Work Packages 2 through 6.

14.6.2 Comment from STOPP - The Association of Dance Institutes in Finland (Milla Malmberg)

The Association of Dance Institutes in Finland (STOPP) ry has been active since 1982 as an interest group for and link between dance institutes. The union represents basic education in the art of dance, but other schools that teach dance are also represented as information-only members.

The union's task is to promote the operating requirements of its member institutes and to raise awareness of dance institutes' operations and targets. To this end, the union organises training and networking activities, informs its member institutes of current industry affairs, publicly announces its member institutes' activities, participates in workgroups to develop the industry, prepares statements and comments, and develops dance institutes' nationwide performance activities. STOPP ry acts as an employers' specialist representative in negotiations surrounding collective agreements for dance instructors.

STOPP's member institutes work in the field of basic education in the art of dance as presented in a curriculum analysis put together by Katja Mäkinen. Currently, around 80 dance institutes, 800 dance instructors and 30,000 dance students of all ages are covered by the union's activities.

The performing arts are in a very precarious position in the Finnish education system. The analysis does an excellent job of highlighting the strong position of music education, not only in early childhood education and care (ECEC) and basic education, but also in secondary education. The share of other performing arts decreases as pupils grow. In early childhood education and care, various dance and drama games are often a part of ordinary activities, but in basic education and upper secondary school, dance can only be studied during the school day at a few highly specialised educational institutions.

Nevertheless, the elements of dance and theatre are often combined and utilised as part of other educational activities. The importance and opportunities of the expressive arts subjects are also identified in the foundations of national curricula. However, it's worth noting that there are vast differences in the number of mentions of the performing arts. Training opportunities for teachers also vary greatly between the arts. For example, it generally isn't possible to study dance pedagogy as part of teacher training studies for basic education and upper secondary education. Correspondingly, there are huge differences in competence requirements, and a physical education teacher unfamiliar with dance is formally a more qualified upper secondary school dance instructor than someone who holds a master's degree in dance pedagogy.

How extensively performing arts exercises and their strengths and properties are utilised depends on the instructor's own approach and skills. The significance of the instructor is also highlighted in music education, particularly in ECEC and primary school. A classroom teacher who teaches music has not necessarily specialised in music education, which in practice,

means that they are not necessarily able to play an instrument. The situation changes in secondary education, where music teachers are required to have training in the subject.

The significance of the arts in basic education is therefore very important. Teaching that is organised during leisure time is provided by professional instructors. National curricula fundamentally recognise both the special features of the arts themselves as well as the social and cultural aspects of the arts. Curricula targets are very comprehensive, and even ambitious. Basic education in the arts strives to develop society and a sustainable future without compromising on skills in the arts.

Basic education in the arts collaborates heavily with other forms of education. Local primary education institutions specialising in the arts are often mentioned in municipalities' cultural education plans. As a result of this collaboration, professional training in the performing arts can be expanded, even on a small-scale, to the fields of early childhood education and care, primary education, and secondary education. However, municipalities and practices differ greatly from one another. Individual teachers and headteachers play a key role in developing practices.

Performing arts teaching that is missing from upper secondary education curricula can be organised via a general upper secondary education diploma course, with the exception of circus arts, for which it is not currently possible to complete a general upper secondary education diploma. In many municipalities, general upper secondary education diplomas in dance are organised in collaboration with local dance institutes. However, this kind of collaboration most often reaches upper secondary school students who were already involved with dance education. In addition to the general upper secondary education diploma, in many upper secondary schools, dance is also organised as part of physical education, particularly with regard to the tradition of the Vanhojen Tanssit prom.

The teaching of practical and arts subjects in upper secondary education is currently undergoing reform. In connection with the reform, general upper secondary education diplomas in music, the visual arts and physical education will be removed, and the subjects will become part of matriculation. This change will elevate the position and value of practical subjects and the arts in upper secondary education but will also change the nature of teaching in those subjects. At the same time, general upper secondary education diplomas will be reformed with the aim of developing the position and teaching of other practical subjects and the arts.

Legislation concerning basic education in the arts is also under review. The reform primarily aims to increase the availability and accessibility of education in the arts. Various forms of collaboration, plus the development of the teaching funding system, will hopefully bring education in the arts closer to all children, young people, and adults. Although the opportunities of the performing arts have been recognised, and all of the necessary elements exist in theory, we currently do not yet have a system that would safeguard the availability of professional education in the arts for all.

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15. Germany

Vera Schaub, Ronja Kampschulte & Christian Rolle

Due to migration, Germany is becoming an increasingly diverse country. The term *superdiversity* attempts to capture the wide-ranging differences among people with a migration background across the first, second, and third generations – not only in terms of their ethnicity, culture, nationality, or religion but also regarding their education and legal status.

In Germany, the federal states are responsible for both formal and non-formal education. The selection of five federal states highlights key differences in their approaches. We chose to examine Bavaria and North Rhine-Westphalia, as they are the largest and most populous states. Saxony was included to represent the eastern part of Germany, which is significant for historical reasons. Additionally, we selected Lower Saxony and Hamburg to represent northern Germany, with Hamburg being one of Germany's three federal city-states – a unique characteristic that deserves attention.

The German school system is divided into different educational levels, with significant variation in school types at the secondary level from state to state. Preschool institutions are organized differently across states. Many preschools are managed by independent providers, such as churches or local associations, but they are predominantly state-funded. Primary school typically covers grades 1 to 4. At the secondary level, pupils are assigned to different school types based on their academic performance and grades. While school subjects are largely similar, performance expectations vary, and only certain school types offer the opportunity to achieve A-levels (*Abitur*). Higher education for future teachers of the performing arts is primarily the responsibility of universities and specialized performing arts universities, with additional private colleges offering degrees in dance, theatre, and music education.

The performing arts are not equally represented across the formal school system. Music is taught as a separate subject in all school types, with corresponding curricula in all federal states. In contrast, theatre/drama education is a regular school subject in only a few federal states. Dance education is not an independent subject in schools, although elements of dance are included to some extent in music and physical education curricula.

Curriculum guidelines (*Lehrpläne*, *Bildungspläne*) for compulsory schools are developed by expert commissions, typically composed of experienced subject teachers appointed by state ministries. Ministry officials oversee both the development process and the implementation of these guidelines in schools, ensuring compliance with legal frameworks. The curriculum guidelines are revised or rewritten approximately every 5 to 15 years. They are designed to be flexible, granting teachers considerable freedom in selecting content to accommodate regional, school, or class-specific conditions, as well as student preferences. However, in primary schools, there are relatively few trained specialist teachers for the artistic subjects.

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Beyond the compulsory curriculum, the performing arts play an important role in extracurricular activities, which are typically delivered in the afternoons. However, there are no state guidelines for this area, and schools have significant autonomy in designing their extracurricular programs.

All forms of performing arts are also present in non-formal institutional contexts. These institutions may be run by cities and municipalities or privately owned, with private institutions relying exclusively on fees for funding. Numerous private and public music schools offer opportunities for children and young people to learn an instrument or take singing lessons. These non-formal activities usually occur in the afternoon and occasionally involve collaborations with schools during the school day. In rural areas, extracurricular opportunities are more limited. Here, extracurricular programs are often run by associations or NGOs, frequently in partnership with schools.

There are no state curricula for private institutions and NGOs, but the umbrella organization *Verband Deutscher Musikschulen* (VDM) develops curricula for music schools co-funded by cities and municipalities. Non-formal institutions for dance and theatre are much rarer, though various funding opportunities support individual educational projects in music, dance, and theatre. Some programs receive permanent backing from local associations or through collaborations with regular schools. While non-formal cultural education activities lack state guidelines, professional umbrella associations for dance, theatre, and music education provide recommendations. These recommendations are not binding curricula but serve as influential guides, particularly for financial support.

The curricula for higher education in the performing arts are developed by universities and colleges themselves. The federal states establish certain requirements, which vary in strictness, while the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (*Kultusministerkonferenz*, KMK) provides only a very general framework for higher education institutions to follow.

This analysis covers curricula for three levels of formal education: early childhood education, primary education and secondary education. It also focuses on non-formal education of dance and theatre. Please note that the original curricula were written in German. For longer quotes, we provide both the German original and the English translation. For shorter quotes and individual terms incorporated into the text, we provide translations in the foot notes.

15.1 Formal Education – Early Childhood/Kindertagesstätten

The Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs [KMK] (2004/2017) states that the educational plans form the basis for “early, individual, and talent-oriented support for all children”[116] (KMK, 2004/2007, p. 3), thereby promoting societal participation for all individuals, regardless of gender, cultural background, socioeconomic status, or physical limitations, through an inclusive approach (KMK, 2004/2017, pp. 3, 17-18). An “inclusive attitude” and

[116] “frühe, individuelle und begabungsgerechte Förderung aller Kinder” (KMK, 2004/2017, p. 3)

"pedagogy of diversity"[117] are emphasized, along with the goal of "promoting cultural sensitivity".[118] However, cultural education or aesthetic education is not explicitly mentioned in the list of aspects and content relevant to holistic education (KMK, 2004/2017, pp. 8-9, 12). Aesthetics education includes "[…] the areas of music, dance, theatre, film, and visual arts"[119] (KMK, 2004/2017, pp. 14-15). The text refers to "cultural identity",[120] implying a concept of a stable identity tied to a cultural dimension. Educational professionals are expected to foster a prejudice-aware institutional culture, while children should be empowered in their identity and encouraged to experience, appreciate, and value diversity (KMK, 2004/2017, p. 20).

It is evident that the discourses around "culture", "identity", and "diversity" are interconnected, with the concept of culture being broadly used to describe social interactions. Integration and inclusion are framed as action-oriented approaches to addressing social and cultural diversity, deemed essential for future coexistence (KMK, 2004/2017, p. 25).

In the foundational paper from North Rine Westphalia [NRW], the term "culture" is often used in the sense of learned behaviours and skills, that is, in terms of cultural socialization. This is evident in terms such as "culture of transition"[121] (MfKFFuIdLNW & MfSuBdLNW, 2018, p. 55) or "culture of dialogue"[122] (MfKFFuIdLNW & MfSuBdLNW, p. 97). The following quote seems to assume a monocultural, monolingual habitus in children without clarifying what is meant by their "culture": "Children can develop self-confidence when their culture, language, and especially their individuality are appreciated"[123] (KMK, 2004/2017, p. 99).

Interculturality is conceptualized here as communication between distinct and separable cultures. Simultaneously, children are encouraged to develop their "own culture". However, phenomena like hybridity, fluid boundaries, and transculturality (Welsch, 2010) are not explicitly addressed. Compared to other federal states, NRW dedicates longer sections to aesthetic-musical education. Aesthetics is broadly defined, encompassing everyday life as a field of aesthetic education. Special emphasis is placed on free play, diverse forms of expression, music, dance, theatre, role play, and singing (MfKFFuIdLNW & MfSuBdLNW, 2018, p. 104).

Although theatre is not explicitly mentioned, role play is emphasized. Music's relevance from birth and the development of musical-emotional perception and expression are highlighted. Music is broadly defined to include sounds and noises from everyday life. NRW (2018) views music, rhythm, language, and movement as interconnected, describing music as a "sensory language"[124] (MfKFFuIdLNW & MfSuBdLNW, p. 106), though the singular concept of language is not fully clarified. Musical and acoustic rituals are seen as structuring daily routines. Music is presented as having a unifying power between cultures, with communal music-making fostering social cohesion. Music is understood as a "universal sensory-engaging medium through

[117] "inklusive Haltung" und "Pädagogik der Vielfalt"
[118] "Förderung der Kultursensitivität".
[119] "Ästhetische Bildung umfasst insbesondere die Bereiche Musik, Tanz, Theater, Film und bildnerisches Gestalten".
[120] "kulturelle Identität".
[121] "Kultur des Übergangs".
[122] "Dialogkultur".
[123] "Selbstvertrauen können Kinder entwickeln, wenn ihrer Kultur, ihrer Sprache und insbesondere ihnen als Person Wertschätzung entgegengebracht wird" (KMK, 2004/2017, p. 99).
[124] "sinnliche Sprache".

which sensations can be elicited and expressed" (MfKFFuIdLNW & MfSuBdLNW, 2018, p. 107). Children are encouraged to explore "unknown instruments from different cultures"[125] (MfKFFuIdLNW & MfSuBdLNW, 2018, p. 108), though the definition of "unknown" remains ambiguous. Recommendations include working with "music of various styles (children's songs, classical pieces, 'disco', dance music, music from other countries)"[126] (MfKFFuIdLNW & MfSuBdLNW, 2018, p. 108) with "music from other countries" broadly categorized alongside "disco". Cultural diversity is framed as an asset in "our society" (MfKFFuIdLNW & MfSuBdLNW, 2018, p. 50), with constructive engagement achieved through "common dialogue and encounters" supported by learnable "intercultural competence"[127] (MfKFFuIdLNW & MfSuBdLNW, 2018, p. 50).

Similarly, the orientation plan for education in Lower Saxony emphasizes the importance of physicality and sensory experiences in children's engagement with the world (Niedersächsisches Kultusministerium [NKM], 2023a, pp. 10–11). Unlike NRW, theatre is explicitly mentioned (NKM, 2023a, p. 27). Music is noted as playing a central role in group life (NKM, 2023a, p. 27). Terms like "cultural education" and "inclusion" are not explicitly mentioned. Music is described as integral to daily routines and children's own musical activities are expected to be omnipresent. Songs from other "cultural circles"[128] are to be learned, though the term "cultural circles" implies a container model of culture with closed and separate boundaries (NKM, 2023a, p. 30f.). Cultural socialization is referenced with terms like "culture of participation", "culture of complaint", and "learning cultures"[129] (NKM, 2023a, pp. 34, 43, 45). Music and dance are considered joint learning areas within aesthetic education. In addition to "dance music" and "classical music", "music from other cultures"[130] should be addressed, though this is not specified further. The rhythmic and musical engagement of children aged 0–3 is considered essential for their cognitive, emotional, and social development. However, daycare educators are not required to have a music pedagogy background (NKM, 2023b, p. 33). Singing is noted for promoting language acquisition, while the connection to movement strengthens body awareness (NKM, 2023b, p. 33).

The Bavarian State Ministries [BS] emphasize that "cultural diversity should be viewed as an enrichment and that intercultural education should promote dialogue and cooperation between people with different cultural backgrounds"[131] (BS, 2016, p. 21). Inclusion is framed as a "pedagogy of diversity",[132] which "aims for a world without exclusion"[133] (BS, 2016, p. 30). However, aesthetic or cultural education is not explicitly mentioned in the context of inclusion. Heterogeneity is seen as an opportunity within inclusive pedagogy, but there remains a clear division

[125] "'unbekannte' Instrumente aus verschiedenen Kulturen" (MfKFFuIdLNW & MfSuBdLNW, p. 108).
[126] "Musik unterschiedlichster Stilrichtungen (Kinderlieder, Klassikstücke, 'Disco', Tanzmusik, Musik aus anderen Ländern" (MfKFFuIdLNW & MfSuBdLNW, p. 108).
[127] "gemeinsamen Dialog und für Begegnung" durch eine erlernbare "interkulturelle Kompetenz".
[128] "Kulturkreise".
[129] "Beteiligungskultur", "Beschwerdekultur", "Lernkulturen".
[130] "Tanzmusik" und "klassischer Musik" soll "Musik anderer Kulturen".
[131] "kulturelle Vielfalt als Bereicherung zu betrachten [ist] und durch interkulturelle Bildung den Dialog und die Zusammenarbeit zwischen Menschen mit unterschiedlichem kulturellem Hintergrund zu befördern sind […]".
[132] "Pädagogik der Vielfalt".
[133] "zielt auf eine Lebenswelt ohne Ausgrenzung".

between "own" and "foreign" cultures (BS, 2016, pp. 32–35). The term "literacy" appears only in Bavaria's document, referring to the competence to understand and use cultural symbols like letters, numbers, and images. While Bavaria asserts that learning areas are interconnected, its division of subjects into categories like music (under arts) and culture (under society, economy, and history) remains rigid (BS, 2016, pp. 43–44).

Hamburg adopts an inclusive educational perspective, emphasizing institutional change over adaptation by children. Structural discrimination is explicitly addressed (Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, 2024, pp. 4, 15–16). Hamburg extensively covers aesthetic education (Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, 2024, p. 52). Creative play and activities connect children's reality and imagination, enabling "magical and cognitive thinking"[134] (Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, 2024, p. 52). Music-making in groups is highlighted for its inclusivity, support of language development, and fostering of key competencies. Hamburg uniquely references the reflective aspects of arts, acknowledging the effort they involve while enabling intense experiences. The arts could contribute to the development of the "100 languages of children"[135]. The development of diverse languages of children, which include more than just verbal languages, is focused. Hamburg highlights the ability of very young children to perceive complex artworks in music, painting, and theatre. It is the only state to use the term "artwork"[136] (Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, 2024, pp. 52–55). Hamburg is the only source to specifically articulate the demand for gender neutrality and discrimination sensitivity among professionals in dealing with art and culture. The close connection to other art forms, especially dance, is highlighted (Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, 2024, p. 54–55). Additionally, it explicitly mentions professional musicians, dancers and actors who should be involved. Hamburg is the only source that deals more intensively with theatre play. The "self-determined, playful character in improvisations and performances with children"[137] (Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, 2024, p. 55) is deemed important. Theatre is seen as a "play with symbols" and could be a play before an audience (Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, 2024, pp. 55–58).

15.1.1 Commentary and Summary

Overall, it can be noted that the binding educational and developmental plans for early childhood education highlight the importance of aesthetic education, albeit with varying focal points. On the one hand, the significance of sound and music from birth – if not earlier – is emphasized for early childhood social, motor, linguistic, and cognitive development. Aesthetic education aims to engage children's senses and emotions while stimulating their creative and imaginative play. The connection between music (particularly singing) and movement with other learning processes is regarded as particularly beneficial, especially in fostering multilingual abilities. Both self-directed creation and receptive perception are highlighted as important components.

Music is frequently seen as a unifying force that enhances social cohesion, fostering tolerance and a sense of community. Dance (and occasionally movement) is often mentioned in connection with music but is not addressed as an independent area in any of the documents.

[134] "magisches und kognitives Denken".
[135] "100 Sprachen der Kinder".
[136] "Kunstwerk".
[137] "selbstbestimmte, spielerische Charakter ist bei den Improvisationen und Spielstücken mit den Kindern" (Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, 2024, p. 55).

Theatre is primarily referenced in terms of “play” and “performance”, with Hamburg providing the most extensive reflection on this area. North Rhine-Westphalia also mentions role play, but it does not receive its own dedicated section.

None of the documents adopt a transcultural approach as an operational concept. Instead, they tend to address interculturality as an exchange between distinct, separate cultures, with varying degrees of emphasis. Most documents frequently reference “one’s own” and “other” or “foreign” cultures without critically questioning these binary classifications or the stereotypes associated with them. Artistic work is often framed as a means of creating connections between these separated cultures. There is a noticeable tendency to reproduce a container-like model of cultures, wherein musical forms from “other cultures” are contrasted with “one’s own” musical forms – often focusing exclusively on classical music or well-known German songs.

In contrast, Hamburg stands out by emphasizing the need for critical and discrimination-sensitive reflection on the inclusion of the arts, the cultural canon employed, and the societal, artistic, linguistic, and personal knowledge being conveyed. Hamburg also stresses the importance of diversity at the staffing level. Notably, all the documents advocate for cooperation with other educational and cultural institutions, although Lower Saxony emphasizes that educators can take on all creative tasks themselves.

The concept of culture is broadly used across all documents and is often understood in terms of cultural socialization. Despite this, the documents generally reflect an inclusive understanding of education, focusing on participation, involvement, and equal opportunities.

Interestingly, while participation and involvement are broadly emphasized as goals and foundational principles of early childhood education, they do not play a significant role in the specific sections on aesthetic education. Except for Hamburg, issues of inclusion and exclusion related to power structures within the field of aesthetic education are largely unaddressed. Instead, artistic and cultural work is primarily attributed a unifying and personality-developing function.

15.2 Formal Education – Primary Schools (grade 1–4)

In all federal states, the performing arts are recognized as making an important contribution to cultural literacy in primary schools. In Bavaria, for example, music is perceived as a “formative component of all cultures”[138] (Staatsinstitut für Schulqualität und Bildungsforschung München [SfSuBM], 2024a, p. 1) and, therefore, as a relevant subject in primary schools. The Bavarian curriculum states that pupils should “appreciate the importance of music and culture”[139] (SfSuBM, 2024a, p. 9). The primary school curriculum in NRW similarly emphasizes that “music has a firm place in school life: [...] all these activities are aimed at developing a culture of music and listening that has an impact beyond the school” (Ministerium für Schule und Bildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westphalen [MfSuBdLNW], (n.d.), passage Lernen & Lehren).

[138] “Musik ist ein prägender Bestandteil aller Kulturkreise”.
[139]

Furthermore, all German curricula emphasize the connection of intercultural education and the promotion of cultural appreciation, acknowledgment and awareness (see Landesamt für Schule und Bildung Hamburg [LSB], 2022, p. 6; NKM, 2006, p. 9, etc.). For instance, the Bavarian curriculum states that "the intercultural education of pupils [i.e.,] experiencing songs or dances from different cultural areas opens up access to dialogue about the familiar and the unfamiliar, about identity and diversity" (SfSuBM, 2024b, p. 9). This indicates that intercultural learning should occur in primary schools in order to contribute to understanding "identity and diversity". In this sense, cultural literacy is understood as fostering social cohesion and inclusion.

However, the curricula of the different federal states vary in their understanding of culture and interculturality. In some federal states, the concept of culture is based on the binary distinction between "their culture" and "our culture". For example, in Lower Saxony the curriculum states:

> Pupils must learn to understand their own cultural and historical heritage, but also that of others, in order to be able to participate in a heterogeneous and global society. By dealing with and understanding their own and other cultures, the foundations are laid for an open attitude in order to experience inter- and intracultural differences in their possibilities and limitations.[140] (NKM, 2006, p. 9)

This suggests that cultures are clearly distinct entities, and while pupils can learn to appreciate other cultures, there is no mention of them being able to develop new hybrid identities. The underlying concept of culture overlooks the possibility of evolving cultural identities, what may be particularly relevant for pupils with a migrant background.

North Rhine-Westphalia explicitly addresses this group of pupils. In NRW (MfSuBdLNW, n.d.), the curriculum states that "by including music from the home country of children with a migration background, music lessons contribute to intercultural learning" (passage Lernen & Lehren). This can be seen as an example of the great importance attached to cultural literacy for social inclusion and cohesion in the primary school curricula in Germany. A connection is made between the needs of a post-migrant society and the meaning of intercultural education. However, the wording suggests that there are country-specific music cultures and underestimates the changes that they have long been undergoing as a result of globalization and migration.

The same perspective is evident in Saxony's music curriculum for primary schools, which underscores the importance of cultural literacy for fostering mutual understanding and respect:

> By exploring music from different stylistic periods and encountering music from different cultures, pupils develop openness and tolerance towards forms of music that are often foreign to them. Singing, moving, dancing and listening to music together helps

[140] "Die Schülerinnen und Schüler müssen ihr eigenes kulturelles und historisches Erbe, aber auch das von anderen verstehen lernen, um an einer heterogenen und globalen Gesellschaft teilhaben zu können. Durch den Umgang und das Verständnis eigener und anderer Kulturen werden die Grundlagen zu einer offenen Haltung gelegt, um inter- und intrakulturelle Unterschiede in ihren Möglichkeiten und Grenzen zu erfahren." (NKM, 2006, p. 9)

> pupils from different cultural backgrounds to get to know, understand and respect each other.[141] (Staatsministerium für Kultus Freistaat Sachsen [SfKFS], 2019, p. 2)

In contrast, a more dynamic understanding of culture can be found in Hamburg's music curriculum for primary schools. The curriculum emphasizes that music education is about "mutual consideration and recognition and appreciation when making music together, sensitization of listening behaviour, openness to the diversity of musical forms and also responsibility for the further development of cultural life" (LSB, 2022, p. 6). Here, music education aims to enhance intercultural awareness, encouraging pupils to appreciate the diversity of cultural practices and traditions. This approach suggests that cultural literacy can enhance social cohesion and inclusion through dialogue:

> In this sense, music lessons are a contribution to the realization of the sustainability goals formulated by the United Nations for a peaceful and non-violent culture, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and the reduction of inequalities.[142] (LSB, 2022, p. 7)

15.2.1 Commentary and Summary

Overall, performing arts education appears to hold an important place in primary school education. The analysis of primary school curricula reveals varying degrees of emphasis on themes such as social cohesion, inclusion, and cultural literacy. It is noteworthy that the perception of cultural diversity differs significantly across different regions of Germany. While many curricula aim to foster an appreciation of diversity, some lack a coherent and comprehensive concept of cultural diversity. This inconsistency could undermine the broader goal of promoting social inclusion.

While all curricula share inclusion as an overarching goal, the underlying conceptualizations of culture are sometimes problematic. In some federal states, the curricula reflect a static view of culture, maintaining a clear division between "*our*" culture and "*their*" culture. Such a binary approach fails to account for the emergence of new hybrid cultural forms in a post-migrant society and risks reinforcing divisions between groups. As a result, this limited understanding of culture may hinder efforts to advance social inclusion and cohesion through cultural literacy.

Although fostering cultural literacy and social cohesion is a common aim, the ways in which cultural diversity is represented in these curricula may inadvertently lead to practices of "othering" rather than fostering genuine social inclusion. Only a few primary school curricula incorporate a transcultural perspective that aligns with the realities of superdiverse post-migrant societies.

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[141] "In der Erschließung von Musik verschiedener Stilepochen und der Begegnung mit Musik unterschiedlicher Kulturkreise entwickeln die Schüler Offenheit und Toleranz gegenüber ihnen häufig fremden Erscheinungsformen. Gemeinsames Singen, Bewegen und Tanzen und Musikhören hilft Schülern verschiedener kultureller Herkunft sich kennen zu lernen, einander zu verstehen und sich zu respektieren."

[142] "In diesem Sinne ist Musikunterricht ein Beitrag zur Umsetzung der von den Vereinten Nationen formulierten Nachhaltigkeitszielen zu einer friedlichen und gewaltlosen Kultur, Weltbürgerschaft und Wertschätzung kultureller Vielfalt sowie Reduzierung von Ungleichheiten." (LSB, 2022, p. 7)

15.3 Formal Education – Secondary Education (grade 5–10)

In secondary school education, the curricula describe music as a unifying force. For instance, the Staatsinstitut für Schulqualität und Bildungsforschung München [SfSuBM] (2024b) states that "beyond emotion and intellect, music speaks to each individual as a whole and has the power to unite people in singing and making music together"[143] (p. 1). This suggests that "making music together" (p. 1) is viewed as a tool for building community and fostering a sense of togetherness.

However, several passages reveal a concept of culture characterized by distinctions between "our Western culture" and "other cultures" (SfSuBM, 2024b, pp. 1, 13). Additionally, there seems to be an understanding of culture as something divided by national boundaries.

Most curricula assert that becoming familiar with different cultures promotes social cohesion and helps pupils appreciate other cultures (SfSuBM, 2024b, p. 1); (NKM et al., 2015, p. 6; Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen [MfSuWdLNW], 2012, passage *Aufgaben & Ziele*). In Bavaria, a section on intercultural education mentions the concept of transcultural personality development: "Music lessons have an orientation function because they enable pupils to recognise cultural resources as offers of identification and to integrate several cultures into their own identity in the sense of transcultural personality development"[144] (SfSuBM, 2024b, p. 13).

Furthermore, the Bavarian curriculum (SfSuBM, 2025) states that "familiarizing themselves with music from other cultures helps young people to develop values based on tolerance and respect in a pluralistic and transcultural society"[145] (p. 1). These statements suggest that cultural literacy is seen as a tool for promoting social inclusion and cohesion in secondary school education in Bavaria.

Hamburg's curriculum states:

> Mutual consideration and recognition when making music together are closely tied to this, as well as the development of listening habits, openness to the diversity of musical forms, and the responsibility for the further development of cultural life. Singing and making music together is a joyful experience and contributes to strengthening awareness of the importance of respectful interaction with one another. Actively engaging with various musical practices makes the societal and cultural conditioning of music conscious and plays a crucial role in value-based education. The musical broadening of horizons achieved in this way creates a foundation on which values such as respect,

[143] "Musik spricht über Gefühl und Verstand hinaus jeden Einzelnen in seiner Ganzheit an und besitzt die Kraft, Menschen im gemeinsamen Singen und Musizieren zu verbinden".

[144] "Musikunterricht besitzt eine Orientierungsfunktion, weil er ermöglicht, dass Schülerinnen und Schüler kulturelle Ressourcen als Identifikationsangebote erkennen und im Sinne transkultureller Persönlichkeitsbildung mehrere Kulturen in ihre eigene Identität integrieren können".

[145] "Das Kennenlernen von Musik anderer Kulturkreise unterstützt die Kinder beim Aufbau einer auf Toleranz und Achtung basierenden Werthaltung in einer pluralistischen und multikulturellen Gesellschaft".

> tolerance, and appreciation can be conveyed – values that are significant and forward-thinking for a pluralistic and diverse society.[146] (LSB, 2022, p. 7)

Cultural participation and identity are highlighted as key aims of music education in Hamburg. Through "singing and making music together" (LSB, 2022, p. 7), music lessons are expected to foster a sense of community and social cohesion.

In North Rhine-Westphalia (MfSuWdLNW, 2012), artistic subjects, particularly music, are understood as tools for developing cultural literacy. The curriculum emphasizes their potential to "contribute to critical reflection on gender and cultural stereotypes" (MfSuWdLNW, 2012, *Aufgaben & Ziele* passage). This suggests that culture and common stereotypes are seen as aspects that need to be critically examined and questioned.

The curriculum for theatre lessons in Hamburg states:

> Perception and respect for cultural diversity as a basis for peaceful coexistence cannot be prescribed or learnt theoretically; it is a matter of active negotiation processes and the resulting intersubjective agreements in a community. It is precisely such negotiation processes that are constitutive for projects in a contemporary understanding of theatre teaching and can therefore be specifically initiated in the development process of performances with regard to cultural diversity. In the context of divergent cultural values, this provides good starting points for intercultural and transcultural learning processes.[147] (Stadt Hamburg, 2022, p. 7)

The curriculum highlights the importance of negotiating changing values within a discursive framework of collaborative work, fostering tolerance for ambiguity. Theatre education is presented as a space for reflecting on cultural diversity, divergent cultural values, and inter- and transcultural learning processes.

15.3.1 Commentary and Summary

The curricula for secondary school education emphasize social cohesion, cultural literacy, and diversity. However, some of them continue to reinforce binary patterns of "our Western culture"

[146] "Daran gebunden ist die gegenseitige Rücksichtnahme und Anerkennung beim gemeinsamen Musizieren, die Sensibilisierung des Hörverhaltens, die Offenheit für die Vielfalt musikalischer Erscheinungsformen und auch die Verantwortung für die Weiterentwicklung kulturellen Lebens. Gemeinsames Singen und Musizieren ist beglückend und trägt zur Stärkung des Bewusstseins für die Wichtigkeit eines respektvollen Umgangs miteinander bei. Die handelnde Auseinandersetzung mit verschiedenen musikalischen Praxen macht die gesellschaftliche und kulturelle Bedingtheit der Musik bewusst und leistet einen entscheidenden Beitrag zur Werteerziehung. Die so erreichte musikalische Horizonterweiterung schafft eine Basis, auf der Werte wie Respekt, Toleranz und Wertschätzung vermittelt werden können, die für eine pluralistische und diverse Gesellschaft bedeutsam und zukunftsweisend sind".

[147] "Wahrnehmung und Respektierung kultureller Vielfalt als Grundlage für ein friedliches Zusammenleben können nicht verordnet oder theoretisch gelernt werden, es handelt sich um aktive Aushandlungsprozesse und daraus resultierende intersubjektive Übereinkünfte in einer Gemeinschaft. Genau solche Aushandlungsprozesse sind konstitutiv für Projekte in einem zeitgemäßen Verständnis von Theaterunterricht und können entsprechend in Hinblick auf kulturelle Vielfalt schon im Entstehungsprozess von Aufführungen gezielt angebahnt werden. Hieraus ergeben sich im Zusammenhang divergierender kultureller Wertvorstellungen gute Anknüpfungspunkte für inter- und transkulturelle Lernprozesse".

versus “other cultures”. This approach limits multiperspectivity and fails to account for the hybrid and evolving nature of cultures.

All curricula share the goal of promoting social cohesion by encouraging learning about different cultures and traditions. Cultural literacy is recognized as a key competence for fostering both social cohesion and inclusion.

15.4 Non-formal Education

Since dance and theatre are less represented in the curricula for formal education, this chapter focuses on these two disciplines. The Association of German Music Schools (*Verband Deutscher Musikschulen*, VDM), which oversees music schools in Germany financed by local municipalities, has supported training programs for music educators, teaching materials, and curricular developments for many years. These initiatives aim to diversify educational offerings and emphasize the connection between cultural literacy, transculturality, and interculturality. However, the extent to which these measures have influenced practices at these music schools cannot be determined within the scope of this analysis.

One of the largest platforms for cultural literacy in Germany is called *kubi-online*. This platform regularly publishes new articles on cultural literacy-related topics. Currently, there are 47 articles on dance (Kubi-Online (n.d.-b), 72 on theatre (Kubi-Online (n.d.-c), and 88 on music (Kubi-Online (n.d.-a))). This could suggest that, even in non-formal education contexts, dance and theatre are less represented than music.

Interestingly, guidelines and publications on the different disciplines of the performing arts emphasize distinct main topics. While dance and theatre tend to focus on improvisation and play, music is often framed within a political context, with discussions around culture and music education addressing cultural literacy and societal change. This discrepancy likely does not reflect a lack of relevance for dance and theatre within cultural-political discourse but rather indicates a lack of research and attention in these fields.

It is important to note that the analysed guidelines and curricula may not fully represent the realities of performing arts practices in Germany. There are universities that recently added Applied Theatre to their study programs[148] and many theatres in Germany adopt an inclusive approach, e.g. the KKT theatre in Cologne understands itself as a “theatre of diversity and participation” [149] (KKT Theater, n.d.). Furthermore, e.g. the City of Cologne promotes fundings for projects that are related to “cultural participation”, “inclusion” and “diversity” [150].

There are numerous funding programs focused on cultural education in the non-formal and extracurricular sectors. One example from the state of North Rhine-Westphalia is the cultural education program *JeKits*, which has been in place since 2015/2016 (*JeKits*, n.d.). *JeKits* is implemented in cooperation with extracurricular education partners, such as music schools or

[148] For more information see: https://www.hs-coburg.de/studieren/master/master-studiengaenge-soziales-gesundheit/applied-theatre-theater-als-soziale-arbeit/ and https://www.theaterwissenschaft-ernst.uni-bayreuth.de/de/studium/Master-Applied-Theatre/index.html

[149] “Theater der Vielfalt und Teilhabe”

[150] “kulturelle Teilhabe”, “Inklusion” and “Diversity”. https://www.stadt-koeln.de/artikel/68329/index.html

dance institutions, as well as the schools themselves. The program offers three alternative areas of focus: instruments, dance, or singing.

At the federal level, the program *Kultur macht stark* is now in its third funding phase, running from 2023 to 2027. The target group for these educational offerings includes children and adolescents aged three to eighteen, including those with disabilities. The activities are extracurricular and are carried out by local alliances consisting of at least three partners. A broad concept of culture is applied, encompassing everything from everyday culture to literature, music, theatre, and circus (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, n.d.).

15.4.1 Commentary and Summary

Although there are few official guidelines or state regulations for arts education in non-formal contexts, publications by professional educational associations for the performing arts and various individual cultural institutions demonstrate that cultural literacy and intercultural education play a significant role in the educational practices of the performing arts.

15.5 Conclusions and Reflections

15.5.1 Findings in Light of the Theoretical Framework

The analysis of educational guidelines and curricula in Germany reveals a strong emphasis on promoting cultural literacy, social inclusion, and cohesion through the performing arts. However, the approaches and underlying concepts vary significantly between federal states, reflecting diverse interpretations of culture and interculturality. A recurring theme is the dual focus on fostering a sense of shared identity and engaging with cultural diversity.

Intercultural education is broadly emphasized, with most curricula advocating for appreciation and respect for other cultures. However, only a few adopt a transcultural perspective that acknowledges the evolving and intersecting nature of cultures. Of the five federal states we analysed, Hamburg stands out for its critical and discrimination-sensitive approach, emphasizing the importance of diversity among educators, inclusive practices, and reflective engagement with the performing arts.

The curricula also vary in their treatment of different art forms. Music receives the most attention and is universally acknowledged as a powerful medium for fostering social cohesion and cultural literacy. It is often described as a unifying force that transcends language barriers and promotes collective participation. Dance and theatre, while included, are less consistently represented.

Non-formal education plays a significant role in supplementing formal curricula, particularly for dance and theatre. Initiatives such as *JeKits* in North Rhine-Westphalia and national programs like *Kultur macht stark* demonstrate a commitment to expanding access to cultural education. These programs often partner with schools, NGOs, and local cultural institutions to provide diverse opportunities for participation, not least for marginalized groups. However, the availability of such programs varies across regions, with rural areas often facing limited options.

In summary, while German curricula and guidelines for arts education demonstrate a commitment to fostering cultural literacy and inclusion, their effectiveness is limited by inconsistencies in conceptualizing culture and diversity. A more integrated approach, embracing transculturality and critical reflection on cultural power structures, could enhance the potential of the performing arts to contribute to social cohesion and equity.

15.5.2 Decolonial Perspective

While many curricula highlight the potential of the performing arts to bridge cultural divides and create a sense of community, there is a tendency in several states to frame culture as static and binary, often juxtaposing “our Western culture” with “other cultures.” This perspective risks reinforcing separation and limiting the appreciation of cultural hybridity and fluidity, which are central to understanding post-migrant societies from a post-colonial perspective.

Even though the goal of social and cultural inclusion is evident in all curricula and spaces for participation of marginalized groups are being opened up, the analysis identifies a lack of critical engagement with the underlying cultural concepts within the curricula. Subtle forms of “othering” and the reinforcement of power dynamics persist, highlighting the need for more robust postcolonial perspectives. Incorporating such frameworks could help align the curricula with the realities of a superdiverse, post-migrant society and better address the needs of students from diverse backgrounds.

15.6 Commentaries

15.6.1 Comment from the Serbian Consortium Member Kulturanova

The introduction is clear and effectively outlines the current economic, political, and social situation in Germany. From the very beginning, we are made aware of the broader context, and throughout the analysis, the authors guide us from documents and policies to their findings and research results. The structure, alternating between analysis chapters and reflective chapters, creates a dynamic rhythm. This approach allows readers to both understand the current situation and engage with the authors' reflections on specific policies, curricula, and social contexts. The style, clarity, and methodology contribute to a neat, detailed, and in-depth analysis.

However, while the authors introduce their research as focusing on dance and theatre, the music is emphasized more in the analysis. Although dance and theatre are mentioned as marginalized, the discussion remains largely centered on music. The question remains, why dance and theatre (despite Germany’s rich traditions of these art forms) remain marginalized? This would add an important layer of depth to the analysis.

Additionally, the final section (15.5.2) introduces decolonial perspectives rather late in the essay. These perspectives could present from the beginning, with addition of reflections on disadvantaged groups and minorities in Germany. Doing so would allow for a more cohesive integration of decolonial perspective throughout the analysis.

Overall, the essay is thorough and insightful. It addresses significant socio-political issues and provides a comprehensive examination of both school curricula and non-formal education. The authors highlight the role of individual cultural institutions, reminding us that the educational process extends beyond the formal schooling system.

15.6.2 Comment from Bundesverband Musikunterricht e.V.

Transculturalization is constitutive of our culture as a social practice: our language, our eating habits, and all our everyday self-evident practices have their origins in other cultures and have found their way to Germany in a variety of ways. This is especially true of the arts, including music, where different traditions and cultures have permeated and enriched each other for centuries. When the composer Georg Friedrich Händel from Halle wrote an Italian opera with a French overture in England, or when the Italian Giovanni Battista Lulli changed his name to Jean-Baptiste Lully, found employment at the court of Louis XIV, and profoundly influenced musical style there, it illustrates that globalization is not an invention of our time — we have always lived and will continue to live in a transculturally constituted world.

Today, it is taken for granted that tango and salsa are danced on our streets, yet these realities are still not adequately reflected in school music education.

The curriculum analysis presented here clearly shows that this is not solely due to the standardization tendencies of a school system in search of certainties and obligations; rather, the restrictions have deeper roots. Although an extremely differentiated theoretical discourse on transcultural music education has long existed and the need for such an approach in our transcultural society is widely recognized, our curricula and educational frameworks continue to be shaped by the notion of a homogeneous culture.

In music lessons, students are still expected to engage with “the familiar” and “the foreign”; there is still talk of a dominant culture that must be measured and acquired through instruction. Music education remains deeply one-sided, centered on a self-defined Western music tradition, and is further restricted to German-speaking composers from Bach to Beethoven.

If music as a school subject is to retain its legitimacy and continue to serve as a vital space for young people to explore and shape their identities, then fundamentally new directions must be pursued. This has been clearly demonstrated by the mapping of the formal and informal educational landscape conducted as part of the project. Particularly because identity formation presents young people with increasingly complex challenges, curricular stereotypes must not exacerbate the social boundaries that ultimately lead to exclusion.

Music education, perhaps more than any other subject, could offer opportunities to explore diverse practices and thus break down societal attributions. Children already experience themselves within multiple cultures and musical practices — whether by listening to gangsta rap in their free time, singing in a church choir, participating in a school band, or being moved by so-called classical music.

The curriculum analyses presented here have shown that music can become a vital, and ideally lifelong, companion in the lives of children and young people. Across all age groups and educational levels, it can foster a democratic and anti-racist attitude, though it can also reinforce prejudices and contribute to exclusion. Therefore, we need a culturally sensitive

approach to music education more than ever, one that empowers all children and young people in their personal engagement with music and opens up new avenues for practice.

In our increasingly fragmented society, it is more urgent than ever to promote cultural competencies and strengthen intercultural dialogue through concrete recommendations for action that must be integrated into curriculum development.

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16. Italy

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In Italy, compulsory schooling begins at age 6 (with primary school) and ends at age 16, during the second cycle of secondary education.

The state has exclusive legislative competence for "general rules on education" and for determining the essential levels of services that must be guaranteed throughout the national territory. The Regions have concurrent legislative power in the field of education and exclusive power in the field of vocational education and training. State educational institutions have autonomy in teaching, organisation, research, experimentation, and development. The educational system is structured as follows:[151]

Integrated system 0-6 articulated in:

- Early childhood facilities (0–3 years), regulated by the Regions and operated by Local Agencies.
- Preschool (2–5 years) is regulated by the state and run by the state, local agencies, such as municipalities, and third-sector entities.

The first cycle of education, compulsory (total duration of 8 years), is divided into:

- primary school (6–11 years);
- middle school (Lower Secondary Education; 11–13 years).

The second cycle of education (Upper Secondary Education) is divided into two types of pathways:

- secondary school of five-year duration under state competence (high schools);
- three-year and four-year paths of vocational education and training under regional competence.

Tertiary education (19+ years) offered by universities, institutions of Higher Education in Art, Music, and Dance (AFAM), and Higher Technical Institutes (ITS) with different types of pathways:

- tertiary education pathways offered by universities;
- tertiary education paths offered by AFAM institutions (Higher Training in Artistic, Musical and Dance Education);
- professionalising tertiary education pathways (programs lasting two or three years, particularly in technology, engineering, computer science, design, and service management).

[151] Information available on the official website of the Italian Ministry of Education: https://www.miur.gov.it/sistema-educativo-distruzione-e-formazione

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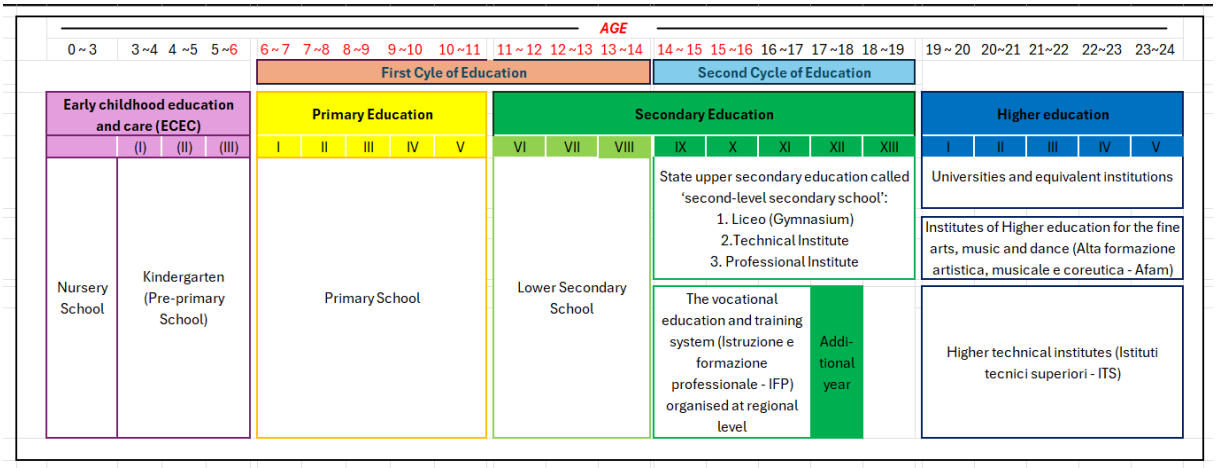


Fig. 1 – The Italian School System

In Italy, ministerial documents are the mandatory reference for the program development for each school grade. They are divided according to this age order:

- 0–3: municipal and regional guidelines.
- 3–6: ministerial law and municipal guidelines when municipalities directly manage pre-schools.
- Primary and Lower Secondary schools: ministerial guidelines.
- High school (VET-Vocational Education and Training system- included): ministerial guidelines.
- University: ministerial guidelines.

These documents present primary references for the curriculum development in which the topics of performing arts, cultural literacy, and social cohesion are presented. Furthermore, Italy has reference points for all school grades (the only exception is the university). They are concerned with specific topics considered mandatory even though they are not.

NOTE: Since 2020, the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) has been split into two separate bodies: the Ministry of Education (MI) and the Ministry of University and Research (MUR).

Alongside explaining the Italian educational system, it is essential to provide some insights regarding how certain concepts are interpreted, particularly those of inclusion and minority.

Inclusion

In Italy, inclusion is often focused on disability due to historical, legislative, and cultural reasons. Firstly, numerous regulations (including *Law 104/1992*) strongly emphasise the rights of people with disabilities, leading to targeted policies and visible initiatives for this category. Specific policies and programs have been developed to ensure access to services, education, and employment for individuals with disabilities. These initiatives have consolidated the idea that inclusion is often related to this group.

Media attention, the work of sector associations, and public perception have also contributed to keeping the inclusion of disabled individuals as a primary topic. At the same time, other minorities have remained in the background. For example, the integration of immigrants and

the fight against ethnic discrimination are managed through policies that vary significantly at local and regional levels, lacking the same legislative strength or unified focus found in disability policies. This results in a lesser recognition of the inclusion of other minorities as a central and priority issue.

Public perception and attitudes towards diversity have further influenced the importance of this specific form of inclusion. For instance, in Italy, "solidarity" often manifests through support for people with disabilities.

Minorities

In Italy, minorities are often considered vulnerable groups rather than simply groups to be protected. This is due to various social, economic, and cultural factors. Minorities, such as migrants, specific ethnic communities, and religious groups, are often associated with economic and social disadvantages in Italy, including high unemployment rates, precarious employment, low income, and inadequate housing conditions. Alongside these phenomena, there are often episodes of discrimination, including institutional discrimination, which result in a lack of access to essential services. Other social phenomena, such as prejudice and discrimination, exacerbate this perception, preventing many minorities from fully participating in society. At the political and legislative level, Italy has often developed protection and support measures for groups perceived as vulnerable, marginalised, or particularly at risk. This intertwining of social, cultural, and economic phenomena over time has contributed to the perception of minorities not only as groups to be protected to ensure equality but also as subjects that require support and assistance to overcome situations of vulnerability. Vulnerability is, therefore, associated with the systemic difficulties that minorities face, necessitating more excellent protection than what would be afforded to a simple numerical minority.

NOTE for the quotations: In the translation, an effort has been made to preserve the sense and meaning of each quotation while ensuring that specific terms and constructions of the Italian language are not overlooked.

16.1 Early Childhood and Preschool (approximately ages 0-6)

The Italian State defines general guidelines regarding the content of early childhood education services programs without detailing every aspect. The Ministry of Education, University and Research [MIUR] *Guidelines for the integrated 0–6 system* outline services' educational goals and objectives, remaining flexible and allowing content adaptation to the territory's needs. Within the integrated 0-6 system, educational services for early childhood (ages 0–3) are regulated at the regional level. Hence, each region has specific and different laws defining the organisation and management of the facilities, qualitative standards, and training objectives for staff. Concerning early childhood, it is the municipalities that are the local authorities that issue educational guidelines, while preschools follow the specific directions of national regulations. Beginning in preschool, the main point of reference is the National Law of 2012, *National Directions for the Curriculum for Preschool and First Cycle Education*, based on areas of competence called "fields of experience". Within every field of experience, there are competencies that each child should develop through experience in pre-primary school.

16.1.1 Performing Arts, Music, Drama, and Theatre

In the legislation, these areas still need to be more marginal. The concept of *performing arts* cannot be identified; in the Italian context (especially in pre-primary school), arts education, including the performing arts, prevails. Following is an example from the legislation:

> Children express thoughts and emotions with imagination and creativity: art directs this propensity by educating them about the pleasure of beauty and aesthetic sense. Exploring the available materials allows for early artistic experiences, stimulating creativity and infecting other learnings. The languages[152] available to children, such as voice, gesture, dramatisation, sounds, music, manipulation of materials, graphic-pictorial experiences, and mass media, must be discovered and cultivated so that they develop in children a sense of beauty, the knowledge of themselves, of others and reality.[153] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 20)

The performing arts are mentioned in the document mainly in the fields of experience, “the body and movement”, and “images, sounds, colours”. "They are seen as one of the languages children can use to creatively express themselves:

“expression concerns the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences, and emotions in a wide variety of media, including music, performing arts, literature, and visual arts”[154] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 11).

Performing arts are also discussed in the context of learning environment and perceived as a way of knowledge construction and a particular type of language:

“experiment, manipulation, game, story, music, and artistic expressions are favoured occasions to learn hands-on what at a later time will be the content of much more elaborate theoretical and experimental knowledge”[155] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 7).

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[152] In the Italian language, there are two different terms to indicate *lingue,* languages such as French, English, Spanish, etc., and *linguaggi*, languages as forms of communication (such as “body language”, “artistic languages”).

[153] “I bambini esprimono pensieri ed emozioni con immaginazione e creatività: l’arte orienta questa propensione, educando al piacere del bello e al sentire estetico. L’esplorazione dei materiali a disposizione consente di vivere le prime esperienze artistiche, che sono in grado di stimolare la creatività e contagiare altri apprendimenti. I linguaggi a disposizione dei bambini, come la voce, il gesto, la drammatizzazione, i suoni, la musica, la manipolazione dei materiali, le esperienze grafico-pittoriche, i mass-media, vanno scoperti ed educati perché sviluppino nei piccoli il senso del bello, la conoscenza di se stessi, degli altri e della realtà” (Ministero dell’istruzione, dell’Università e della ricerca [MIUR], 2012c, p. 20).

[154] “Consapevolezza ed espressione culturale riguarda l’importanza dell’espressione creativa di idee, esperienze ed emozioni in un’ampia varietà di mezzi di comunicazione, compresi la musica, le arti dello spettacolo, la letteratura e le arti visive” (MIUR, 2012c, p. 11).

[155] “L’esperimento, la manipolazione, il gioco, la narrazione, le espressioni artistiche e musicali sono infatti altrettante occasioni privilegiate per apprendere per via pratica quello che successivamente dovrà essere fatto oggetto di più elaborate conoscenze teoriche e sperimentali” (MIUR, 2012c, p. 7).

"Movement experiences allow the integration of different languages, alternating speech and gestures, the production and enjoyment of music, accompanying narratives, and fostering the construction of self-image and the elaboration of body diagram"[156] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 19).

Among the performing arts, music is undoubtedly the one that plays a predominant role and is interpreted as a discipline in which to develop knowledge and skills:

"[The child][157] experiments with and combines basic musical elements, producing simple sound-musical sequences. He explores the first musical alphabets by using the symbols of informal notation to encode perceived sounds and reproduce them"[158] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 21).

Music is also depicted as an expressive channel to know oneself and the world around:

> As the child interacts with the soundscape, he develops his cognitive and relational skills and learns to perceive, listen to, search for and discriminate sounds within meaningful learning contexts. He explores his sound-expressive and symbolic-representational possibilities, increasing confidence in his potential. Listening to personal sound productions opens them up to the pleasure of making music and sharing repertoires belonging to various musical genres.[159] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 20)

Theatre is marginal, without representing the specific reference point in the Law. It is mentioned within other general aspects:

> The exploration of the available materials allows for early artistic experiences, which can stimulate creativity and infect other learnings. The languages available to children, such as voice, gesture, dramatisation, sounds, music, manipulation of materials, graphic-pictorial experiences, and mass media, must be discovered and cultivated so that they develop in children a sense of beauty, the knowledge of themselves, of others and reality.[160] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 20)

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156 "Le esperienze motorie consentono di integrare i diversi linguaggi, di alternare la parola e i gesti, di produrre e fruire musica, di accompagnare narrazioni, di favorire la costruzione dell'immagine di sé e l'elaborazione dello schema corporeo" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 19).

157 "They" is more effective and inclusive, but the original document refers to "the child" using the masculine form ("il bambino"). In Italy, the use of the masculine, even in the singular, is still common, especially in official documents, to refer to both boys and girls, despite numerous calls for more inclusive language, particularly regarding gender. Even in later quotations, there are numerous references to "lo studente" or "il bambino".

158 "[Il bambino] sperimenta e combina elementi musicali di base, producendo semplici sequenze sonoro-musicali. Esplora i primi alfabeti musicali, utilizzando anche i simboli di una notazione informale per codificare i suoni percepiti e riprodurli" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 21).

159 "Il bambino, interagendo con il paesaggio sonoro, sviluppa le proprie capacità cognitive e relazionali, impara a percepire, ascoltare, ricercare e discriminare i suoni all'interno di contesti di apprendimento significativi. Esplora le proprie possibilità sonoro-espressive e simbolico rappresentative, accrescendo la fiducia nelle proprie potenzialità. L'ascolto delle produzioni sonore personali lo apre al piacere di fare musica e alla condivisione di repertori appartenenti a vari generi musicali" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 20).

160 "L'esplorazione dei materiali a disposizione consente di vivere le prime esperienze artistiche, che sono in grado di stimolare la creatività e contagiare altri apprendimenti. I linguaggi a disposizione dei bambini, come la voce, il gesto, la drammatizzazione, i suoni, la musica, la manipolazione dei

Dance is even more marginal, and it is only mentioned in the use of the body scheme:

"[the child] controls the execution of the gesture, considers risk, interacting with others in movement games, music, dance, expressive communication.[161] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 20)

16.1.2 Cultural Literacy

Cultural literacy is mainly interpreted from an intercultural perspective:

> To enhance the uniqueness and peculiarity of each student's cultural identity. It does not suffice to recognise and preserve the pre-existing diversities independently. Instead, it is necessary to actively support their interaction and integration through the knowledge of other cultures and our own, in a comparison that does not elude questions such as religious beliefs, domestic roles, gender differences.[162] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 6)

"Childhood services in Milan have pluralism as a tradition and vocation, and they make the encounter with the many family cultures, with the many ideas of childhood, with the heterogeneity, sometimes conflicting, of educational models"[163] (Municipality of Milan, 2023, p. 10);

"Introducing a cultural perspective means taking on the changes that permeate the city and our services in order to understand differences, to activate all possible mediations and seek convergences between children, families, and educators"[164] (Municipality of Milan, 2023, p. 10).

The cultural understanding approach is marginal in the reference documents, as can be seen: "[the child] recognises the most important markings of his/her culture and territory, institutions, public services, the functioning of small communities and cities"[165] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 19).

materiali, le esperienze grafico-pittoriche, i mass-media, vanno scoperti ed educati perché sviluppino nei piccoli il senso del bello, la conoscenza di se stessi, degli altri e della realtà" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 20).

[161] "[Il bambino] controlla l'esecuzione del gesto, valuta il rischio, interagisce con gli altri nei giochi di movimento, nella musica, nella danza, nella comunicazione espressiva" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 20).

[162] "L'obiettivo è quello di valorizzare l'unicità e la singolarità dell'identità culturale di ogni studente. Non basta riconoscere e conservare le diversità preesistenti, nella loro pura e semplice autonomia. Bisogna, invece, sostenere attivamente la loro interazione e la loro integrazione attraverso la conoscenza della nostra e delle altre culture, in un confronto che non eluda questioni quali le convinzioni religiose, i ruoli familiari, le differenze di genere" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 6).

[163] "I servizi all'Infanzia di Milano hanno tradizione e vocazione al pluralismo e, oggi più che mai, fanno dell'incontro con le tante culture familiari, con le tante idee di infanzia, con l'eterogeneità, talvolta conflittuale, dei modelli educativi" (Comune di Milano, 2023, p. 10).

[164] "Introdurre uno sguardo culturale significa assumere i cambiamenti che pervadono la città e i nostri servizi per comprendere le differenze, attivare le mediazioni possibili e ricercare le convergenze tra le bambine e i bambini, tra le famiglie, tra le educatrici" (Comune di Milano, 2023, p. 10).

[165] "(Il bambino) riconosce i più importanti segni della sua cultura e del territorio, le istituzioni, i servizi pubblici, il funzionamento delle piccole comunità e della città" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 19).

16.1.3 Cultural Literacy and Performing Arts

This aspect is not particularly present and is only mentioned in a few parts, where the performing arts seem to be conceptualised as a space for encountering others through cultural elements:

> The languages available to children, such as voice, gesture, dramatisation, sounds, music, manipulation of materials, graphic-pictorial experiences, mass media, must be discovered and cultivated so that they develop in children a sense of beauty, the knowledge of themselves, of others and reality.[166] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 20)

"Music is a universal experience that manifests itself in different ways and different genres, all of equal dignity, [it is] charged with emotion and rich in cultural traditions"[167] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 20).

16.1.4 Social Cohesion

Social cohesion is an area particularly present in the Law and is interpreted as participation, well-being, and community belonging:

> The promotion and growth of each person mutually stimulates the promotion and growth of other people: each learns better in relationship with others. It is not enough to live together in society, but it is necessary to build it continuously together.[168] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 6)

> The education and care actions addressed to children appear as practices to promote their expression and participation skills; they appear as an exercise in listening, in a shared recognition of the best interest towards the children's well-being and of mediation between all the subjects directly or indirectly involved in the educational intervention.[169] (Municipality of Milan, 2023, p. 6)

[166] "I linguaggi a disposizione dei bambini, come la voce, il gesto, la drammatizzazione, i suoni, la musica, la manipolazione dei materiali, le esperienze grafico-pittoriche, i mass-media, vanno scoperti ed educati perché sviluppino nei piccoli il senso del bello, la conoscenza di se stessi, degli altri e della realtà" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 20).

[167] "La musica è un'esperienza universale che si manifesta in modi e generi diversi, tutti di pari dignità, carica di emozioni e ricca di tradizioni culturali" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 20).

[168] "La promozione e lo sviluppo di ogni persona stimola in maniera vicendevole la promozione e lo sviluppo delle altre persone: ognuno impara meglio nella relazione con gli altri. Non basta convivere nella società, ma questa stessa società bisogna crearla continuamente insieme" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 6).

[169] "Le azioni di educazione e di cura rivolte ai bambini si configurano come pratiche di promozione della loro capacità di espressione e di partecipazione, come esercizio di ascolto, di individuazione condivisa del miglior interesse in direzione del loro benessere e di mediazione tra tutti i soggetti direttamente o indirettamente coinvolti nell'intervento educativo" (Comune di Milano, 2023, p. 6).

16.2 Primary School and Middle School (approximately ages 6-11)

For this school grade, the law at the national level is the same as for the pre-primary school. There are no regional guidelines. Each institution enjoys autonomy regarding curricula but must develop a *Three-Year Educational Offer Plan* (PTOF) in line with national guidelines. The curriculum set by law provides the mandatory basic structure on which each school builds its educational plan, adapting it to the specific context of the institution (students' needs, local resources, etc.). All the school's methodological, organisational, and planning decisions must align with the learning objectives and competencies outlined in the National Guidelines.

16.2.1 Performing Arts, Music, Drama, and Theatre

As with the previous grade, performing arts are scarce because the primary approach concerns arts education, as the following examples:

"To critically and actively read and interpret the languages of images and multimedia; to understand art pieces; to know and appreciate cultural and artistic heritage"[170] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 60);

"In this way, the student[171] is educated in the safeguarding and preserving the artistic and environmental heritage starting from his territory"[172] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 60).

In general, in comparison with the previous grade, there are more references to the performing arts, and they are mainly in physical education, where the use of the bodily dimension is interpreted as an expression of communication and the use of emotions:

"(the student) uses body and motor language to communicate and express his moods, also through dramatisation and rhythmic-musical and choreographic experiences"[173] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 63);

"To use expressive and corporeal manners originally and creatively, by way of dramatisation and dance, knowing how to convey emotional content simultaneously"[174] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 64).

[170] "Di leggere e interpretare in modo critico e attivo i linguaggi delle immagini e quelli multimediali; di comprendere le opere d'arte; di conoscere e apprezzare i beni culturali e il patrimonio artistico" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 60).
[171] In Italian "l'alunno": alunno is masculine singular. See the same reasoning applied to the word "il bambino."
[172] "In questo modo l'alunno si educa alla salvaguardia, e alla conservazione del patrimonio artistico e ambientale a partire dal territorio di appartenenza" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 60).
[173] "(Lo studente) utilizza il linguaggio corporeo e motorio per comunicare ed esprimere i propri stati d'animo, anche attraverso la drammatizzazione e le esperienze ritmico-musicali e coreutiche" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 63).
[174] "Utilizzare in forma originale e creativa modalità espressive e corporee anche attraverso forme di drammatizzazione e danza, sapendo trasmettere nel contempo contenuti emozionali" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 64).

In the primary school curricula, music is a discipline, and it is predominant within performing arts:

"Through improvisation or by participating in collective elaboration processes, they can devise and realise musical and multimedia messages, in critical comparison with models belonging to the musical heritage, using computer systems too"[175] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 59).

Music is also explained as an approach to integrate other performing arts and art in general:

"To know, to describe and interpret in a critical way musical pieces of art and to design/realise auditory events that include other artistic forms, such as dance, theatre, visual and multimedia arts"[176] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 59).

A prevalent part of the music discipline is described as a framework, tool, and environment for developing cultural literacy and intercultural education:

"The identity and intercultural function of music inspires pupils to become aware of their being part of a cultural tradition while providing them with the tools for knowing, comparing and respecting other cultural and religious traditions"[177] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 58);

> They develop a flexible, intuitive, creative mindset and participate in the heritage of different musical cultures; they use competencies that are specific to that branch of knowledge to understand the meanings, mentalities, ways of life, and values of the community they belong to.[178] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 58)

16.2.2 Cultural Literacy

The documents include several perspectives on cultural literacy. It is described as a "classic" and first approach (Hirsch, 1998):

> The first cycle of education's specific assignment is to promote basic literacy through the acquisition of the languages and codes that constitute the structure of our culture, in an enlarged horizon that encompasses the other cultures we live with and to the conscious use of new media.[179] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 24)

[175] "È in grado di ideare e realizzare, anche attraverso l'improvvisazione o partecipando a processi di elaborazione collettiva, messaggi musicali e multimediali, nel confronto critico con modelli appartenenti al patrimonio musicale, utilizzando anche sistemi informatici" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 59).

[176] "Conoscere, descrivere e interpretare in modo critico opere d'arte musicali e progettare/realizzare eventi sonori che integrino altre forme artistiche, quali danza, teatro, arti visive e multimediali" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 59)

[177] "Mediante la funzioni identitaria e interculturale la musica induce gli alunni a prendere coscienza della loro appartenenza a una tradizione culturale e nel contempo fornisce loro gli strumenti per la conoscenza, il confronto e il rispetto di altre tradizioni culturali e religiose" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 58).

[178] "[gli alunni] Sviluppano un pensiero flessibile, intuitivo, creativo e partecipano al patrimonio di diverse culture musicali; utilizzano le competenze specifiche della disciplina per cogliere significati, mentalità, modi di vita e valori della comunità a cui fanno riferimento" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 58).

[179] "Il compito specifico del primo ciclo è quello di promuovere l'alfabetizzazione di base attraverso l'acquisizione dei linguaggi e dei codici che costituiscono la struttura della nostra cultura, in un orizzonte allargato alle altre culture con cui conviviamo e all'uso consapevole dei nuovi media" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 24).

Another perspective is closer to intercultural education:

> Dialogue between mutually respectful interlocutors that shared meanings are built, and work is done to smooth disagreement out, to acquire new points of view, to negotiate and to give a positive meaning to the differences as well as to prevent and regulate conflicts.[180] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 26)

A further aspect concerns a connection between intercultural education/cultural literacy with music (see previous section) and social cohesion:

"Multilingual and intercultural education is a functional resource for the appreciation of diversities and to the scholastic success of everyone, which is the premise for social inclusion and democratic participation"[181] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 25).

16.2.3 Social Cohesion

Social cohesion is a frequent point of reference and seems to be conceptualised mainly through the lens of citizenship education:

> Citizenship education is promoted by relevant experiences that let one learn how to care for oneself, others, and the environment concretely, advancing cooperation and solidarity. This phase of the educational process is fertile land for the development of informed participation to shared values and cooperative and collaborative attitudes which establish a practical condition for cohabitation.[182] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 58)

"[…] the activation of socialisation and cooperation process, the acquisition of tools of knowledge, the exploitation of creativity and participation, the development of a sense of belonging in a community, and the interaction between different cultures"[183] (MIUR, 2012c, p. 58).

16.3 Upper Secondary Education (approximately ages 14-19)

Upper secondary education in Italy is made up of 3 different paths:

- High School;
- VET with vocational pathway;

[180] "È attraverso la parola e il dialogo tra interlocutori che si rispettano reciprocamente, infatti, che si costruiscono significati condivisi e si opera per sanare le divergenze, per acquisire punti di vista nuovi, per negoziare e dare un senso positivo alle differenze così come per prevenire e regolare i conflitti" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 26).

[181] "L'educazione plurilingue e interculturale rappresenta una risorsa funzionale alla valorizzazione delle diversità e al successo scolastico di tutti e di ognuno ed è presupposto per l'inclusione sociale e per la partecipazione democratica" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 25).

[182] "L'educazione alla cittadinanza viene promossa attraverso esperienze significative che consentano di apprendere il concreto prendersi cura di se stessi, degli altri e dell'ambiente e che favoriscano forme di cooperazione e di solidarietà. Questa fase del processo formativo è il terreno favorevole per lo sviluppo di un'adesione consapevole a valori condivisi e di atteggiamenti cooperativi e collaborativi che costituiscono la condizione per praticare la convivenza civile" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 58).

[183] "[…] all'attivazione di processi di cooperazione e socializzazione, all'acquisizione di strumenti di conoscenza, alla valorizzazione della creatività e della partecipazione, allo sviluppo del senso di appartenenza a una comunità, nonché all'interazione fra culture diverse" (MIUR, 2012c, p. 58).

- VET with technical pathway.

All three pathways have a plurality of different specialisations. Again, the reference legislation for constructing the curricula is the state one[184]. Individual institutions must develop the PTOF [Three-Year Educational Offer Plan] consistent with the National Guidelines, which establish the regulatory framework and objectives for curricula in high schools, including high schools and technical and vocational colleges. Furthermore, cross-competence (as soft skills) guidelines are the same for the different pathways.

16.3.1 Performing Arts, Music, Drama, and Theatre

In this educational grade, the performing arts are marginal and not included as in previous grades. Specific high school pathways dedicated to art and/or the performing arts have a significant focus because the performing arts are a specialisation area of the path. Only in the vocational VET pathway is music education included in the curricula:

> The teacher focuses most of the activities on laboratory paths and consolidates the competencies acquired by students at the end of the first cycle of education by enhancing their musical experience and moments of listening. To this end, respecting the peculiar expressive modality of the discipline, teaching is also developed with essential and appropriate connections with other verbal and nonverbal communicative codes (literary graphic-pictorial, mimic-gestural, multimedia) and with specific knowledge of the scientific-technological axis. At the end of the learning pathway, the student acquires musical expressive techniques useful for animation.[185] (MIUR, 2010b, p. 60)

In high schools – *Lyceum* (non-specializing pathway aimed at developing a solid general cultural background) – there are general references to art education, as can be seen from these examples:

[184] The reference for high schools is the national guidelines, while for vocational and technical colleges, special guidelines have been issued. The following are the normative references:
DPR (presidential decree) No. 87/2010, regulation that introduced the guidelines for vocational institutes (*Professional institutes: Guidelines for the transition to new sorting*).
DPR (presidential decree) No. 88/2010, regulation with the guidelines for technical institutes (*Technical institutes: Guidelines for the transition to new sorting*).
DPR (presidential decree) No. 89/2010, regulation reorganizing high schools with relevant national guidelines (Outline of regulations containing " National indications concerning the specific learning objectives concerning the activities and teachings included in the study plans provided for high school courses).

[185] "Il docente concentra gran parte delle attività su percorsi laboratoriali, consolida le competenze acquisite dagli studenti al termine del primo ciclo di istruzione valorizzandone l'esperienza musicale e i momenti di ascolto. A tale scopo, nel rispetto della peculiare modalità espressiva della disciplina, l'insegnamento è sviluppato anche con essenziali ed opportuni collegamenti sia con altri codici comunicativi verbali e non verbali (letterari grafico-pittorici, mimico-gestuali, multimediali), sia con gli specifici saperi dell'asse scientifico-tecnologico. Lo studente, al termine del percorso di apprendimento, acquisisce tecniche espressive musicali utili all'animazione" (MIUR, 2010b, p. 60).

"he (the student) will also be capable of analysing the main graphic-visual production of the past and the contemporary, and of grasping the interactions between the latter and artistic languages"[186] (MIUR, 2010a, p. 161).

The specific aspects of performing arts concern the Lyceum, which has courses dedicated to the visual and/or performing arts. In particular, a musical and choreographic pathway. Music and dance are predominant in these addresses. Regarding the musical curriculum, the focus is on the development of specific technical competencies aimed at the ability to use one or more instruments:

"for the first instrument, adequate and conscious performance skills of compositions from different eras, genres, styles, and traditions, supported by simple analytical procedures relevant to the repertoires studied; for the second instrument, the essential elements of instrumental technique"[187] (MIUR, 2010a, p. 308).

The curriculum also seeks to develop sound theoretical knowledge to use in practice:

> He also knows how to adopt and apply targeted strategies in appropriate executive contexts, sight reading, transport, memorisation, and improvisation, as well as learning a piece in a given time. He knows how to use appropriate techniques for the execution of significant compositions from different eras, genres, styles and musical traditions, demonstrating that he possesses the necessary historical and stylistic knowledge, as well as having understood the poetics of the various authors presented.[188] (MIUR, 2010a, p. 309)
>
> The student reproduces complex rhythmic sequences, polyrhythms, and polymers with relevant use of body and movement and short musical pieces, both individually and in groups, highlighting the rhythmic aspect, phrasing, and form also through the use of the body and the movement.[189] (MIUR, 2010a, p. 310)

Moreover, placing knowledge from a historical perspective is underlined in the curriculum:

> At the end of the course, the student has acquired familiarity with Western traditional art music; he knows the overall profile of the history of Western music in the written

[186] "Lo studente sarà altresì capace di analizzare la principale produzione grafico-visiva del passato e della contemporaneità, e di cogliere le interazioni tra quest'ultima e i linguaggi artistici" (MIUR, 2010a, p. 161).
[187] "per il primo strumento, adeguate e consapevoli capacità esecutive di composizioni di epoche, generi, stili e tradizioni diverse, supportate da semplici procedimenti analitici pertinenti ai repertori studiati; per il secondo strumento, gli essenziali elementi di tecnica strumentale" (MIUR, 2010a, p. 308).
[188] "Sà altresì adottare e applicare in adeguati contesti esecutivi, strategie finalizzate alla lettura a prima vista, al trasporto, alla memorizzazione e all'improvvisazione, nonché all'apprendimento di un brano in un tempo dato. Sà utilizzare tecniche adeguate all'esecuzione di composizioni significative di epoche, generi, stili e tradizioni musicali diverse, dando prova di possedere le necessarie conoscenze storiche e stilistiche, nonché di aver compreso le poetiche dei diversi autori presentati" (MIUR, 2010a, p. 309).
[189] "Lo studente riproduce sequenze ritmiche complesse, poliritmi e polimetrie con pertinente uso del corpo e del movimento e brevi brani musicali, sia individualmente sia in gruppo, evidenziando l'aspetto ritmico, il fraseggio e la forma anche attraverso l'uso del corpo e del movimento" (MIUR, 2010a, p. 310).

> tradition; he knows how to recognise and place the main artistic phenomena, the primary musical genres and the pre-eminent authors, from Gregorian chant to the present day, in the historical-cultural frameworks and the relevant social and productive contexts; he knows how to distinguish and classify the various sources of music history.[190] (MIUR, 2010a, p. 311)

The dance pathway appears to be generally connected with the leading Italian dance schools (e.g. La Scala in Milan) and is framed as focusing particularly on acquiring knowledge, approaches, styles, and techniques of the performing art of dance:

> Over the five years, the student achieves overall technical and preparation theory in classical dance, allowing him to access the classical dance section of Alta Dance training. His path will aim to fully master the body and movement techniques and achieve a perfectly balanced execution in technical, stylistic, expressive and creative aspects.[191] (MIUR, 2010a, p. 318)

Learning also focuses on knowledge of the choreographic heritage in terms of history within Italy (e.g. traditional dances):

> Among the topics addressed, issues relating to conservation and protection stand out in the transmission of the dance heritage, with particular reference to dance forms traditional in Italy and the occasions and functions of dance in various cultures, offering them at the same time basic notions of Ethnochoreology.[192] (MIUR, 2010a, p. 316)

In addition, theoretical knowledge and its contextualisation are part of dance curriculum:

> At the same time, sensitivity and abilities are enhanced in the theoretical and aesthetic fields of student's perceptions through reading methodological texts and decoding the choreographic score to achieve a structural analysis that highlights the aspects rhythmic, dynamic, spatial, and formal aspects of the works examined.[193] (MIUR, 2010a, p. 316)

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[190] "Al termine del percorso lo studente ha acquisito familiarità con la musica d'arte di tradizione occidentale; conosce il profilo complessivo della storia della musica occidentale di tradizione scritta; sa riconoscere e collocare nei quadri storico-culturali e nei contesti sociali e produttivi pertinenti i principali fenomeni artistici, i generi musicali primari e gli autori preminenti, dal canto gregoriano ai giorni nostri; sa distinguere e classificare le varie fonti della storia della musica" (MIUR, 2010a, p. 311).

[191] "Nel corso del quinquennio lo studente raggiunge una preparazione complessiva, tecnica e teorica nella danza classica, che gli consenta di accedere alla sezione danza classica dell'Alta Formazione coreutica. Il suo percorso sarà teso ad acquisire una piena padronanza del corpo e delle tecniche di movimento e a raggiungere un'esecuzione perfettamente bilanciata negli aspetti tecnici, stilistici, espressivi e creative" (MIUR, 2010a, p. 318).

[192] "Fra i temi affrontati hanno risalto le problematiche relative alla conservazione e alla trasmissione del patrimonio coreutico, con particolare riferimento alle forme della danza tradizionale in Italia e alle occasioni e funzioni della danza nelle varie culture, offrendo al contempo nozioni basilari di Etnocoreologia" (MIUR, 2010a, p. 316).

[193] "Parallelamente in ambito teorico ed estetico sono potenziate la sensibilità e le capacità percettive dello studente attraverso la lettura di testi metodologici e la decodificazione della partitura coreografica per giungere a realizzare un'analisi strutturale che evidenzi gli aspetti ritmici, dinamici, spaziali e formali delle opere esaminate" (MIUR, 2010a, p. 316).

On the other hand, theatre is marginal for all pathways, also in the music and dance high school pathways.

16.3.2 Cultural Literacy

In this grade of school, Cultural Literacy is seen as an interpretation that starts from a single discipline and opens up connections with different systems from the Italian one. The goal is to recognize different spheres, such as economic, social and cultural, and the relations between them. Students also learn to perceive various scales of these spheres from local to global, and intercultural perspective is mentioned in this context:

> As far as Italian literature is concerned, the teacher plans and schedules the teaching itinerary in such a way as to enable the student to progressively orient himself or herself on the artistic and literary heritage of Italian culture, with essential references to the main literature of other countries, also from an intercultural perspective.[194] (MIUR, 2010b, p. 39)

> The teacher of "Law and Economics" contributes to the student's attainment, at the end of the five-year course, of results of analysing the reality and concrete facts of daily life and developing generalizations learning that enable him or her to: analysing reality and concrete facts of everyday life and developing generalisations that help explain individual and collective behaviour from an economic perspective; recognize the variety and historical development of economic, social and institutional forms through the synthesis categories provided by economics and law; recognize the interdependence between economic, social, institutional, cultural, technological phenomena and their local/global dimensions; establish connections between local, national and international traditions both in an intercultural perspective and for the purposes of study and work mobility; orient themselves in the regulations governing the production processes of the sector of reference, with particular attention to both safety in the living and working places and to the protection of the environment and the territory.[195] (MIUR, 2010b, p. 72)

"Recognize the interdependence between economic, social, institutional, cultural, technological phenomena and their local/global dimensions; make connections between local, national

[194] "Per quanto riguarda la letteratura italiana, il docente progetta e programma l'itinerario didattico in modo tale da mettere in grado lo studente di orientarsi progressivamente sul patrimonio artistico e letterario della cultura italiana, con riferimenti essenziali alle principali letterature di altri paesi, anche in una prospettiva interculturale" (MIUR, 2010b, p. 39).

[195] "Il docente di "Diritto ed economia" concorre a far conseguire allo studente, al termine del percorso quinquennale, risultati di apprendimento che lo mettono in grado di: analizzare la realtà e i fatti concreti della vita quotidiana ed elaborare generalizzazioni che aiutino a spiegare i comportamenti individuali e collettivi in chiave economica; riconoscere la varietà e lo sviluppo storico delle forme economiche, sociali e istituzionali attraverso le categorie di sintesi fornite dall'economia e dal diritto; riconoscere l'interdipendenza tra fenomeni economici, sociali, istituzionali, culturali, tecnologici e la loro dimensione locale/globale; stabilire collegamenti tra le tradizioni locali, nazionali e internazionali sia in una prospettiva interculturale sia ai fini della mobilità di studio e di lavoro; orientarsi nella normativa che disciplina i processi produttivi del settore di riferimento, con particolare attenzione sia alla sicurezza sui luoghi di vita e di lavoro sia alla tutela dell'ambiente e del territorio" (MIUR, 2010b, p. 72).

and international traditions both from an intercultural perspective and for the purpose of study and work mobility"[196] (MIUR, 2010b, p. 65).

In the curriculum, cultural literacy and the notion of interculturality are also present in discussion on knowledge of more than one language as the development of competencies for the understanding of cultural systems and historical processes also referring to different areas:

"As part of the development of knowledge about the cultural universe relating to the foreign language, the student understands aspects relating to the culture of the countries where the language is spoken, with particular reference to the social sphere"[197] (MIUR, 2010a, p. 16);

> Furthermore, the student is able to interpret and comment on works in prose and verse, using the tools of linguistic, stylistic, and rhetorical analysis and placing the works in the respective historical and cultural context; has assimilated categories that allow us to interpret the mythological, artistic, literary, philosophical, political, scientific heritage common to civilisation European; knows how to compare cultural and literary models and value systems.[198] (MIUR, 2010a, p. 198)

> Students are guided, including in comparison with their mother tongue, to the progressively conscious use of communicative strategies to foster the transfer of skills, abilities, and knowledge, between the two languages and facilitate learning from a language and intercultural education perspective.[199] (MIUR, 2010c, p. 67)

Cultural understanding is perceived as being highly oriented towards the understanding and knowledge of one's own cultural system, particularly that of the West and Europe.

"The student acquires the fundamental notions relating to the meaning that culture has for man, understands cultural diversity and the reasons that have determined them also in connection with their arrangement in geographical space"[200] (MIUR, 2010a, p. 394);

> Furthermore, the student is able to interpret and comment on works in prose and verse, using the tools of linguistic, stylistic, and rhetorical analysis and placing the works in

[196] "Riconoscere le linee essenziali della storia delle idee, della cultura, della letteratura, delle arti e orientarsi agevolmente fra testi e autori fondamentali, con riferimento soprattutto a tematiche di tipo scientifico, tecnologico ed economico; stabilire collegamenti tra le tradizioni culturali locali, nazionali ed internazionali, sia in una prospettiva interculturale sia ai fini della mobilità di studio e di lavoro" (MIUR, 2010b, p. 65).

[197] "Nell'ambito dello sviluppo di conoscenze sull'universo culturale relativo alla lingua straniera, lo studente comprende aspetti relativi alla cultura dei paesi in cui si parla la lingua, con particolare riferimento all'ambito sociale" (MIUR, 2010a, p. 16).

[198] "Lo studente, inoltre, è in grado di interpretare e commentare opere in prosa e in versi, servendosi degli strumenti dell'analisi linguistica, stilistica, retorica e collocando le opere nel rispettivo contesto storico e culturale; ha assimilato categorie che permettono di interpretare il patrimonio mitologico, artistico, letterario, filosofico, politico, scientifico comune alla civiltà europea; sa confrontare modelli culturali e letterari e sistemi di valori" (MIUR, 2010a, p. 198).

[199] "Gli studenti vengono guidati, anche nel confronto con la lingua madre, all'uso progressivamente consapevole delle strategie comunicative per favorire il trasferimento di competenze, abilità e conoscenze, tra le due lingue e facilitare gli apprendimenti in un'ottica di educazione linguistica e interculturale" (MIUR, 2010c, p. 67).

[200] "Lo studente acquisisce le nozioni fondamentali relative al significato che la cultura riveste per l'uomo, comprende le diversità culturali e le ragioni che le hanno determinate anche in collegamento con il loro disporsi nello spazio geografico" (MIUR, 2010a, p. 394).

> the respective historical and cultural context; has assimilated categories that allow us to interpret the mythological, artistic, literary, philosophical, political, scientific heritage common to civilisation European; knows how to compare cultural and literary models and value systems.[201] (MIUR, 2010a, p. 198)

There are also an essential number of references that regard citizenship and citizenship education that consider intercultural education:

"It includes the concept of citizenship (Italian and European), in a dimension of relations between peoples and explores the theme of the dignity of the human person, migration and crimes against humanity"[202] (MIUR, 2018, p. 14).

In cross-competences, there are essential parts that concern Intercultural Education and cultural literacy seen as as a dialogue and empathy:

"The ability to work constructively with others. The ability to communicate constructively in different environments. The ability to build trust and empathy. The ability to express and understand different points of view"[203] (MIUR, 2018, p. 14);

> The ability to recognise and realise opportunities for personal, social or commercial enhancement through the arts and other cultural forms. The ability to engage in creative processes both individually and collectively. Curiosity about the world, openness to imagine new possibilities.[204] (MIUR, 2018, p. 15)

"The ability to communicate and negotiate effectively with others. The ability to deal with uncertainty, ambiguity and risk"[205] (MIUR, 2018, p. 14).

16.3.3 Social Cohesion

The Social Cohesion dimension is mainly present in all reference documents. The focus seems to be on the role of rights:

"Relevance among them are aspects concerning the possibility of placing personal experience in a system of rules based on the mutual recognition of rights guaranteed by the Constitution,

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[201] "Lo studente, inoltre, è in grado di interpretare e commentare opere in prosa e in versi, servendosi degli strumenti dell'analisi linguistica, stilistica, retorica e collocando le opere nel rispettivo contesto storico e culturale; ha assimilato categorie che permettono di interpretare il patrimonio mitologico, artistico, letterario, filosofico, politico, scientifico comune alla civiltà europea; sa confrontare modelli culturali e letterari e sistemi di valori" (MIUR, 2010a, p. 198).

[202] "Include il concetto di cittadinanza (italiana ed europea), in una dimensione di relazioni tra i popoli ed esplora il tema della dignità della persona umana, delle migrazioni e dei crimini contro l'umanità" (MIUR, 2018, p. 14).

[203] "Capacità di lavorare con gli altri in maniera costruttiva. Capacità di comunicare costruttivamente in ambienti diversi. Capacità di creare fiducia e provare empatia. Capacità di esprimere e comprendere punti di vista diversi" (MIUR, 2018, p. 14).

[204] "Capacità di riconoscere e realizzare le opportunità di valorizzazione personale, sociale o commerciale mediante le arti e le atre forme culturali. Capacità di impegnarsi in processi creativi sia individualmente che collettivamente. Curiosità nei confronti del mondo, apertura per immaginare nuove possibilità" (MIUR, 2018, p. 15).

[205] "Capacità di comunicare e negoziare efficacemente con gli altri. Capacità di gestire l'incertezza, l'ambiguità e il rischio" (MIUR, 2018, p. 14).

for the protection of the individual, the community and the environment"[206] (MIUR, 2010b, p. 28);

> Educating for legality means elaborating and disseminating an authentic culture of civic values, a culture that understands the law as an expression of the social pact, indispensable for building conscious relationships among citizens and between citizens and institutions. That is, it enables the acquisition of a deeper and broader notion of citizenship rights, starting with reciprocity among subjects endowed with the same dignity; it helps to understand how the organisation of personal and social life is based on a system of legal relations; and it develops the awareness that conditions such as dignity, freedom, solidarity, and security cannot be considered as acquired forever, but must be pursued, desired and, once conquered, protected.[207] (MIUR, 2010b, p. 27)

Consequently, the notions of participatory citizenship and common interest can be seen as elements of social cohesion:

"Citizenship competence refers to the ability to act as responsible citizens and to participate fully in civic and social life, based on an understanding of social, economic, legal and political structures and concepts as well as global developments and sustainability"[208] (MIUR, 2018, p. 11).

"The ability to engage effectively with others for a common or public interest"[209] (MIUR, 2018, p. 14).

Related to this, the role of the community is perceived as reinforcing the emphasis on social cohesion:

"Identity and a sense of belonging to a professional community, that reflect an ethical view of reality, a way of acting for positive purposes about not only personal but common needs"[210] (MIUR, 2010b, p. 7).

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[206] "Tra essi particolare rilevanza assumono le questioni concernenti la possibilità di collocare l'esperienza personale in un sistema di regole fondato sul reciproco riconoscimento dei diritti garantiti dalla Costituzione, a tutela della persona, della collettività e dell'ambiente" (MIUR, 2010b, p. 28).

[207] "Educare alla legalità significa elaborare e diffondere un'autentica cultura dei valori civili, cultura che intende il diritto come espressione del patto sociale, indispensabile per costruire relazioni consapevoli tra i cittadini e tra questi ultimi e le istituzioni. Consente, cioè, l'acquisizione di una nozione più profonda ed estesa dei diritti di cittadinanza, a partire dalla reciprocità fra soggetti dotati della stessa dignità; aiuta a comprendere come l'organizzazione della vita personale e sociale si fondi su un sistema di relazioni giuridiche; sviluppa la consapevolezza che condizioni quali dignità, libertà, solidarietà, sicurezza, non possano considerarsi come acquisite per sempre, ma vanno perseguite, volute e, una volta conquistate, protette" (MIUR, 2010b, p. 27).

[208] "La competenza in materia di cittadinanza si riferisce alla capacità di agire da cittadini responsabili e di partecipare pienamente alla vita civica e sociale, in base alla comprensione delle strutture e dei concetti sociali, economici, giuridici e politici oltre che dell'evoluzione a livello globale e della sostenibilità" (MIUR, 2018, p. 11).

[209] "Capacità di impegnarsi efficacemente con gli altri per un interesse comune o Pubblico" (MIUR, 2018, p. 14).

[210] "Identità e senso di appartenenza ad una comunità professionale, che riflettono una visione etica della realtà, un modo di agire per scopi positivi in relazione ad esigenze non solo personali ma comuni" (MIUR, 2010b, p. 7).

Similarly, the discussions on the network seem to imply a role of cohesion:

"The school cannot act alone, but needs to refer to a network of relationships with the local area involving local authorities, businesses, associations, volunteers, social and professional organisations"[211] (MIUR, 2010b, p. 15);

"There is an increasing need for interaction and dialogue, in non-episodic forms, between businesses, which must become "knowledge factories" in order to survive and develop, and schools, traditional "knowledge and citizenship factories"[212] (MIUR, 2010b, p. 15);

"Thanks to their ability to "systemise," in fact, the networks promote inclusion, reduce failures and early exits from school and training paths, facilitate possible transitions between educational paths, and increase the number of graduates and educational levels among adults"[213] (MIUR, 2010c, p. 13).

The notion of inclusive education makes a reference to cohesion and equality:

"Envision a universally literate world capable of providing quality, equitable, and inclusive education and learning opportunities for all"[214] (MIUR, 2018, p. 5).

16.4 Tertiary Education

In Italy, there are several types of tertiary education programs in the arts. These are offered both by universities (such as the three-year Bachelor's degree in DAMS – Drama, Art and Music Studies) and by the AFAM system (Higher Education in Art, Music and Dance), as well as by other institutions through post-secondary courses.The AFAM system is a parallel pathway to university-level education. It is officially recognized by the Ministry of Education, University and Research [MIUR] and holds the same academic value. This system includes institutions such as Academies of Fine Arts, Conservatories of Music, ISIA (Higher Institutes for Artistic Industries), and other specialized schools in the fields of art and performing arts. The ISIA are public institutions that provide high-level training in design and visual communication.

In the Italian system of tertiary education in the artistic and performing arts fields, there are no official or nationally standardized curricula. However, several sets of guidelines developed by

[211] "La scuola non può agire da sola, ma ha bisogno di fare riferimento ad una rete di relazioni con il territorio che coinvolge gli enti locali, le imprese, l'associazionismo, il volontariato, le organizzazioni sociali e professionali" (MIUR, 2010b, p. 15).

[212] "In questo contesto sono sempre più necessari l'interazione e il dialogo, in forme non episodiche, tra le imprese, che per sopravvivere e svilupparsi devono divenire 'fabbriche di conoscenza', e le scuole, tradizionali 'fabbriche della conoscenza e della cittadinanza'" (MIUR, 2010b, p. 15).

[213] "Grazie alla loro capacità di "fare sistema", infatti, le reti favoriscono l'inclusione, riducono gli insuccessi e le uscite precoci dai percorsi scolastici e formativi, facilitano eventuali passaggi tra i percorsi educativi, accrescono il numero dei diplomati e i livelli di istruzione tra gli adulti" (MIUR, 2010c, p. 13).

[214] "Immaginare un mondo universalmente alfabetizzato in grado di fornire un'educazione di qualità, equa ed inclusiva, e opportunità di apprendimento per tutti" (MIUR, 2018, p. 5).

national bodies serve to inform the design of educational programs and promote their coherence and quality. Among these, the *Guidelines of the National University Council*[215] (Consiglio Universitario Nazionale – CUN) provide useful recommendations for the definition and updating of university study programs. In parallel, the National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes (Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del Sistema Universitario e della Ricerca – ANVUR) has established specific criteria for the accreditation of first- and second-level AFAM programs, with the aim of ensuring the quality of educational offerings[216]. Another key reference is provided by the guidelines issued by the National Council for Higher Artistic and Musical Education[217] (Consiglio Nazionale per l'Alta Formazione Artistica e Musicale – CNAM), a body established under Law 508/1999. The CNAM contributes to the planning, direction, and coordination of the AFAM system, and offers guidance for the development of the academic frameworks of artistic, musical, and dance institutions.

Within this framework, each university or AFAM institution—while adhering to the general regulatory references defined at the ministerial level—retains broad autonomy in structuring its programs, selecting educational content and subjects, and adopting specific pedagogical approaches. This autonomy also allows institutions to integrate, even in the absence of explicit guidance in ministerial documents, principles related to inclusion, social cohesion, and cultural citizenship. These themes are not central in national guidelines, which primarily focus on technical and structural aspects. However, inclusion-oriented practices are emerging at the local level, contributing to a diverse educational landscape that may serve as a valuable resource for the development of innovative approaches.

For this reason, it is not possible to identify a single model applicable to all institutions; instead, only selected and meaningful examples drawn from various programs offered by universities and academies can be considered. As a result, the landscape of arts education in Italy appears highly diverse and fragmented. According to the authors, such heterogeneity represents not only an organizational complexity but also a potential resource for the development of educational experiments aimed at inclusion and cultural citizenship.

A similar situation can be observed in the initial training of teachers of artistic subjects in Italian schools. Official documents concerning access to teaching positions focus primarily on technical and disciplinary requirements, with no explicit references to inclusion, social cohesion, or cultural literacy. Although the National Curriculum Guidelines acknowledge the educational

[215] Consiglio Universitario Nazionale. (2024). Guida alla scrittura degli ordinamenti didattici 2025/2026. https://www.cun.it/uploads/6103/Guida%202024-2025.pdf?v=

[216] Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del Sistema Universitario e della Ricerca. (2025). Linee guida per l'accreditamento di nuovi corsi di diploma accademico di I livello AFAM (ampliamento dell'offerta formativa).https://www.anvur.it/sites/default/files/2025-02/01_Linee-Guida-AFAM_I-livello-Ampliamento-2025DEF_0.pdf.
Linee guida per l'accreditamento di nuovi corsi di diploma accademico di II livello AFAM (ampliamento dell'offerta formativa). https://www.anvur.it/sites/default/files/2025-02/02_Linee-Guida-AFAM_II-livello-Ampliamento-2025DEF.pdf
Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del Sistema Universitario e della Ricerca. (2025). Linee guida per l'accreditamento di nuovi corsi di master AFAM (ampliamento dell'offerta formativa). https://www.anvur.it/sites/default/files/2025-02/03_Linee-guida-Master-AFAM-2025DEF.pdf

[217] Consiglio Nazionale per l'Alta Formazione Artistica e Musicale. (2024). Guida alla scrittura degli ordinamenti didattici 2025.
https://www.cnam.it/wp-content/uploads/Cnam_guida_ordinamenti_2025.pdf

relevance of these themes, they are not systematically addressed in the preparation of future teachers. Any initiatives in this direction depend on individual universities or AFAM institutions and, to date, remain fragmented and lack coordination at the national level.

For this reason, the authors highlight a misalignment between the educational goals set out in the national curricula—particularly those concerning citizenship, diversity, and cultural participation—and the current preparation provided to future teachers of artistic subjects. In the absence of binding guidelines on themes such as cultural literacy, inclusion, and social cohesion, it is up to individual universities or AFAM institutions to decide whether and how to integrate them into their training programs. However, such initiatives remain, at present, sporadic and fragmented, and do not yet constitute a shared or systematized national orientation.

16.5 All Grades

As part of the curriculum analysis, the Italian research team considered it appropriate to include a selection of institutional documents which, although not formally structured as curricula, share the same regulatory and guiding purposes. This category includes, on the one hand, key texts for intercultural education—such as *The Italian Approach to Intercultural Education and the Integration of Foreign Students* (MIUR, 2007) and the *Intercultural Guidelines* (MIUR, 2022)—and, on the other hand, documents issued by the Ministry of Education, University and Research concerning the performing arts, such as the *Strategic Guidelines for the Educational Use of Theatre Activities* (MIUR, 2016) and *Making Music Together: Guidelines for a Multi-Year Plan to Promote Music Practice in Schools of All Levels* (National Committee for Practical Music Learning, 2009).

Although these documents do not formally take the structure of a curriculum, they display characteristics that, in our view, make them comparable in terms of their regulatory and guiding functions. They are issued by competent institutional authorities, are valid nationwide, and are addressed to all schools within the national education system. Moreover, they provide pedagogical guidelines, educational objectives, and frameworks that significantly contribute to shaping the educational identity of Italian schools, complementing and enriching the official curricula.

16.5.1 Intercultural Education

Italy's history is characterised by being a country of emigration until the years of the economic boom. It was only in the 1970s that it became a country of immigration. In Italy, Intercultural Education was born as an educational response, especially in the school system, to create inclusion and as a point of reference for curricula (Portera, 2022; Santerini, 2017)[218].

Intercultural education is an educational approach aimed at promoting interaction, confrontation, and dialogue among people from different cultures, facilitating coexistence in increasingly multicultural societies (Portera, 2020)[219]. It should be specified that intercultural education is

[218] Portera, A. (2022). Educazione e pedagogia interculturale. Il Mulino. Santerini, M. (2017). Da stranieri a cittadini. Educazione interculturale e mondo globale. Mondadori.
[219] Portera, A. (2020). Manuale di pedagogia interculturale. La terza.

not a particular form of education reserved for foreign students; instead, it is aimed at everyone, ensuring that no one feels foreign or excluded. It is based on the idea that each person, regardless of their origins, represents a unique and irreplaceable asset (Fiorucci et al., 2017)[220]. The main objective of intercultural education is not only to educate about diversity but also to create contexts in which differences are valued as resources for mutual enrichment and personal and collective development.

Intercultural education in Italian schools addresses multiculturalism's challenges and promotes an inclusive learning environment that respects cultural diversity. On intercultural education, ministries have created documents and guidelines primarily dedicated to schools. The primary reference documents are:

- *Documento di indirizzo - La via italiana per la scuola interculturale e l'integrazione degli alunni stranieri* (MIUR, 2007)[221]: This document outlines the Italian approach to intercultural schooling and the integration of foreign students, highlighting strategies and practices that schools can implement.
- *Linee Guida per l'integrazione degli alunni stranieri* (MIUR, 2014)[222]: This document provides guidelines for the integration of foreign students in Italian schools, emphasising inclusive practices and effective support systems to address the challenges faced by these students.
- *Orientamenti interculturali. Idee e proposte per l'integrazione di alunni e alunne provenienti da contesti migratori* (MI, 2022)[223]: This document was published as part of a national project aimed at promoting the inclusion of children from migrant backgrounds. It discusses ideas and proposals for integrating students from diverse cultural contexts.

These documents have evolved and are continuously updated on the evolving characteristics of the plurality of society. From a historical point of view, they certainly reflect the evolution of approaches, with a progressive shift from an integration approach to an inclusive approach, and they fully recognise the current plurality of the country's composition.

The language used follows the same evolution. In the early documents (especially the one from 2007), there is frequent reference to "immigrant pupils" or "kids who come from worlds geographically and culturally distant from Italy"[224] (MIUR, 2007, p. 3). Students must be placed "within normal classes" (MIUR, 2007, p. 8) as if to suggest a sense of non-normality. The gaze is always on the lack of knowledge, the possibility of integration, and social support networks (both foreign students and their families), which are represented as "a collective problem":

> Identifying a model means focusing on a set of principles, decisions, and actions related to the integration of minors of immigrant origin into the school and Italian society,

[220] Fiorucci, M., Pinto Minerva, F., & Portera, A. (2017). *Gli alfabeti dell'intercultura*. Edizioni ETS.
[221] Ministry of Education [MIUR]. (2007). *Guideline Document – The Italian way for intercultural schools and the integration of foreign students*.
[222] Ministry of Education [MIUR]. (2014). Guidelines for the reception and integration of foreign students.
[223] Ministry of Education [MI]. (2022). *Intercultural orientations: Ideas and proposals for the integration of students from migrant backgrounds.*
[224] "ragazzi che provengono da mondi geograficamente e culturalmente lontani dall'Italia" (MIUR, 2007, p. 3).

> attributable to a plurality of actors, in the generalised recognition of the collective relevance of the problem and the public institutional responsibility.[225] (MIUR, 2007, p. 5)

In the most recent documents (*Orientamenti interculturali*), the language is more inclusive and democratic. The term "students[226] coming from migratory backgrounds" is preferred over "foreign students". The focus is on "target groups"[227] categorised into different types: newly arrived students, children aged 0 to 6, new generations of Italians and citizens, unaccompanied foreign minors, young adults, and families (see index). It is as if the document only addresses these cases rather than all individuals present in schools in various roles (*all* students, *all* families, teaching staff, administrators, support staff, etc.) (MIUR, 2002). However, the reference to "immigrant families" is still used, placing the focus on the lack of knowledge and capabilities:

"We recall some critical issues that already disadvantage minors and families without Italian citizenship"[228] (MI, 2022, p. 10);

"More generally, special attention is needed from the school regarding the educational guidance of students coming from migratory backgrounds, given the more significant difficulties in obtaining information and making independent assessments by some immigrant families"[229] (MI, 2022, p. 12).

In summary, students with a migratory background and their families are still predominantly portrayed — according to the analysed documents — as individuals with specific difficulties, often facing challenges within the school system and needing support and integration. They still need to emerge as active participants within schools and the community.

These documents promote intercultural education in schools, understood and applied through diverse perspectives. A first interpretation of intercultural education involves a significant shift away from viewing students with a migrant background as a person with problematic aspects or needing compensatory measures:

"Adopting the intercultural perspective, the promotion of dialogue and confrontation between cultures means not to restrict oneself to only organising integration strategies for immigrant pupils or special compensatory measures"[230] (MIUR, 2007, p. 3).

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[225] "Individuare un modello significa mettere a fuoco un insieme di principi, decisioni ed azioni relative all'inserimento nella scuola e nella società italiana dei minori di origine immigrata, attribuibili ad una pluralità di attori, nel riconoscimento generalizzato della rilevanza collettiva del problema e della responsabilità istituzionale pubblica" (MIUR, 2007, p. 5).

[226] In the original document it is declined in the two genders: "studenti e studentesse".

[227] In Italian it is closer to "intended recipients of the actions". This particular construct implies being passive recipients of something done by others.

[228] "Ricordiamo alcune criticità che già penalizzano i minori e le famiglie di cittadinanza non italiana". (MI, 2022, p. 10)

[229] "Più in generale, ci vuole un'attenzione speciale, da parte della scuola, verso l'orientamento scolastico degli studenti provenienti da contesti migratori, considerate le maggiori difficoltà di informazione e di valutazione autonoma di parte delle famiglie immigrate" (MI, 2022, p. 12).

[230] "Adottare la prospettiva interculturale, la promozione del dialogo e del confronto tra culture, significa non limitarsi soltanto ad organizzare strategie di integrazione degli alunni immigrati o misure compensatorie di carattere speciale" (MIUR, 2007, p. 3).

Nevertheless, in the latest guidelines the person with a migratory background (whether born or not in Italy) is recognised as a full citizen:

"Everyone must have equal opportunities in terms of access, educational success and orientation"[231] (MIUR, 2007, p. 7).

"It is necessary to take a different view, no longer viewing people from migratory backgrounds as bearers of needs, but as bearers of rights and duties"[232] (MI, 2022, p. 35).

Another perspective on intercultural education emphasizes the responsibility of society and educational institutions, while recognizing diversity as a positive expression of plurality and value:

"They require educational institutions to generate meanings and tools that are capable of interweaving personal uniqueness, societal belonging and responsibility, and the human condition for the construction of forms of social integration that respect people and diversity"[233] (MIUR, 2007, p. 5-6).

"School choices to welcome various forms of diversity (gender differences, differently abled, heterogeneity of social background)"[234] (MIUR, 2007, p. 8).

"Taking diversity as a paradigm of the very identity of the school in pluralism, as an opportunity to open up the entire system to all differences (of origin, gender, social level, school history)"[235] (MIUR, 2007, p. 9).

A further interpretation emphasizes the importance of regulations and measures in fostering integration and inclusion, as well as in preventing discriminatory practices at the local level:

> Principles of freedom are laid down in the Constitution, and enrolment in the school is accepted for all students whose parents request it. This principle is valid for all pupils and is particularly significant in the case of children with immigrant origin, as it pays attention to diversity central and reduces the risks of homologation and assimilation."[236] (MIUR, 2007, p. 8)

[231] "Tutti devono poter contare su pari opportunità in materia di accesso, di riuscita scolastica e di orientamento" (MIUR, 2007, p. 7).
[232] "è necessario assumere uno sguardo diverso, interpretando i soggetti provenienti da contesti migratori non più come portatori di bisogni, ma come portatori di diritti e di doveri" (MI, 2022, p. 35).
[233] "Richiedono che le istituzioni educative generino per tutti significati e strumenti capaci di intrecciare unicità personale, appartenenza e responsabilità societaria, condizione umana per la costruzione di forme di integrazione sociale rispettose delle persone e delle diversità" (MIUR, 2007, p. 5-6).
[234] "La scuola sceglie di accogliere varie forme di diversità (differenze di genere, diversamente abili, eterogeneità di provenienza sociale)" (MIUR, 2007, p. 8).
[235] "Si tratta, invece, di assumere la diversità come paradigma dell'identità stessa della scuola nel pluralismo, come occasione per aprire l'intero sistema a tutte le differenze (di provenienza, genere, livello sociale, storia scolastica)" (MIUR, 2007, p. 9).
[236] "Principi di libertà stabiliti dalla Costituzione e accettare l'iscrizione alla scuola per tutti gli studenti i cui genitori ne facciano richiesta. Si tratta di un principio valido per tutti gli alunni, particolarmente significativo nel caso dei minori di origine immigrata, in quanto rende centrale l'attenzione alla diversità e riduce i rischi di omologazione e assimilazione" (MIUR, 2007, p. 8).

> To adopt common and shared measures, attentions, and protocols for reception and integration in all schools, in the grade corresponding to the age of birth, to avoid discretion and disparities from school to school, from city to city, in a sort of unjustifiable 'localisation of rights'.[237] (MI, 2022, p. 17)

The documents on intercultural education highlight the role of dialogue between and among people and the constituent aspects of the school system:

"The Italian school chooses to adopt the intercultural perspective - i.e., the promotion of dialogue and confrontation between cultures - for all pupils and at all levels: teaching, curricula, disciplines, relationships, classroom life"[238] (MIUR, 2007, p. 8).

"Intercultural strategies avoid separating individuals into autonomous and impermeable cultural worlds, instead promoting confrontation, dialogue and even mutual transformation, to make coexistence possible and address the resulting conflicts"[239] (MIUR, 2007, p. 9).

These documents present intercultural education as a process oriented toward the construction of shared horizons, also aimed at promoting social cohesion:

"The Italian way to interculture combines the ability to know and appreciate differences with the search for social cohesion, in a new vision of citizenship suited to today's pluralism, in which special attention is given to building convergence towards common values"[240] (MIUR, 2007, p. 9).

The same documents acknowledge the multilingual nature of Italian classrooms. Although the Italian language is frequently prioritized as central to integration, a more inclusive view of multilingualism as a value and opportunity for all has gradually emerged:

"The acquisition and learning of the Italian language are an essential component of the integration process"[241] (MIUR, 2007, p. 12).

> The increasingly widespread multilingualism in schools represents an opportunity for all pupils as well as for foreign pupils. In all cases, even in primary schools, teachers

[237] "La necessità di adottare misure, attenzioni e protocolli comuni e condivisi di accoglienza e di inserimento in tutte le scuole, nel grado corrispondente all'età anagrafica, al fine di evitare discrezionalità e disparità da scuola a scuola, da città a città, in una sorta di ingiustificabile 'localizzazione dei diritti'" (MI, 2022, p. 17).

[238] "La scuola italiana sceglie di adottare la prospettiva interculturale – ovvero la promozione del dialogo e del confronto tra le culture – per tutti gli alunni e a tutti i livelli: insegnamento, curricoli, didattica, discipline, relazioni, vita della classe" (MIUR, 2007, p. 8).

[239] "Le strategie interculturali evitano di separare gli individui in mondi culturali autonomi ed impermeabili, promuovendo invece il confronto, il dialogo ed anche la reciproca trasformazione, per rendere possibile la convivenza ed affrontare i conflitti che ne derivano" (MIUR, 2007, p. 9).

[240] "La via italiana all'intercultura unisce alla capacità di conoscere ed apprezzare le differenze la ricerca della coesione sociale, in una nuova visione di cittadinanza adatta al pluralismo attuale, in cui si dia particolare attenzione a costruire la convergenza verso valori comuni" (MIUR, 2007, p. 9).

[241] "L'acquisizione e l'apprendimento dell'italiano rappresenta una componente essenziale del processo di integrazione" (MIUR, 2007, p. 12).

> can enhance multilingualism by giving visibility to other languages and different alphabets, discovering 'language loans' between languages, etc. Maintaining the language of origin is a human right.[242] (MIUR, 2007, p. 13)

Among the same documents on intercultural education, culture is interpreted as a dynamic and plural construct, shaped not exclusively by citizenship, but by each individual's biographical history and their interaction with broader life systems.

> A personalist conception of culture, on the other hand, values people in their singularity and in the unrepeatable way in which they experience aspects of identity, belonging, and migration. The intercultural relationship operates on recognising the pupil with their history and identity, avoiding any rigid fixation on cultural belonging and labelling. Training in the intercultural sense means recognising the other in his diversity, without silencing it, but neither by creating 'ethnic/ethnocultural cages', expressing confirmation and activating channels of communication without reductionism.[243] (MIUR, 2007, p. 15)

"Avoiding the objectification of cultures, essentialism, their contextualisation, the risk of folklore and exoticism"[244] (MIUR, 2007, p. 17).

Another perspective views intercultural education as a tool for encouraging both teachers and students to reflect on issues related to diversity, and to identify strategies for dealing racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, and anti-Gypsyism:

"Interculturality as a change in relationships concerns most of all the teacher: the 'mirror effect' induces the teacher to confront and criticise himself, revealing rigidities and stereotypes in his way of thinking, opening up new possibilities for understanding."[245] (MIUR, 2007, p. 15)

"The school world needs to reflect, and to do so with students as well, on the words that are used outside and inside school about immigration, and to monitor the meanings that are more or less consciously conveyed"[246] (MI, 2022, p. 15).

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[242] "La situazione di plurilinguismo che si sta sempre più diffondendo nelle scuole rappresenta un'opportunità per tutti gli alunni oltre che per gli alunni stranieri. In tutti i casi, anche nelle scuole primarie, gli insegnanti possono valorizzare il plurilinguismo dando visibilità alle altre lingue e ai vari alfabeti, scoprendo i "prestiti linguistici" tra le lingue ecc. Il mantenimento della lingua d'origine è un diritto dell'uomo" (MIUR, 2007, p. 13).

[243] "Una concezione personalista della cultura, invece, valorizza le persone nella loro singolarità e nel modo irripetibile con cui vivono gli aspetti identitari, l'appartenenza, il percorso migratorio. La relazione interculturale opera il riconoscimento dell'alunno con la sua storia e la sua identità, evitando, tuttavia, ogni fissazione rigida di appartenenza culturale e ogni etichettamento. Formare in senso interculturale significa riconoscere l'altro nella sua diversità, senza tacerla, ma neanche creando "gabbie etnico/etno culturali", esprimendo conferma e attivando canali di comunicazione senza riduzionismi" (MIUR, 2007, p. 15).

[244] "Evitando l'oggettivizzazione delle culture, l'essenzialismo, la loro decontestualizzazione, il rischio di folklorizzazione e di esotismo" (MIUR, 2007, p. 17).

[245] "L'interculturalità come cambiamento nelle relazioni, infine, riguarda soprattutto l'insegnante: l'"effetto specchio" induce il docente a confrontarsi e a criticarsi, svelando rigidità e stereotipi del proprio modo di pensare, aprendo nuove possibilità di comprensione" (MIUR, 2007, p. 15).

[246] "É in ogni modo importante che il mondo della scuola rifletta, e lo faccia anche con gli studenti, sulle parole che vengono utilizzate fuori e dentro la scuola a proposito di immigrazione, e sorvegli i significati che ne vengono più o meno consapevolmente veicolati" (MI, 2022, p. 15).

"to give visibility and response to cultural and learning needs, not limited to first level demands (reception, integration)"[247] (MI, 2022, p. 22).

"Intercultural education, one of whose tasks is to develop strategies against racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, anti-Gypsyism, within a global framework of encounters between people from different cultures."[248] (MIUR, 2007, p. 16)

Differences—both in terms of intercultural disciplines and classroom heterogeneity—can serve as points of reflection on the self, the world, and the ways we think:

"History, geography, literature, mathematics, science, art, music, new communication languages and other fields of knowledge provide an inescapable opportunity for diversity training, allowing one to approach not only different 'contents', but also different structures and ways of thinking"[249] (MIUR, 2007, p. 18).

"Awareness of their status as minorities settled in a context different from that of their society of origin. With it, come demands for the definition, reworking and transmission of their cultural heritage and family upbringing patterns"[250] (MI, 2022, p. 23).

16.5.2 Performing Arts

Theatre

In 2016, the Ministry of Education, University and Research developed the national theatre plan for schools. It is the first national plan in Italy on theatre:

> The theatrical activity abandons the character of an additional extracurricular offer once and for all and is elevated to a complementary didactic choice, aimed at a more effective pursuit of institutional goals and curricular objectives. It is these that will be privileged and taken as parameters for assessing the appropriateness of the experience of artistic performances concerning educational pathways.[251] (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 1)

Theatre in schools pursues two aims:

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[247] "dare visibilità e risposta ai bisogni culturali e di apprendimento, non limitandosi alle domande di primo livello (accoglienza, inserimento)" (MI, 2022, p. 22).

[248] "Si parlerà, quindi, di educazione interculturale che affronta tra i suoi compiti l'elaborazione di strategie contro il razzismo, antisemitismo, islamofobia, antiziganismo, all'interno di un quadro globale di incontro tra persone di culture diverse" (MIUR, 2007, p. 16).

[249] "Storia, geografia, letteratura, matematica, scienze, arte, musica, nuovi linguaggi comunicativi e altri campi del sapere costituiscono un'occasione ineludibile di formazione alla diversità, permettendo di accostarsi non solo a diversi "contenuti", ma anche a strutture e modi di pensare differenti" (MIUR, 2007, p. 18).

[250] "Presa di coscienza del proprio status di minoranze insediate in un contesto diverso da quello della società di origine. Con essa, sorgono esigenze di definizione, rielaborazione e trasmissione del proprio patrimonio culturale, nonché dei modelli di educazione familiare" (MI, 2022, p. 23).

[251] "L'attività teatrale abbandona definitivamente il carattere di offerta extracurricolare aggiuntiva e si eleva a scelta didattica complementare, finalizzata a un più efficace perseguimento sia dei fini istituzionali sia degli obiettivi curricolari. Saranno questi che andranno privilegiati e assunti come parametri per valutare l'adeguatezza delle esperienze degli spettacoli artistici rispetto ai percorsi di istruzione" (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 1).

"to educate students to be both users and producers (authors, actors, directors, etc.) of performances"[252] (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 1).

Theatre is interpreted as a learning context that offers space for interaction, dialogue, and socialisation, as well as opportunities to explore and engage with artistic languages:

> The design and realisation of plays offers children the opportunity to understand plays from the inside, to manipulate language and to experiment with different forms of interpretation in historical contexts and realities of the past or present, and also to push their imaginations to interpret stories of the future.[253] (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 2)
>
> As producers and/or members of the technical or artistic troupe, students enter into a synergetic relationship with each other, driven by a common shared project that blurs diversity by creating spaces for socialisation and giving rise to a reservoir of ideas, projects, and resources that everyone can draw on and enrich with various contributions.[254] (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 2)

"Art experiences, where possible, should be socialised, as it is important to give visibility to young people through their artistic products"[255] (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 2).

"The student, therefore, must be educated to be an attentive spectator of performances. These skills must be trained at school by learning and using the different languages that the various types of performances use"[256] (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 2).

In the school context, theatre is understood as a multifaceted educational practice that includes the creative adaptation of spaces—even in minimally equipped environments—the active and participatory involvement of students in all phases of the process, and the systematic documentation of the activity as an integral part of the educational experience:

> The theatre activity can also occur in the classroom or adapted spaces. It is important to be able to stimulate the imagination in order to reveal what is not there, to pretend in order to be someone else, to evoke an atmosphere, to enter into character, to empty what appears of meaning, to bring out what means, to transform a real space into a

[252] "educare gli studenti a essere sia fruitori e sia produttori (autori, attori, registi ecc.) di spettacoli" (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 1).
[253] "La progettazione e la realizzazione di spettacoli teatrali offre ai ragazzi l'opportunità di comprendere gli spettacoli dal di dentro, di manipolare il linguaggio e di sperimentare diverse forme di interpretazione in contesti e in realtà storiche del passato o del presente e anche spingere la fantasia a interpretare storie del future" (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 2).
[254] "Nella veste di produttori e/o di membri della troupe tecnica o artistica, i ragazzi entrano tra loro in un rapporto sinergico, spinti da un comune progetto condiviso che fa sfumare le diversità creando spazi di socializzazione e dando vita a un serbatoio di idee, progetti e risorse al quale tutti possono attingere e che tutti possono implementare arricchendolo con vari contribuiti" (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 2).
[255] "Le esperienze artistiche, ove possibile, vanno socializzate, essendo importante dare visibilità ai ragazzi attraverso i loro prodotti artistici" (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 2).
[256] "Lo studente, pertanto, va educato ad essere attento fruitore di spettacoli. Tali capacità vanno allenate a scuola attraverso l'apprendimento e l'uso dei diversi linguaggi di cui le varie tipologie di spettacoli si servono" (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 2).

> lived space that deceives the eye and transports minds beyond appearance.[257] (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 2)
>
> The workshop space must be created mainly by the activity of the children who, feeling it their own, will be stimulated to artistic engagement. The workshop can be shared remotely with other institutions, sharing a single project. Each group will be responsible for a part of the whole, which may be the text's choice, the script's drafting, the scenic design, the selection of actors, and all the actions that the theatre production requires.[258] (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 3)

"The enjoyment and production of artistic performances, since they must have an impact on educational processes, must be documented, just as all other curricular activities are documented"[259] (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 4).

Music

In 2009, the Ministry developed Guidelines for a multiannual plan of activities concerning disseminating musical practice in schools of all levels. Music education is the most widespread discipline among the performing arts in Italian schools, and this document has allowed Italian schools structure to define the practice in all educational grades better. It defined the right to creativity for all students:

> Everyone has the right to develop and grow with this creativity. The school has to support and educate it and respond to this right, which needs to be in a way consistent with its educational goals. The musical experience must, therefore, become cultural and shared by all because it promotes the integration of different components, the logical, the perceptive-motor and the affective-social.[260] (National Committee for Music Education [CNM], 2009, p. 3)

[257] "L'attività teatrale può essere svolta anche nell'aula stessa o in spazi adattati. Importante è riuscire a stimolare l'immaginazione per far apparire ciò che non c'è, fingere per sembrare un altro, per evocare un'atmosfera, per entrare nel personaggio, per svuotare di significato ciò che appare, per far emergere ciò che significa, per trasformare uno spazio reale in uno spazio vissuto che inganni l'occhio e trasporti le menti al di là dell'apparenza" (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 2).

[258] "Lo spazio laboratoriale deve essere prevalentemente creato dall'attività stessa dei ragazzi i quali, sentendolo proprio, saranno incentivati all'impegno artistico. Il laboratorio può essere condiviso a distanza con altri istituti condividendo un unico progetto. Ogni gruppo avrà la responsabilità di una parte del tutto, che può essere la scelta del testo, la stesura del copione, il progetto scenografico, la selezione degli attori e tutte le azioni che la produzione teatrale richiede» (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 3).

[259] "La fruizione e la produzione degli spettacoli artistici, dovendo avere una ricaduta sui processi educativi, dovrà essere documentata, così come sono documentate tutte le altre attività curricolari" (MIUR, 2016, paragraph 4).

[260] "Tutti hanno il diritto di sviluppare questa propria creatività e di crescere insieme a essa. La scuola deve sostenerla ed educarla, deve rispondere a questo diritto e a questo bisogno che è coerente con i suoi traguardi formativi. L'esperienza musicale deve pertanto diventare un patrimonio culturale e umano condiviso da tutti, perché promuove l'integrazione di diverse componenti, quella logica, quella percettivo-motoria e quella affettivo-sociale" (National Committee for Music Education [CNM], 2009, p. 3).

"Musical practice, in its processes of exploration, understanding, and learning, must belong to all schooling"[261] (CNM, 2009, p. 3).

The document recognises the capacity of the discipline to develop emotional and cognitive skills:

"Ability to actively and critically read reality, to offer them a further possibility of knowledge and self-expression, both rational and emotional, to put them in an effective and conscious relationship with other subjects"[262] (CNM, 2009, p. 5);

> It allows direct access to the universe of symbols, meanings, and categories that underlie the musical language and that instrumental and choral repertoires bring with them; it lays the foundations for the development of critical-aesthetic and musicological evaluation skills on facts, works, events, repertoires both historical and contemporary, favouring conscious listening.[263] (CNM, 2009, p. 5)

16.6 Conclusions and Reflections

16.6.1 Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis conducted, considering documents on school curricula by grade and general, it is possible to draw some considerations and reflections on performing arts, cultural literacy, and their connection.

As a starting point, the data show that in Italian school regulations, **the performing arts** — including music, theatre, and dance — **are only marginally represented**, with a predominant focus on music and on the history of visual arts (such as painting, sculpture, and architecture) from preschool to secondary school. Performing arts are generally underrepresented as disciplines in the curricula, except for specific upper secondary programs dedicated to the arts, particularly in the VET sector, such as schools focusing on music curricula or dance-related programs, often linked to prestigious Italian institutions.

In addition, within the performing arts, **music plays a predominant role** and is considered a central discipline in the primary school curriculum (developing knowledge and skills related to music). According to the documents analysed, it often serves as a tool to integrate the other performing arts and is also regarded as an expressive channel for understanding oneself and the surrounding world. Additionally, it is used as a means to develop cultural literacy and intercultural education.

[261] "La pratica musicale, nei suoi processi di esplorazione, comprensione e apprendimento, deve invece appartenere a tutti i percorsi scolastici" (CNM, 2009, p. 3).

[262] "fornire agli alunni una sempre maggiore capacità di lettura attiva e critica del reale, di offrire loro una ulteriore possibilità di conoscenza ed espressione di sé, razionale ed emotiva, di metterli in relazione fattiva e consapevole con altri soggetti" (CNM, 2009, p. 5).

[263] "consente di accedere direttamente all'universo di simboli, significati e categorie che fondano il linguaggio musicale e che i repertori strumentali e corali portano con sé; pone le basi per lo sviluppo di capacità di valutazione critico-estetiche e musicologiche su fatti, opere, eventi, repertori sia storici che contemporanei, favorendo l'ascolto consapevole" (CNM, 2009, p. 5).

Another relevant aspect emerging from the analysis is the view of performing arts not merely as disciplines of study, but primarily **as a means of fostering students' skills**. Indeed, the regulations that refer to all grades of education, music education, and dance are conceived as disciplines that promote students' creativity, emotional expression, and cultural understanding. As for theatre, the National Plan integrates it into schools as a fundamental educational practice, as it promotes creativity, collaboration, and student participation; it also serves as a means of engaging different artistic languages, fostering socialisation and dialogue.

It is also worth noting that theatre and dance, unlike music, are being introduced in first-cycle schools primarily through **extracurricular initiatives** led by external specialists. This aspect, highlighted in the documents, may have several implications, including: lack of continuity over the medium to long term and relative lack of incisiveness; unevenness across the territory (more sensitive or wealthier territories may adhere to more supplementary activities); little control concerning the themes conveyed (extracurricular activity themes follow funding that is often nationally defined without considering the needs of that specific territory).

Moreover, the specific focus on the arts, mainly performing arts, starting from high school means that only at 14 years old can students experience the performing arts in a structured way within their educational paths. The documents suggest that there is a risk of excluding children and young people who cannot engage in artistic activities before high school ("how can I choose a study path based on dance if it has not been part of my schooling until I turn 14?"). It is possible to connect to the concept of **educational poverty**[264], referring to children and young people who, due to the structure of the education system, risk not being able to access quality artistic paths during their early developmental years.

A final point worth highlighting is that the explicit references to the concept of cultural literacy seem to be limited in the reference documents. The analysis indicates that Cultural literacy is predominantly interpreted from the perspective of **intercultural education**. In documents concerning all levels of education, intercultural education promotes dialogue between cultures, acknowledges social responsibilities, and values diversity as a central aspect of the educational experience. It encourages a shift in perspective, moving from viewing diversity as a challenge to seeing it as an opportunity for social cohesion. While some common elements exist, the two concepts are not entirely interchangeable. In the shift from cultural literacy to intercultural education, as with all shifts in meaning, something changes and is lost. The focus on understanding a specific culture through a shared body of knowledge, typical of cultural literacy, seems to diminish. In intercultural education, the dialogical process that underpins cultural literacy (Maine, Cook & Lähdesmäki, 2019) is not emphasised, and dialogue is presented as a tool to foster intercultural competence and a resource for social cohesion.

[264] Educational poverty concerns the lack of learning and development opportunities that can preclude children and youth from accessing quality education and training experiences that foster the full development of their skills and potential. The European Union has recognized educational poverty as a major challenge to be addressed to promote social inclusion and reduce inequality. The United Nations' Agenda 2030, also signed by European countries, has set among the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) goal number 4, which aims to ensure quality, equitable and inclusive education for all. In this context, educational poverty is recognized as one of the factors limiting access to learning and development opportunities for children and youth, especially those from disadvantaged families.

In conclusion, the analysis of the documents shows that the **performing arts are only marginally linked to cultural literacy**, although they represent a space for understanding and interacting with cultural aspects. In this context, they are often presented as valuable tools for intercultural education or citizenship education and for developing social cohesion, understood as participation, civic responsibility, a sense of belonging to the community, and commitment to the common good.

Shifting the focus to the ***gaps*** that emerge from the analysis of the documents, it is possible to identify constants that cut across all levels of education and all documents.

First of all, there is **a gap between the text and its practical implementation**: within school curricula, the performing arts are primarily described as a means to develop social skills, as an expressive channel for understanding oneself and the surrounding world, and as a tool for fostering intercultural education and cultural literacy. However, in structured programs, teachers responsible for artistic disciplines are not specifically trained to work in this regard (for example, a music teacher may have a solid understanding of music history and pedagogy but may not necessarily be competent in intercultural education, group, or cooperative work, or emotion management).

Secondly, in the analysed documents, the intended recipients seem to be solely the schools and, specifically, the teachers working there. Although there is an explicit request for the inclusion and participation of families, children, and young people in school activities, these documents do not include these groups among the intended recipients. This **top-down approach** is also evident in the absence of the perspectives of families, children, and young people, as well as in the language used, which often risks being difficult to understand.

Lastly, the regulations examined claim to concern all individuals within the educational system, but there are **very few references to minorities and/or vulnerable targets**. While there are specific regulations for minorities (such as multilingualism and respect for religions in schools; disabilities, sensory disabilities, specific learning disorders; students with a migration background; students with special educational needs; children outside of family care; adoption; etc.), the risk is that students are ghettoised into cluster groups for which specific regulations are applied, without considering them part of the social fabric of the school. Moreover, general regulations formulated in an apparently neutral manner, without recognising the presence of minorities or vulnerable targets, may represent indirect discrimination.

16.6.2 Findings in Light of the Theoretical Framework

When examined through the theoretical framework outlined in the literature review (D1.1)[265], the curriculum analysis highlights significant elements concerning Cultural Literacy, Intercultural Competence and Education.

In line with the findings from the literature review in D1.1, the analysis confirms that Italy is also among the countries that do not explicitly use the concept of cultural literacy in their documents, instead employing analogous or similar ideas. Specifically, Italy uses intercultural education as a reference point. In the analysed documents, curricula and policy, this concept

[265] In this paragraph, citations refer to the document produced in WP1, D1.1 Literature review.

focuses on (intercultural) dialogue and connecting intercultural competencies. However, it tends to emphasise students' intercultural competence rather than that of teachers and the school system. Moreover, references to intercultural education as an ongoing process (p. 28, D1.1) are almost absent, as are references to moving beyond mere cultural understanding and celebration of diversity to actively engage with socio-political contexts and question complicity in oppressive systems (p. 30, D1.1).

Furthermore, the analysed documents lack explicit references to "decolonising intercultural education", both in terms of including the recognition and appreciation of alternative knowledge systems and perspectives (p. 31, WP 1) and in terms of addressing «awareness of teachers' positions within the hegemonic culture» (p. 33, D1.1).

Lastly, a reflection on the distinction between intercultural and multicultural education is worth noting. While the approach presented in Italian documents is predominantly and explicitly intercultural, it is often translated into multicultural activities, projects, and interventions in schools. Examples of this are the many projects available online, where schools promote intercultural education through events such as "typical food day," "typical music day," "typical dances day," etc. These projects tend to perpetuate a static and stereotypical, sometimes even highly folkloristic, view of culture.

16.6.3 Decolonial Perspective

Looking at the documents from a decolonial perspective, several points for reflection emerge, particularly in relation to the limited and normative representations of the performing arts, the folklorisation of minority cultural expressions, and the persistence of an ethnocentric and deficit-based view of students and families with a migration background.

A first point to consider is that diversity within the performing arts is largely overlooked. This is evidenced by the fact that, for example, music in the first education cycle is often interpreted solely as classical or traditional music without considering different (modern) genres or alternative methods and approaches, leaving them to the individual teacher’s discretion.

Another significant aspect emerging from the analysis concerns how folk dances and music are represented. In the documents specifically addressing them, they are predominantly presented from a folkloristic perspective, which contrasts with the intentions and requirements expressed in the documents related to formal educational pathways. The risk is to give an interpretation that views culture as something that belongs to “the other” and never to oneself, that sees the culture of the majority as neutral (in contrast to those that are specific) and perpetuates a stark distinction between citizens and foreigners (us vs. them).

A final issue worth addressing concerns the strongly ethnocentric perspective reflected in the language used throughout the documents. For example, in documents related to intercultural education, people with a migration background (previously referred to as “foreigners”) are often seen as lacking something, and families are presented as poorly informed, minimally involved (or unapproachable), or isolated. The change in language between the earlier documents (MIUR, 2007) and the more recent ones (MIUR, 2022) is commendable. However, while the change in language is notable, it does not seem to be accompanied by a substantial shift in the underlying perspective, which continues to be shaped by an ethnocentric framework.

16.7 Commentaries

16.7.1 Comment from the German Consortium Member University of Hildesheim

The Italian curriculum provides rich insights into performative arts education within the Italian educational system. Intercultural education has been an integral part of school system to create inclusion and a reference point. The term “experiment” or experimental knowledge as well as interculturality seems to be important as it is mentioned in a variety of documents. Cultural literacy is understood in the Italian context as a competence to deal with diverse cultural backgrounds and identities. This is very relevant and important for the discussion. Dialogue also comes to the forefront of cultural literacy. An interesting example is how Western traditional art music is depicted as part of the curriculum, which might be understood as a form of classism and might not be the best approach to intercultural education.

Dances outside of traditional Italian heritage are depicted as part of ethnochoreology, to what extent these practices challenge the inclusion of minority cultures in the dance curriculum is questionable. The literature and knowledge used in practices and curriculum appear to be highly Eurocentric, and the language employed reveals a strongly ethnocentric perspective. The curriculum cycles and extracurricular activity initiatives (theatre and dance) are similar to those in Germany. The citizenship dimension, which includes migration, dignity, and crimes against humanity, is highlighted. Perhaps the following questions to explore might be: state-level educational programs, if there are significant differences between North and Southern Italy, or autonomous regions like Trentino, in their understandings of interculturalism, cultural literacy, as well as the curricular programs and activities they offer, and whether they are inclusive and representative or not.

16.7.2 Comment from Puntozero and Alchemilla

Puntozero, based in Udine, is a cultural and creative cooperative active since 2013, working at the intersection of *performing arts*, *multimedia arts*, *community engagement*, and *creative consultancy*. With projects such as **Terminal**, **Pubblico Incanto**, **Capovolgere all’Infinito**, and **Teen to Teen**, we have continuously explored how performative and participatory artistic practices can foster belonging, critical thinking, and emotional literacy in youth and communities. Through our collaboration with **Alchemilla**, an education-focused partner (alchemilla-lab.it), we integrate pedagogical insights and facilitate co-creation processes that foreground marginalized voices. Our joint work often operates in schools, informal education settings, and public spaces—spaces where performing arts become not only expressions of creativity but also tools for social transformation and civic engagement.

From this perspective, the findings of the curriculum analysis resonate deeply with our field experience. The marginal presence of performing arts in Italian curricula—particularly in the early education cycles—is not surprising. In our projects, we often enter schools as external actors through extracurricular programming, workshops, and festivals. While this allows some degree of experimentation, it reinforces the gap highlighted in the documents: the precarious and uneven presence of theatre, dance, and even contemporary music forms across the territory. This fragmentation risks excluding those who might benefit most—especially students

from marginalized or migratory backgrounds who may lack access to extracurricular cultural capital.

Our experiences confirm that music, though present in primary schools, is treated narrowly. Often centered around classical or canonical repertoires, music education rarely reflects the contemporary soundscapes familiar to students, nor does it integrate genres or instruments from different cultures. In contrast, many of our projects—such as **Trasduzioni**, and **Yourope Matters**—embrace plural musical heritages and new media languages, offering young people a space to reimagine identity, memory, and belonging through performance.

We strongly identify with the document's reflection on the "folklorisation" of cultural expressions. Too often, cultural diversity is showcased in schools through themed "days" rather than embedded in structural curricula. This superficial approach, while well-intentioned, perpetuates a static and exoticized vision of "the other" rather than cultivating the dialogic cultural literacy described in academic frameworks. In contrast, our community-based work encourages long-term processes of *translation* and *relational aesthetics*, where young people collaboratively explore complex cultural identities—not as consumers of stereotypes but as active creators of meaning.

The commentary on intercultural vs. multicultural education is crucial. While national policies promote an "intercultural" rhetoric, in practice we observe the prevalence of multicultural tokenism. Intercultural competence, in our view, must begin with a critique of power, not just the celebration of diversity. Projects like **DIMMI** and **TIGRI** focus precisely on these intersections—foregrounding the voices of migrant youth, queer identities, or neurodivergent communities—questioning the deficit narratives often imposed by institutional discourse.

We also agree with the analysis that teachers are insufficiently trained to address the intersection of performing arts and cultural literacy. In our collaborations with schools, we often meet highly motivated teachers who feel unequipped to work with participatory art methods or to frame cultural expressions within a decolonial or socially aware pedagogy. Here, the partnership with Alchemilla has been pivotal: we have co-designed teacher training modules that bring educators into contact with contemporary practices of cultural production, digital storytelling, and collective performance-making.

Finally, the observation that students and families are not considered active agents in educational policies is a point we encounter regularly. Our projects explicitly aim to *reverse this hierarchy*. For example, in **Casamia** families, local artists, and youth collaborate as co-authors of collective narratives. This participatory methodology not only challenges the top-down logic of national regulations but also repositions cultural education as a shared, community-driven process.

In conclusion, the findings affirm what we have long observed on the ground: that performing arts remain structurally undervalued in Italian education, and that cultural literacy is interpreted in ways that often limit its transformative potential. Yet, they also point toward a fertile space for intervention. As practitioners at the intersection of education, art, and community, we believe that by embedding participatory and critical artistic practices into schools—not as "extras"

but as essential tools for cognitive, emotional, and civic growth—we can help shape an education system that truly reflects the complexity, diversity, and potential of contemporary society.

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17. Norway

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This section provides an overview of the Norwegian education system, focusing on the role of performing arts (music, dance, drama/theatre) in both formal and non-formal educational settings. It introduces the different levels of formal education—from kindergarten to teacher education—as well as non-formal education institutions like after-school programs (SFO) and cultural schools (*kulturskole*), highlighting how the performing arts are integrated into these areas.

Formal Education

Kindergarten (Barnehage)

In the Norwegian kindergarten (*barnehage*) system, performing arts are introduced informally through play, creative expression, and cultural activities. The *Framework Plan for Kindergartens* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017) emphasizes the importance of creativity, which includes activities related to music, dance, and movement. These activities aim to support children's social, emotional, and cultural development, providing an early foundation for artistic engagement and expression.

Primary School (Grunnskole) (Grades 1–7)

In primary school (*grunnskole*), performing arts become a more integral part of the curriculum. Music is a compulsory subject, and students are encouraged to sing, play instruments, and engage in rhythm and movement. Through these activities, students are supposed to develop basic skills in music, as well as an appreciation for cultural diversity. Drama and dance are also incorporated into classroom activities, often in a cross-curricular manner, fostering creativity and expression. However, dance and drama do not exist as independent subjects within the primary school curriculum; instead, they are included as content areas within other subjects.

Lower Secondary School (Ungdomsskole) (Grades 8–10)

At the lower secondary school (*ungdomsskole*) level, performing arts continue to be included in the curriculum, with music remaining a compulsory subject. The curriculum is designed to further develop students' musical skills, their ability to work collaboratively, and their understanding of different cultural traditions. Drama is often integrated into language and social studies subjects, helping students to explore and express complex ideas while fostering empathy and intercultural competence. Dance is not offered as a separate subject either, but may be included as part of physical education, music education or integrated into other activities.

Upper Secondary School (Videregående skole) (Grades 11–13)

In upper secondary school (*videregående skole* or VGS), performing arts are offered as elective subjects, allowing students to specialize in music, dance, or drama. Students who choose these subjects receive a more in-depth education in performing arts, with a focus on both

practical performance skills and theoretical understanding. These courses provide a pathway for students interested in pursuing further education or careers in the arts.

Teacher Education (Lærerutdanning)

In Norway, teacher education (*lærerutdanning*) is divided into general teacher education and subject-specific teacher education (*faglærerutdanning*, also known as "LUPE – Lærerutdanning i Praktiske og Estetiske fag" for arts education subjects). In general teacher education, students can study arts education subjects for up to 60 credits. This enables future teachers to gain foundational knowledge in practical and aesthetic subjects such as music, drama, and dance, which they can integrate into their broader teaching practice. This pathway provides teachers with the tools to incorporate creative and artistic elements into their classrooms, even if they are not specialists in these fields. Subject-specific teacher education (LUPE), on the other hand, offers more in-depth training in each discipline, preparing specialized teachers in areas such as music, dance, and drama. These programs focus on equipping arts educators with comprehensive teaching skills and subject-specific pedagogy in the performing arts. Both general and subject-specific teacher education programs are structured as five-year Master's programs, providing extensive preparation for teaching practice.

Non-formal Education

After-school Care (Skolefritidsordning, SFO)

The after-school care program ("SFO") provides a non-formal educational environment for children in grades 1–4, where participation is optional and performing arts activities are among the possible choices. Music, dance, and drama are often used as tools for social interaction and play, allowing children to develop their creativity in a relaxed and supportive setting. The focus is on enjoyment and participation, making the performing arts accessible to all children regardless of their abilities.

Schools of Music and Performing Arts (Kulturskole)

Schools of Music and Performing Arts [SMPA] (*Kulturskole*) are an important part of the non-formal education landscape in Norway. These schools are typically owned by local municipalities and are often located within community centres or schools. They offer specialized training in music, dance, and drama (mainly) to children and young people, providing opportunities for deeper artistic engagement outside of the regular school curriculum. SMPA programs are designed to be inclusive and accessible, promoting cultural participation and fostering a lifelong appreciation for the arts. SMPAs are legally established under the Education Act (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2024), and their funding primarily comes from municipal budgets, with additional contributions from parental fees and state grants.

Summary

The Norwegian education system integrates performing arts at various levels, both formally and non-formally. According to the curriculum documents, performing arts (often with a clear emphasis on music) should play a significant role from early childhood through upper secondary education. Non-formal education institutions like the after-school care program and Schools of Music and Performing Arts complement the formal education system by providing

additional opportunities for artistic engagement, ensuring that performing arts remain an accessible and vital part of children and young people's development.

17.1 Formal Education – Early Childhood/Kindergarten

In early childhood education, cultural literacy is cultivated through an emphasis on diverse cultural expressions and values that are foundational to understanding multiple perspectives. The *Framework Plan for Kindergartens* underscores the importance of promoting "democracy, diversity, and mutual respect" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017, p. 7), which sets the groundwork for children to begin appreciating the variety of cultural expressions around them. Cultural literacy in this context is not just about acquiring knowledge but also about fostering an open mindset that values the uniqueness of each individual.

The curriculum aims to ensure that children feel acknowledged and valued for who they are, as highlighted by the statement that "kindergartens shall help ensure that all children feel they are being seen and acknowledged for whom they are and highlight the place and value of each and every one of them within the group" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017, p. 9). This principle reinforces the role of early childhood education in creating an environment where cultural awareness begins with the recognition of the child's own identity, which then extends to an understanding of others.

The Framework Plan also makes explicit reference to Norway's indigenous culture, stating that "Sami kindergarten children shall be supported in preserving and developing their language, their knowledge and their culture irrespective of where in Norway they live" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017, p. 24). By integrating Sami culture into the broader context of early childhood education, the curriculum helps children develop a respect for cultural diversity from an early age, contributing to a broader, culturally literate foundation.

Social inclusion and cohesion are fostered in the Norwegian kindergarten system through educational practices that emphasize equal participation, respect for all individuals, and the promotion of democratic values. The *Framework Plan for Kindergartens* explicitly mentions that "kindergartens shall promote equity and equality irrespective of gender, functional ability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, ethnicity, culture, social status, language, religion, and world view" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017, p. 10). This commitment to equality ensures that every child, regardless of background or ability, has an opportunity to fully participate and feel included.

Furthermore, the emphasis on meeting "every child's need for care, security, belongingness and respect" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017, p. 7) underscores the importance of providing a nurturing and supportive environment. The Framework Plan emphasizes that "all children shall be able to experience democratic participation" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017, p. 8), which not only teaches them about their own rights and responsibilities but also fosters a sense of community and cohesion. These elements are key to creating inclusive educational settings where children learn the value of mutual respect and participation from a young age.

The role of arts education in promoting social inclusion is also highlighted, albeit subtly. The Framework Plan notes that "experiences involving art and culture in kindergarten can encourage a sense of belonging, participation, and the children's own creative processes" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017, p. 50). Through activities involving music, dance, and visual arts, children are provided opportunities to express themselves creatively while also learning to appreciate the contributions of others, which helps build a sense of community and shared identity.

Summary

Role and Importance: Arts education in early childhood settings, as outlined in the Norwegian curriculum, plays a significant but subtly integrated role in promoting cultural literacy and social inclusion. While not always explicitly labelled as "arts education", activities involving play, creativity, and cultural expression are central to the curriculum. These elements are foundational in fostering an understanding of diverse cultures and artistic expressions from an early age. While the explicit mention of "arts education" seems underemphasized, the inherent presence of arts-related activities is profound. Arts are woven throughout the curriculum as mediums for expression, learning, and interaction rather than as standalone subjects.

Contributions to Cultural Literacy: Arts education contributes to cultural literacy in kindergartens by encouraging children to engage with and reflect on a variety of cultural and artistic forms, such as storytelling, music-making, and dance. This exposure helps children develop an appreciation for different cultural expressions and traditions, which is crucial for building a broad, culturally literate foundation. The curriculum supports this through activities that integrate art, music, and cultural heritage into everyday learning experiences.

Role in Social Inclusion and Cohesion: Social inclusion and cohesion are supported through arts education by promoting collaborative activities where children from various backgrounds can come together to create and share. Through these activities, children can learn important social skills, such as cooperation, listening, and empathy, which help build a sense of community and belonging. Kindergartens are tasked with using arts as a medium for inclusion, where children learn to express themselves and appreciate the expressions of others, thereby fostering mutual respect and understanding.

In summary, the early childhood/kindergarten curriculum emphasizes cultural literacy through the integration of diverse cultural knowledge and respect for individuality. Social inclusion is enhanced by promoting democratic values and equality within educational settings. Arts education in Norwegian kindergartens shall play a crucial role in developing cultural literacy and enhancing social inclusion, even if it is not always central or explicitly defined. Its integration into broader educational goals shows a commitment to using arts as a vital tool for early childhood development.

17.2 Formal Education – Primary and Lower Secondary Schools

In the Norwegian primary and lower secondary school curricula, cultural literacy is understood as the ability to appreciate, understand, and interact with various cultural expressions and identities through the arts. The integration of cultural literacy into arts education is emphasized

across subjects such as music, dance and drama, where students are encouraged to engage practically with diverse cultural backgrounds and expressions. This approach aims to foster a broad perspective and empathetic understanding of different cultural contexts.

For example, the *Drama and rhythm curriculum for students with sign language* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020i) curriculum describes drama and rhythmics as a "central subject for creative power, cultural understanding, and identity development, where students learn to express themselves through a variety of forms of expression" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020i)[266]. Similarly, the *Curriculum in music Sami* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020j) curriculum emphasizes that,

> music is a central subject for creativity, cultural understanding, and identity development. Through this subject, students are given a foundation to participate in music throughout their lives. In music, students develop competence in joik, singing, playing, and dancing, in making music, and in forming and understanding a diversity of expressions. (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020j)

This broad engagement in musical practices helps students form an appreciation of different cultural traditions and artistic forms.

Moreover, the *Primary and Lower Secondary School Curriculum for Music* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020k) reinforces the idea that "in the music subject, the pupils develop competence in playing, singing and dancing, in making music and in forming and understanding a diversity of expressions" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020k, p. 2). This curriculum also stresses the broader cultural and societal impact of music by aiming "to help the pupils understand how music stems from cultures, creates culture, and contributes to social change" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020k, p. 2). Through engaging with such concepts, students shall be equipped with a sense of cultural awareness that prepares them "for participation in a social and working life which needs practical and aesthetic skills, creativity, and social interaction" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020k, p. 2).

The focus on cultural understanding extends to how students learn to connect their musical expressions with their cultural origins. As stated in the *Primary and Lower Secondary School Curriculum for Music* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020k), "The core element of cultural understanding refers to how singing and music that are performed, made, and experienced by the pupils are anchored in and are important to the culture they originate in" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020k, p. 2). This curriculum highlights that "playing, singing, and dancing as aesthetic expressions are influenced by, and are expressions of, historical and societal

[266] "Drama og rytmikk er et sentralt fag for skaperkraft, kulturforståelse og identitetsutvikling der elevene lærer å uttrykke seg gjennom et mangfold av uttrykksformer" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020i). It must be mentioned in this context that this curriculum for pupils with sign language affects only very few pupils. The same applies to the Sami curriculum, which presents a very similar view of the subject of music: "'Music is a key subject for creativity, cultural understanding and identity development. The subject gives pupils the basis for participating in music in a lifelong perspective. In the subject of music, pupils develop expertise in joik, singing, playing and dancing, in making music and in shaping and understanding a diversity of expressions." ("Musikk er et sentralt fag for skaperkraft, kulturforståelse og identitetsutvikling. Gjennom faget får elevene grunnlag til å delta i musikk i et livslangt perspektiv. I faget musikk utvikler elevene kompetanse i joik, sang, spill og dans, i å lage musikk og i å forme og forstå et mangfold av uttrykk") (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020j)

circumstances," underscoring that "the meaning of music is created when music is used in social contexts, and music gives meaning to social events and rituals" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020k, p. 2).

The development of multicultural competence is a fundamental aspect of the curricula. By exposing students to a range of cultural traditions and practices, the curricula encourage not only appreciation but also active participation and expression within these cultural frameworks. For example, in music education, students explore various musical traditions, gaining an understanding of how music shapes cultural identity and reflects societal changes. Such exposure allows students to appreciate the role of the arts in different cultural contexts, broadening their perspective and fostering empathy.

Social inclusion and cohesion are implicitly integrated through practices that encourage collaboration and respect for diversity. The *Drama and rhythm curriculum for students with sign language* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020i) emphasizes that the subject "shall contribute to helping students maintain and develop their cultural and multilingual identity in inclusive and diverse communities" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020i)[267]. This approach is intended to make students feel that they belong to a community that respects and values diverse identities. In addition, students are meant "to experience belonging through engaging in different cultural expressions" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020i)[268], highlighting the role of the arts in strengthening social bonds.

Furthermore, the curricula emphasize the importance of building interpersonal relationships: "The subject emphasizes interpersonal relationships and provides tools for building and strengthening relationships" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020i, p. 30)[269]. In music, students are encouraged "to develop their aesthetic, creative, and expressive abilities and to be given the opportunity to express themselves," while the curriculum "shall provide a foundation for music enjoyment and a sense of achievement, and students shall experience that their own voice matters within the community" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020j)[270]. These goals emphasize the role of music in fostering a sense of belonging, where students engage with a diversity of artistic and cultural expressions, ultimately "opening doors to greater community" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020j).

The *Primary and Lower Secondary School Curriculum for Music* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020k) further reinforces this by stating that "in music, pupils shall encounter a diversity of artistic and cultural expressions that open the door to a greater sense of togetherness" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020k, p. 2). The curriculum adds that "encounters with live music are

[267] "Faget drama og rytmikk skal bidra til at elevene kan ivareta og utvikle sin kulturelle og flerspråklige identitet i inkluderende og mangfoldige fellesskap" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020i).
[268] "Elevene skal få oppleve tilhørighet ved å utfolde seg gjennom ulike kulturelle uttrykk" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020i).
[269] "Faget legger vekt på mellommenneskelige relasjoner og gir verktøy for å kunne bygge og styrke relasjoner" ((Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020i, p. 30).
[270] "Gjennom faget musikk skal elevene utvikle sine estetiske, kreative og skapende evner og få mulighet til å uttrykke seg. Faget skal legge til rette for musikkglede og mestringsfølelse, og elevene skal få erfare at egen stemme betyr noe i fellesskapet. I musikk skal elevene møte et mangfold av kunstneriske og kulturelle uttrykk som åpner dører til større fellesskap." (Læreplan i musikk samisk, 2020j, reference 17).

a natural part of this, and the pupils shall be given the opportunity to experience that folk music and the Saami music culture are important parts of our common culture and cultural heritage" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020k, p. 2). This emphasis on live and cultural experiences is intended to nurture a sense of community and shared cultural identity among students.

Summary

Diverse Cultural Expressions: The curricula emphasize the role of arts education in exposing students to a wide range of cultural expressions. This exposure goes beyond simple appreciation; it encourages active participation, helping students connect with different cultural and social backgrounds. Such engagement is viewed as a pathway to fostering social cohesion and building a community among students.

Active Participation and Engagement: Students are encouraged to actively participate in music and performing arts, moving beyond the role of passive spectators to becoming creators and performers. This involvement fosters a sense of belonging and contribution, as students experience the value of inclusion and the strength found in diversity through their engagement with different cultural traditions and artistic expressions.

Collaborative Learning Environments: The arts curricula stress the importance of collaborative learning, where students work together on projects that span cultural boundaries. These collaborative efforts build social skills, promote mutual respect, and foster an inclusive school environment. By participating in such artistic collaborations, students learn to negotiate differences and find common ground through shared artistic goals.

Empathy and Understanding: By engaging with art forms that reflect various life experiences and cultural identities, students develop empathy and a deeper understanding of others. The curricula highlight how music and drama can convey emotions and narratives that, while potentially different from one's own, have universal appeal and impact, fostering a connection among students.

Role of Educators: Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating inclusive and cohesive learning environments. They are responsible for creating opportunities for all students to engage meaningfully with the arts, ensuring that every student feels valued and supported regardless of their background. This inclusive approach encourages an appreciation of diverse perspectives within the educational setting.

In summary, in primary and lower secondary education in Norway, social inclusion and cohesion are approached through a dynamic interaction with the arts. This approach fosters not only an appreciation of diversity but also active participation in a multicultural society. The curriculum aims to cultivate a harmonious and inclusive community, with the arts serving as a bridge for cultural understanding, empathy, and social cohesion.

17.3 Formal Education – Upper Secondary (VGS)

At the upper secondary level in the Norwegian arts education curriculum, cultural literacy is framed as the development of an understanding and appreciation for diverse cultural expressions through active engagement in the arts. This approach emphasizes cultivating students

who are not only aware of various cultural dimensions but who also actively participate in cultural expression and discourse. Such an educational approach aligns with broader societal goals of nurturing open-minded, culturally aware, and empathetic citizens.

The curriculum's focus on cultural literacy seeks to equip students with the skills necessary to participate actively in different social communities. For example, the *Curriculum in music* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020f) states that "by giving students creative, cultural, and aesthetic competence, the subject prepares them to participate actively in various social communities" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020f)[271]. This emphasis on social engagement through cultural competence encourages students to understand and navigate diverse cultural landscapes, preparing them to be inclusive and participatory members of society.

In music education, cultural literacy involves fostering an understanding of the historical and cultural roots of different musical forms and recognizing music as both a personal and cultural expression that mirrors societal changes and individual experiences. The *Curriculum in listening* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020d) highlights that

> the listening subject shall help strengthen students' cultural anchoring, musical identity, and mutual respect by giving them insight into a broad selection of genre cultures and musical forms. This includes Norwegian folk music, Sami music, and the musical expressions of other minorities that form part of our common living culture and tradition. (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020d)[272]

The curriculum further emphasises how "through practical listening experiences and reflective discussions, students gain intercultural understanding" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020d) which is an essential component of cultural literacy.

Similarly, the *Curriculum in Sámi music and theatre* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020h) emphasizes the importance of understanding Sami society and cultural perspectives, preparing students to engage meaningfully in diverse social settings: "The subject shall give students knowledge of Sami social life and cultural understanding and equip them to participate actively in various social communities" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020h)[273]. This statement reflects the curriculum's commitment to integrating indigenous perspectives, fostering a more inclusive and culturally aware society.

In dance, the curriculum stresses the importance of recognizing dance as both a cultural artifact and a form of personal expression. This dual role allows students to explore how cultural contexts shape artistic forms and how individual creativity can, in turn, influence cultural narratives. The *Curriculum in dance in perspective* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021b) states,

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[271] "Ved å gi elevene kreativ, kulturell og estetisk kompetanse ruster faget elevene til å delta aktivt i ulike sosiale fellesskap" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020f).

[272] "Faget lytting skal bidra til å styrke elevenes kulturelle forankring musikalske identitet og gjensidige respekt gjennom at de får innsikt i et bredt utvalg av sjangerkulturer og musikkformer. Dette inkluderer norsk folkemusikk, samisk musikk og andre minoriteters musikkuttrykk som inngår i vår felles levende kultur og tradisjon. Gjennom at elevene får praktisk lytteerfaring og erfaring med å reflektere over lytting og lytteopplevelse bidrar faget til å gi elevene interkulturell forståelse." (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020d)

[273] "Faget skal gi elevene kunnskap om samisk samfunnsliv og kulturforståelse, og ruste elevene til å delta aktivt i ulike sosiale fellesskap" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020h).

> The subject shall give students knowledge and tools to express artistic ideas through choreography and to understand dance in various social, historical, and cultural contexts. Dance in Perspective prepares students for active participation in a societal and work life that requires problem-solving, critical thinking, cooperation, and intercultural understanding. (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021b)[274]

This comprehensive approach underscores dance education's role in equipping students with skills that transcend artistic practice and apply to real-world social dynamics.

Drama education at the upper secondary level similarly aims to deepen students' engagement with cultural narratives and societal structures. In the *Curriculum in theatre ensemble* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020g), the curriculum emphasizes the importance of cultural competence as a foundation for broad social participation: "By giving students cultural and aesthetic competence, the subject lays the foundation for versatile societal participation" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020g)[275]. Through drama, students are encouraged to explore and critique social and cultural issues, using theatrical expressions as a means to question and understand the societal norms and structures around them.

Beyond fostering a connection to specific cultural expressions, the upper secondary curriculum in the arts places a strong emphasis on developing critical cultural awareness. Students are taught to analyse how the arts both reflect and influence cultural identities and societal values, equipping them to understand and appreciate the diversity and complexity of cultural experiences. For instance, the curriculum's approach to music and drama often includes social commentary, giving students the tools to discuss cultural phenomena critically and in context. This critical approach not only broadens students' cultural perspectives but also encourages them to actively participate in cultural discourse.

Empowerment through artistic expression is another key component of cultural literacy at the upper secondary level. Students are encouraged to use the arts as a means of both personal and cultural expression, giving them a voice to convey their cultural viewpoints and contribute to the broader cultural dialogue. Through creating, performing, and analysing artistic works, students develop the skills to express themselves within a cultural framework, enriching their understanding of both self and society. The educational setting at this level provides collaborative projects and performances that bring diverse cultural perspectives together, fostering a more inclusive understanding of culture.

In upper secondary education, social inclusion and cohesion are key objectives in the Norwegian arts curriculum, which emphasizes creating supportive environments for diverse expressions and collaborative learning. By fostering democratic participation in the arts, the curriculum encourages respect and integration across diverse cultural identities, preparing students to become proactive, empathetic contributors to a diverse society.

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[274] "Faget skal gi elevene kunnskap om og verktøy til å uttrykke kunstneriske ideer gjennom koreografi og til å forstå dans i ulike sosiale, historiske og kulturelle kontekster. Dans i perspektiv skal forberede elevene til aktiv deltakelse i et samfunns- og arbeidsliv som stiller krav om problemløsing, kritisk tenkning, samarbeidsevne og flerkulturell forståelse." (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021b).

[275] "Ved å gi elevene kulturell og estetisk kompetanse legger faget grunnlaget for allsidig samfunnsdeltakelse" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020g).

The arts curriculum at this level places significant emphasis on creating inclusive learning environments where every student is encouraged to engage with and contribute to artistic activities. This inclusion is not solely about participation; it also ensures that students from different backgrounds feel valued and recognized. The *Curriculum in music, dance and drama* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020a) states that "music, dance, and drama shall contribute to giving students experience with inclusion and developing respect for a diversity of artistic expressions and identities" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020a).[276] This goal is central to the curriculum's approach, making the arts accessible to all students regardless of their abilities, cultural backgrounds, or learning styles.

Collaboration is another crucial element for fostering social cohesion, as seen in the curriculum's approach to group artistic endeavours. Collaborative projects in music, dance, and drama are designed to build a sense of community by requiring students to work together towards shared artistic goals. Through these collaborations, students learn to appreciate diverse perspectives, negotiate differences, and support each other—skills that are essential for societal cohesion. The *Curriculum in Sámi music and theatre* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020h) reflects this goal, stating that the subject "shall give students the opportunity to experience how cultural diversity and different identities can be an enrichment and resource for artistic processes" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020h)[277]. Such statements underscore the curriculum's commitment to promoting social cohesion by emphasizing the value of cultural diversity in collective artistic creation.

The curriculum also actively encourages students to explore and represent diverse cultural identities through various forms of artistic expression. By engaging with a wide range of cultural expressions, students gain a deeper understanding of the societal mosaic and the significance of each culture's contribution to the arts. This respect for diversity is fundamental to fostering social inclusion, as students learn to appreciate the richness that different backgrounds bring to their shared experiences in the arts. The *Curriculum in theatre in perspective* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021e) supports this by stating that the subject "shall contribute to giving students insight into different cultural expressions and developing creativity, social engagement, and the ability to participate democratically" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021e)[278]. By encouraging students to engage with varied cultural expressions, the curriculum promotes both cultural literacy and social inclusivity.

The development of empathy and social awareness is another important objective within the arts curriculum at the upper secondary level. By studying and performing works that address social issues, students develop a heightened awareness of societal dynamics and a deeper understanding of the lives and experiences of others. Drama, music, and dance frequently explore themes such as inequality, social justice, and community, prompting students to critically examine their roles in society and consider how they can contribute to social cohesion.

[276] "Musikk, dans og drama skal bidra til at elevene får erfaring med inkludering og utvikler respekt for et mangfold av kunstneriske uttrykk og identiteter" ((Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020a).

[277] "Samisk musikk og scene skal bidra til at elevene får mulighet til å erfare hvordan kulturelt mangfold og ulike identiteter kan være en berikelse og ressurs for kunstneriske prosesser" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020a).

[278] "Teater i perspektiv skal bidra til at elevene får innsikt i ulike kulturelle uttrykk og utvikler skaperglede, samfunnsengasjement og evne til demokratisk medvirkning" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021e).

The *Curriculum in music, dance and drama* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020a) states that the subject "gives students the opportunity to use artistic expressions as a form of democratic expression, and to develop an awareness of the possibilities and limitations of freedom of speech" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020a)[279]. This focus on using the arts as a medium for self-expression and societal reflection empowers students to engage meaningfully with social issues and fosters empathy for diverse perspectives.

Summary

The upper secondary arts curriculum in Norway aims to develop cultural literacy and foster social inclusion and cohesion through a comprehensive engagement with music, dance, and drama. Cultural literacy is framed as an in-depth understanding of diverse cultural expressions, achieved through active participation and critical analysis. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of recognizing cultural roots, promoting respect for indigenous and minority traditions, and using arts as a platform for personal and social expression.

Social inclusion and cohesion are cultivated by creating inclusive learning environments, fostering collaborative artistic projects, and promoting democratic participation in the arts. By engaging with a wide range of cultural expressions, students develop empathy, social awareness, and an appreciation for diversity. Through these experiences, the curriculum prepares students to become proactive, culturally aware, and socially responsible citizens, ready to contribute meaningfully to a multicultural and inclusive society.

17.4 Formal Education – Higher Education (teacher education)

In higher education, particularly within teacher education programs, cultural literacy is approached as a process of in-depth, critical, and reflective engagement with culture. This educational level aims to prepare students to become culturally competent individuals who can navigate and contribute meaningfully to the complex cultural landscapes of the modern world. The focus is on fostering critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and an informed participation in cultural discussions and developments.

The *Framework for Teacher Education in Practical and Aesthetic Subjects* (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2020) highlights this goal by emphasizing that,

> the education shall provide international perspectives, place the teaching profession and the practical and aesthetic subjects within a historical, cultural, and societal context, and contribute to critical reflection, joy in creation, and an understanding of the profession that upholds practical and aesthetic learning processes. (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2020)[280]

[279] "Faget gir også elevene mulighet til å ta i bruk kunstneriske uttrykk som demokratisk ytringsform, og å utvikle bevissthet om ytringsfrihetens muligheter og begrensninger" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020a).

[280] "Utdanningen skal gi internasjonale perspektiver, sette lærerprofesjonen og de praktiske og estetiske fagene inn i en historisk, kulturell og samfunnsmessig sammenheng, og bidra til kritisk refleksjon, skaperglede og en profesjonsforståelse som ivaretar praktiske og estetiske læringsprosesser" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2020).

This statement illustrates how teacher education integrates cultural literacy with broader educational goals, encouraging future teachers to critically engage with cultural contexts and appreciate the role of arts in society.

Cultural literacy in higher education also involves understanding the diversity of student backgrounds and competencies. The Framework specifies that the education module "shall contribute to knowledge about the diversity in students' backgrounds and academic prerequisites and help students develop competence in child and adolescent development, learning, and youth culture" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2020)[281]. This preparation equips future teachers to engage with the multicultural realities of contemporary classrooms, ensuring they are able to foster inclusive and culturally sensitive learning environments.

Teacher education curricula place a strong emphasis on building a nuanced awareness of global and local cultural dynamics. Students are encouraged to explore how global cultural flows impact local cultures, and vice versa, fostering an appreciation for both the interconnectedness of the world and the distinctiveness of local expressions. This approach aligns with the goal of preparing teachers to "create a learning environment characterized by diversity, community, and mutual understanding" (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021)[282]. By grounding teaching practices in an understanding of both global and local cultural influences, future educators are better equipped to facilitate cross-cultural understanding among their students.

Practical and theoretical integration is another essential component of cultural literacy in higher education. The curriculum supports students in linking cultural theories with practical experience through workshops, internships, and collaborative projects. The National Guidelines stress that "knowledge of aesthetic learning processes and interdisciplinary work forms the foundation of professional practice. Students' didactic competence is developed through practice and experience with their own creative processes in workshops, appropriate production facilities, and various arenas" (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021)[283]. This integration of theory and practice allows students to not only learn cultural concepts but to apply them in real-world settings, enhancing their ability to bring cultural literacy into their future classrooms.

Additionally, higher education in the arts aims to cultivate ethical and reflective practitioners. Students are encouraged to reflect on the ethical implications of cultural production and consumption and to critically examine their own cultural positions and biases. For instance, the National Guidelines outline that,

> knowledge of youth culture and the ability to motivate for learning shall be central elements in the education. Multiculturalism, different gender perspectives, diversity in

[281] "Profesjonsfaget skal bidra til kunnskap om mangfoldet i elevenes bakgrunn og faglige forutsetninger, og bidra til at studentene utvikler kompetanse om barn og ungdoms utvikling og læring og om barne- og ungdomskultur" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2020).

[282] "Læreren skal skape et læringsmiljø preget av mangfold, fellesskap og gjensidig forståelse" (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021).

[283] "Kunnskap om estetiske læringsprosesser og tverrfaglig arbeid ligger til grunn for profesjonsutøvelsen. Studentenes didaktiske handlingskompetanse utvikles gjennom øvelse og erfaring med egne skapende prosesser i verkstedet, egnede produksjonslokaler og ved ulike arenaer." (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021).

> schools and society, Sami culture, and Indigenous rights are important topics for students to reflect upon to create motivating and inclusive school and learning environments. (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021)[284]

This reflective practice is essential for responsible and culturally aware teaching, ensuring that future educators are prepared to approach cultural differences with sensitivity and understanding.

Moreover, cultural literacy in teacher education extends to a deep awareness of how identity develops through cultural and musical experiences. According to the National Guidelines, the student "has an in-depth awareness of children and young people's musical and social identity development and can use this competence to work with students' cultural understanding and attitudes towards music in a diverse and multicultural society" (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021)[285]. This focus on identity development through the arts prepares teachers to support students' cultural self-expression, fostering a classroom environment where diverse identities are celebrated and respected.

In Norwegian teacher education, social inclusion and cohesion are central to the educational goals, emphasizing the preparation of future educators who can foster inclusive and culturally diverse classrooms. The *Framework for Teacher Education in Practical and Aesthetic Subjects for Grades 1-13* (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2020) outlines a foundation built on "equality, diversity, and inclusion", which serves as the professional ethical basis for teacher candidates. This foundation "supports continuous professional development that qualifies students to contribute to the further development of schools as institutions of education and learning in a democratic and diverse society" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2020)[286]. This goal underscores the commitment to equipping educators who understand the significance of creating supportive and inclusive learning environments.

The Framework also highlights that the courses on education "shall form the pedagogical foundation in the education, be practically oriented, a value and formation subject, and give candidates their identity as teachers in the school" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2020). It aims to provide knowledge about "the diversity in students' backgrounds and academic prerequisites" and supports students in developing "competence in child and adolescent development and learning, as well as knowledge of child and youth culture" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2020)[287]. By focusing on diverse student backgrounds and needs, the curriculum encourages

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[284] "Kunnskap om barne- og ungdomskultur og evne til å motivere for læring skal være sentrale elementer i utdanningen. Det flerkulturelle, ulike kjønnsperspektiver, mangfold i skolen og samfunnet, samisk kultur og urfolks rettigheter er tema som er viktig for studentene å reflektere rundt for å kunne skape motiverende og inkluderende skole- og læringsmiljø." (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021)

[285] "Kandidaten har inngående bevissthet om barn og unges musikalske og sosiale identitetsutvikling og kan bruke denne kompetansen til å arbeide med elevenes kulturforståelse og holdninger til musikk i et forskjelligartet og flerkulturelt samfunn" (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021).

[286] "Utdanningen skal gi et profesjonsetisk grunnlag bygget på likestilling, mangfold og inkludering. Dette bidrar til å ruste for kontinuerlig profesjonell utvikling som kvalifiserer studentene til å bidra i videreutvikling av skolen som en institusjon for danning og læring i et demokratisk og mangfoldig samfunn."

[287] "Profesjonsfaget skal danne den lærerfaglige plattformen i utdanningen, være praktisk rettet, være et verdi- og dannelsesfag og gi kandidaten identitet som lærer i skolen. Profesjonsfaget skal bidra til kunnskap om mangfoldet i elevenes bakgrunn og faglige forutsetninger, og bidra til at studentene

future teachers to facilitate a classroom culture that values each student's unique contributions and fosters mutual respect.

A reflective and inclusive approach to teaching is further reinforced through topics such as multiculturalism, gender perspectives, diversity in schools and society, Sami culture, and Indigenous rights. The *National Guidelines for Teacher Education in Practical and Aesthetic Subjects for Grades 1-13* (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021) emphasize that these topics "are important for students to reflect upon in order to create motivating and inclusive school and learning environments" (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021)[288]. This focus encourages teacher candidates to consider their own cultural biases and assumptions, promoting a teaching practice that is not only inclusive but also adaptable to various social and cultural backgrounds.

Higher education in teacher training also aims to cultivate community engagement and cohesion among future educators. The National Guidelines specify that "the learning environment shall stimulate experiences, expression, and reflection on contemporary issues, quality, democracy and citizenship, public health and life skills, and sustainable development" (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021)[289]. This holistic approach to learning equips teacher candidates with a deep understanding of community dynamics and the importance of building relationships based on mutual respect and understanding.

The National Guidelines underscore the ethical responsibility and reflective practice necessary in fostering social inclusion. They elaborate that teacher students "have in-depth knowledge of learning and challenges among the diversity of students and the potential contributions of practical and aesthetic approaches", as well as "profound knowledge of the importance of community for an inclusive school and learning environment." This includes being able to "apply their knowledge and skills from a professional basis to engage in dialogue with students and their parents about academic, cultural, personal, and social learning and development" (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021)[290]. Future teachers are encouraged to consider the ethical implications of their teaching practices, aiming to create learning environments that are respectful, supportive, and conducive to democratic participation.

In line with these values, teacher education also prepares students to contribute to innovative processes that support democratic engagement, environmental responsibility, and public health. As the National Guidelines state, teacher students are equipped to "contribute to inno-

utvikler kompetanse om barn og ungdoms utvikling og læring og om barne- og ungdomskultur." (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021).

[288] "Det flerkulturelle, ulike kjønnsperspektiver, mangfold i skolen og samfunnet, samisk kultur og urfolks rettigheter er tema som er viktig for studentene å reflektere rundt for å kunne skape motiverende og inkluderende skole- og læringsmiljø" (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021).

[289] "Læringsmiljøet skal stimulere til opplevelse, utfoldelse og refleksjon over samtid, kvalitet, demokrati og medborgerskap, folkehelse og livsmestring, og bærekraftig utvikling" (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021).

[290] "Kandidaten har inngående kunnskap om læring og utfordringer blant mangfoldet av elever og hvilke muligheter praktiske og estetiske tilnærmingsmåter kan bidra med … Har inngående kunnskap om fellesskapets betydning for et inkluderende skole- og læringsmiljø … kan anvende sine kunnskaper og ferdigheter og ut fra et faglig grunnlag være i dialog med elevene og deres foresatte om faglig, kulturell, personlig og sosial læring og utvikling." (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021).

vation processes for democratic participation, respect for all people, nature, and the environment, and to facilitate public health and life skills" (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021)[291]. This preparation positions future educators to lead by example in fostering inclusive and cohesive communities within and beyond the classroom.

Summary

In summary, higher education in Norwegian teacher training emphasizes cultural literacy and social inclusion as foundational pillars of teacher education. Cultural literacy is developed through a blend of critical, reflective engagement with cultural texts and practices, practical and theoretical integration, and an emphasis on both global and local cultural dynamics. This approach equips future teachers to become culturally competent, ethically aware, and reflective practitioners who can facilitate meaningful cultural learning experiences in their classrooms.

Social inclusion and cohesion are fostered through an educational framework that promotes inclusive pedagogy, ethical responsibility, and community engagement. By grounding teacher candidates in values of equality, diversity, and inclusion, and encouraging them to address the diverse needs of students, the curriculum prepares future educators to create supportive, inclusive, and culturally responsive learning environments. This comprehensive focus on cultural literacy and social inclusion aligns with Norway's broader educational goals of nurturing empathetic, socially responsible, and civically engaged teachers who are prepared to contribute positively to a multicultural society.

17.5 Non-formal Education

In Norway's non-formal education sector, cultural literacy is approached with a focus on inclusivity, skill development, appreciation of diversity, community building, and lifelong engagement in cultural activities. Non-formal education, particularly through the Schools of Music and Performing Arts, emphasizes the role of arts and culture in personal and social development, fostering an environment where artistic expression becomes an essential part of one's growth and identity.

The *Curriculum Framework for Schools of Music and Performing Arts* (Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts, 2016) highlights that the primary goal is "maintaining and developing artistic and cultural competences", rooted in a "holistic understanding of human existence". It emphasizes that every individual has "a sense of form and a need for expression that can be developed through education", underscoring that artistic and cultural expressions connect with fundamental human emotions like joy, longing, dreams, melancholy, or loneliness. These expressions, according to the curriculum, are "fundamental for the process of learning, growing, and forming us as human beings" (Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts, 2016). This perspective establishes a foundation for cultural literacy as a means to explore and understand essential aspects of humanity.

[291] "Kandidaten kan bidra til nytenkning og innovasjonsprosesser for demokratisk deltakelse, respekt for alle folk, natur og miljø og legge til rette for folkehelse og livsmestring" (Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2021).

The *New Framework Plan for Schools of Music and Performing Arts* (Norsk Kulturskoleråd, 2024) further reinforces this approach by setting a goal "to provide high-quality educational offerings to all children and young people, regardless of their location or economic background". This commitment to inclusivity ensures that students "learn, experience, create, and convey cultural and artistic expressions" (Norsk Kulturskoleråd, 2024)[292]. The framework also supports students with particular interest and motivation in the arts, preparing them for potential admission to higher artistic education, while simultaneously contributing to the broader personal development of young people. By fostering respect for others' cultural affiliations, raising awareness of one's own identity, and cultivating critical reflection, the curriculum seeks to create an environment that encourages cultural literacy as a process of self-discovery and respect for diversity.

An essential aspect of cultural literacy in non-formal education is helping students strengthen their social and cultural competencies. The Framework Plan states that students, as well as others engaging with the offerings of the cultural schools, are given "the opportunity to strengthen their social and cultural competence and find their own voice within the community" (Norsk Kulturskoleråd, 2024)[293]. This focus on individual expression within a collective context aligns with the broader goals of fostering cultural literacy that is grounded in community values and interpersonal understanding. Furthermore, the curriculum emphasizes that students' "ability for critical reflection and independent choices is strengthened" (Norsk Kulturskoleråd, 2024)[294], empowering them to think deeply about their cultural environment and make informed decisions within it.

A focus on diversity is also central to cultural literacy in non-formal education. The Framework Plan underscores the importance of "increasing diversity competence" and directs schools to place greater emphasis on "seeing and understanding diversity as a central value" (Norsk Kulturskoleråd, 2024)[295]. By promoting diversity as a fundamental component of education, the curriculum encourages students to value different perspectives and cultural backgrounds, thereby cultivating a deeper understanding and appreciation for cultural plurality.

Finally, the Schools of Music and Performing Arts promote cultural literacy as a lifelong journey, where engagement with the arts continues beyond childhood and adolescence. This vision of lifelong learning in cultural literacy encourages individuals to remain connected to their cultural roots while adapting to the evolving cultural landscapes around them. By positioning cultural literacy as a continuous process, non-formal education in Norway fosters an enduring

[292] "Formålet til kulturskolen er å gi eit undervisningstilbod av høg fagleg og pedagogisk kvalitet til alle barn og unge, uavhengig av kvar dei bur og økonomi. I kulturskolen skal elevane få lære, oppleve, skape og formidle kulturelle og kunstnariske uttrykk. Kulturskolen skal òg bidra til å kvalifisere elevar med særleg interesse og motivasjon for opptak i høgare kunstfagleg utdanning. Tilbodet skal bidra til danninga barn og unge får, til å fremje respekt for den kulturelle tilhøyrselen andre har, til bevisstgjering av eigen identitet og til å utvikle evna til kritisk refleksjon." (Norsk Kulturskoleråd, 2024)

[293] "Elevene og andre som møter kulturskolens tilbud, får mulighet til å styrke sin sosiale og kulturelle kompetanse og finne sin egen stemme i samfunnets fellesskap" (Norsk Kulturskoleråd, 2024).

[294] "Elevenes evne til kritisk refleksjon og selvstendige valg styrkes" (Norsk Kulturskoleråd, 2024).

[295] "Ved å øke sin mangfoldskompetanse setter kulturskolen sterkere fokus på å se og forstå mangfold som en sentral verdi" (Norsk Kulturskoleråd, 2024).

engagement with arts and culture that contributes to the development of informed, culturally aware, and expressive citizens.

In the context of non-formal education in Norway, social inclusion and cohesion are understood as creating accessible, community-focused, and culturally inclusive educational opportunities that contribute to the well-being and unity of participants. Programs such as the out-of-school-hours care (SFO) and the Schools of Music and Performing Arts are designed not only to educate but also to foster a sense of belonging and cooperation among individuals of diverse backgrounds.

The *Framework Plan for Out-of-School-Hours Care* (SFO) (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021l) emphasizes that SFO "shall actively contribute to forming communities in which all children can participate and experience a sense of belonging". This inclusive approach ensures that children develop "equality, social belonging, and a social community with other children and with the staff", recognizing the importance of "respect for differences and recognition of diversity" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021l, p. 19). The framework further highlights that "SFO shall ensure that children with special needs are included in play, culture, and activities on an equal footing with other children" and mandates active efforts "to promote universal design", supporting the inclusion and sense of community for all children (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021l, p. 19).[296] These provisions reflect a commitment to broad access and participation, ensuring that no child is excluded from educational opportunities due to physical, social, or cultural barriers.

In the Schools of Music and Performing Arts, cultural diversity and inclusivity are prioritized to promote unity within local communities. The *New Framework Plan for Schools of Music and Performing Arts* (Norsk Kulturskoleråd, 2024) articulates this role by stating that "by reflecting the diversity of cultural expressions in society, the cultural school utilizes its potential to act as a bridge and an inclusive force in the local community, while facilitating a diverse offering" (Norsk Kulturskoleråd, 2024)[297]. This goal aligns with the institution's commitment to serving as a bridge-builder that unites people from different cultural backgrounds, fostering mutual respect and understanding.

The *Curriculum Framework for Schools of Music and Performing Arts* (Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts, 2016) further grounds the program in a humanistic perspective, which values "community, freedom of expression, human dignity, and democracy". This framework notes that "the Norwegian community accommodates a growing diversity of cultural expressions", and through acknowledgment and awareness of this diversity,

[296] "SFO shall actively contribute to forming communities in which all children can participate and experience a sense of belonging. SFO shall help ensure that children experience equality, social belonging and a social community with other children and with the staff. This requires respect for differences and recognition of diversity. Children can feel a sense of community in large and small groups, and in play and adapted activities. The provision shall vary according to the group of children and the children's age, development and interests. SFO shall ensure that children with special needs are included in play, culture and activities on an equal footing with other children. SFO shall work actively to promote universal design, cf. Section 19 of the Equality and Anti-discrimination Act, in order to facilitate children's inclusion and sense of belonging to the community." (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021l, p. 19)

[297] "Gjennom å speile mangfoldet av kulturelle uttrykk i samfunnet benytter kulturskolen sitt potensial til å være brobygger og inkluderende kraft i lokalsamfunnet samt legger til rette for et mangfoldig tilbud" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021l, p. 19).

the schools can contribute to "maintaining and renewing our cultural heritage" (Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts, 2016). The framework highlights that understanding one's own culture is essential to respecting others, positing that "cultural activities create arenas for belonging and social community and may inspire participation in the community of disagreement; which is a precondition for a well-functioning democracy" (Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts, 2016). This perspective reinforces the importance of cultural identity in fostering respect for diversity and positions the arts as a vehicle for democratic engagement and dialogue.

Moreover, non-formal education programs in Norway place a strong emphasis on community-centric learning. By tailoring programs to meet the specific needs and interests of local populations, these initiatives contribute to community cohesion and local development. The collaborative nature of many activities within non-formal education fosters cooperative skills and mutual respect among participants. By working together towards shared goals in music, dance, drama, and other artistic pursuits, participants build a collaborative spirit that strengthens social bonds within the community.

Summary

In Norway's non-formal education sector, cultural literacy and social inclusion are deeply interwoven in the goals and practices of institutions like the Schools of Music and Performing Arts and the out-of-school-hours care (SFO). Cultural literacy is approached as an inclusive and lifelong journey, encouraging individuals to connect with diverse cultural expressions and develop skills in artistic and cultural competencies. This focus on diversity, community building, and critical self-reflection promotes an environment where students can explore their identities and respect others' cultural backgrounds.

Social inclusion and cohesion are reinforced through accessible, community-centered programs that value each participant's contributions and foster a sense of belonging. Through community engagement, collaborative activities, and respect for cultural plurality, non-formal education in Norway helps build socially cohesive communities that appreciate diversity. These programs not only enrich individual lives but also strengthen the social fabric by promoting unity, mutual respect, and democratic engagement within local communities.

17.6 Conclusions and Reflections

17.6.1 How Cultural Literacy and Social Inclusion Are Reflected in the Norwegian Curricula

Cultural literacy in the Norwegian curricula is understood both implicitly and explicitly as the capacity to understand, appreciate, and interact with various cultural expressions and identities. This understanding spans all levels of education, from early childhood to higher education, and emphasises:

- The development of an appreciation for diverse cultural traditions and expressions through active participation in music, dance, and drama.

- The integration of cultural knowledge and sensitivity into everyday learning, encouraging students to explore global and local cultural dynamics.
- The promotion of cultural competence as a lifelong pursuit that enhances personal identity and societal engagement.

Norway's curricula also emphasize the importance of social inclusion and cohesion as integral to students' educational experiences. These concepts are addressed:

- Through the promotion of inclusive environments that respect and celebrate diversity within educational settings, aiming to eliminate barriers to participation.
- By fostering a sense of community and mutual respect among students from different cultural and social backgrounds, particularly through collaborative arts projects.
- By developing the skills necessary for students to participate actively and empathetically in a multicultural society.

17.6.2 Arts Education as a Medium for Social Inclusion and Cohesion

Arts as a Medium for Cultural Expression: Arts education is explicitly used as a tool for fostering cultural literacy by immersing students in diverse cultural practices and expressions. This immersion helps students gain a profound understanding of the cultural foundations behind various artistic forms, enriching their cultural awareness and competence.

Arts as a Catalyst for Inclusion: The curricula explicitly position arts education as a catalyst for promoting social inclusion and cohesion. Through arts education, students engage in collaborative creative processes that necessitate and foster inclusivity, teamwork, and understanding across diverse groups.

Empowerment through Arts: There is a clear linkage in the curricula between arts education and the empowerment of individuals. By participating in the arts, students develop not only their creative skills but also their social and cultural skills, which are essential for active participation in society.

Ethical and Reflective Practice: Higher education especially emphasizes the role of arts in fostering ethical and reflective practitioners who can navigate and contribute to a culturally diverse world thoughtfully and responsibly.

In conclusion, the Norwegian curricula demonstrate an understanding of how arts education can serve as a powerful vehicle for both cultural literacy and social inclusion. The explicit connections made between learning through arts and achieving broader educational and societal goals underscore the integral role of arts education in shaping informed, culturally competent, and socially cohesive citizens.

17.6.3 Findings in Light of the Theoretical Framework

The analysis of Norway's curricula underscores the integral role of performing arts in promoting cultural literacy and fostering social inclusion, a focus that is highlighted in the d@rts literature review (Mortimer et al., 2024). Cultural literacy is conceptualized as a dialogic, ongoing process that extends beyond knowledge acquisition, emphasizing the importance of intercultural dialogue and engagement (Maine et al., 2019). This is clearly reflected in Norway's arts

education, where the curricula encourage students to interact with diverse cultural expressions and perspectives through creative practices. For example, in the curriculum for upper secondary education, there is a strong emphasis on fostering a sense of belonging through participation in collaborative and culturally diverse artistic practices, which aligns with intercultural competence as described in Mortimer et al. (2024). Moreover, the focus on student-centered learning, particularly within the performing arts, enables students to explore cultural narratives and share their own experiences, creating a dialogic space for mutual understanding and empathy.

The inclusion of key competencies that encourage student participation and contribution in diverse arts and cultural learning experiences involves recognizing cultural diversity, promoting social interaction through the arts, and reflects broader aims of cultural literacy. This approach is evident, for instance, in the way music and drama curricula in Norway are structured to allow students to collaborate, reflect on their cultural contexts, and present their work to diverse audiences. By integrating such practices, Norway's curricula provide students with the tools to engage critically and creatively with both their own cultural backgrounds and those of others, fostering a sense of community that supports the goals of social inclusion. This emphasis on arts-based learning as a method for building social cohesion, seen across multiple stages of education in Norway, reflects the findings of Mortimer et al. (2024) that performing arts serve as a bridge across cultural divides, helping to nurture empathy, respect, and shared understanding.

17.6.4 Decolonial Perspective

The analysis of Norway's curricula shows important steps toward decolonial engagement, though there remains potential for further progress. As highlighted in Mortimer et al. (2024), decoloniality involves moving beyond Eurocentric frameworks and embracing a plurality of knowledge systems and cultural expressions. Norway's curricula already reflect this shift in several ways. For instance, the emphasis on cultural diversity and the integration of non-Western artistic traditions, such as indigenous Sámi practices, signals a commitment to challenging Eurocentric dominance in the arts. By providing students with opportunities to engage with diverse cultural expressions, the curricula promote cultural literacy and social cohesion, aligning with decolonial principles. The inclusion of Sámi perspectives in the curriculum, particularly in performing arts, acknowledges indigenous traditions as vital components of Norway's culture and communities. This engagement with indigenous knowledge is a significant step toward decoloniality, as it disrupts the traditional dominance of Western artistic paradigms. However, there remains scope for deepening this integration, ensuring that indigenous and non-Western knowledge systems are not only represented but central to shaping arts education.

Additionally, Mortimer et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of recognizing different ways of knowing, including oral traditions, embodied practices, and community-based knowledge systems, which are often marginalized in favour of written or academic knowledge. Norway's curricula have begun to engage with these diverse epistemologies through the inclusion of experiential learning and embodied practices in the performing arts. By fostering a more intentional focus on these approaches, particularly those rooted in indigenous and non-Western practices, Norway's curricula can continue to challenge colonial practices and work towards a truly decolonial educational framework. Decoloniality requires not just representation but embed-

ding indigenous and non-Western knowledge systems throughout the entire educational structure. In Norway, this could mean a deeper integration of Sámi cultural practices across all levels of arts education, making them foundational to the understanding of the arts. In doing so, Norway's education can better align with the goals of social inclusion and cultural equity, offering students a more just and culturally responsive educational experience.

17.7 Commentaries

17.7.1 Comment from the Finnish Consortium Member University of Jyväskylä

The analysis covers curricula for early childhood education and care, primary school, lower secondary school, upper secondary school and teacher education (tertiary education). Guidelines for non-formal education are also analyzed, including after-school activities and schools of music and performing arts.

Based on the analysis, the curriculum for early childhood education and care emphasizes the recognition of the child's own identity. This provides the foundation for understanding and valuing others and for broader cultural awareness. Democratic participation is emphasized already at this first stage of education. Performing arts are integrated in other activities and everyday learning experiences, and the presence of arts-related activities is profound even though arts education as such is not deeply discussed in the curriculum. The curriculum acknowledges the contribution of arts education, including performing arts, to promoting social inclusion, sense of belonging and participation, but this is not further elaborated.

In the curricula for primary and lower secondary school, cultural literacy is framed as the ability to appreciate, understand and interact with various cultural expressions and identities through the arts. Music curriculum also underlines forming a diversity of expressions. Music is here placed in a broader cultural and societal context, which it both reflects and shapes. According to the curriculum, music education should help learners to understand how music can contribute to social change, which indicates the transformative nature of art. The curriculum underlines agency and active participation of students. Other core ideas include diversity and belonging. Through these aspects, curricula for primary and lower secondary school implicitly discuss cultural literacy learning.

The aims of the curricula for upper secondary school include cultivating students who understand and appreciate diverse cultural expressions and also actively participate in cultural expression and discourse. Cultural literacy is implicitly discussed as cultural competence, cultural awareness and critical cultural awareness. Learning in music, dance and drama contributes to this through the collaborative practices intrinsic in performing arts. According to the curricula, performing arts education can develop the ability to question and understand societal norms, structures and dynamics, negotiate differences, appreciate diverse perspectives as well as understand the lives and experiences of others. Education seeks to develop open-minded, empathetic, inclusive, participatory and socially responsible members of society.

According to the analysis, the focus of cultural literacy learning in teacher education is on fostering critical thinking, ethical reasoning and informed participation in cultural discussions and developments. The curriculum places practical and aesthetic subjects in historical, cultural, societal and international contexts. The mutual relation of global and local cultural dynamics is acknowledged in the teacher education curricula, which can be interpreted as one of the core elements of cultural literacy. The analysis stresses the need to build inclusive and culturally sensitive learning environments, providing space for diversity. The curricula explicitly mention topics related to minorities and encourage students to ethical reflection on cultural production and consumption. Other core notions of teacher education, relevant to cultural literacy, include social cohesion, community and participation.

Based on the analysis, also non-formal education can help students strengthen their social and cultural competencies. The *Curriculum Framework for Schools of Music and Performing Arts* uses the term "artistic and cultural competence" that closely aligns with cultural literacy. According to this curriculum, artistic and cultural expressions connect with fundamental human emotions. Therefore, cultural literacy can be conceptualized as a means to explore and understand essential aspects of humanity, as suggested in the analysis. One of the curricula for schools of music and performing arts uses the term diversity competence. This comes close to cultural literacy and demonstrates the emphasis of diversity as a positive value in the non-formal education of performing arts.

Importantly, the analysis points out that cultural after-school activities not only broaden access to performing arts education across physical, social or cultural barriers, but also seek to build inclusive and cohesive communities. According to curricula for after-school activities, the aim is to provide children with experiences of participation and a sense of belonging. The curricula also underline equality, respect for differences and recognition of diversity. According to one of the curricula, cultural activities "may inspire participation in the community of disagreement, which is a precondition for a well-functioning democracy" (Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts, 2016). This exemplifies how performing arts education can develop cultural literacy as a dialogic practice in the context of diversity.

17.7.2 Comment from the Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts (Norsk kulturskoleråd)

We are an organisation that represents Norwegian municipalities as owners of municipal schools of music and performing arts. Our activities include advocacy, guidance, competence development for schools and municipalities, as well as the provision of statistics and other relevant support. Furthermore, the Council is responsible for the national Framework Plan for the Schools of Music and Performing Arts, which serves as an advisory document for municipalities.

The analyses in this chapter (as well as chapter 8) highlight how the performing arts can foster cultural literacy and promote social inclusion. Municipal schools of music and performing arts can utilise relevant policy documents to work toward these goals. Through their own Framework Plan, these schools can complement the primary school curriculum by offering focused practice sessions and opportunities for artistic performance. This goes far beyond the notion

of “after-school music.” It represents a comprehensive arts education programme that sharpens pupils’ creativity, critical thinking, and cultural insight — all of which are core aims of the national primary school curriculum. National laws, EU guidelines, and the d@rts framework can serve as valuable tools for quality assurance and planning.

By aligning their work with the competence aims outlined in the Framework Plan, municipal arts schools can demonstrate their contribution to interdisciplinarity, inclusion, and democratic participation. In short, the municipal school of music and performing arts is not merely a venue for extracurricular lessons. It is a vital part of the local educational ecosystem, offering a coherent and structured pathway in the arts. By offering both broad introductions and opportunities for deep artistic engagement, the municipal arts schools help primary schools meet cultural and social learning objectives. At the same time, they enhance pupils’ well-being, motivation, and cultural awareness — benefitting both individuals and the wider community.

In light of these remarks, we find that the descriptions and analyses in the report are in line with our understanding of how the field is organised and operates.

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18. Serbia

Ivan Pravdić, Milan Vračar & Svjetlana Pravdić

In Serbia, early childhood education and care (ECEC) covers children from six months to the age of six, when mandatory preschool begins. While ECEC is not obligatory before preschool, participation rates have increased in recent years due to national policies promoting early education as a key factor in cognitive, emotional, and social development. Preschool educators are required to hold a BA in preschool education, and pedagogical assistants are employed in some cases to support inclusion, especially for Roma children. Despite these efforts, regional disparities in quality and access remain significant, particularly in rural and minority areas.

Primary and lower secondary education in Serbia spans grades 1–8 and is compulsory. The national curriculum includes music and visual arts as standalone subjects, while other forms of artistic expression (e.g. drama, movement, media) are rarely formalized. From grade 3 onwards, students take a foreign language, and the curriculum encourages cultural comparisons and awareness, though this is often text-based rather than experiential.

Upper secondary education includes general gymnasiums and vocational schools. While music and ballet schools provide comprehensive performing arts education, general schools offer only limited exposure through electives or extracurriculars. Gymnasiums may offer Civic Education or Sociology, which engage with social justice, identity, and democracy, but rarely use performative methods.

Higher Education is excluded from this analysis, but it can be noted that higher education institutions in Serbia offer degrees in performing arts through universities in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, and Kragujevac. Faculties of dramatic arts, music, and applied arts train future professionals in performance, theory, and pedagogy. Interdisciplinary programs in cultural management and media also exist, some of which address questions of identity, memory, and civic engagement. Yet for students outside these tracks, exposure to arts or cultural literacy is minimal. Few general university programs incorporate cultural expression, creativity, or intercultural learning. Arts-based research is marginal, and international cooperation is limited to a few Erasmus+ initiatives. Higher education offers deep specialization in performing arts for a select group of students, but cultural literacy is rarely mainstreamed across disciplines. Broader integration of arts-based methods and cultural engagement in general curricula remains underdeveloped. Each University program creates its curriculum, and on the national level only the standards and criteria are defined, which is why it is not included in this analysis.

Serbia’s curriculum provides a solid foundation for cultural awareness, inclusion, and democratic values across all educational levels, but performing arts and cultural literacy remain unevenly integrated, with limited opportunities for arts-based, dialogical learning outside specialised education.

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18.1 Pre-school

This analysis focuses on the *Rulebook on the Basics of Preschool Upbringing and Education* (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2018) and the *Rulebook on the General Basics of the Preschool Program* (National Educational Council, 2006).

In the program of preschool institutions, a child is defined as "competent and rich in potential", which means that it has "developing capacities that make it a competent participant in its learning and development" (National Educational Council, 2006, p. 22). This competence is built through relationships with adults and peers and is conditioned by encouraging and supportive actions.

Since kindergarten, children in Serbia are offered opportunities to develop their cultural awareness and expression through various ways such as the cultivation of children's play; developing the cultural, national and identity of the inhabitants of the planet; and bringing the cultural heritage of the community and humanity closer to children. Other ways include "encouraging the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions of children through different artistic areas (visual art, drama, music, movement and dance, literature); furnishing the space that encourages wonder and aesthetic experience; encouraging children in different ways to creatively process their experiences through different media" (National Educational Council, 2006, p. 24).

Creative ways of expression are "visual expression, building in space, movement and dance, voice expression, singing, sound and music, talking, dramatization, non-verbal communication" (National Educational Council, 2006, p. 4). The cultural heritage of the immediate and wider community, as well as of humanity, is created through creative activities: visual arts, sports, drama, science, technology, literature, musical creativity and other cultural products that create an experience of meaning and beauty of human actions in children, as well as belonging to a specific cultural and general global identity.

Kindergarten is defined as a place of democratic and inclusive practice, which means:

- Respecting the right of all children to education through inclusive practice in kindergarten which respects gender, cultural, health and any other diversity, develops sensitivity to discrimination (gender, cultural, social, national...) and pays special attention to the inclusion of children from sensitive groups.
- Respect for children's right to active participation in education through a focus on the child's well-being and support for his potential and active participation in the life of the kindergarten...
- Connection with the local community through various ways of participation of children in the local community and participation of the local community in the practice of the kindergarten. (National Educational Council, 2006, p. 27)

Preschool upbringing and education are focused on the process of developing long-term goals and outcomes, as basic competencies of successful human functioning and development. The values that are encouraged are altruism and tolerance, morality and social and emotional

competence, responsibility, creation and creativity, and positive identity. Professional associates and educators jointly review the quality of the program through the evaluation of the real program in its supporting dimensions: “learning environment; quality of relationship; joint participation; support for learning dispositions; inclusion, diversity and democratic values; cooperation with family and local community” (National Educational Council, 2006, p. 18). This type of self-evaluation does not serve to evaluate the work of educators and professional associates, but the data obtained in this way are the basis for joint reflection and changes in practice.

Support for the child’s social well-being is achieved in the following ways:

- Developing a positive cultural and social identity and satisfaction and pride in belonging to different communities (peer, family, local, national, global);
- developing social competence as the ability of emotional attachment and empathy, successful social communication and cooperation;
- development of moral values and norms, ability of moral reasoning, fairness and respect for differences;
- developing altruism, qualities of humanity such as helpfulness, empathy, tolerance, nobility, solidarity;
- developing awareness of the mutual connection between people and nature and care for the environment;
- developing a proactive attitude towards life and the environment. (National Educational Council, 2006)

Appreciation and acceptance of diversity as a value, not as a disadvantage, is encouraged through:

- An effort to change the representations, practices, stories and relationships that subject one to and support inequality;
- questioning stereotypes and prejudices;
- special support for the participation of children from vulnerable groups;
- helping children to recognize what is fair and what is not and to deal with injustice;
- developing democratic relations in the group;
- supporting the development of children’s potential for solidarity and activism. (National Educational Council, 2006)

The cultural awareness of belonging, appreciation and acceptance, and the expression of these, connects personal experience and a close community with universal identity, and ideas, experiences and emotions are expressed and articulated through visual art, drama, music, movement and dance, literature.

To a large extent, the principle of authenticity is insisted upon: “respect for the integrity, diversity and uniqueness of each child, the developmental, cultural, social and other specificities of children and their families” (National Educational Council, 2006, p. 24) especially taking into account the needs of support for children with developmental disabilities and disabilities and children from other vulnerable social groups, who are not separated from other children in kindergartens.

Socialisation is connected with the construction of identity (which is inseparable from the acceptance of cultural differences, “getting to know the routines and rituals of other cultures”), and learning symbolic expression, children get to know “symbols of other cultures” (National Educational Council, 2006, p. 12). Symbolic representations are not only visual but also include costumes, mime, and creative movement. It connects ‘real’ actions and objects with ‘imaginary’ concepts of games.

Creativity in this youngest growth is defined as expanded play: “speech is expanded through mime, gesture, movement, touch, pantomime” (National Educational Council, 2006, p.15) and dramatizations of situations are part of regular activities.

In the last year of preschool education, a foreign language can be introduced, and this is done through language drama workshops where situations and activities through which the child gets to know it and uses it meaningfully.

The word ‘dialogue’ is very frequently used as a basic method of horizontal and vertical communication and is being used to “initiate conversations about group life, diversity, gender and other stereotypes and prejudices” (National Educational Council, 2006, p. 26).

18.2 Primary School

In 2001, three elective courses were initiated to start from the 3rd grade. Drama in Education was one of them, but it was dropped in 2003, although more than 80% of school teachers had been trained to apply drama in different courses. Only Civic Education and Religious Education were left as elective courses.

Pupils with special needs are included in classes in regular schools as much as possible and have their customized programs and systems for adapting the content of teaching to their abilities. Pupils from minority ethnic communities have special teaching units related to their native cultures and follow the lessons in their mother tongue. Curriculums are specifically written in the language of the minorities (Hungarian, Slovak, Ruthenian, Croatian, Macedonian, Vlach, Albanian, Bosnian, Bunjevac, Czech, Roma, Romanian, Slovenian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian). Pupils get days off / holidays according to their religious affiliation.

The *General Plan for Realization of Primary School Education* (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2021) in Serbia covers activities for eight years *(from 7 to 15 years of age).* Elements of performing arts are not much present. During classes in music education, group dances and national dance *kolo* are studied and tried out in 5th grade, and 7th grade characteristic dances of Baroque are studied. Dramatization is incorporated into the first cycle of primary education (Grades 1–4), while drama is addressed in Grades 5 and 7 primarily through the dramatization and performance of literary texts. Visiting theatres is a usual activity in cities where there are theatres for children. In 8th grade, pupils need to write reviews of theatre performances.

Music is a part of education throughout all grades, and the word performing is almost exclusively connected to music, yet performing the movement with music is a part of curricula in the first cycle (1st to 4th grade). Birthday and celebration songs are present in the first grade, learning new dances and songs are present in the 2nd grade. In the 3rd grade, movements are

being practised to somatically understand durations of notes in puzzlers/songs with dance. In 8th grade, simple rhythmical and melodic motifs are performed in the style of ancient civilizations.

Physical Education / Sports is present during all eight grades and includes dance and rhythmic activities. Only technical and digital literacy are mentioned, while cultural competencies and cultural literacy are not mentioned at all.

Openness and tolerance are not at all mentioned, while respect is there once in the 6th grade concerning respecting authors' rights. Diversity is present as biodiversity only, while dialogue is present as a method in all humanities and arts. Inclusion, participation, marginalization and segregation are not being mentioned in the general programs. Democracy is mentioned among the themes for 8th graders: "World between democracy and totalitarianism" (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2021, p. 22).

In much greater depth, one can search complete curriculums with their structures, objectives, aims, methods, and expected outcomes by following links with selected relevant documents. They include data not just for general elementary schools but for Ballet and Music schools as well. Unfortunately, these documents are sealed in such a way that parts of the text cannot be downloaded or copied from them, which makes quantitative analysis impossible.

From the first grade of elementary school, musical-didactic games are included, through which children meet the performing culture of different nations. Through *Fine/Visual Arts*, children are also introduced to the visual identities of other (present in Serbia) cultures. In later grades, the history of minorities is included in the course content.

Serbian, as the majority's mother tongue, in addition to nurturing the tradition and culture of the Serbian people, also aims to develop multiculturalism and includes presenting a dramatic/dramatized text.

Foreign languages are part of the curriculum in Serbia from the third grade, and besides the language, pupils learn a lot about the specificities of these cultures (English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian). Students will have to learn two foreign languages from the 5th grade. Teaching includes dramatic activities and is aimed at acquiring sociocultural competencies and their subtype of intercultural competencies ("development of awareness of other and different, knowledge and understanding of similarities and differences between speech communities" (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2021, p.9).

In later grades (7th and 8th), students are taught both written and oral mediation and (inter)cultural content (through customs, context, history and non-verbal communication).

From the 3rd grade, the subject *Nature and Society* introduces the understanding of the historical and contemporary context through the study of the past and present of the communities in which the students live, which is important for them to start developing cultural competencies first through their own daily experience. *Art and Culture* also serve to introduce and build a positive attitude towards the culture and artistic heritage of one's own and other peoples. In addition to art techniques, non-verbal expressions with facial expressions and the body are used. It is similar in the case of *Musical Culture,* where the same goal is achieved by singing along with the movement.

One of the optional subjects from the third grade until the end of primary school education is *Civic Education,* which aims to "encourage the development of a personality that is responsible for its rights and the rights of others, open to agreement and cooperation... respecting the principles, procedures and values of democratic society" (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2022, p. 75). The tasks given to pupils are related to recognizing examples of solidarity in the environment, stories and films; recognizing persons or groups in need of help and support; and seeking help in situations of violation of his or others' rights (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2021). These are achieved through the topics of diversity, equality, sensitive social groups, stereotypes and prejudices, discrimination, and drama workshops and choral singing are also used to process them.

Another elective subject is *Religious Education,* which also promotes learning about and connecting different religious groups, experiences and philosophies through open and tolerant dialogue. The course also deals with scientific knowledge and all positive experiences and achievements of mankind (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2021). Depending on the communities in different cities, pupils can learn about religion through the lenses of Orthodox, Catholic, Reformation and Evangelistic Christianity, as well as Islam. Around 60% of primary schoolers choose Religion Education, but in secondary school, these numbers drastically change.

An innovative subject from grades 5 to 8 is *Values and Virtues as a Life Compass* in which, among other things, cooperation, communication and responsible participation in a democratic society are taught. Among the virtues are tolerance, empathy, and solidarity. Social skills include cooperation and recognizing one's own and others' feelings. Outcomes include knowledge of local and global organizations engaged in humanitarian work. This subject involves the dramatization of the selected text, which in itself represents some value problems.

The subject *Life Skills* in the 5th or 6th grade connects critical thinking and problem-solving, with the aim of promoting intense social and emotional communication and conflict resolution. Drama workshops are used for this course. At the same age, *Media Literacy* is also studied, which methodically encourages interactivity, group work, creativity and project teaching. *Musical Education* in the same period should contribute to the pupil's "understanding and use of intercultural dialogue […] understand the concept of inclusion and be sensitive to diversity" (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2021, p. 17). Dialogic cultural literacy and music are tightly linked here.

The German language from the 5th to the 8th grade means not only learning and nurturing the language, but also getting to know and understand the culture of the heritage of the Germans who lived in the lower Danube region (not any more for a century). This supports learning to respect tradition, culture and develop interculturality as a way of life in modern society (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2021, p. 134). This is achieved by comparing customs, holidays, architecture, literary motifs and cuisine between different cultures. Cultural education is thus conceived as fostering interculturality, aligning with cultural literacy.

In the eighth grade, among the optional subjects, there is also *Art*, which studies, compares and connects traditional and modern musical and visual arts of different cultures in order to encourage "communication, cooperation, responsible participation in democratic life" (Ministry

of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2021, p. 46). The link between arts and democratic participation is clear.

Philosophy with Children is another optional subject addressing tolerance and differences in opinion, as well as seeking to develop sensitivity for the social and cultural context (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2021, p. 56).

Basic music education and training (6 years), as well as basic ballet education (4 years), are separated in separate schools, parallel to regular and compulsory elementary schools. The goals include "developing feelings of solidarity, understanding and constructive cooperation [...] preservation of the musical tradition and culture of the Serbian people and national minorities, development of interculturality, respect and preservation of national and world cultural heritage" (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2021, p. 7). The notions of cultural diversity and cultural literacy are visible in these goals.

18.3 Primary Education for Adults

The idea of cultural literacy is present in the primary education for adults through the explicit focus on cultural diversity. One of the key competencies in primary education for adults is "cultural consciousness, multiculturality and creativity" (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2013, p. 2) which includes, among other skills, "acceptance of the existence and positive evaluation of diversity in the social, cultural, ethnic, religious and creative domain, with an understanding of the importance and appreciation creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions through different media" (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2013, p. 2). Courses in *History* includes learning about "cultural and artistic heritage and different religions, the role of culture in creating European identity, responsibility towards individuals who are different, cultural plurality, support in understanding and accepting others who are different, need to stop fascism and xenophobia" (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, 2013, p. 41). The special course is *Responsible Living in Civil Society* which emphasizes taking action to stop violence, prejudices, discrimination, and intolerance in micro and macro environments. The various topics mentioned here can be seen as dimensions of cultural literacy.

18.4 Secondary Education

General secondary education in Serbia lasts four years and is usually followed by higher education because students are not qualified for the labour market after graduation. The schools are mostly free public schools, but there are also private and foreign schools. The general secondary education system includes:

- General high schools (Gymnasiums) as the most common form of secondary education. Those schools can be primarily focused on social or natural sciences, or equally on both (general direction). Usually, students in the same gymnasium can choose the major that suits them better. Some high schools have bilingual teaching, which means that a certain number of lessons are taught in a foreign language.

- Secondary schools for gifted students with strong motivation, talent, skills and knowledge in a specific field:
    - Mathematical high school.
    - Philological high school.
    - Gymnasium specialized in physics and
    - Gymnasium specialized in Informatics-Communications-Technical Sciences.
    - Secondary schools for special education for students with serious learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

- Secondary vocational education in Serbia lasts three or four years and prepares students for the labour market:
    - agriculture, food production and processing;
    - geodesy and construction;
    - economy, law and administration;
    - natural sciences and mathematics;
    - electrical engineering;
    - textile and leather industry;
    - personal services;
    - traffic;
    - mechanical engineering and metal processing;
    - health and social protection;
    - chemistry;
    - geology, mining and metallurgy;
    - forestry and wood processing;
    - trade, catering and tourism;
    - culture, arts and public relations (including music and ballet secondary schools for talented students).

The goals of secondary education include:

> Developing non-violent behaviour and zero tolerance towards violence; developing competencies for understanding and respecting human rights, civil liberties and the ability to live in a democratically organized and legal society; and insists on respecting the culture and traditions of national minorities, developing interculturality, as well as respecting and preserving national and world cultural heritage. (Institute for the Advancement of Education and Training, 2024)

Throughout many courses, especially languages and humanities, these ideas are consistently put into notion and dialogue but scarcely using performative practices.

Musical Culture in secondary schools should achieve the possibility of simultaneous improvisation with the student's voice and movement, and one of the most important goals is for the student to "participate in musical activities and performances, showing self-confidence, a sense of teamwork, peer education, empathy, individuality, solidarity, originality, criticality, eloquence as well as experience in the field of media" (Institute for the Advancement of Education and Training, 2024, p. 111). Empathy and solidarity as aspects of cultural literacy are

mentioned among aims of music education here. Every high school is obliged to organize the work of a choir, and if possible, an orchestra. In them, music education is seen as a way of learning diversity and tolerance, since their educational goal is respect for diversity and tolerance, and the program is also adapted to the national minorities present. The teaching of *Musical Culture* includes choral singing not only of classical and folk compositions but also of popular culture ("Bohemian Rhapsody" by Freddie Mercury and songs by the Beatles...). *Physical Education* (sports) includes learning classical dances.

Aspects of cultural literacy are also strongly present in learning foreign languages, which aims at acquiring socio-cultural and intercultural competencies such as interculturality, cultural values, stereotypes, and mediation: it represents understanding of general world knowledge and the cultural similarities and differences between one's own culture and the culture of the target language communities (Institute for the Advancement of Education and Training, 2024). That knowledge relates to all aspects of community life, from everyday culture and living conditions to the art of living, through interpersonal relationships, values, beliefs, and behaviour, to non-verbal means. This linking of competence to foreign languages has been consistently implemented: Intercultural competence implies understanding of otherness and differences. It also implies the development of curiosity, tolerance and a positive attitude towards diversity (Institute for the Advancement of Education and Training, 2024).

Student interactivity and inclusion is the method by which this is achieved. Topics are suggested by the students themselves and are thereby relevant in terms of their age, interest, educational and professional needs (Institute for the Advancement of Education and Training, 2024). The topics are explored by considering various cultural and social phenomena. For example, "Authentic oral and written communication" has been extended to modern media: "listening to songs, watching shows, reading authentic texts, talking, electronic messages, SMS, social networks, forum or blog discussions, debates" (Institute for the Advancement of Education and Training, 2024, p. 286).

In all high schools and a good part of vocational schools, two foreign languages are taught. In all grammar schools, the *Latin Language* is taught as compulsory, and in the Philological Grammar School, in addition to the continuation of learning the same foreign languages as in primary school, it is possible to choose the courses *Chinese Language and Civilization* and *Japanese Language and Civilization. The Latin Language* (with elements of classical civilizations) and/or *Classical Greek* are being taught as compulsory.

In "Filology Gimnasum", there is a special course named *Basics of Translating,* which serves as a basis for learning not just mediation, but also attaining social and cultural competencies, as well as intercultural competencies. These include developing curiosity, tolerance and a positive attitude towards different cultures and individuals. These competencies – aligning with cultural literacy – are part of all foreign language curricula.

In the classes of the mother tongue (Serbian and others), stage creative activities are applied for the interpretation of a literary work, but they are only solo (monologue, recitation), while dialogue is practised only in the form of debate.

Gymnasiums offer a wide range of subject choices, among which language, *Media and Culture*, *Individual, Group and Society*, *Fundamentals of Geopolitics*, *Religions and Civilizations* offer competencies related to cultural literacy.

There are special gymnasiums for youth talented in audio-visual and scenic arts, where both creating and performing dramatic and media content through workshops are the main activity in major courses. Dramatic games, performing articulation, role-playing and even forum theatre is required by the national curriculum. The creative dramatic process is also present through making scenes from personal materials and objects brought by pupils.

One of the compulsory subjects in all secondary schools is *Sociology (with Citizens' Rights)*, which seeks to improve students' abilities of communication, dialogue and argumentation. It stresses the importance of the openness of society for social development. With regard to contemporary Serbian society, it analyses opportunities, channels and consequences of mobility. (Institute for the Advancement of Education and Training, 2024.)

Vocational high schools (3 years duration) continue learning interculturality through the compulsory teaching of at least one foreign language and through the elective teaching of *Civic Education* during all three years. The goals reflect the idea of cultural literacy: "responsible and engaged life in a democratic society; empowering students to respect, defend and affirm the values of a democratic society; strengthening social cohesion, respecting diversity and supporting the suppression of all forms of discrimination and violence" (Institute for the Advancement of Education and Training, 2024, p.54). The course of *History* (optional for 2 years) seeks to improve "understanding of interculturality, development of tolerance and culture of reasoned dialogue" (Institute for the Advancement of Education and Training, 2024, p.75). Vocational secondary art schools are specialized in various artistic fields and techniques (music, ballet, graphics, design etc.).

The same elective programs as in primary schools are present in secondary. In the course, Civic/*Citizenship Education*, chosen freely by the majority of high schoolers, pupils learn about promoting non-discrimination and participation through roleplaying and acting debates. Both the outcomes and the topics of the course cover several aspects of cultural literacy, inclusion and cohesion. The outcomes are that a pupil should be able to:

- critically examine issues of diversity among people and relate them to respect for human rights and equality;
- connect the personal characteristics of people as dimensions of diversity and discrimination;
- recognize situations and forms of discrimination and react proactively;
- show tolerance towards differences and not discriminate against other people on any basis;
- distinguish situations of exclusion versus inclusion in the social life of the community;
- recognize different types of stereotypes and prejudices and argue the importance of opposing these phenomena;
- distinguish interculturality from multiculturalism;
- argumentatively discuss women's struggle for equality;

- list the most important institutions and documents dealing with the protection of equality;
- list several non-governmental organizations that deal with issues of protecting human rights and the goals of their activities;
- cooperate with other students in conducting research and projects;

The topics and concepts studied are, among others:

- Personal and social identity;
- Sensitive social groups;
- Exclusion versus inclusion in society
- Discrimination;
- Women's struggle for equality;
- Commissioner for the Protection of Equality;
- Stereotypes, auto stereotypes, hetero-stereotypes, prejudices, stigmatization, segregation;
- Ageism;
- Persons of different sexual orientation and their rights;
- Persons with disabilities;
- National Minorities. Multiculturalism and interculturality;
- Migrants;
- Institutions and documents dealing with the protection of equality;
- Non-governmental organizations in the fight for respect for human rights (Institute for the Advancement of Education and Training, 2024).

The program of *Citizen's Education*, both in themes and methodologies, serves as a platform for cultural literacy and much more. *Religious Education* teaches youth not only about dominant Orthodoxy but about other religions as well, promoting critical thinking and tolerance.

Secondary education for adults does not have a specific curriculum.

18.5 Non-formal Education

Serbia's non-formal education landscape plays a critical role in promoting cultural literacy and access to the performing arts. Local cultural centers (kulturni centri), civil society organizations, independent cultural spaces, and grassroots initiatives all contribute to this ecosystem.

Municipal cultural centers often serve as hubs for music, dance, and drama activities for children and youth. These centers vary widely in resources and pedagogical quality but remain one of the most accessible cultural infrastructures in the country. Programs include choir rehearsals, folklore ensembles, children's theatre workshops, and heritage festivals. Many operate in cooperation with schools, often serving as complementary education providers.

Independent cultural organizations—such as the Centre for Cultural Decontamination (CZKD), Heartefact Fund, Kulturanova, Stanica Service for Contemporary Dance, Roma Education Fund programs, and the Association Independent Cultural Scene of Serbia (NKSS)—organize

workshops, festivals, residencies, and community performances that explicitly link artistic practice with questions of memory, identity, and democracy. These initiatives often adopt participatory methods and are particularly important for youth from marginalized or underrepresented communities.

Collaboration between non-formal and formal education sectors is weak and mostly informal. Non-formal education for adults is directed to professional training and advancements, and the curriculum is not defined by the state, which is why it is excluded from the analysis here.

18.6 Conclusions and Reflections

From kindergarten on, the syncretic connecting of arts and humanistic values deteriorates, yet cultural literacy plays a significant part in obligatory language studies and *Sociology* (in secondary education) as well as several elective courses, notably *Citizenship Education*. Fortunately, some humanities courses can provide opportunities for pupils to share their voices, and some teachers can connect these with his/her enthusiasm and initiative to performatively liven up the contents of interest. Methodologically, although many teachers received education and training to give workshops, curriculums do not allow too many options for them. Serbian education is more about information and technology (occasionally application) than methodology, while ideologies, except anti-violence democratic ones, are not promoted outside related subjects.

Overall, the analysis indicates that cultural literacy is not an explicit aim of the Serbian curriculum, but several aspects of cultural literacy are nevertheless included in the education at different levels. The performing arts – particularly drama and dance – occupy a marginal place that narrows further as students progress. Where space for voice, dialogue and intercultural understanding exists, it is concentrated in language and citizenship subjects, in elective courses and, above all, in non-formal provision led by NGOs. Inclusion is affirmed in policy language and tracked through formal indicators, but its realisation in everyday practice is uneven. The reflections below develop these points in relation to the project's theoretical framework (18.6.1) and from a decolonial perspective (18.6.2).

Another notable finding is the progressive narrowing of arts education across educational levels: while early childhood education adopts an integrated, arts-rich approach, music and visual arts increasingly dominate the curriculum, drama and dance become marginal, and many opportunities for dialogical and participatory learning shift to the non-formal sector, where cooperation with schools remains limited.

18.6.1 Findings in Light of the Theoretical Framework

In Serbia's formal education system, *cultural literacy* is not recognized in pre-primary and primary education. Art subjects such as music, drama, dance, crafts, and visual arts are present at early stages, but gradually diminish as students advance. Within these, music and visual arts receive greater attention, whereas drama and dance, especially performing arts remain

neglected. Film and media education is not included in the formal curriculum, though it is increasingly present as an additional course in some of the elementary schools. Outside the school system, many NGOs are fighting to compensate for these gaps.

One of the most significant omissions in the national curriculum is the absence of minority histories and perspectives. This reflects a deeper cultural policy dilemma about whose heritage is included in national narratives and what counts as shared cultural knowledge. This aligns with the paradox of "achieving inclusivity often requires confronting dominant narratives, which can challenge policy stability unless managed with a nuanced and balanced approach." (Matarasso et al., 1999, p. 35)

In Serbia, there is a clear division between formal curricula and non-formal initiatives, as NGOs primarily promote individual, young artistic and cultural participation, while promoting social inclusion and human rights. This contrast further provokes the need for a stronger presence of cultural literacy within official curricula, ensuring its recognition within national cultural and educational policies.

The Serbian education system continues to follow a model based on obedience, reproduction of information, and standardized knowledge, ignoring critical thinking, intercultural dialogue, or meaningful civic participation. Young people are taught how to function within the system, not how to question it or build something new. Instead of shaping their own lives, they serve roles pre-designed for them. What's needed is not just reform, but a fundamental shift—from passive learning to active engagement with culture and community. Arts-based learning, if treated as more than a decorative activity, could become a powerful tool for developing important social values. Since there is no mention of cultural literacy in Serbian laws, implementation of cultural literacy in the school curriculum and making of the nexus of cultural literacy and performing arts education would benefit the overall educational system.

Education can be a space for transformation, rather than the site of ideological control. What we teach is important—but so is how, and why, and for whom. Why do we still invest so much in models that ignore the lived experiences of youth? Why are young people kept away from "adult" topics in theatre, literature, and art, when they've shown—again and again—that they're capable of re-organizing and leading, as we saw during the student protests in Serbia in 2025? Their organization and protests were led by principles of social cohesion and inclusion.

Multiliteracy and democratic participation are present across the curriculum, however performing arts (especially drama and dance) are still marginal, particularly in the later stages of education. Even in non-formal education, cultural diversity and intercultural understanding are rarely addressed. In reality, many of the policies remain only on paper. If arts education and cultural literacy are treated as engaging and participatory activities, they can help bridge across empty talk of inclusion and the lived experience of exclusion.

18.6.2 Decolonial Perspective

Most of the textbooks and educational programs in Serbia were written and published under the influence of colonial and imperial knowledge systems. As articulated in the Decolonial

Epistemic Manifesto, Mignolo (2009) argues that envisioning democratic and non-imperial societies requires a critical break from dominant political and epistemic frameworks, emphasizing the importance of decolonial approaches to knowledge and social structures. Eurocentric knowledge frameworks shape curricular dominance and to a certain extent, advocate for epistemic disobedience by rendering these monistic structures inaccessible or even hostile to minority perspectives. For example, the curriculum of the Medical Faculty in Serbia includes no overview of the history of medicine, nor does it provide medical knowledge of other cultures.

In light of these decolonial theories, and alignment with the decolonial framework of d@rts, this chapter highlights how Serbia's educational structures continue to reproduce normative, Eurocentric narratives under the guise of neutrality and universality. This analysis supports and critically examines cultural policy recommendations that aim to integrate postcolonial awareness and local cultural realities. Importantly, from a decolonial standpoint, these recommendations should not be limited to performative actions or symbolic reforms. They must also prioritize the inclusion of marginalized voices in the policymaking process itself.

Why is our school curriculum aligned with the European level? Why do we even intervene in minority cultures and change their structure? However, to avoid bias in governmental and national policies we need "international contacts as an important counterbalance to the less positive aspects of cultural nationalism" (Matarasso et al., 1999, p. 32). Therefore, cultural policy should examine the preservation of minority cultural interests while guaranteeing cultural inclusion. An effective cultural policy keeps a balance between promoting national cultural and educational development and fostering intercultural relations and exchange.

18.7 Commentaries

18.7.1 Comment from the German Consortium Member University of Cologne

In line with the policy analysis, the chapter on curricula reinforces the idea that document review alone is insufficient to assess the inclusivity of an educational system or its engagement with diversity. While Serbian curricula include key terms such as *democracy*, *cultural awareness*, and *tolerance*, the chapter poses the critical question: What do these values look like in practice?

To a large extent, the curriculum analysis reads as a critique of the Serbian school system, which—according to the chapter—is characterized by "obedience, reproduction of information, and standardized knowledge, ignoring critical thinking, intercultural dialogue, or meaningful civic participation" (18.6.1). The accuracy of this depiction cannot be fully verified externally, yet it resonates with findings from other contexts, where educational systems often tend to preserve existing structures and resist change.

For the dialoguing@rts project, the chapter's reflections on the role of the arts in Serbian schools are particularly relevant. It notes that the arts are predominantly treated as *techne*, with art history taught in a chronological, decontextualized manner that lacks relevance to

the present. From these insights, one can argue that arts education must go beyond instruction to foster critical thinking. This is a lesson with broad relevance for all participating countries. Cultural literacy should extend beyond factual knowledge to encompass critical dialogue—precisely the aim of dialoguing@rts.

18.7.2 Comment by a Practitioner Consortium Member Kulturanova

Kulturanova is a non-governmental, non-profit organization based in Novi Sad, Serbia, officially established in 2001. Its mission is to initiate intercultural and intersectoral dialogue in society by fostering youth creativity through art education, cultural content production, and the improvement of public policies in the fields of culture and youth. Kulturanova operates through four main program pillars: Teatarnova (focused on theater and performance arts), Muzikanova (supports young music creators through different projects), Medianova (deals with audio-visual and media content) and Futuranova (Centers on innovations and dialogue in cultural industries).

Throughout the years, Kulturanova has actively contributed to advancing cultural and educational practices aligned with European policy goals, particularly those outlined in the New European Agenda for Culture and the European Commission's vision for promoting common values through education. Through projects such as *Live On* (with Torino), the Erasmus+ initiative *Youth Creating Digital Democracy (YCGD)*, alongside Creative Europe and Association Independent Culture Scene of Serbia, Kulturanova has engaged high school students in artistic, media, and civic educational projects. These projects emphasize intercultural dialogue, critical thinking, and youth participation. By introducing creative learning methods and producing educational content in collaboration with schools, Kulturanova's work has provided informal support to formal education systems. It has influenced local discussions on curriculum development and encouraged greater recognition of independent cultural influence in shaping youth policies in Serbia. However, it often seems that such impactful initiatives, largely led by independent organizations and NGOs, continue to be overlooked by the government, despite their alignment with broader European objectives.

The Serbian education and cultural systems contain promising elements for promoting cultural literacy, particularly in early childhood education and within specialized artistic schools. Yet performing arts are not fully utilized as educational tools in the broader curriculum. Opportunities for intercultural learning and inclusion through the arts are underexploited.

The curriculum analysis shows that the guidelines for ECEC place strong emphasis on play-based learning, creativity, and early exposure to cultural practices, including music, movement, and visual stimuli. Although not explicitly framed in terms of cultural literacy, ECEC in Serbia emphasizes emotional expression, group participation, and socialization, which are consistent with the goals of cultural literacy education. Music and movement are central elements in daily activities, and storytelling is widely used to introduce children to traditional tales and community values. However, structured drama or dance activities are limited and typically depend on teacher initiative or available external programming. Early childhood education in Serbia supports foundational aspects of cultural literacy—such as emotional awareness, group cooperation, and early artistic expression—but lacks systematic use of performing arts

or multiliteracies. Structured inclusion of drama, dance, and music education would benefit from stronger pedagogical and policy support.

Regarding primary and lower secondary education, the 2017 curriculum reform introduced cross-curricular competencies, including communication, cooperation, and responsible participation. These elements offer potential entry points for cultural literacy but are inconsistently implemented. In the subject of Serbian language and literature, students engage with national and world literature, and dramatizations are sometimes used to interpret texts. However, performing arts methodologies are not part of mainstream instruction.

In schools with dedicated cultural programs or motivated teachers, students may participate in drama clubs, choral ensembles, or local heritage festivals. Yet these practices depend heavily on local funding and school leadership. Educational practices remain predominantly lecture-based, and opportunities for embodied learning are rare. Primary and lower secondary education in Serbia contains curricular space for artistic expression and cultural reflection but lacks systematic integration of performing arts methodologies. Intercultural learning and cultural literacy appear sporadically and largely depend on individual school context.

In upper secondary education, vocational schools for performing arts (music, ballet, applied arts) follow structured curricula with strong emphasis on cultural heritage, European traditions, and technical skill. These schools contribute to cultural literacy by shaping aesthetic judgment, discipline, and historical awareness. However, their selective nature and geographic concentration limit access. While upper secondary education contains valuable content related to cultural literacy, it is highly uneven. Artistic high schools offer deep engagement but remain elite institutions. Broader secondary education lacks systemic strategies for integrating the performing arts into citizenship and cultural awareness.

Serbia has established systems for formal arts education, particularly in specialized schools, but lacks comprehensive integration of performing arts across general education. National guidelines for integrating performing arts into general and civic education are needed. Cultural literacy remains underdefined and marginal within formal curricula, despite its growing relevance.

Non-formal education is a dynamic and inclusive space for performing arts and cultural literacy development in Serbia. Non-formal education actors play a vital role in fostering inclusion and innovation but face structural precarity. While rich in innovation and diversity, its long-term potential is constrained by weak institutional support, fragmented policy connections, and reliance on temporary funding. Partnerships between cultural organizations and schools need to be institutionalized. Instruments such as The Cultural Rucksack in Norway or the Finnish Basic Education in the Arts system demonstrate how policy can bridge formal and non-formal education, promote access, and ensure quality in performing arts education. Serbia currently lacks such integrated models. A systemic approach that supports cultural literacy and social cohesion through the arts remains an open challenge.

To strengthen the role of performing arts in education and society, Serbia could benefit from adopting a national framework for basic education in the arts, enhancing teacher training, and institutionalizing cooperation between schools, cultural institutions, and civil society. A more

cohesive and inclusive approach to cultural literacy through the performing arts would contribute to a more democratic, diverse, and culturally aware society.

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19. Uganda

Alfdaniels Mabingo

Education has continued to play a central role in transforming Ugandan communities. Before the advent of the Western education systems, education was entwined within the social, cultural, religious, and political fabric of the people (Mino, 2011). Everyday life integrated processes and systems that conferred knowledge, skills, and ways of knowing, thinking, and doing. The introduction of formal education after the arrival of British colonialists creates a binary system of knowledge production: the indigenous community-based and informed system and school-based system. Gradually, the school-based system gained strength and became the center of knowledge and skills. The colonial and postcolonial governments diverted resources to institutions within the Western system of education, ignoring the indigenous ways of creating and sharing knowledge (Okoth, 1993). Subjects such as science, mathematics, English, social science, and religious education emerged as knowledge domains. The integration of new subjects expanded as Western formal education gained ground and spread across the country. The performing arts – music, dance, and drama, originally integral to the sociocultural fabric and way of life, were incorporated into the new education system. The Western education system has formed a bedrock for formal education in Uganda. There are three stages of formal education, whose curriculum for performing arts the analysis will draw on: 1) primary school performing arts curriculum, and 2) lower secondary school performing arts curriculum.

Uganda is a diverse country with multiple and diverse ethnic groups of people with a myriad of customs, beliefs, and practices. With legacies of colonialism still visible in the social, cultural, religious, political, and economic fabric of society (Parashar & Schulz, 2021), the performing arts reflect these legacies through the forms of music, dance, and theatre being practiced and taught in schools (Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2003). The contexts such as theatres where the arts are staged and studios where they are produced also reveal the legacies of colonialism and neocolonialism. Within the context of education, the Western forms of the arts sit alongside indigenous practices (Kigozi, 2019). For example, in the lower secondary curriculum, students are expected to perform tasks such the following:

> In this chapter, you are to explore and demonstrate the meaning and effects of the following musical elements: treble clef; stave, key signature of G major; simple duple time; eighth, quarter and half notes. You will then compose, read and write songs following the given elements. You will stage a song of your choice in western style and share experience on the challenges you will meet in organising your performance.

Historically, the Western forms and approaches to education in music and theatre dominated the curriculum within formal education. The teacher training and other professional development interventions also focused on music from Western traditions. Predominantly, indigenous practices such as dances and folksong constituted extracurricular programs such as concerts, competitions, and festivals at the formal education system at primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary levels of formal education. The curricula of performing arts in formal educa-

tion have evolved in relation to the shifts in the needs of local communities and the government's plan for socioeconomic transformation (Wabyona, 2021). This curriculum analysis drew on the following question to locate issues of cultural literacy and social cohesion in the performing arts curriculum: How do performing arts curricula in Uganda address cultural literacy and social cohesion? We situated the analysis within the decolonial framework as the curricula under review function in an environment that was formerly colonized.

19.1 Primary School Performing Arts Curriculum

The primary school curriculum for performing arts lays emphasis on singing and signing, dance, reading and writing/brailing, instrumental work, listening, and drama as the core practical and aesthetic subjects. The subjects are generic, but the topics therein cover specific arts practices from Indigenous cultures and Western traditions. The curriculum states that the creative arts and physical education subjects offer strategies to equip learners with artistic skills at an early age. The emphasis on "artistic skills" seems to indicate that cultural literacy is not at the forefront of the curriculum, although it might be cultivated as an added knowledge base in the process of educating learners to acquire artistic skills.

The curriculum places the learner at the centre of teaching and learning processes. It envisions empowering a learner to be able to

- demonstrate skills of identifying and promoting economic activities in society,
- develop interrelated skills of performing, composing, and analysing in all activities,
- take nutritional care of oneself and other people,
- share with and take care of other people's feelings, interests, abilities and contributions in group activities,
- demonstrate a sense of leadership and teamwork in a variety of situations,
- identify dangers in the environment and take appropriate precautions,
- develop understanding and appreciation and extend his/her positive interests and increased ability to make correct judgments,
- acquire knowledge and skills needed to follow a music-related career,
- make links from music experiences to other areas of learning, and
- apply knowledge and skills of ICT in music development, production and storage.

The curriculum seeks to produce a holistic person who can draw on their skills and knowledge of performing arts to add social, cultural, and economic value to society (Kigozi, 2023). The curriculum states that after undertaking education in performing arts, the learner will be able to use "the knowledge and skills acquired… to impact the community in which they live and also to improve on their social and emotional nourishment (for the case of learners with special educational needs)" (National Curriculum Development Center, 2012, p. 3).

The curriculum dives into subject knowledge as it sets out to train the learner to appreciate and interpret rhythm and pitch in music. It also aims to prepare the learners to appreciate and demonstrate listening and literacy skills in art and music; appreciate, create, and demonstrate a sense of the beauty of African cultural heritage through folk songs; identify, appreciate, and communicate through music, dance, and drama; identify and demonstrate knowledge and skills of interpreting music; appreciate and demonstrates skill and techniques of performing

African folk dances; appreciate international dances both standard and those selected from particular regions; identify and appreciate African traditional music instruments; demonstrates knowledge and skills of melody writing; demonstrate a sense of time management; identify and demonstrate knowledge and skills of performing music, dance and drama; displays self-discipline, tolerance and ethical values; demonstrates skills and techniques of composing music; demonstrates leadership skills. The foregoing list of learning outcomes demonstrates a focus on imparting knowledge and skills in Western forms of performing arts and Indigenous arts practices. This combination of the content offers the learners a range of both technical and cultural exposure, building their literacies in appreciating, interpreting, and creating experiences that traverse the stories, meanings, and people behind these arts practices.

The teaching methods of rote, discovery, role-play/drama, problem-solving, project work, field visits, use of resource persons, exhibition, tactile, and signing open possibilities for learners to experiment with diverse ways of embodying, navigating, understanding, and processing content knowledge of the art forms. Learning methods such as signing support learners with different abilities to be able to partake in the processes of teaching and learning. This connotes inclusivity in teaching and learning. Additionally, the methods provide a wide range of entries into teaching and learning. There is no single method that is elevated above others. These diverse methods imply that the teachers can apply and adapt them to different environments of teaching and learning. Hands-on experience is highly encouraged through the above-mentioned methods of teaching. The curriculum emphasizes that:

> Learning is best achieved by doing. To achieve this, appropriate instructional materials should be availed. [Learners] should be able to locate and collect instructional materials from the environment. The learner should be involved in the making of some of these learning materials. (National Curriculum Development Center, 2012, p. 9)

19.2 Lower Secondary School Performing Arts Curriculum

The pillars of the lower secondary performing arts curriculum (National Curriculum Development Centre, n.d.) drawing on the UNESCO Education Strategy (2014-2021) advocate for a humanistic and holistic vision of education as a fundamental human right that is essential to personal and socio-economic development. Particularly, the curriculum seeks to dovetail into sustainable development goal 4, which advocates for inclusive and quality education. The curriculum prioritizes inclusion and quality education as drivers of a productive, transformative, and just society. The curriculum also draws on the National Development Plan II, which emphasizes the enhancement of human capital, development, strengthening mechanisms for quality, effective efficient service delivery, and improvement of quality and relevance of skills development. Furthermore, the curriculum links with the 2016-2021 manifesto of the ruling National Resistance Movement party of Uganda. The section in the manifesto that the curriculum draws on foregrounds continuous assessment examination systems, strengthening soft skills, which promote self-esteem, conscientiousness, and a generally positive attitude to work, promoting e-learning and computer literacy as processes and approaches that can enhance learning outcomes. The curriculum is considered a tool with the potential to provide an education that holistically addresses and responds to the needs of Ugandan society.

The curriculum seeks to produce independent-minded, socially aware, and creatively active learners who can demonstrate self-motivation, self-management, and self-esteem; understand and cultivate the development of indigenous cultures and languages and appreciate diversity, equity, and inclusiveness; demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the emerging needs of society and the economy; and appreciate the physical, biological and technological world and make informed decisions about sustainable development and its impact on people and the environment. The tenets above point to the quest of the curriculum to nourish critical thinking, cultural literacy, and social inclusion. The curriculum seeks to "instill and promote national unity, an understanding of the social and civic responsibilities, strong love and care for others and respect for public property, as well as an appreciation of international relations and beneficial international co-operation" (National Curriculum Development Centre, n.d., p. 4). It can be deduced that cultural literacy is reflected in the expectation that a learner must be aware of their sociocultural environment by using the performing arts as a lens to understand this sociocultural world.

The aspect of social inclusion is located in the values that the curriculum seeks to cultivate. These values include peace and harmony, integrity and honesty, patriotism, a positive attitude toward work, respect for human rights, and self-control. The list of values shows the humanistic nature of the curriculum. As individuals who emerge from communities and return to communities after school, the curriculum attempts to prepare them to be able to understand, connect, value, and belong to society. Uganda has diverse cultures, religions, political beliefs, and social backgrounds. The values as laid out in the curriculum invite the learner to reflect on this environment and deploy the performing arts to navigate and negotiate the dynamics within the environment. This focus is reflected in the curriculum's aim to "enable the individual to apply acquired skills in solving problems of community, and to develop a strong sense of constructive and beneficial belonging to that community" (National Curriculum Development Centre, n.d., p. 4).

The curriculum positions diverse performing arts traditions from Uganda and beyond as a cornerstone for teaching and learning. The material of the arts such as music, dance, and drama provide resources that the teachers and students use to look at the following topics: 1) exploring, experiencing, making, and appreciating; 2) connections in performing arts; 3) exploring, making and marketing performing arts in the community; 4) creating and appreciating the role of performing arts in the economy; 5) experimenting with performing arts and exploring career opportunities in the performing arts industry; 6) creating performing arts and exploring the performing arts industry in the economy; 7) creating performing arts and appreciating the ethical and legal responsibilities in the production of performing arts; and 8) creating and presenting performing arts. These topics situate the arts within the wider contexts of practice and inquiry, inviting the learner to build capacities to understand the technical elements of the performing arts and place the understanding within the environment of practice. The cultural literacy that is offered through the content of the curriculum locates the music, dance, and drama practices not only within their tradition, but also within the contemporary social, economic, and political phenomena that are always in a constant state of change.

The curriculum sets out a multidimensional pedagogy to deliver the content knowledge of the programs. This pedagogy includes methods such as field works, presentations in class, keywords and meanings, drawing/graphics, role play and narrations, demonstration, locating and

putting marks on an area, presenting findings in graphic and written format, showing data charts, group discussions, writing equations and formulas, carrying out academic research, and sharing or learning with people across the world. The teaching methods open up space for learners to find different entry points into knowledge and skills, extending opportunities for diverse learning abilities to be accommodated and celebrated. Furthermore, the teaching approaches allow learners to find new ways to think about the application of the skills and knowledge acquired through the performing arts in an ever-changing environment.

The curriculum is wrestling with the colonial baggage of homogenizing cultural arts traditions. For example, one of the topics in the curriculum is titled “Using African Styles in Performing Arts” (National Curriculum Development Centre, n.d., p. 18). One wonders what “African Styles in Performing Arts” means. It can be deduced that in attempting to be inclusive by accommodating diverse dance, music, and drama traditions, the curriculum falls into the quandary of generalizing diverse cultures, communities, and traditions. Mabingo (2022) raised concerns about the dangers of homogenizing music and dance traditions from Africa using labels such as “African music” and “African dance”. Whereas these coinages may create commercial value for these art forms in research and scholarship, they seem to undermine the traditions and communities where they originate, further engraining the conventional Western practice and behaviours of looking at Africa as one country.

19.3 Conclusions and Reflections

The performing arts curricula at primary and lower secondary school education levels seek to position the arts as central to the education of a holistic learner. Currently, the curricula straddles Indigenous arts traditions and Western artistic practices. The combination of these two cultural orientations is hoped to offer complex multiple skills to the learners. The curricula function against a background of very diverse Ugandan cultures. Naturally, the curricula cannot accommodate all the Indigenous artistic traditions that exists in these diverse cultures. Yet the curricula are supposed to be ‘national’ in nature and essence. As such, questions still linger regarding whose dance, music, and stories need to be included. How can teachers be prepared to operate nationally in their teaching roles yet they come from a particular cultural background?

19.3.1 Findings in Light of the Theoretical Framework

The primary and lower secondary school performing arts curricula integrate indigenous arts in education in an era when calls to decolonize education in Africa are becoming louder and far-reaching. Beyond integration integrating indigenous arts into education, one can sense attempts to promote embodied cultural learning through performing arts in education. The diversity of arts traditions and knowledge bases offer multiple entry points into embodied experiences through the arts. The quest to expand the scope of arts practices seems to also position varied performing arts as tools for cultural expression and inclusion. The curriculum weaves the agenda that aims to enrich the learners, value arts practices, and frame education as a process and experience that can open up a person to diverse literacies and systems of inquiry. The agenda of arts education in Uganda is entangled with the complexities of decolonisation and the legacies and continuities of colonialism. The arts education in Uganda is and will, for

some time, be a work in progress. There are various questions over whether decolonisation attempts that are grounded in inclusion of diverse cultural practices can adequately accommodate the complex cultural make up of Uganda.

19.3.2 Decolonial Perspective

The performing arts curricula at primary and lower secondary school education is constantly evolving. Within these curricula, there is recognition that the performing arts have a role to play is shaping society through education. Having been sidelined during the colonial period and for the most part of the postcolonial era, the arts are still grappling with legacies of colonialism. As the current curricula reveal, there is an attempt to accommodate Indigenous arts tradition and Western artistic practices in primary and lower secondary school education. The Indigenous art forms are just making entry into the curriculum. Previously, these forms were considered just extracurricular activities in the school system. Western form of music and theatre were privileged to dominate the performing arts curricula for more than 40 years. It can be deduced that the new curricula are making endeavours towards decolonisation. However, the cultural and ethnic complexity of Uganda is still inhibiting the development of a curriculum that addresses the diversity of the communities. Questions have arisen regarding whose arts traditions should be included in the national curricula for performing arts in primary and lower secondary education. Furthermore, the decolonial agenda is limited by the policy that requires classroom instructions to be conducted in English, the national language of Uganda.

19.4 Commentaries

19.4.1 Comment from the Aotearoan Consortium Member University of Auckland

This report provides a detailed and insightful account of arts education within Ugandan primary and secondary school sectors. It also offered an account of tertiary education but that is not included here. We appreciated the opening contextualisation of the emergence of formal education and how this colonisation process ignored indigenous ways of creating and sharing knowledge in diverse communities in Uganda.

The report details curriculum content and associated pedagogies valued within primary and secondary school contexts. While the report notes how the curriculum implies inclusion, cultural literacy and social cohesion, we felt that more quotes from the curriculum documents would evidence the missed opportunities and how the curricula do speak to inclusion, cohesion and literacy.

We very much appreciated how the report speaks to the wrestle between colonial baggage and the homogenisation of specific artistic traditions as erroneous activities known as ‘African music’ and ’African dance’. The tension between valuing some forms of colonial artistic knowing over indigenous and community-based arts knowledges is well stated and valuable.

19.4.2 Comment from an arts educator

The analysis of the arts education curriculum gives a snapshot of the progress that has been made in integrating arts in the main education systems in Uganda. The journey of the arts in education has been long. Since the colonial days, when the arts were demonized and sidelined from formal education, a mindset that despises the arts has been prevalent in the local Ugandan communities. As a result of this colonial brainwashing, the arts have not been incorporated into formal education at different levels. For example, the arts are not given equal attention like subjects such as mathematics, science, and information technology, among others. The analysis shows how the arts are gradually finding their ways in formal education in Uganda. The text shows how the curriculum caters for indigenous cultural practices. The content of the curriculum that analysis came from has significant focus on some cultural dances and music from some ethnic communities in Uganda. Slowly, the curriculum seems to be addressing the challenge which in the past has shown the arts curriculum focusing on western musical knowledge. The indigenous music and dance forms has majorly been reduced to extracurricular activities. As the review of the curriculum has indicated, there are questions whether the curriculum will exhaustively cover music and dance traditions from all the ethnic communities in Uganda. The integration of indigenous dances might require training a cohort of teachers with competences to teach the Indigenous dance forms.

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20. Curriculum Analysis: Summarising Discussion

Katja Mäkinen and Tiina Lämsä

This chapter brings together the main findings from the curriculum analyses and discusses them briefly with examples from Aotearoa New Zealand, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Serbia and Uganda. Chapter 20.1 focuses on the notion of cultural literacy itself and summarizes how the curricula interpret the core concepts related to it: diversity, cohesion and inclusion. For example, the position of children's culture and youth culture are briefly addressed in this context. In addition, the related questions of boundary-making are also brought up.

Chapter 20.2 focuses on the role of performing arts education in cultural literacy learning in the curricula of the different levels of education. It discusses how the potential of performing arts to provide experiences of diversity and foster cultural understanding and empathy is recognized in the curricula of different countries.

Our reinterpretation of cultural literacy as a transformative competence is introduced in the chapter 20.3. It stresses cultural literacy as a dialogical social practice and as critical literacy that entangles with the decolonial perspective taken in d@rts. For example, the chapter brings together observations on curricula discussions on the inclusion of various marginalised groups as well as the ability of performing arts to contribute to democracy education and transcultural learning.

20.1 Cultural Literacy and Related Concepts in Curricula

In the curricula of the seven countries analysed here, cultural literacy refers to the ability to understand, appreciate, and interact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. It includes knowledge of cultural norms, values, practices, and expressions. The analysis showed that cultural literacy is mostly seen in the curricula as a competence of individuals, but sometimes also spanning institutions, communities, and societies.

Cultural diversity refers in the curricula to the variety of cultural expressions, traditions, and practices within a society. It includes individuals and groups from different ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. Cultural literacy and cultural diversity are interrelated in that cultural literacy enables individuals to understand and appreciate the variety of cultural expressions and practices within a society, thereby fostering social cohesion through mutual respect and effective communication.

If cultural literacy means ability to understand and produce meanings in culturally diverse contexts, it is important to pay attention to various aspects of diversity. One of them is the understanding of and the relations between the 'global' and the 'local'. Diversity means both interconnectedness of the world and distinctiveness of local expressions. The notions of global and local are complex, and some of the curricula take care to find a balance between them, acknowledging that they are tightly entwined. For example, a teacher education curriculum in Norway seeks to support the students to construct a nuanced awareness of how global and

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local cultural flows impact each other. In their future work as educators, they can then facilitate cross-cultural understanding among their students.

Social cohesion is linked to cultural diversity in the curricula, referring to the fostering a sense of belonging and bonds between people from different backgrounds. Inclusion is used as a closely related concept that refers to the principle that all individuals, regardless of their background, have equal opportunities to participate and contribute to society. For example, a curriculum in Norway emphasizes that learning drama and rhythm seeks to help students with sign language maintain and develop their cultural and multilingual identity in inclusive and diverse communities. This curriculum also underlines that through engaging in different cultural expressions, students can experience belonging.

To enhance diversity, cohesion and inclusion, it is crucial to ask whose culture is referred to in the curricula that guide the activities and learning at schools. Children's culture is discussed in many curricula: children's agency in creating and changing culture is underlined for example in the curricula in Finland. The curricula from Italy explicitly underline the inclusion and participation of families, children, and young people in school activities. However, the analysis revealed that the intended recipients of curricula are the schools and teachers rather than these groups. The perspectives of families, children, and young people thus remain absent. A curriculum in Norway mentions youth culture, cultural diversity, different gender perspectives, Sami culture, and indigenous rights in the context of inclusive learning environments. Some curricula discuss the importance of including traditions of minorities as part of school festivities, which can be a way of making them visible but contains a risk of representing them as curiosities and expressions of celebrating diversity rather than an equal element of the social and cultural fabric.

While creating cohesion and belonging is a prominent aim in the curricula, the texts sometimes construct binaries of "our Western culture" and "other cultures", maintaining subtle forms of "othering", as the analysis from Germany indicated. Similarly, the analysis in Italy revealed an ethnocentric perspective, through which people with a migration background are often depicted as isolated and lacking information and involvement. More hybrid and fluid conceptions of culture would help aligning the curricula with the realities of a superdiverse societies and better address the needs of students from diverse backgrounds.

20.2 The Role of Performing Arts Education in Cultural Literacy Learning

Performing arts education plays a role in cultural literacy learning in curricula, by providing students with opportunities to engage with diverse cultural expressions through music, dance, drama, and at the interfaces of these forms of expression. In the curricula, these experiences are intended to broaden the students' perspectives and enhance their empathy and understanding by allowing students to experience and interpret different cultural narratives, encouraging creative expression and appreciation of cultural diversity.

Pre-primary education aims to promote children's cultural understanding and communication skills through diverse artistic experiences. Most countries emphasize cultural diversity and inclusivity. Arts education plays a central role in pre-primary education, while performing arts

may have a more marginal position in some countries. Pre-primary curricula include artistic expression and aesthetic education. Creativity and cultural awareness are key elements that support children's holistic development and self-expression.

In the consortium countries, music is generally a compulsory subject in **primary education**, and drama and dance are integrated into the teaching of various subjects. In primary education, most countries' curricula include elements of intercultural learning that promote understanding and tolerance of different cultures. Music, visual arts, and physical education are seen as key subjects that support students' creative expression and cultural understanding. Curricula emphasize cultural diversity and student participation, fostering empathy and respect for diversity.

In **secondary education**, performing arts are generally elective subjects, and students can specialize in music, dance, or drama. Music and drama are central in certain institutions, offering students opportunities to deepen their skills in these areas. Education in the performing arts supports students' cultural literacy and helps them develop empathy and respect for diversity. Emphasis is placed on cultural understanding and social inclusion.

In **tertiary education**, training in the performing arts is specialized and includes both practical and theoretical education. Teacher education includes training in practical and aesthetic subjects, preparing future educators to incorporate artistic elements into their teaching. This approach enhances teachers' ability to promote cultural literacy and social inclusion in the classroom.

In the curricula of different levels, performing arts education seeks to contribute to social cohesion and inclusion by creating inclusive environments where students from diverse backgrounds can collaborate and express themselves. The aim is to promote understanding and respect for different cultural perspectives through shared artistic experiences and encourage participation and engagement from all students, fostering a sense of community and belonging. For example, according to a curriculum in Norway, collaborative projects in music, dance, and drama require students to work together towards shared goals, enabling them to appreciate diverse perspectives, negotiate differences and build a sense of community, thus providing them with skills that are essential for societal cohesion. A curriculum in Hamburg depicted theatre teaching as a platform for negotiation on cultural diversity and "intercultural and transcultural learning processes" (Stadt Hamburg, 2022, p. 7).

As discussed in the analysis of Norwegian curricula, drama, music, and dance frequently explore themes such as inequality, social justice, and community. Studying performing arts at school offers students opportunities to develop empathy, social awareness and understanding of the lives and experiences of others as well as to reflect their own roles in society and in building social cohesion.

Performing arts education also aims to support cultural diversity by providing a platform for the representation and celebration of diverse cultural traditions. When successful, it encourages students to explore and appreciate different cultural forms and expressions and promotes intercultural dialogue and understanding through collaborative artistic projects. For ex-

ample, according to a Norwegian curriculum for primary and lower secondary school, the subject of music develops students' competence in forming and understanding a diversity of expressions.

Non-formal education in performing arts offers plenty of opportunities to cultural literacy learning. A Norwegian curriculum for non-formal cultural education uses the terms social and cultural competence and diversity competence. The analysis on this curriculum revealed that engaging with cultural education can improve students' ability for critical reflection and independent choices and their understanding and appreciation for cultural plurality. It can also help students to find their own voice within the community. As such, non-formal education that enhances respect for diversity and democratic engagement within local communities can contribute to the strengthening of the social fabric. However, if the focus of the curriculum is primarily set on advancing skills, non-formal education in arts may miss its opportunity to build socially cohesive societies that appreciate diversity.

20.3 Cultural Literacy as a Transformative Competence

Education is one of the core institutions of society: it reaches practically everyone. This is why structures, practices and contents of education must reflect the entire society and why it is crucial to take diversity into account in education. The question is about social justice within education, society and global relations.

The learners live in an interconnected world, which underlines the need to acquire competences in acting in the context of diversity. In d@rts, we understand cultural literacy as a social practice and the ability to have constructive dialogue in the context of cultural diversity. Cultural literacy helps to understand that culture is always plural and fluid, constantly constructed and re-constructed through social interaction. As a dialogic practice, it opens space between people for creating culture and new expressions together.

The plural and changing character of culture calls for competences of cultural literacy, and highlights diversity and transformation as core notions of cultural literacy. This means that cultural literacy provides understanding of diversity and makes space for different voices by using one's own voice and listening to others. At the same time, cultural literacy is critical literacy that helps to identify processes and practices of exclusion, marginalization and othering as well as dynamics of categorization, boundary drawing and inequality. Moreover, it offers tools for actively change them.

As such, cultural literacy is understood in d@rts as a transformative competence that entangles with decolonial perspective paying attention to inclusion and participation of all population groups on an equal basis. While inclusion of various marginalized groups is a recurrent topic in the curricula analysed here, the analysis revealed that curricula do not often name the groups they refer to when discussing inclusion. This can be interpreted as decolonial use of language that wishes to question preconceptions and avoid reproducing prior categorisations, seeking to deconstruct marginalisation and othering by not naming any groups. On the other hand, it can be interpreted as insensitive bypassing of differences, ignoring power hierarchies related to diversity, and possibly indirect discrimination.

In any case, neutral rhetoric that does not point out any problems makes it difficult to recognize issues that need changing and acting upon them, thereby resulting in preserving the status quo. While some curricula do include specific regulations for minorities, the risk is that students are separated into distinct groups, without considering them all a part of the social fabric of the school, as concluded in the analysis of the Italian curricula. Nevertheless, we also need to remember that the national guidelines of curricula are inevitably very general, and the local demographics are supposed to be taken into consideration in the local curricula.

Cultural literacy as a transformative competence that aligns with decolonial perspective includes questioning and transforming the perceived conceptions and creating alternative knowledge. The analysis showed that for instance the curricula in Finland encourage students to be critical and participate in civic activity at school and beyond. A decolonial approach can mean challenging the existing power structures within the school through students' action in the students' boards, for example. Some curricula acknowledged the potential of cultural activities to facilitate disagreement, questioning, and producing alternatives. For example, a Norwegian curriculum for music and performing arts depicted cultural activities as arenas for belonging, participation and community of disagreement, which was defined as a precondition for democracy. A curriculum in Italy conceived multilingual and intercultural education through music as a resource for the appreciation of diversities, providing support for social inclusion and democratic participation.

In the curricula analyzed here, the potential of performing arts to raise questions is recognized to some extent. For example, a curriculum in Norway stresses how dance provides students with skills in problem-solving, critical thinking, cooperation, and intercultural understanding, needed for active participation in a societal and work life. Also music can develop students' cultural awareness, practical and aesthetic skills, creativity, and social interaction, according to a curriculum in Norway. Studying music can help to understand how music stems from cultures, creates culture, and contributes to social change, which refers to cultural literacy as a transformative competence. Similarly, a Norwegian curriculum for drama education at the upper secondary level emphasizes the role of cultural and aesthetic competence for broad social participation: through drama, students are encouraged to explore, question and critique societal norms and structures.

21. Reflections: Why Does Curriculum Analysis Matter

The authors of the curriculum analysis were invited to reflect upon the significance of the analysis by writing about the question *Why does curriculum analysis matter*. To enhance dialogue, we agreed to share our reflections with each other and publish them in this deliverable. According to them, curriculum analysis matters because curricula reflect the values and priorities of the society. Curriculum analysis helps to review the goals and content of the education and its pedagogical practices. Authors bring forth that analysing curricula from different countries enables identifying similarities and differences and sharing knowledge and practices across different contexts and levels and forms of education. The reflections show that curriculum analysis matters, because curricula articulate guidelines for developing skills, values, attitudes and ways of knowing for the new generations, thereby shaping how the world will be built in the future.

Curricula are social and political constructions that articulate what matters within a society. Curriculum documents present content that is deemed to be relevant for young people and relevant from disciplinary experts' points of view. Curriculum also reflect the needs and aspirations of the wider society. Reviewing curriculum content and how that content is delivered is vital in ensuring that what we teach and learn and how we teach and learn is both relevant for the future and respectful of the past.

The present analysis of the arts curriculum, in respect to philosophies of social inclusion and social cohesion, speak to the needs of civil society and skill sets young people will need to navigate wider concerns. Ensuring that diverse perspectives are recognised understands that colonialisation of knowledge making processes, products, and theories is not sustainable in our rapidly evolving societies. Decolonial perspectives draw to the front of our minds and bodies that there are multiple ways to know the world and to operate within the world. Decolonial analysis of curriculum takes the opportunity to understand how bias, habits of mind and entrenched values and pedagogies continue to undermine specific learners in every classroom.

(Reflection by Ralph Buck and Sarah Foster Sproull)

Curriculum analysis is crucial because it helps us understand the educational values and priorities embedded in a nation's educational system. Through curriculum analysis, we gain insights into how concepts such as cultural literacy and social inclusion are promoted at different levels of education, from early childhood to higher education. Specifically, for Norway, analysing the curricula reveals the integration of arts education as a tool to enhance cultural literacy and foster social cohesion. By understanding the role that arts education plays in teaching about cultural diversity, democratic participation, and social inclusion, educators can make

informed decisions about improving pedagogical practices to address the needs of a transcultural society. Additionally, it provides a way to assess whether curricula challenge or perpetuate Eurocentric perspectives and how they engage with different cultural narratives and knowledges. By identifying gaps and opportunities, curriculum analysis can help advocate for more inclusive teaching practices that align with cultural literacy goals and promote social inclusion and cohesion.

(Reflection by Jens Knigge and Kristie Mortimer)

Curricula analysis is critical in any educational and training system-related project, whether formal or non-formal. This analysis is not merely a technical exercise but a contribution that starts from recognising the value of education as the foundation of society. Curricula analysis lays the foundation for a continuous and constructive dialogue among institutions, professionals, and citizens, fostering a shared and responsible vision of the future.

Specifically for d@rts, this analysis can contribute to the achievement of goals relevant to the project in terms of the following:

Curricula as fixed/fundamental points and indicators of a country's intentions

Educational curricula represent a declaration of intent: they define what a country considers essential to transmit to its citizens, outlining cultural, social, and economic priorities. They reflect national policies, shared values, and competencies considered fundamental to addressing today's challenges. Analysing the differences between curricula from different countries allows us to highlight diverging features and choices, shedding light on national priorities and pedagogical strategies.

Specifically in the context of performing arts, cultural literacy, and social inclusion and cohesion, curricula analysis helps to understand how these are integrated and dealt with in educational systems, offering insight for potential observations, discussions and possible improvements. This can also become an opportunity to identify best practices and innovative strategies adopted elsewhere. Understanding the peculiarities of the national curriculum and comparing it with foreign models allows professionals to reflect on their methods and approaches, fostering greater awareness of their roles and opportunities for improvement.

Support to social and institutional actors

Curricula are essential tools not only for schools and teachers but also for government, evaluation agencies and those working in the field of educational research. Institutions can use data from the analysis to adjust or design more specific educational policies, answering society's needs/demands more efficiently. Furthermore, from a social responsibility perspective, the choices made in defining curricula directly impact the education of new generations and the development of a population's competencies. Therefore, a thorough analysis is an act of social responsibility, as it can guide these decisions in an informed and conscious direction.

Making citizens and professionals aware

Curricula analysis helps to inform and raise awareness among various professional categories (educators, teachers, trainers…), as well as the general public, on how specific topics are

dealt with in education and training systems. It can promote knowledge and informed participation regarding the themes highlighted by the project (in our case, performing arts and cultural literacy).

Knowledge of different approaches can incite a dialogue between educational cultures, and it can promote exchanges of innovative practices, improving the quality of education globally. Making citizens and professionals more informed helps to create a society that is more attentive and critical of political and institutional choices, encouraging constructive public debate.

(Reflection by Cristina Balloi and Elisa Maria Francesca Salvadori)

Access to education is defined as a right of all segments of the society in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Education is one of the most central – if not the most central – institutions in societies. Especially those forms and levels of education that reach all the population of certain age cohort have crucial impact on how the future will look like and how the members of society will think and act and what they will value. Schools form a large part of the environment in which we grow. The priorities of various (although not all) actors are inscribed in the curriculum. As such, the curricula contain ideas of what is considered important and what kind of world is desirable. Curriculum analysis helps education professionals, and all the rest, reflect these questions and put them in practice through curriculum design, decision-making and implementation.

(Reflection by Katja Mäkinen)

22. Conclusions

Katja Mäkinen

> A fia vave o'o lou va'a alo na o oe, ae a fia tuli mamao le taunu'uga tatou 'alo'alo faatasi
>
> (If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together)
>
> (Samoan expression)

The final chapter produces an overview of education and cultural policies and curricula in the seven consortium countries as well as the European Union and the Council of Europe. It identifies drivers and constraints for cultural literacy learning in formal and non-formal education and cultural activities. The chapter first discusses the meanings and variants of the concept of cultural literacy and its mainly implicit use in the policies and curricula. Various interpretations of diversity and culture are discussed in this context. The findings highlight dialogue as the core element of cultural literacy, and the chapter discusses also other elements of cultural literacy mentioned in the policies and curricula. The chapter also addresses how the contribution of performing arts education to cultural literacy learning remains un-specified in the data, based on the analysis. Moreover, it brings forth that cultural literacy is mostly discussed on the individual level rather than as a collective competence.

The chapter ends with overarching reflections written by some of the authors of the analyses. In these reflections, the authors look at the curriculum and policy analysis in their own country through the lenses provided by the other tasks of the WP1: the theoretical framework drawing from the literature review (D1.1) and the decolonial analytical framework developed in T1.4.

In today's pluralist societies, we need competences for constructive interaction and for appreciating diversity. We need competences that transform paradigms and social behaviours. Through performing arts, it is possible to collaborate on complex, meaningful and innovative expressions of culture and creatively co-construct meaning. However, unjust practices, prejudices and inequality challenge these attempts, maintaining cultural hierarchies, divisions and exclusions. Therefore, in d@rts, we understand cultural literacy as a constructive and respectful dialogue in the context of diversity – as a transformative competence.

Based on the analysis of education and cultural policies and curricula in the seven consortium countries as well as the European Union and the Council of Europe, cultural literacy is not an established concept in education and cultural fields. The term as such was rarely explicitly used in the data analysed here. However, it was implicitly discussed in terms of (inter)cultural education, (inter)cultural competence, cultural awareness, critical literacy or media literacy, for example. Cultural literacy was also often conceived as understanding various cultural forms and practices, as defined in the policy analysis from Uganda.

Multiliteracy was one of the concepts used in some of the curricula that comes close to cultural literacy. It acknowledged various forms of knowledge and various forms of literacy but was

usually not connected to performing arts – even though they provide opportunities to produce and gain embodied knowledge, for example. Elements included in cultural literacy, such as inclusion and tolerance were also present in the data. These notions put the emphasis on cultural expression and cultural participation. They also underline constructive interaction and engagement across perceived differences.

In the policies and curricula, cultural diversity was seen as an asset enriching life but sometimes also a problem to be managed. It included various forms of cultural expression and cultural, ethnic, religious or linguistic backgrounds. Gender equality was also discussed whereas discussion of gender diversity was rarer. Diversity based on sexual orientation, dis/abilities or socio-economic factors received less attention in most of the documents.

The analyses brought forth the need to proceed from celebrating diversity to learning to construct new shared meanings and actions and develop a sense of belonging in the context of cultural complexity. “Different cultures” should not only coexist side-by-side, but as equals in tight interaction, producing new meanings and knowledges together. For example, the analysis from Norway pointed out that while cultural preservation of minorities may contribute to inclusion, it was not necessarily conceptualised as intercultural exchange or dialogue in the policies. Indeed, the curriculum analysis from Germany discussed the need to move from interculturality to transculturality, which acknowledges the hybridity and fluidity of culture and could better generate cohesion and solidarity. This is why participation and community engagement should be discussed in the context of cultural literacy learning. As the policy analysis from Norway underlined, cultural literacy is also about engaging with and contributing to the cultural and democratic life of society.

Both policies and curricula were filled with great objectives, but many of the country analyses noted that they lacked specificity and concreteness in how to achieve these goals. One example is respect between various population groups, which was frequently mentioned in policies and curricula in the context of cultural diversity but often remained abstract. While policies and curricula do not often address specific situations, the inclusion of Sami cultural elements in the Norwegian curriculum is an example of the visible presence of cultural diversity in the documents. The role of the Māori culture in the documents of Aotearoa New Zealand is even stronger.

It is important that cultural diversity is not only seen as a goal nor a circumstance of the surrounding environment but that the institutions designing policies and curricula and providing education are culturally diverse themselves through practitioners from various demographic groups and their various knowledges and ways of knowing, and that this diversity is made visible and seen as an asset. In the school context, equal participation of all students in all activities of the education institutions would ensure diversity and dialogue in decision-making and operations of education institutions. Indeed, inclusion and social cohesion can be seen as core criteria when assessing policies and curricula. Hence, the relevance of education and cultural policies and curricula can be evaluated through the questions of inclusion and representation, as discussed in the reflection by Jens Knigge and Kristie Mortimer at the end of this chapter.

Underlining interaction in the context of cultural diversity implies a central position of dialogue, which is a core element of cultural literacy as understood in d@rts. Respect, openness, awareness and mutual understanding were attached to interaction in the data. Dialogue that is not only respectful, open and mutual but also equally acknowledges various ways of knowing can lead to producing new knowledge. In the curricula and policies analysed here, inequalities and power relations involved in both interaction and cultural diversity were usually not discussed in a comprehensive way, which constrains cultural literacy learning.

This is partly because the focus was often, especially in the curricula, on the individual learner rather than on the collective level. For example, the policy analysis from Italy pointed out that the term intercultural competence tended to emphasise student's intercultural competence rather than that of teachers and the school system. However, the entire society is inherently cultural and thus all actors, both individual and collective, need cultural literacy. Similarly, fragmentation, polarisation and unequal power relations permeate the entire society and thus cannot be solved at the individual level or through education and cultural activities alone. According to a policy in Finland, artistic approaches and acts as well as dialogic encounters in organisations, institutions and societal interaction produce multivocal knowledge and perspectives to be used in societal action and decision-making, which implies understanding cultural literacy as a collective competence operating at organisational and societal level.

Common to the policies and curricula in different contexts was that they advocated goals that are appealing to most and difficult to object to. These aims often intertwine with values, including human rights, equality, non-discrimination, democracy, respect, tolerance, inclusivity and community. The type of documents analysed here do not usually discuss the complexities and contradictions inherent in these beautiful ideas, which makes them difficult to interpret.

The relevance of policy and curriculum analyses for decision-making was acknowledged in the reflections by the consortium partners (see chapters 11 and 19). This analysis enables recognising drivers and constraints for cultural literacy learning in formal and non-formal education and cultural activities and thus helps develop better curricula and policies in these fields. Supportive policies and curricula ensure that cultural literacy is integrated into teaching practices, fostered by educators and institutions alike. The availability of resources and opportunities for learners of all ages to engage in cultural activities further enhances their understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural perspectives.

Despite these drivers, there are significant constraints that hinder the effective promotion of cultural literacy. Limited funding and resources for arts education programmes pose a major challenge, restricting the scope and reach of these initiatives. Furthermore, a lack of training and support for educators to effectively teach cultural literacy can impede the integration of these concepts into the curriculum. Societal and institutional barriers also play a role, often hindering the inclusion of diverse cultural perspectives and limiting the impact of cultural literacy efforts. School systems themselves are not always equal but may reinforce inequality among young generations. Equal basic education for all is one of the structural preconditions for cultural literacy learning and social inclusion and cohesion.

Societies in Europe and beyond urgently need social cohesion to counter challenges such as misinformation, demographic change and migration, which reproduce social stratification and lead to social fragmentation and polarisation. Cultural literacy as a dialogical practice can help

individuals, groups and organisations engage and appreciate cultural differences and thereby strengthen democratic dialogue and citizenship, which can promote social cohesion. Using diverse cultural heritage and living arts practices, cultural literacy can create a post-colonial European sense of belonging. In the policies and curricula analysed here, social cohesion and inclusion were often aimed at, but performing arts education was not fully embedded in these goals.

The findings of the policy and curriculum analysis contribute to identifying and creating innovative, sustainable, dialogue-based and participative performing arts education practices that advance cultural literacy, social cohesion and inclusion. Indeed, it is important to ask whether and how performing arts education is used for supporting cultural literacy and social cohesion and inclusion. However, it is equally important to ask the same question about other educational activities and other subjects from history to chemistry. That is outside of the scope of this analysis, but we hope that this analysis will inspire scrutiny of policies and curricula from that perspective.

The Samoan expression in the opening quote of the concluding chapter (cited in a curriculum by the Aotearoa New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2024a, p. 2) captures the essence of the conviviality of the human condition: it is through interaction and cooperation that we can achieve important things such as cohesion and inclusion. This is why it is crucial to understand cultural literacy as a dialogical competence and practice it through performing arts in which interaction is intrinsic.

Authors' Reflections on the Findings

The present analysis of the Aotearoa New Zealand arts education curriculum at pre-primary, primary, early secondary and senior secondary levels recognised that in Aotearoa New Zealand we live in a bi-cultural society that is increasingly multicultural and complex. All curriculum recognised Māori (Indigenous) perspectives and viewpoints. The Pre-primary curriculum was most explicit in this regard, while the Senior Secondary curriculum recognised explicit disciplinary expertise within Māori Performing Arts. Having said this there remains an unstated tension between the western (Pakeha) separation of dance, music, drama etc into distinct disciplinary curriculum, while the Māori perspective would argue that these arts forms are not distinct. This is most apparent in the Primary and lower secondary curriculum. Having said this, the curriculum allows the teacher to make the final decision regarding curriculum content and how they want to deliver the curriculum. As such they may integrate the arts with each other and/or across the wider curriculum. In this way I believe the curriculum remains true to an aim of advancing disciplinary knowledge and expertise while also allowing the non-siloed delivery of the arts.

The present Arts education analysis reveals that Curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand are relatively forward thinking in respect to issues of inclusion and social cohesion, and relatively respectful of indigenous cultural perspectives. The Aotearoa New Zealand curriculum supports the d@rts literature review (D1.1) in respect to arts education having explicit capacity to foster inclusion and social cohesion. The Performing Arts curriculum note how they contribute to an education that develops learners' notions of inclusion and social cohesion, however they don't claim to 'own' this focus or capability. The Aotearoa New Zealand Curriculum is a values driven document, with values of inclusion and social justness, cohesion, community respect and so on underpin all subject areas.

The present analysis of arts policy in Aotearoa New Zealand embraces and advances our bi-cultural and multicultural arts context, and mirrors ongoing social and political change locally and globally. Creative New Zealand, Ministry of Culture and Heritage, and Auckland Council all involve policy language aligned with inclusion and social cohesion, and Aotearoa New Zealand arts policy is invested in embracing and advancing Māori (Indigenous) and Pasifika arts practice, alongside all performing arts in Aotearoa New Zealand. The policy analysis identified that Aotearoa New Zealand's policy avoids Eurocentric dominance in its meanings, contexts and uses of concepts, and embraces cultural literacy, intercultural competence, social cohesion and inclusion in a uniquely Aotearoa way. In alignment with the literature review (D1.1), performing arts in Aotearoa New Zealand "serves as a powerful tool for embodying cultural knowledge and facilitating social cohesion, offering both practical and creative means to engage with diverse cultural perspectives" (Mortimer et al., 2024, p. 42). Aotearoa's arts policies increasingly reflect a commitment to decolonizing cultural spaces, ensuring that Māori and Pasifika voices remain central in national dialogues. This ongoing shift underscores the importance of arts not only as a medium for expression, but as a vital force for challenging and reshaping dominant cultural narratives.

(Reflection by Ralph Buck and Sarah Foster Sproull)

Cultural Literacy, Intercultural Competence and Education

In line with the findings from the literature review (D1.1), Italy is also among the countries that do not explicitly use the concept of cultural literacy in their documents, instead employing analogous or similar ideas. Specifically, Italy uses intercultural education as a reference point. In the analysed documents, curricula and policy, this concept focuses on (intercultural) dialogue and connecting intercultural competences. However, it tends to emphasize students' intercultural competence rather than that of teachers and the school system.

References to intercultural education as an ongoing process (Mortimer et al., 2024, p. 28) are almost absent, as are references to moving beyond mere cultural understanding and celebration of diversity to actively engage with socio-political contexts and question complicity in oppressive systems (Mortimer et al., 2024, p. 30).

Furthermore, the analysed documents lack explicit references to "decolonizing intercultural education", both in terms of including the recognition and appreciation of alternative knowledge systems and perspectives and in terms of addressing "awareness of teachers' positions within the hegemonic culture" (Mortimer et al., 2024, p. 33).

Lastly, a reflection on the distinction between intercultural and multicultural education is worth noting. While the approach presented in Italian documents is predominantly and explicitly intercultural, it is often translated into multicultural activities, projects, and interventions in schools. Examples of this are the many projects available online, where schools promote intercultural education through events such as "typical food day", "typical music day", "typical dances day", etc. These projects tend to perpetuate a static and stereotypical, sometimes even highly folkloristic, view of culture.

Cultural literacy & policy

The analysed Italian policies promote "cultural inclusion, social cohesion, and a broader appreciation of diverse cultural perspectives" (Mortimer et al., 2024, p. 40). However, this occurs through individual references within the texts rather than as an explicit choice by the legislator or the entity that drafted the document. There is no evidence of normative intentionality in this regard.

Furthermore, policies related to the performing arts and those concerning intercultural education do not interact. There are no explicit references to a common framework, but the relationship can be traced through individual elements and references within the texts.

As previously highlighted, Italian policies do not address cultural accessibility in terms of equal access to cultural education for all socioeconomic groups. Similarly, they do not address marginalized groups' exclusion from higher artistic education or professional artistic development opportunities (Mortimer et al., 2024, p. 44), nor do they aim to address historical power imbalances and incorporate the perspectives of marginalized groups (Mortimer et al., 2024, p. 47).

These policies generally need a central focus on integrating decolonial perspectives into cultural literacy and policymaking. Specifically, it is challenging to find references to a "critical re-evaluation of existing frameworks, challenging the dominance of Western educational models and promoting a more inclusive and equitable educational system" (Mortimer et al., 2024, p. 48).

Role of performing arts in education

In line with the findings from the literature review (D1.1), the analysis of Italian documents also confirms that the performing arts "can create spaces where intercultural competence and cultural literacy can be fostered" (Mortimer et al., 2024, p. 52). Although the concept is rarely explicitly expressed, components of cultural literacy intertwined with the performing arts can be identified in many documents, most notably in policies. However, the focus is frequently placed on the inclusive function and the appreciation of differences, overlooking the development of intercultural competence (or cultural literacy).

In Italy, as previously mentioned, the main focus is on music, often presented as a "tool for cultural expression and inclusion" (Mortimer et al., 2024, p. 58) without references to adequate training pathways or the necessary skills to achieve this goal.

Mentions of the decolonial approach (even implicit ones) are virtually absent, as is its potential to support the performing arts and intercultural education in addressing historical injustices, integrating cultural diversity, and creating spaces for genuine cultural expression (Mortimer et al., 2024, p. 59).

Finally, Italy's significant tradition of social theatre (Mortimer et al., 2024, p. 59) is rarely reflected in the analysed documents. While the inclusive power of the performing arts is acknowledged, there is almost no emphasis on "giving voice" to participants, and theatre is seldom highlighted for its role as a tool for fostering participation. Similarly, the crucial role of the performing arts as an instrument of change for the broader community has yet to emerge in curricula or policies, where other aspects are more frequently emphasized.

(Reflection by Cristina Balloi and Elisa Maria Francesca Salvadori)

The curriculum and policy analyses align well with the theoretical framework outlined in the literature review (D1.1). The Norwegian curricula reflect an approach to cultural literacy that emphasizes interaction, aligning with the theoretical understanding of cultural literacy as an ongoing, participatory process. Arts education in Norway is positioned as a tool for students to engage with and understand cultural diversity, which is consistent with the theoretical emphasis on intercultural dialogue.

From a decolonial perspective, the inclusion of Sami cultural elements in the curriculum is an important step toward challenging Eurocentric frameworks. However, there is still room for deepening the engagement with indigenous and non-Western knowledge systems to make them a more integral part of the curriculum. The policy and curricula reflect an intent to move beyond traditional perspectives, but further steps are needed to fully embrace decolonial objectives by integrating diverse cultural narratives as foundational, rather than supplementary, elements of education. Analysis of both curriculum and policies can also consider who they are written for, by and with. For example, who wrote the curricula and policies and did this include any consultation or collaboration with different people in the community? Do the curricula and policies consider diverse people, cultures and contexts? Through these analyses

and critical reflections, we can better understand how inclusive and representative the curricula and policies are and identify opportunities to strengthen their relevance and impact for our communities.

(Reflection by Jens Knigge and Kristie Mortimer)

According to the literature review (Mortimer et al., 2024) performing arts has the potential to combat systemic inequalities in societies. To some extent, this potential was acknowledged in some of the curricula and policies analysed here but it was not a prominent feature. Similarly, some of the documents addressed the question of decolonisation of intercultural education or educational frameworks but this was not discussed in detail. In general, the transformative potential of performing arts education, cultural diversity and cultural literacy to renew societies was not fully recognised.

(Reflection by Katja Mäkinen)

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