

**KWALITEIT EN CONSISTENTIE**



**ARTS AND CULTURAL EDUCATION  
IN FLANDERS**

**By Anne Bamford** → September 2007



## PREFACE

'The decomposed Biker' (De ontbonden Fietser). That's the name of the work of art on the cover of this book. A very successful example of education of creative art and culture. This work of art was the recurrent theme in the school project Kitsch 2.2 of the primary school for special needs *De Horizon* in Aalst. In various classes both pupils and teachers jointly reflected on the subject and its practical implementation. They experimented with diverse materials and techniques, assessed the project and made small adjustments. It was an exceptional experience for all people involved. Pupils and teachers were uncommonly enthusiastic and cooperated with heart and soul. All pupils were able to integrate references to their own multicultural background and their specific interests in this project. When they presented me their work of art, they told me their story. They enjoyed being able to take the initiative in working together on their project and achieving a nice result. The work of art is now displayed in my Brussels office, where national and international visitors often look at it in sheer admiration.

The working methods of this school comply with almost all the requirements for sound art education. These requirements were distilled out of a comparative research of different countries by professor Anne Bamford in 2006. In the first half of 2007 they acted as the benchmark for the evaluation of the scene of art and cultural based education in Flanders, in schools as well as in leisure time.

This publication reflects the results of this analysis. Some findings are sometimes surprising, but certainly encouraging. Flanders has high quality programmes and projects on art and cultural based education, but for all sorts of reasons not all children and youngsters are able to participate in them. Bamford focuses on the importance of inclusion: all children have the right to art and cultural based education. So here again it's a matter of equal chances for all.

This richly elaborated research with theoretical considerations, examples of good practice and recommendations asks for a thorough assimilation. For that reason I will appoint a committee to develop the conclusions and recommendations of this piece of research into concrete policy proposals. This committee will include experts of the various sectors involved.

It is my sincere hope that this publication will be a source of inspiration for many. It will undoubtedly have a positive influence on the art and cultural based education at school and far beyond.

**Frank Vandenbroucke**

*Flemish Minister for Work, Education and Training*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research would not have been possible without the support and generosity of all the people involved.

Special thanks to the team at *CANON Cultuurcel* who initiated the research, provided moral and logistical support, and were critical friends at all stages of the process.

Ms Ann Dejaeghere from the Strategic Research division of the Flemish Ministry of Education provided contextual leadership, translation and document and policy interpretation. Ms Dejaeghere is a dedicated researcher, highly efficient guide and logistical manager and valued companion and friend. The research has benefited greatly from her input and assistance at all stages from inception and design to implementation and review.

Gratitude is expressed to Professor Matt Qvortrup for his input in relation to policy and contextualisation and his expertise in the formulation of recommendations and reporting. Special thanks to Dr Nicholas Houghton for his editorial contributions and support.

The following organisations were consulted in the research

*Artforum, de Veerman, Wisper, Mooss, fABULEUS, Jekino, Koning Kevin, Initiatief Audiovisuele Kunsten, Vlaams Theater Instituut, Forum voor Amateurkunsten, Vlaams Centrum voor Openbare Bibliotheken, Muziekcentrum Vlaanderen, Cultuurlokaal, Culturele Biografie Vlaanderen, administratie Cultuur, administratie Jeugd, administratie Onderwijs en Vorming, inspectie Onderwijs, Kabinet Onderwijs en Vorming, pedagogische begeleidingsdiensten VSKO, POV, OVSG, GO! and VOOB, Gemeentelijke Basisschool De Harp, Vrije Basisschool De Mozaïek, Vrije Basisschool Buggenhout, Lerarenopleiding, Arteveldehogeschool, Academie Beeldende Kunsten van het Gemeenschapsonderwijs Anderlecht, Lerarenopleiding Hogeschool Gent, Koninklijk Atheneum Maerlant Blankenberge, Vrije Basisschool Het Palet, Sint Vincentiuscollege Ieper, Stedelijke Academie Ieper, Kunsthumaniora van het Gemeenschapsonderwijs Gent, Hogeschool Sint Lukas, Basisschool van het Gemeenschapsonderwijs Gouden Regen, Hiberniaschool, Hogeschool Antwerpen, Departement Dramatische Kunst, Muziek en Dans, Koninklijk Atheneum II Lyceum Mechelen, Don Bosco Technisch Instituut Halle, Instituut Maris Stella – Sint Agnes Gemeentelijke Lagere School voor Buitengewoon Onderwijs Oranjerie, Basisschool van het Gemeenschapsonderwijs Het Laerhof Merksem, Vrije Lagere School - Heilig Hart Tessenderlo, Provinciaal Instituut Lommel, Basisschool van het Gemeenschapsonderwijs het Kleine Atheneum, Gemeenteschool Schoor, Haspengouwse Academie voor Beeldende Kunsten, Stedelijke Academie voor Muziek, Woord en Dans, Sint Niklaas, Stedelijke School BuSO De Brug Aarschot, Lerarenopleiding Groep T, Lemmensinstituut Leuven, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Faculteit Letteren en Wijsbegeerte, Educatieve Dienst MuHKA Antwerpen, Flanders DC, Vlaams Radio Orkest, Fontana Identity & Design, S. Print BVBA, UNIZO, CC Zwanenberg, CC de Ploter, CC Lokeren, CC de Werft, CC Gildhof, Vlaamse Vereniging Leerkrachten Geschiedenis, Vereniging Lerarenopleiders Vlaanderen, Vereniging Lerarenopleiders Vlaanderen, Muzes, Vereniging Vlaamse Leerkrachten, Stedelijke Openbare Bibliotheek Gent, Werken aan Onderwijs, Cultuur en Kunst Gent, Gemeenschapsinstelling De Zande, Beernem, Theater Malpertuis and Vereniging Vlaamse Cultuur- en Gemeenschapscentra.*

The following individuals are thanked particularly for their participation in the research. At all stages the research team was made to feel very welcome and the honesty of responses and generosity of time and support made the thoroughness of the research possible.

*Pieter Quaghebeur, Annemie Geerts, Steve Maes, Steve Van Roy, Dirk De Lathauwer, Geert Poelaert, Jos De Backer, Walter Provo, Ann Olaerts, Kaat Peeters, Frederika Van Wing, Roel Vanhoeck, Marc Van Mechelen, Hildegard Vangenechten, Marie-Anne Van Hijfte, Karen Jacobs, Ine Vos, Marijke Verdoodt, Johan Van Gaens, Karl Desloovere, Vera Pollier, Dirk Diepers, Leen Mortier, Mieke Quintens, Ward Dejaegher, Ingrid Leys, Roger Standaert, Peter Michielsens, Marleen Deputter, Valerie Del Re, John De Plecker, Micheline Scheys, Kris De Ruysscher, Hans Schmidt, Wim Smet, Miet Bogaert, Vital Muylaert, Maggy Dekens, Christiane Samaey, Nathalie Verstraete, Brigitte Wolf, Frank Billiet, Didier Veeckman, Marjan Van Theemsche, Annie Lion, Hilde De Maeyer, Margot Claeys, Luc Dewolf, Leen Vanheuverzwijn, Willem Klewais, Karolien Nijs, Karen Clement, Ida Jonniaux, Ilse Vanhoutte, Christiane Helder, Jürgen Balbaert, Jan De Vos, Conny Louwage, Frank Bosschaert, Steven Decaesstecker, Kris Latré, Geert Breine, Dirk Viaene, Jan Van Vaek, Peter Deschutter, Willem De Greef, Jan Cools, Veerle Dierick, Wilbert Lambrechts, Ann Vervoort, Pascale De Groote, Annouk Van Moorsel, Linda Germeyns, Roos Van Baelen, Margaretha Callens, Gilbert Torisaen, Griet Quaghebeur, Tim Thys, Paul Geerts, Lieve Rempelbergh, Patrick Huygen, Nancy Vervoort, Jée Wuyts, Marijke Gyselaers, Barbara Spruyt, Eliane Kiesekoms, Paul Vanhees, Jan Sleurs, Sonja Abeels, Carine Schuytjens, Toon Vekemans, Marc Neven, Lydia Scheelen, Ann Van Aeken, Geert Malchair, Josee Peters, Herman De Vleeschhouwer, René Cypers, Caroline Van Vlasselaer, Bram Vanderbruggen, David Patteet, Stijn Dhert, Annick Desair, Kris Vercammen, Sofie Jacobs, Hilde Jacobs, Mark Joly, Werner Goegebeur, Peggy Saey, Filip Van Dingenen, Hans Van Regenmortel, Pieter Van den Broeck, Beatrijs Lauwaert, Piet Convents, Goedele Van Dijk, Jan Van Dijk, Ann Debaere, Tine Maenhout, Gunther Broucke, Anne Leemans, Eric Van Tuycom, Gilles Van Dorpe, Veerle Boesmans, Fri De Keyser, Nicole De Messemaeker, Paul Neefs, Claudine Van Tieghem, Saskia Boelens, Pedro De Bruyckere, Hans François, Katleen Sedeyn, Jos Maes, Wietze Minne, Denise Matheve, Myriam Verreycken, Annie Lens, Ethel Thuyn, Ingrid Antheunis, Frank Mulier, Herman Verschelden and Evi Gillard.*

## CONTENTS

Executive Summary .....	6
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction and overview</b>	
1.1 Introduction .....	9
1.2 Scope .....	9
1.3 Context .....	10
1.4 Country/Policy .....	11
1.5 Financing patterns .....	13
1.6 Schools .....	15
1.6.1 Vignette: A philosophy-based primary school within a medium-sized city .....	16
1.6.2 Vignette: A religion-based school within a small village .....	16
1.7 School choice .....	16
1.8 Arts Education .....	18
1.9 Cultural Education .....	20
1.10 Heritage Education .....	21
1.11 Media Education .....	22
1.12 In school provisions .....	23
1.12.1 Vignette: Percentage of budget by level of schooling .....	23
1.12.2 Vignette: A little taste of art .....	24
1.13 After school/Part-time arts education (DKO) .....	24
1.13.1 Vignette: Trying to be more creative .....	26
1.14 Aims: Why have the arts .....	26
<b>Chapter 2: World Standards – Benchmarking</b>	
2.1 Introduction .....	30
2.2 World standards: Defining the alpha of quality arts education .....	30
2.3 The nature of quality .....	30
2.4 Indicators of Quality .....	31
<b>Chapter 3: Responses to quality</b>	
3.1 Introduction – Overall statements about quality .....	33
3.2 Active partnership with creative people and organizations involving teamwork and collaboration .....	33
3.3 Flexible organizational structures and permeable boundaries .....	36
3.3.1 Vignette: Various places to learn .....	37
3.4 Accessibility for all .....	38
4.4.1 Vignette: The first thing I work on is getting them to laugh .....	39
3.5 Cultural diversity .....	40
3.5.1 Vignette: In a mosaic, every piece is beautiful .....	41
3.5.2 Vignette: The children really opened their hearts .....	41
3.5.3 Vignette: I would say 90% are upper class .....	42
3.5.4 Vignette: Poverty is a problem in the school .....	43
3.6 Ongoing professional development .....	43
3.7 Detailed assessment, reflection and evaluation strategies .....	49
3.7.1 Vignette: We make a portfolio of learning .....	50
3.7.2 Vignette: You have touched on a raw nerve .....	51
3.8 Libraries .....	52
3.8.1 Vignette: We have wonderful facilities for young people .....	53
3.9 Cultural Centres and Institutions .....	54
3.10 Cultural agencies (Mediators) .....	55
3.10.1 Vignette: We exist and have a presence across networks .....	55
3.10.2 Vignette: Making sure no one slips through the net .....	56
3.11 Project and research-based enquiry .....	57
3.12 Centred around active creation, performance and exhibition .....	57
3.13 The languages of the arts .....	58
3.14 Risk-taking .....	59
3.15 Profiling the school .....	59
3.15.1 Vignette: We try to really sell the message for the arts .....	60
3.15.2 Vignette: The arts as a key way to profile the school .....	60
3.16 Education in and through the arts .....	61

## Chapter 4: So? Taking the longer view

4.1	Introduction .....	63
4.2	Continuity – Arts impact and learning lines .....	63
4.2.1	Vignette: The arts are very important .....	64
4.3	The Broad School and social outcomes .....	64
4.3.1	Vignette: The school is some isolated island .....	65
4.4	Museums .....	65
4.5	Out of school provisions .....	66
4.5.1	Vignette: Hard to show the impact .....	67
4.6	Creative industries .....	67
4.7	Research and sharing .....	69
4.7.1	Vignette: We don't really draw this all together .....	69

## Chapter 5: Impediments

5.1	Introduction .....	70
5.2	Time .....	70
5.3	Finances .....	72
5.4	Limited Accessibility .....	74
5.4.1	Vignette: You see them glow .....	74
5.5	Implementation .....	75
5.6	School leadership/Directors .....	76
5.6.1	Vignette: A kind of ivory tower .....	77
5.7	School Boards .....	79
5.8	Inspectors and pedagogical advisors .....	79
5.9	Quality Assurance .....	81

## Chapter 6: Teacher Education

6.1	Introduction .....	82
6.2	Good arts teachers .....	82
6.3	Research into teacher education .....	82
6.4	Requirements for educational training .....	83
6.5	Student teachers .....	83
6.6	Teacher education vision, scope and processes .....	85
6.7	Specialist Teacher Education .....	87
6.7.1	Vignette: They see music as a job, we saw the arts as our life .....	88
6.8	Teacher education and inservice education .....	89
6.8.1	Vignette: This is public relations. It is not the arts .....	89
6.9	Working around the problem .....	90
6.10	Conservatories .....	91

## Chapter 7: Recommendations

7.1	Introduction .....	94
7.2	Recommendations .....	94
7.3	Areas requiring more research .....	95
7.4	Conclusions/Future directions .....	95

References .....	96
------------------	----

## List of tables

1.	Abbreviation of school types .....	17
2.	Percentage of budget by level of schooling .....	23

## List of figures

1.	Aims of arts education .....	28
2.	Quality arts education .....	31
3.	Usage of professional development providers .....	44
4.	Discipline breakdown of courses offered .....	48
5.	Types of assessment used .....	51

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on a six months study of arts and cultural education in Flanders, this report assesses the current state of these two subjects in the region. It identifies the short-comings and many strengths of the current provisions and their implementation, as well as proposing how best-practice models can be transferred from the pre-eminent performers and educators to those at the other end of the performance scale.

While acknowledging the special circumstances pertaining to Flemish art education - especially its complexities and the large degree of decentralisation - the report combines international insights with regional characteristics to assess the current state of play.

A number of major factors should be pointed out. Many of these involve financial and budgetary matters. Thus, while the financial support for education indicates a high level commitment to education, the funding streams for arts and culture education are unclear.

Further, the structural costs for delivering arts education appear to be quite high. In the light of this, it is recommended that specific tied funds in arts and cultural education should be continued and made more structural and long-term. The processes for application should be simplified while those for monitoring and evaluation should be improved. The arts would benefit from a more coherent and combined approach to funding with generally agreed targets and less duplication and partitioning of funding.

It is generally the case that the physical resources in the schools are of adequate standard to facilitate the delivery of quality arts education. However, a culture of competition between schools means there is little sharing of good practice, especially between different school networks. To resolve this, arts and cultural funding could be used to encourage greater sharing of good practice.

Throughout the visits it was a general conclusion that the term 'culture education' is seen to have diluted arts education in schools and the educational role of culture within communities. Moreover, heritage education receives relatively little attention and is marginalised in the curriculum. It is also a concern that media education is minimal and unconnected to arts education.

Accessibility for all is a highly prized belief in Flemish education but the reality is that arts and cultural education is generally available at the highest level to the affluent and educational elite of Flanders. Schools and cultural institutions are aware of the need for greater cultural diversity but - in practice - arts and cultural education tend to favour students from the more elite echelons of Flemish society.

In the same context it can be stated that, overall and despite being very low cost, part-time arts education (DKOs) fails to attract specified target groups. Moreover, despite strenuous efforts DKOs generally attract children from families with stronger socio-educational backgrounds. While Flanders has an extensive and well-funded system of after-school arts education, the extent and quality of arts and cultural education within primary and secondary schools varies considerably according to the expertise within the school.

There are many good practice examples of partnerships between schools and artists in Flanders. These should be extended, both in terms of the number of schools involved and the length of time of the partnerships. It is, furthermore, necessary to give consideration to partnerships with industry and the broader community.

The quality and extent of arts and cultural education within teacher education appears to have diminished in recent years. At the same time, the demand for more creative and culturally-orientated teachers within education has increased. This has resulted in a skills shortage in this area. This is particularly evident in primary schools.

Post-graduate training is a concern. Professional development opportunities are expensive and short-term and do not develop pathways of learning for teachers and are generally not accessible to teachers who are in full-time employment.

It is recommended that those responsible for delivering arts and cultural education - and children - should be encouraged to take a more enquiry oriented approach to learning in the arts.

There is a general lack of expertise in the area of evaluation and assessment of arts and cultural learning. At all levels of the education and cultural systems there is a need for the development of practical ways to monitor quality and achievement in arts. This is particularly significant given the fact that low quality arts and cultural education is detrimental and that the positive impacts of the arts are only engendered through high quality programmes.

Cultural Centres provide a large number of programmes for children. This is commendable, but it is a concern that there is a

general lack of funding, interest and expertise in art and cultural **education** amongst these centres.

It is important that projects and learning lines culminate in a high quality presentation of the learning process and that process and products be clearly linked. To enable an effective balance between process and product, learning in the arts needs a compulsory allocation of time at **all** levels of the school so that children systematically and continuously develop competences in the languages of the arts.

The pupils attend a relatively large number of events and performances outside school. While passive arts and cultural education (such as these) are valuable they should not be used as a substitute for children's active creative processes and opportunities for children to be performers and artists.

International research shows that the arts and culture are vital languages for understanding the world, yet this aspect of the arts is not apparent in Flanders.

Funding should encourage risk taking and experimental approaches and arts education should lead to an improvement in student, parental and community perceptions of schools.

Schools and cultural agencies engaged in art and cultural education could be assisted to develop communication plans and to present their good practice through the media.

School inspectors and school boards have a vital role to play in supporting the value of the arts, implementing requirements for arts and cultural education and monitoring the quality of provisions. The pedagogical advisory services are essential in implementing requirements for arts and cultural education, the school inspectors in monitoring the quality of provisions. These bodies will need support and training in these tasks. It is desirable that the inspectors and boards adopt a positive attitude to the value of the arts and become advocates for the importance of these in the curriculum.

As has been showed in UNESCO Compendium (Bamford, 2006), there is a difference between what can be termed, *education in the arts* (e.g. teaching in fine arts, music, drama, crafts, etc.) and *education through the arts* (e.g. the use of arts as a pedagogical tool in other subjects, such as numeracy, literacy and technology). This finding was also evident in Flanders. While this was acknowledged, it remains the case that schools need stronger programmes in the arts and artistic and creative ways to learn in an integrated way across the curriculum.

The commitment to research and evidence-based policy in Flanders is commendable.

[Bamford, A.](#)

(2006) *The Wow Factor: Global research compendium on the impact of the arts in education* (Berlin, Waxmann Verlag).



# Chapter 1

## { INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW }

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In 2006-07 evaluative research was undertaken in Flanders to determine the nature, scope and impact of arts and cultural education for young people in Flanders. The study aimed to gather comprehensive data about the extent and quality of arts and cultural education in Flanders. It addressed the following questions;

1. What is being done in arts education and how is it being done?
2. What is the quality of arts education in Flanders? This includes both the quality of the teaching and the quality of the learning (what the children receive and does with what they receive).
3. What are the current and future possibilities and challenges? What expertise exists within education and more broadly in the arts and cultural sector?

These questions were addressed through the use of an intensive six month study using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The report is organised in a way that starts from definitions of terms and the nature of practices. Within the context, the report examines the impact on children and the manifestation of arts and cultural education in the classroom. The research analyses the implementation framework of arts and cultural education and identifies factors that influence the adoption of best practice in arts and cultural education.

The focus of the research is on both formal and non-formal provisions of arts and cultural education for children under the age of eighteen years. In the context of Flanders, this includes examination of arts and cultural education within schools and also the activities completed by children in a range of after school possibilities. The research also investigated provisions in nursery years and for children with special learning needs. Associated with this focus, policy and implementation issues were explored, and a focus was given to teacher education and the professional development of both teachers and artists.

This research is linked to the international evaluation of arts education conducted in 2006 for UNESCO (Bamford, 2006) and the subsequent in-depth country studies in Denmark and The Netherlands. To build a benchmarked set of knowledge, complementary methods have been used for these studies and the same framework has been applied to data gathering and analysis of themes to enable international comparisons to be made.

### 1.2 SCOPE

The research was led by Professor Anne Bamford, Director of The Engine Room at University of the Arts, London. During the in-country study, *CANON Cultuurcel* provided logistical support. Ms Ann Dejaeghere from the Strategic Research division of the Flemish Ministry of Education provided contextual leadership, translation and document and policy interpretation.

The research commenced in October 2006 and the data gathering was completed in May 2007. In total 140 people (n=140) were interviewed, surveyed or participated in focus groups and 74 schools and organisations were consulted. The participants came from all stakeholder sectors and included civil servants, politicians, school inspectors, pedagogical advisors, school directors, teachers, cultural coordinators, industry representatives, cultural institutions, students, artists, teacher educators, professors, performers, members of the media, parents and the museum and gallery sector.

The field research was conducted in all the municipalities in Flanders and through a matrix it was ensured that all types of schools and institutions were covered as part of the data collection.

The research used a range of methodologies including:

- Document and media analysis
- Survey and data tracking of baseline data
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Observations and
- Provisions for electronic submissions by email

The scope of the study included a comprehensive sample of formal school provisions for young people aged of three to eighteen years and also incorporated non-formal cultural offerings that directly intersected with the specified target group.

A detailed evidence-based analysis of arts and cultural education resulted in the production of this published report, an executive summary, and initiated public and media discussions.

The appointment of an in-country researcher to work as a collaborative member of the research team for the duration of the project ensured that while the study could be conducted in an independent and unbiased manner, the methodology and analysis could still benefit from the value of contextual knowledge. This position was responsible for translations into and from all relevant languages and ensured that contextual knowledges and interpretations were embedded in the project. This person also sought relevant 'on the ground' permissions and planned, convened and booked in-country meetings, agendas, itineraries, accommodation and visits, in-line with the research plan.

All participants were given full and open access to the information gained and invited to comment and respond to the report in its draft state. All data remain protected as per international data protection protocols. The contributors were acknowledged and referenced in the work where this does not contravene privacy. The aim was to highlight salient, transferable and overarching themes, not to comment on the success or otherwise of particular cases. As far as possible actual quotations have been used to provide evidence for the analysis made as these extended narratives allow for an authentic insight into all levels of the implementation and delivery cycle and present a cross section of the views of stakeholders.

Each section begins with a summary of the key findings of that particular topic, theme or issue. When reading the report, where points are particularly pertinent to either primary, secondary or specialist schools (such as DKO, Teacher Education and others) these have been specified and it is clearly indicated the level or school type to which the comment refers. If a comment does not specify the type or level of school, it can be assumed this refers as a general point to all schools, that is to both secondary and primary schools and is not specifically related to one school level.

The following sections provide an overview of the political and policy context for arts and cultural education in Flanders. The purpose of this is to highlight the salient factors that have formed and continue to shape practices in Flanders.

### 1.3 CONTEXT

#### → **The political system in Flanders is complex and layered and this directly impacts on the planning, delivery and monitoring of arts and cultural education**

Part of the federal state of Belgium, Flanders has almost six million inhabitants. Their official language is Dutch. Brussels is the capital of Flanders, but also of Belgium and Europe. An understanding of arts and cultural - and heritage - education in Flanders needs to be set in the context of the constitutional and policy context.

The process of federalisation of Belgium was a slow process of political debate, which took almost a quarter of a century to achieve. Between 1970 and 1993, the federal parliament approved four state reforms (Alen & Rusen, 1993). During this period, the federated states were granted, step-by-step, their own government, their own parliament and their own administration. The powers of the federated states were systematically enhanced. Belgium is now divided into 3 communities.

The competence for education lies with the communities. That is why the Flemish, French and the German-speaking community all have their own educational systems.

The focus of this research is on the Flemish community. This corresponds to the Dutch language area, including the bilingual area of Brussels. Flanders has one Flemish Parliament and one Flemish government. The government has oversight over community and regional matters, including culture, education, healthcare, language and regional and community cooperation.

The Flemish region consists of five main provinces, namely the provinces of West Flanders, East Flanders, Antwerp, Limburg and Flemish Brabant. The research into arts and cultural education was conducted across all these five regions. These regions are further broken down into municipalities, and there are currently 308 of these.

As a part of the federation of Belgium, Flanders enjoys a comparatively large level of autonomy especially at the educational and cultural level (See Ministry of the Flemish Community: Education Department: *Education in Flanders: A Broad view of the Flemish Educational Landscape*, n.d.).

At the outset, the complexity of the political, administrative and implementation structure is evident as each of the municipalities, regions and communities have an influence on the policy and practices in arts and cultural education. To further compound the picture, overlying the political and regional structure, free choice of school type is highly prized as a democratic right, and so a number of school systems exist.

There are a number of school networks that operate as almost autonomous bodies.

In a general summary the major networks are:

- Catholic Education (VSKO);
- Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (OVSG);
- Provincial education Flanders (POV);
- Community Education (GO); and
- Method or philosophy-based schools (each belonging to a smaller network of similar methods of philosophies).

The *Flemish Education Act 1997* gives the school boards – and/or networks (*onderwijsnetten*) the right to determine their own curricula (ibid. 12), but within the frame work of the final objectives.

It is also important to note that within any of the networks, there can be a huge variation in approaches to learning. For example, schools within the Catholic, cities or provincial networks may also adopt a particular method or philosophy to organise learning. Similarly, some of the members of the ‘method-based’ grouping may in fact opt for quite traditional educational pathways for the pupils. It is important to acknowledge the complexities inherent within the Flemish system, but for the ease reporting and consistency, the classifications adopted (although presenting a simplistic view) are used throughout the report.

Within the Flemish Government, the Flemish Minister of Education and Training is responsible for almost every aspect of education policy, from nursery to university education (Erk, 2003).

To establish a context for examining arts and culture education within the general school system, Belgium has around 12 percent of the population six to fourteen year olds and six percent fifteen to nineteen years old (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2002). There is a high degree of trust in the Flemish education system (according to OECD figures for 2003, 77.8 percent place a high degree of trust in the system, p16) (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2002).

The Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media has an important responsibility in the field of socio-cultural work and this in part includes cultural and arts education.

At the outset it is important to note that the Flemish education system is quite complex. This report will present Flemish education in a simplified way to try to capture a general picture of organisation and operation, rather than a very detailed managerial outline.

## 1.4 COUNTRY/POLICY

- **Structural meetings need to occur on a regular basis to ensure shared vision, implementation and monitoring between the various ministries that cover arts and cultural education**
- **Meetings between education and culture are vital and the ministers should express joint statements on arts and culture education**

There is a high degree of trust in Flemish education and this level of public trust continues to grow. According to the OECD those within higher socio-economic bands are more likely to trust the schools than those in the lower socio-economic groups. Generally, though, the population is very satisfied with education.

In 2003 (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2002), The Education Department of the Ministry of the Flemish Community published a series of *Education Indicators*. The espoused aim of these indicators is to:

- signal key outcomes
- evaluate the extent to which particular objectives have been achieved
- provide a dialogical function between education and external communication with enterprise and community, and
- ascertain the impact of policy

There is currently a perception that unemployment can be reduced through an emphasis on vocational education. The current Minister (who is from the Socialist Party) values equal opportunity for all. This is noteworthy. Belgium achieves relatively well in the PISA results, yet has a long tail suggesting that there is considerable education deprivation at the lower end of the scale. There seems to be a discrepancy between the espoused ideals and the practical outcomes.

The ministries of education, culture and communication tend to work separately and even though the *CANON Cultuurcel* has tried to bridge this gap, in practice there are few instances of joined-up thinking.

In 2002 a protocol was signed between the ministries of culture and education. It was supposed to signal new levels of

cooperation and collaboration, although in practice the gains have been small. The ministries still by and large work in isolation. There are in existence considerable ‘informal’ contacts between the civil servants of the different domains, but these contacts are not always put within a more sustainable and long-term structure.

Structures to allow this sharing should be in place through regular meetings of the various civil servants, but these initiatives have not been followed up in a substantial way to give voice to decisions made by these meetings. Collaborations are important as these prevent overlap, maximise the available budgets and ensure shared priorities. Such collaborations need to be on a structural basis, both at the national and local level and cannot be left to chance or example.

There is a perception that collaboration is prevented at least in part by differences in philosophy and budget between the Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media and the Ministry of Education. For instance, education is perceived as being ruled by quite strict laws and governances which prevent more direct innovation. Conversely, there is a perception that the area of culture is much freer and able to innovate, whereas it has a comparatively small budget and more limited influence outside the sector.

The culture sector reports frustrations with education, in particular the lack of flexibility and the limited scope for creativity. For example, this comment made by a senior policy operative in the culture sector, expresses frustration about the poor quality of arts education and the inability to make improvements:

*We (in the cultural sector) can't change things. To get change, we need real structural changes in education. We need changes to the curriculum. We need cultural institutions to be more involved in the process. The cultural sectors also need to understand education more. But I think the problem is only going to get worse. The budgets are smaller: the schools have less and less 'free' time and the time for the arts in the curriculum is getting reduced every year.*

Similarly, at a focus group of cultural policy makers and those in charge of implementation, they were critical of their success in working with education.

*"The schools tell us not to interfere. This is our business. Don't interfere" The sectors are very separate and we can basically only enter schools to give workshops or schools can come to our cultural institutions for one day, but that is about all."*

There is a perception in culture that an increasing percentage of money within culture is going to services that should be provided as a core part of the education budget. For example, children should receive arts and cultural education as part of their core education and it should not be up to the authorities to ensure this. Thus the *Charter for Artistic Schooling in General Education* states that: “all children and young people in Flanders should experience arts education...since general education is the only part of the educational system which reaches all children and young people. It is responsible for achieving the objective of ensuring the child's democratic right to artistic education”.

This view is also at the heart of official policy, which more or less explicitly is based on the egalitarian ideal that **all** are entitled to arts education. The ideal is based on the philosophy that socialisation into arts and culture is conducive to social integration, which in turn, is a precondition for establishing and maintaining a democratic society. These are laudable ideals. The question however is whether they are adhered to in practice. Does arts education in Flanders live up to these ideals?

According to one study, the Flanders curriculum stresses the position of new media within the integration of arts and other subjects. In this regard Belgium would seem to be comparable to much praised countries like Finland and France (Van der Ploeg 2001, p 22). However, this finding is based on self-reporting from civil servants and might therefore not be representative and valid. Broadly speaking there are too few practical attempts to monitor and evaluate otherwise excellent ideas. This according to one study is particularly true for Belgium (Van der Ploeg 2001, p 39).

This has led to some concern among practitioners at the coalface of the delivery chain:

*The government needs to be clearer in its expectations. There have been too many changes concerning content as well as structures in a short period of time, which were not accompanied by the necessary financial means. It gets more and more difficult to comply with conditions for accreditation and at the same time the resources are being reduced [Director, Music Conservatory].*

More recently this has, however, been addressed. In a report by the *Cultuurnetwerk* Belgium has been singled out as a country that has given priority to formal measurement of the programmes (*Cultuurnetwerk: Culture and School: A Survey, 2004, Utrecht, 73*). Again, however, it must be stressed that this is based on self-reporting and hence open to methodological challenges.

The policy and curriculum documents support the value of a child looking at the arts around them. They ask the child to reference existing images, engage with real music and so on in informing the making of their creative pieces. The way this is interpreted within classrooms, is likely to be affected by the interpretation of this policy ideal within the local network curriculum advice and of course the way the individual teacher interprets the curriculum advice of the educational networks.

This ideal might range from reference to the cultural canon pieces, as a form of cultural aesthetic appreciation, to at another level engagement with popular culture and the media.

## 1.5 FINANCING PATTERNS

- **While the financial support for education indicates a high level commitment to education, the amount of funding to arts and education within the global funding model is unclear.**
- **The structural costs for delivering arts education appear to be quite high. Research is needed to more fully analyse the costs-to-return in arts and cultural education**
- **Specific tied funds in arts and cultural education should be continued and made more structural and long-term**
- **Processes for application should be simplified but processes for monitoring and evaluation should be improved**
- **Parents make considerable financial contributions to arts and cultural education**
- **The arts would benefit from a more coherent and combined approach to funding with generally agreed targets and less duplication and partitioning of funding**

The funds for education within Flanders are by international standards quite high. Flanders spends around 6.1 percent of GDP on education, and this compares favourably to the budget spent by nearby countries. The money is distributed to the school in terms of salaries and lump sum payments, with each pupil in primary school receiving around €3900 and each child in secondary school receiving in the order of €7000.

These figures are indicative of a clear budgetary commitment to education that compares very favourable to other EU countries. It has to be said though, that the complexity of the schooling system would suggest that it may be a more expensive system to administer than others, particularly as considerable duplication is required to deliver education across diverse regions and school types and networks. More detailed analysis would need to be undertaken as to the educational value received by a child in the classroom, in comparison to the expenditure.

The budget for arts education is mainly derived from the Flemish Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media. The municipalities also contribute to arts education as do the regions. Non-profit organisations make a small contribution and an even smaller amount of funds are contributed by businesses and enterprise.

Arts education is partly funded out of the general 'global' budget for the school and partly out of (smaller) special project funds, provided in the most part from the Ministry of Education, though a number of other ministries also have some funds available for arts and cultural projects for children and young people. These funds are tied to special project applications and are generally for twelve months or less for particular initiatives and priorities. The school director, school boards and school networks are responsible for the division of the global budget and there is insufficient evidence to ascertain the exact amounts (both in real and comparative terms) given to arts and cultural education. Funds are also particularly ear-marked for teacher professional development and a small percent of this may go towards artistic and cultural development for teachers. These funds are often allocated based on a school's priorities. It was reported by one pedagogical advisor that "muzische opvoeding" is a common priority. Where a school adopts these longer term strategic development priorities, there appear to be good results in the schools. One advisory service reported that, "We have good results in schools with longer implementation projects. Here the pedagogical services of networks can be asked to support."

An estimate of around €527 per child can be calculated by dividing the global budgets by the supposed recommended hours for arts education<sup>1</sup>. While this gives a very loose figure, the empirical research would suggest that the actual amount dedicated from school budgets towards arts education is considerably lower than this estimate, with much of the money for arts education in reality coming directly from parental subsidy.

While this additional amount from parents is not common in poorer schools, in more affluent schools amounts in excess of €120 per child are common. The average within the schools participating in the research is slightly under €80 per child. This is an interesting point as debate is currently underway in Flanders to place a 'cap' or upper limit (referred to in current discussions as a *maximum bill*) on parental contributions.

While at the time of writing this report that amount had not been selected, this research would suggest that amounts of less than €80 (unless schools were compensated) could result in reductions in arts and cultural provisions. It is also unclear within the proposed changes to parental contributions as to what impact this will have on parent fundraising. In the research,

<sup>1</sup> A rough estimation on how much money per pupil is spent on arts education can be obtained by multiplying the amount received per pupil by the fraction of the number of teaching periods per week devoted to arts education to the total number of teaching periods per week:  
 $3.691,63 \cdot 4/28$

With:  
€ 3.691,63 = the average cost of a pupil in regular primary education in 2005  
4 = the average number of teaching periods spent on expressive arts education (information provided by the inspectorate)  
28 = the total number of teaching periods in a normal school week  
This calculation leads to an average amount of € 527 (rounded) spent on arts education per pupil in regular primary education.

schools commonly charged parents to attend arts related performances and exhibitions or to 'sponsor' arts activities and these opportunities raised money to be placed directly back into arts education, often to purchase instruments, arts resources or to offset performance or publication costs. If this money was also to be 'counted' as part of the capped contribution scheme, once again the effect on arts and cultural education would be significant. The proposal under the scheme is to provide every school with around €45 more per child into the global budget but to limit the amount of extra costs charged to parents.

CANON *Cultuurcel* also directly supports arts education. The major initiative is the *DynaMo* project which provides in the order of €300.000 for school-based arts and cultural projects. Additional financial resources are also provided by CANON *Cultuurcel* to conduct research and to develop and distribute teaching and learning material.

Currently underway is also a pilot project examining the feasibility and applicability of the *Brede School* (Broad School). This project is a cross-sector project aimed to encourage greater collaboration between the various organisations concerned with the learning, development and welfare of children. In a practical sense, the *Brede School* provides an extended school programme within a specified cultural and geographic area and is mainly targeting more marginalised, developing or disadvantaged communities. Currently there's a budget of 250.000€ per year for three years within the ministry of Education. There appears to be considerable financial support for this initiative and interest from the educational community, though at this stage, it is too early to determine the results and impact of this work (see later section on the Broad School).

In addition to the major initiatives described, there are many other forms of funding coming into the arts. It is almost impossible to map this, and it would be suggested that the arts would benefit from a more coherent and combined approach to funding with generally agreed targets and less duplication and partitioning of funding. The plethora of funding providers is confusing to educational and cultural providers and tends to unnecessarily divide funding.

Furthermore, inherent inequities in the system seem to be exacerbated by the diverse funding sources with 'preferred schools' being able to access far more funding than less favoured schools. It leads to a situation of wastage, overlap and gaps as the various funders rarely share their plans with other funders. It also makes the process of linking impacts to funding (or identifying weak links) almost impossible.

This difficulty is compounded by a structure of in-school and out-of-school provisions, including youth arts, youth associations, amateur arts, lifelong arts education, professional arts worlds and a range of socio-artistic projects. Compound this diversity of funding with the number of municipalities, regions, school networks and it is apparent the exponential growth of funding options.

While it could be argued this diversity expands arts and cultural opportunities, in reality it is a confusing system of far too many buckets, with too little money in each bucket.

School directors report feeling confused by the funding and there appears to be an inequitable distribution of the funds, with no accurate way of determining if this is the case. The administrative burden alone related to so many different sources of funding and systems of accountability means that for many schools it is simply not possible or desirable to seek funding under such a circumstance.

In addition to the wasteful distribution of money, the multitude of funders leads to an equally diverse set of aims, with each funding source having clear targets and aims tied to the money. There is little joined-up thinking about these aims, and so schools find themselves having to achieve a multitude of aims in response to the various funders. This includes everything from project related goals, process aims, social outputs, artistic outputs, geographic enhancements and many more. This leads on one hand to unnecessary overlap, and on the other hand, unrecognised gaps. On top of all this, increasingly non-profit organisations and commercial providers are increasingly entering the market, making the likelihood of some clear mapping of funding and shared intention even less apparent.

While the resources appeared to be sufficient, in particular the primary school directors noted that in general the entire budget was used within a year and while it was adequate, it had to be closely watched. Several schools mentioned that limitations of budgets prevented more visits to cultural facilities and performances. Schools with a more active interest in the arts frequently and successfully applied for a range of project based funding to support the arts. While this project funding was seen as positive, there were concerns about the amount of time applications took and the short term and small nature of the funds. For example, most funds were of less than €5.000 and for less than a year, making application processes very time and labour intensive.

## 1.6 SCHOOLS

### → **The physical resources in the schools appear to be of an adequate standard to enable quality arts education to occur**

The Belgian Constitution provides that everyone has a right to education, thus respecting fundamental rights and freedoms. In order to guarantee this right for all children, there is compulsory education.

Compulsory education is organised into primary and secondary schools. Children begin school after the first vacation when they have turned two and a half years of age. This early year education may be termed nursery school, but it is generally in the same buildings as the primary school or closely connected to, and integrated with, the primary school.

Classes in primary school tend to have around 24 pupils to one teacher while classes for younger children may have between fifteen to twenty pupils per teacher. The teacher is a generalist and will basically teach the class all day (8:30am-3:30pm), Monday to Friday, with a shorter day on Wednesdays.

Specialist teachers are employed in primary schools for sport (gymnasium) and sometimes religion and there may occasionally be a specialist for music. During the time when a specialist teacher is working with the class, the classroom teacher may have pupil-free time to allow for meetings or preparation, but all schools acknowledged that teachers do regularly take a lot of extra work home to complete.

The teachers interviewed in this research appear committed, with many examples evident of teachers working considerably longer school hours and also staying after school to do extra activities such as choir classes. Teachers tend to remain for many years in a school (more than 10 years is quite common). Most schools have a mix of more experienced teachers and beginning teachers, though it is about two-thirds experienced to one-third inexperienced as a general pattern in the schools visited.

Some schools – especially in urban areas and within the larger cities - have a very high multicultural student population, whereas others are almost entirely Flemish.

By international standards the schools are well-equipped and effectively organised. Classrooms in the many schools visited are attractive, light and well-maintained. Computers and other technology were generally available. Most schools visited had good-sized halls, or similar spaces. Many schools also had specialist art rooms, such as a wet area for painting, music space or flexible project space – but this is certainly not the case everywhere. Secondary schools are more likely to have specialist arts rooms than primary schools, though it was reported that in recent years some of the specialist rooms in secondary schools have become general classrooms (especially spaces that were previously music rooms). Conversely in several of the primary schools visited, specialist arts rooms had been created out of rooms that were previously regular classrooms. There appear to be readily available arts resources such as paint and paper and some instruments. In most schools, fundraising by parents had been used to support the arts programmes and to purchase additional resources.

Most schools have students' art displayed in the classroom and in publicly accessible parts of the school, but the range and standard of these displays varied considerably.

More innovative Flemish schools make very flexible use of the school facilities. For example, doors might be opened between classrooms, space creatively divided into 'learning corners' multi-aged groups of children working in spaces and student-focused arrangements of space. As a general rule, learning spaces are more flexible in the younger years and more rigid in the older years. There are also some highly traditional schools where desks are arranged in rows and the focus is on teacher directed learning. It was noted by one network in meta-reflections on the report that, "It's not a question of furniture." This pedagogical advisor further commented that creative teachers "with an eye for education on the demand of the child" could do great things despite the physical resources of the school. He expressed the view that while physical resources were important, quality arts education was more likely to be influenced by the "professionalism" of the teacher and flexible organisation of the classrooms and groups within the space.

To make evident this contrast, the following two schools have been described:

#### 1.6.1 Vignette: A philosophy-based primary school within a medium-sized city

The classrooms are attractive and well-organised. The main hall space of the school is open to the public and dominated by two very large paintings by a famous Flemish artist. Spaces both inside and outside are being used flexibly for small group learning. The equipment is arranged in an ordered manner for easy access by the children.

A group of young children are working on a project while other children cook pizza. The atmosphere is industrious and purposeful. The young children are working independently but are confidently handling knives, brushes, scissors and other art making equipment. Other children are seated on low lounges huddled together and reading quietly.

Creative use has been made of light so that the atmosphere is more interesting than the usual fluorescent tubes. The principal refers to several spaces as the 'atelier'. These spaces are dedicated to the making of art work. Children are working independently on easels.

There are abundant concrete materials for children to use in all aspects of learning. The environment is visually interesting and inspiring and the atmosphere is lively, energetic and productive. The children appear to be of multicultural origin. The teachers are difficult to distinguish within the school as they work embedded within rich learning tasks, working alongside the children.

#### 1.6.2 Vignette: a religion-based school within a small village

The classrooms are neat and tidy and the school is very well-kept. The school is bright and spacious and appears to be very well-equipped. The classes are arranged formally within a standard classroom. The teacher is at the front of the room and the children are sitting in rows at their desks. The blackboard is covered in handwriting and spelling exercises and this board dominates the front of the room. The children are very quiet and have nothing on their desks. They are making the same letter in the air with their fingers. An interesting loft area and wooden play equipment are in the corner of the room. There are coloured photocopied drawings displayed and these are almost identical for each child. There are also a number of identical red paintings.

### 1.7 SCHOOL CHOICE

- ➔ **A culture of competition between schools means there is little sharing of good practice, especially between different school networks**
- ➔ **Arts and cultural funding could be used to encourage greater sharing of good practice**

Under the educational law of Flanders, all parents have the right to send their children to a school that is in accord with their philosophical or religious choices. As explained in the earlier sections on the school structure, this has led to a complex range of choices. Clearly though, at a functional level, parents give preference to schools that appear to be achieving well and offer a rich educational programme. Effective discipline within the school also affects choices.

Additionally, there appears to be in practice some level of inadvertent racial segregation with parents also making choices based on the ethnic mix of the school. Contrary stance to this point, several schools have actively targeted pupils from a range or ethnic backgrounds to try to promote a well-rounded educational mix of ethnicities in line with the mix in society. It is reasonable to say though, even where these positive attempts are made, it is largely upper or middle class people from within certain backgrounds that take these more prestigious or preferred positions.

There is a relatively high level of competition between schools and teachers from different school networks are unlikely to meet together. School directors from different types of schools within a local area might meet several times a year, but in general competitions to have the 'best' school in terms of popularity with parents is a greater motivating force than the desire to collaborate.

There are some exceptions to this general pattern. For example a group of three schools within a socially and economically marginalised area had worked very closely on a project to build greater links between the homes and schools. The collaboration had also led to positive links being forged between primary and secondary schools and the initiating of an evaluative research project. Despite the success of this collaboration and the catalysts to greater reflection, the schools within the project still

admitted that they had only collaborated because of strong funding incentives to do so, and that there had been an uneven burden of work within the collaboration, with one school really driving the initiative.

The diversity of schooling options has given rise to a large number of ‘philosophy-based’ schools (sometimes referred to as ‘methods schools’) within the Flemish system. These schools actively model their school organisation on the way they teach arts, based around a given educational theory. For example, a *Freinet* method inspired school<sup>2</sup> visited had adapted the multi-age, constructivist ideal of Freinet into a workable general school model. The underlying principles of creative, student-generated projects and the availability of stimulating educational environment were evident, but had been adapted to fit the needs of a more mainstream primary school context.

In addition to the various networks and school types, within secondary schools there are also three or more options as to the preferred form of education, ranging from a strongly academic, and ‘grammar school’ approach to a selection of technical and vocational options.

The following table indicates the abbreviations of the common education networks and school types.

### 1.7.1 Table: Abbreviation of network and school types

#### Glossary:

<b>VSKO</b> .....	<b>Vlaams Verbond Katholiek Secundair Onderwijs</b> = Catholic Education
<b>GO</b> .....	<b>Gemeenschapsonderwijs</b> = Community education
<b>OVSG</b> .....	<b>Onderwijssecretariaat van de Vlaamse Steden en Gemeenten</b> = Education organised by the association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities
<b>POV</b> .....	<b>Provinciaal Onderwijs</b> = Provincial education
<b>OKO</b> .....	<b>Overleg Kleine Onderwijsverstrekkers</b> = Free confessional and non-confessional education <sup>3</sup>
<b>ASO</b> .....	<b>Algemeen Secundair Onderwijs</b> = General secondary education
<b>TSO</b> .....	<b>Technisch Secundair Onderwijs</b> = Technical secondary education
<b>BSO</b> .....	<b>Beroepssecundair Onderwijs</b> = Vocational secondary education
<b>KSO</b> .....	<b>Kunstsecundair Onderwijs</b> = Arts oriented secondary education
<b>DKO</b> .....	<b>Deeltijds Kunstonderwijs</b> = Part-time (outside of school) arts education
<b>ILBO</b> .....	<b>Initiële Lerarenopleiding Basisonderwijs (kleuter- en lager onderwijs)</b> = Primary Teacher Education
<b>ILSO1</b> .....	<b>Initiële Lerarenopleiding Secundair Onderwijs groep 1</b> = Teacher education for lower secondary school
<b>ILSO2</b> .....	<b>Initiële Lerarenopleiding Secundair Onderwijs groep 2</b> = Teacher education for upper secondary school

*These abbreviations are used throughout this research report.*

Within this complexity of school types, the definition of arts education and the more recently adopted terms of ‘cultural education’, ‘heritage education’ and ‘media education’ are also multifarious, as the following sections outline.

As a general point - and with the exception of the philosophy based schools - there was a lack of any underpinning philosophy of arts education. Teacher education courses, while covering general education philosophies, rarely highlighted contemporary approaches to arts education and teachers lacked a substantial rationale for arts education. As a result, they tended to rely either upon ‘readymade’, one off style of lessons (often with an ‘attractive’ end product) rather than more enquiry based models learning.

<sup>2</sup> French school reformer S. Freinet observed: “If progress is advancing at the speed of 10, then the school scores a 1”. Freinet schools tend to adopt an integrated and progressive approach to education that favours democratic classrooms and learner discussions.

<sup>3</sup> OKO comprises the Federation of independent pluralistic emancipatory method schools (FOPEM), the Federation of Steiner schools in Flanders, the Flemish Education Forum (VOOP) and the governing body of Protestant Christian Education (IPCD).

Conversely, in more creative schools – *muzische scholen* – and schools based around certain philosophies, it was possible to see arts lessons strongly centred on problem-based learning and the development of critical thinking. In these examples, the children worked collaboratively with the teacher to define problems of interest and relevance. They would plan learning in a critical enquiry model with activities being allowed to organically develop over a week or over several months. In these models, the role of the teacher became one of mentoring, facilitating and initiating. These enquiry-based approaches were structured around purposeful reflections and regular planning and progress meetings. In these instances, a cycle of learning occurred that revolved around reflection, planning and evaluation, where the teacher adopted the role of both a mentor and a coach. Systems would exist in the classroom to ensure children progressed through a range of experiences, but could work in an independent, collaborative and creative way.

In most networks, the school directors meet several times a year to talk about particular issues. These tend to be about management issues or pastoral care of pupils. The principals interviewed did not recall any specific programmes on the value of expressive, cultural or arts education, though programmes in creative and critical thinking had occurred and programmes on heritage and civic education were recalled. In reality, several networks do offer opportunities for school directors to learn about the value of arts and cultural education, but these did not appear to be in the general thinking of the samples who commented for this research. In philosophy-based systems, it was common for groups of school leaders to get together quite regularly to discuss approaches, pedagogical issues and school leadership. While these meetings were useful opportunities to raise pedagogical issues, the principals also commented on the value of more ‘organic’ meetings where issues of expressive and creative philosophies were discussed.

## 1.8 ARTS EDUCATION

→ **There is a mismatch between the broad definitions of the arts generally within Flemish society and the narrow definitions of the arts within education**

*Muzische Vorming* is a general term describing the broad objectives of primary education as being “expressive arts”. The focus is on active expression, so the term is applied generally to include the whole series of actions surrounding arts and cultural learning.

It was suggested by a focus group of arts and cultural professionals that the official definitions of the arts as they stand in ministerial advice are “reductionist” and that practice in the arts in Flanders is more dynamic and comprehensive than policy would suggest. It was noted that this dynamic definition of arts is “an important characteristic of the arts” and that it is impossible to “give static definitions because as soon as these definitions are written they are outdated”. This comment points to the fluid nature of contemporary arts practice and the need for policy to remain conscious of the ever changing nature of professional arts practice.

In most countries there is a general congruence between what is viewed as arts within the general community and what is included within the curriculum. The benefit of this is that it enables a diversity of forms of context-specific expression to be developed within school. For example, in Senegal hair-braiding is an important art form and is present in the curriculum. It could be argued though, that by being quite specific in the art forms covered, that the curriculum has a sharper focus. For example, in Colombia a strong focus on music has greatly lifted educational standards in music.

While arts education is a core part of the curriculum (as subject to decree by the Flemish Parliament) from the beginning to the end of school, the local autonomy of the region and of the school means that how this is enacted can vary considerably. In situations of high quality, this could mean that a child gets a substantial education in the arts (primarily music and visual arts) and also may be exposed to the arts as a way to teach areas such as literacy, language learning and civic education.

There are basically nine disciplines that make up the arts in Flanders. These are:

- Theatre
- Singing
- Music (pop, jazz, folk, classical etc)
- Photography
- Audiovisual arts including film and video
- Visual arts
- Writing
- Literature
- Dance

It could be argued that there is a tenth discipline - that being 'media'<sup>4</sup> - though in practice, this was rarely seen as being a definable part of the arts.

In practice, arts education as seen within Flemish schools generally includes music and visual arts. Drama may be included as a methodology to teach other subjects and dance can be – although far less common- part of the arts curriculum. Literature is included within the arts. New media, film and a range of creative practices can also be seen as existing within the arts though the presence of these within the curriculum is likely to be more based on individual teacher interests than on any systemic inclusion.

Amateur arts are separated from professional arts sector. Socio-cultural work in Flanders has grown historically from several cultural and social emancipation movements with an ideological background favouring access and a non-elitist view of the arts. It has played an important role in the Flemish cultural movement.

The work of the socio-cultural organisations that rely on state subsidies in Flanders can be divided into four types: associations, popular high schools, national training institutions and movements. They are controlled by law, specifically by the *Decree of 4 April 2003*. Associations are networks of local divisions or groups. Currently, there are 32 movements active in Flanders, specializing in one or more themes, such as peace, active citizenship, and mobility. Amateur arts cover a diverse range of experiences with the primary purpose of giving amateur artists the opportunity to express themselves creatively, bring creative people together and to continue to develop community talent and cohesion. There is also a range of community groups specifically targeting youth. Anecdotally it was reported that although these might have social, environmental or sport foci, they may also frequently include arts and cultural dimensions within the programme. It was also noted that there were 'youth-led' groups in many towns and cities and that these provided further creative opportunities for young people. It would be valuable to map and describe more fully these activities and this could be the task of a future research process.

While many of these organisations provide services to young people, it was beyond the scope of this research to examine in detail the participation of children and youth in such initiatives. Earlier studies have examined children's 'free choice' engagements in arts and cultural activities and it would be recommended that a future study could examine the specific interface between formal provisions in schools and the 'broader' amateur and community provisions. In particular, such research should look at the way these may work more closely to connect a child's experiences of the arts. There are also possibilities the amateur arts sector could assist in leveraging community and parental support for the arts in the educational sector and conversely how education could assist in the expansion and development of this cultural sector.

A unique feature of the Flemish arts and cultural landscape is the presence of a large number of local bands. These tend to be brass bands that are open to membership from members of the community of any age. In these bands, it is possible for young people to learn to play an instrument and perform with other community members of all ages. *Vlamo (Vlaamse amateurmuziekorganisatie - Flemish Association of Music Bands and Musicians)* was founded in 2002 and is the officially recognized association in Flanders in this field. Once again, the interface between the bands and the more formalised music schools (DKO) and general schools is unclear and could be researched further. In Flanders the arts are broadly defined and cover all sectors including architecture and design. In this way, the definition of 'school related arts education' is relatively narrow, while this concurrently sits within community definitions of arts and cultural education that are quite broad.

The presence of other art forms such as those related to the creative industries (such as fashion, film making, and animation) and those described internationally as urban arts (such as rap, beat box, hip hop) is not common in Flemish schools. During the research a number of vocational schools were visited and these included a curriculum that focused on fashion, hospitality or wood and metal craft, but there was not evidence that these were connected to the arts through a design-orientated approach. The way the more 'creative industry' related art forms are conceived and taught varies considerably, but in each case it is seen to be a more vocational option.

For example, many fashion teachers were previously sewing or textile teachers. The pupils are involved in bespoke tailoring and high level crafting skills in sewing, pattern making and drafting. In other situations it is more an introductory course equipping pupils to work in retail and is mainly targeted at lower ability pupils. In some instances, the pupils study fashion as a discipline and may attend cultural visits such as the fashion museum, but in other instances it is more about developing sets of very basic skills.

<sup>4</sup> The issue of audiovisual arts as part of the general arts education curriculum and 'media' arts as part of broader cultural education is a complex one in Flemish education. There is also a contrast between the largely simplistic definitions 'in practice' and the proposed definitions from the experts in the field. As working definitions, arts education could be said to include literature, dance, drama, music, visual arts and audiovisual arts, including film, video and so on. Media education was suggested to be "not arts education" but rather a component of general education. It has to be noted though that agreement on these definitions has not been generally reached.

## 1.9 CULTURAL EDUCATION

- **There is a distinction made between arts education and cultural education**
- **The term 'culture education' is seen to have diluted arts education in schools and the educational role of culture within communities**

Culture is generally used as the overarching term to describe the identity of people including languages, art, relationships, people, and food. A member of a group of experts interviewed argued that culture is “synonymous with behaviour”, though other members of the group suggested that in the context of policy and funding, definitions of culture should be more limited. In this more limited notion, agreement around the panel of experts suggested that culture is the way people “express themselves and cope with life”. It was further contended that culture is connected with the arts but also goes beyond the arts.

*Culture is the container definition. It is not used in a narrow way. Culture education is not arts education. Culture is made up of arts education but it is different. Yet sometimes the public perceive arts and culture as being the same thing. Culture includes more than just the traditional arts.*

According to a focus group of arts and cultural policy makers, culture is the more general term that is used to describe everything in a culture. Under this there are two perceived areas, art and heritage. Arts education is education in the art disciplines and these are defined as being music, dance, visual arts, drama and the media. Heritage on the other hand is both the historical and contemporary influences on culture, and involves the intangible heritage – such as stories, songs and texts as well as the monuments, archives and other tangible aspects. Furthermore, it was suggested that ‘culture’ includes a range of socio-cultural interventions for both adults and children.

In the mind of the cultural policy makers, arts and cultural education is about developing in children a creative way of thinking and an ability to appreciate artistic forms of expression and participate in the culture of a society. It is not designed to produce artists, but rather to create affective ways of perceiving and responding. They further contended that the arts represented a unique way of thinking.

The cultural sector believed that arts education needs to be more fully structured into the educational environment and it should be considered both as a discipline in its own right and as a part of all other disciplines. Content should be based on both contemporary and traditional practices and should span a range of disciplines and cover urban practices such as fashion, architecture, street arts and other emerging forms. There was considerable discussion in the group about where ‘art education’ ends and where ‘cultural education’ might start.

There was widespread agreement that the content of arts and cultural education should be relevant to the context of the school and should acknowledge the experiences children bring to the learning process. In this way, arts and cultural education should be structured into the core curriculum but the content should emerge from the context.

In relation to education, the point was made that there was a need to distinguish between arts education and cultural education. In particular it was felt that many schools were in practice mixing the two things together and - in doing so - not giving either arts or culture their sufficient place in the curriculum.

There was a strong view expressed from the arts community that the use of ‘arts’ and ‘culture’ as almost synonymous had downgraded the importance of the disciplines of the arts. The contention was that the term ‘cultural education’ may have been ‘pushed’ upon the schools from policy makers, especially the *CANON Cultuurcel*, for political purposes and did not reflect the interpretation of the arts or culture on the ground. As this comment from a local area cultural coordinator suggests: “*CANON < CANON Cultuurcel >* always starts with ‘cultural education’ we always start with just ‘culture’. Education is embedded in what culture means.”

In practice this meant that schools could include a range of ‘soft’ cultural options and then claim that the children in the school received ‘arts and cultural education.’ The panel of experts stressed that art must be seen as existing separately from- although related to- culture in the way these are presented in schools.

It was emphasised that the issue of arts and culture was a very hotly contested debate at the moment, with little consensus. In an attempt to clarify the distinction, one of the respondents offered this explanation: “If you have a book - that is the **arts**. If you know the rules of a library or of a house - that is **culture**.”

In terms of balancing the emphasis between arts and culture in schools, several suggestions were made. One member of an expert panel suggested that it was a case of applying different frames or “glasses” (in the sense of lenses) to how things were explored within school. So for example, a sculpture in a local village garden could be seen through the glasses of heritage and so the teacher might talk about its importance in relation to contemporary and past communities. If the ‘glasses’ were cultural glasses, the teacher might encourage discussion about sculpture in general, the materials used, the trades employed

or its function within the village. If the arts education glasses were worn, it may be to place the sculpture in a stylistic period, to draw the sculpture, to create a new sculpture for the garden; to imagine that the sculpture became alive and was able to dance or act.

In a further attempt to make distinctions, it was suggested that cultural education is a social and collective activity, while art education tends to be individual, requiring creative and artistic skills and resulting in unique processes or products, based on artistry, craftsmanship or creation. While this definition would apply to previous conceptions of art, and could thus distinguish these from culture, post-modern art practice would not necessarily fit within this definition of social versus individual.

It was suggested that arts education was the fluent use of the “languages of the arts disciplines”. So if someone was to be engaged in arts education they would be learning these languages such as musical annotation, colour mixing, choreography, or staging techniques and the aim would be to develop skill levels. In one example given by a music expert, he suggested that in music education it would be a combination of skill development and the “cultural luggage” a child developed to be able to “understand and be open to music”. It was stressed that the “luggage” could include “skills, attitudes and knowledge.”

Culture is defined through shared knowledge and values. It is developed through - and based upon - interactions. These interactions are in turn made possible through understandings of identity, but culture is more than identity, it includes - but should not be limited to - creativity. This shared interaction implies a set of common characteristics readily understood or certain sets of rules that can be applied to the group, such as might be seen in ‘school cultures’, ‘corporate cultures’, and so on.

The argument was also proffered that in relation to the general public discourse and policy ‘culture’ has in a sense been *owned* by the arts, but should not be kept by the arts. For example, within the Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media there are three agencies: that is, the Agency of Arts and Heritage; the Agency of Socio-cultural work for youth and adults; and, the Agency for Sports. The contention expressed was that culture should extend beyond what is generally termed as being ‘the arts’ but that also the arts are specific and should not be subsumed as existing wholly under notions of culture.

## 1.10 HERITAGE EDUCATION

- ➔ **Heritage education receives relatively little attention and is marginalised in the curriculum**
- ➔ **Heritage education is not considered to be part of arts education**

Given the linguistic divide in Belgium as a whole – and the degree to which this has dominated Flemish politics and society in recent years- it is somewhat surprising that *heritage education* has received relatively little attention and is marginalised in the curriculum. Heritage is defined as being both tangible (including moveable and immovable material) and intangible or ‘non-material’ heritage (de Troyer, 2006).

Heritage education belongs to the *literal high culture*, which often characterises nation states (Gelner, 1981). While heritage education was widely taught in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the gradual federalisation has not resulted in a revival of the *Bildungs Kultur*, which characterised *the Romantic Movement*. Rather, *Erfgoededucatie in het Vlaamse onderwijs* (the report of a recent research project on heritage education) does not stress the traditional ideals of a national focus in *heritage education*, but makes a case for local heritage education in a constant dialogue with emerging global culture.

The aim of heritage education is to arrive at a *glocal* (i.e. global and local) conception of heritage education. This aim is clearly related to recognition of the emergence of a multicultural society with a high level of ethnic and cultural diversity. Heritage education also helps a child to be able to “read, understand and be knowledgeable about their surroundings, the history and the society.”

*Erfgoededucatie in het Vlaamse onderwijs: Erfgoed en onderwijs in dialoog* stresses that there is too little (*weinig*) structural connection between teaching in heritage and current educational practice in Flanders. This needs to be addressed through better teacher training. Similarly, this document also makes the distinction between heritage education as a goal in itself, and heritage education as a perspective brought to understand other subject areas. It further explains that teachers have a fairly traditional view of heritage education and tend to associate it with ‘museums’, monuments and history.

Heritage is defined in two main ways within Flanders. The first is *material heritage* which covers the moveable and immovable features of the landscape, places and objects. The second is *immaterial heritage* which encompasses intangible heritage such as songs, stories, traditions, actors, agencies and other non-object based heritage. It is suggested in the following comment from a network inspector that despite the lack of evident heritage education in schools, it is considered as a high priority in policy.

*There is a priority at the moment from the government for heritage projects, so it is a question of priorities. What the government wants to invest in. Schools have money too, but it is about priorities and what schools want to invest in. Also the government tends to favour certain institutions.*

There was a tendency observed during school visits to put heritage and cultural education in the direction of singular 'events' rather than systematic instruction. For example, heritage and cultural education is often equated to events surrounding 'Victory day', 'Peace day' and so on. There is a financial incentive to place cultural activities on single days, as these 'special days' often give children free or reduced entry to cultural facilities.

These days were perceived by some teachers to be tokenistic<sup>5</sup>. For example, this comment by the director of a secondary school points to the trend towards more single days and away from more sustainable and structural arts education provisions:

*The last ten years there has been a tendency to put all the subsidies for arts and cultural education into special event days. Then the Minister can attend this event and be in the spotlight. But if you look at it you can see in a regular sense the subsidies have been reduced to both schools and cultural agencies and we are needing to rely more and more on special grants and outside money to even get the children to experience even a basic provision.*

Whether this perception is true or not, there was a widespread feeling that special events are being seen as a replacement for more substantial provisions within schools, as this further comment from a teacher suggests: "V-day is just a moment to put the Minister in the spotlight".

In other initiatives, the effects have not been felt by schools that are at a longer geographic distance from the cultural facilities. For example, an initiative to support trips to museums was limited only to schools in Brussels, who were more likely to have access to museums in any case. In another example, entrance to the museums was free, but the bus travel would have cost €8 per child.

## 1.11 MEDIA EDUCATION

- **Media education is not connected to arts education**
- **Knowledge of media education is minimal**

Attempts to have media education adopted within schools have largely been unsuccessful. Concepts of the role of media in education, especially in the areas of the so-called 'new literacies', 'multi-modal literacies' and the ethics of communication technology have had little empirical impact in the schools and levels of knowledge and practices in these areas are very low. As this comment from a primary school teacher clearly indicates, during an interview, the majority of respondents did not know the term 'media' education' and were unable to clearly indicate the content or method focus of this part of the curriculum, nor see its connection to wither arts or cultural education.

*⟨Long pause⟩ I don't know that term. Does that mean movies? I don't understand.*

Despite the fact that media education is poorly understood - with most schools interviewed not being familiar with this term and not able to define its aims or identify practice related to media education - there was a realisation among teachers that media education was something that children were good at and was a skill they might need for the future.

*It is funny, the children are great at it. It is the teachers that don't know anything about media education!*

*We are living in a world with many possibilities. The arts are the key to making choices and surviving in the future. We need to open our schools to the influence of the outside. Our schools are becoming museums. There are not crossovers with the lived experiences of the child. The arts need to be more integrated and relate more to the local context. Art is research - not illustration. Our schools are doing their best to kill creativity.*

*I don't see media education as being a subject but rather an 'enrichment' that should be part of all subjects.*

*At the moment our programmes are very visual arts focussed. I would like to do more in media education. Last year we did a simple project with an artist with an animation of Santa Claus. Four teachers from this school went to a course about animation using digital cameras so we did that with the children. It is not that difficult, but we only have one camera so then it is hard to manage in the classroom. We have a lot of computers, but only one camera.*

Media may be taught within more vocational orientated secondary schools, generally to more lower achieving pupils. In some

<sup>5</sup> In a reflective comment from an expert in the field of heritage education it was suggested that "these days can be seen as a lever or an opportunity to organise other activities around special events.

schools it is taught instead of more traditional drawing, fine arts or cultural education classes, as these teachers explain:

*Audio visual language is very useful. Children already know a lot of audiovisual skills that they learn in their own home. TV has taught us a lot, but it is the whole 'Disney' paradigm. They can appreciate it for what it is. After all, you don't go into a cinema and when the lights go off start thinking "Who made this film and how did they make it?" No, you just enjoy the moment and that is important too.*

While once again, the research indicated very low levels of understanding of media education, some respondents did at least hint at the connection between media education and the emerging literacies, such as visual literacy, sound literacy and aesthetic literacy. In the following comments there is some awareness of the role of media education for preparing children for the sorts of communication that will be required in the future.

*Essentially media education needs to be about developing the literacies and sensibilities for modern communication. It should not be about taking all the richness of communication that exists today and then putting it into a neat curriculum box.*

*I don't think media education will be done in schools. Teachers just don't know enough about contemporary communication. Parents expect that schools will do media education, but I don't think you can expect that from schools. After all, education needs to be happening when young people are using the internet, watching TV, have been to the movies, and this is often not in school time.*

The previous quote from a teacher also highlights the low level of expertise in media education within schools by suggesting it would not be possible to "expect that from schools" This implies that the lack of media education may relate directly to a lack of teacher expertise and training in this area. Furthermore, none of the respondents made an explicit or even implied link between arts education and media education.

## 1.12 IN SCHOOL PROVISIONS

→ **The extent and quality of arts and cultural education within primary and secondary schools varies considerably according to the expertise within the school**

The 'in school' provisions differ according to the level of education (e.g. primary or secondary) and the type of school and the network it belongs to. Based on the 2006 figure (see table 1.12.1), secondary education receives the largest percentage of funding.

### 1.12.1 Table: Percentage of budget by level of schooling

*The education budgets per level of education in % of a total education budget of 8.384.507 (thousand €) - 2006*

**Nursery and primary education: 32.08 percent**

**Secondary education: 40.82 percent**

**Non-university higher education: 7.68 percent**

**University education: 9.28 percent**

**DKO: 2.13 percent**

**Other (adult education, social advancement education,...): 8.01 percent**

The term 'expressive arts' is used within primary education to imply both the expressive (such as drama, music and dance) and the 'plastic' arts (including drawing, painting, sculpture and crafts). The amount of expressive arts received in primary school varies considerably from school to school. In the better examples, there is regular teaching and learning scheduled in both visual arts and music and these are generally taught by the general class teacher. In addition to this (and in some cases instead of regular arts instruction) schools may make one or more visits per year to the local cultural centre to watch a performance or see an exhibition. In more isolated schools, a theatre group may visit the school once or twice a year. Apart from these projects and performances, arts education amounts to a series of projects.

In secondary education, the continuation of arts and cultural education (in the period between the compulsory education in music and visual arts and the possibility of choosing electives in senior secondary school), a programme of cross-curricula themes related to arts and education occurs. According to policy, this involves the student in being exposed to – or "confronting" – the expressive or creative point of view within society. All schools must show that they make an effort to do this but as there are no attainment targets related to this, the standard of provision varies considerably from school to school.

To show how arts and cultural education may be enacted at the secondary school level, this vignette shows the regular workings of arts and cultural education in what could be described as being an indicative secondary school situated in a large

coastal town. As the school is the only secondary school for some distance, it could be considered to be a general school with a mixed student and teacher population.

### 1.12.2 Vignette: a little taste of art

*There is not a lot of cultural education in the curriculum. There are strict boundaries between subjects. It is difficult for the arts to be taken seriously. The music teacher is spread across three schools and tries to teach appreciation of music. After school music has to be taken more seriously. In school we don't have the curriculum time, the teaching time, the musical instruments or even a room. The children only get music and drawing in the first two years of high school.*

*Because we can't do much in the way of cultural education, we do try and take the children to a few outside events. For example, about 3 times a year we go to shows at the casino. The fifth and sixth form do a play. Once a year we try to go to the film festival in Bruges, but even Bruges is far away for us. In the evening, about once a month, the teachers invite the pupils to attend the film of the month or show of the month. It is voluntary and only a few attend - maybe ten. The sixth form goes to the gallery. We only go to the museum if there is a special exhibition on.*

*Transport is always a problem, so anywhere we go it costs between four to ten euros. About 1/25 of the children have a problem paying. The history teacher does a bit of arts and cultural education also, but only about three to four hours out of the whole curriculum is related to arts. I have to say, they do enjoy the part of the curriculum when we talk about art. They are very critical, but they are engaged and involved. The pupils only value arts education if they actually make something. We look at painting and they have to make one. We try to also look at film from around the world. In physical education, they do a bit of dance, and also in the music curriculum there is a section where children have to feel the rhythm of the music with their body.*

*Cultural education is done a bit in Dutch, English, Language and History. It is mainly talking about the arts, but we do a both of cultural education like learning about the Aztecs.*

*Heritage education is only really done in the higher levels of secondary school, like when you visit things outside the classroom. The fourth form always goes to Bruges. The pupils only learn a little bit, but at least they learn something. They really know very little about their local area and history.*

*Arts education is only one hour a week. It used to be two hours a week a few years ago but now it is only one hour. It is very practical. It gives them a little taste of art and we do what they like. If they choose to do mathematics as extras, they don't get any art. Actually, if they choose either mathematics or science they don't get any art.*

*I teach the lower level pupils so there is no real art learning. You have to start with so little. I try starting with pop music or film score music, and you can slowly build them up. There is not enough time to teach them about music or to read music, but I do try to give them the confidence to sing.*

*I am a history teacher and I think I do more arts education than most teachers because I have a real personal passion for the arts. I am not trained at all to teach the arts, but I do it, otherwise the children would not get any arts.*

*Only a very small percent of children attend after school classes. Only one to four percent at the most, and then it is the children of the more affluent parents. The lower classes never do any sort of after school music or drawing.*

### 1.13 AFTER SCHOOL/PART-TIME ARTS EDUCATION (DKO)

- **Flanders has an extensive system of government funded after schools arts education**
- **Despite being very low cost, DKOs fail to attract specified target groups**
- **DKOs do not tend to connect directly with schools**
- **Attendance at DKOs is comparatively low**
- **The curriculum at DKOs is generally based on traditional art forms and approaches**

Flanders has an extensive network of after school arts schools. These are spread across the country and even small towns and villages are likely to have access to an arts school: of the 327 Flemish municipalities, 261 have an after school art school (=79%). The majority of these schools are for musical education – primarily to learn an instrument and to study musicology and musical theory.

Although less common, there are also visual arts schools, drama schools and dance schools. The dance schools are generally privately run and do not generally receive direct government subsidy. In government supported arts schools, the salaries of

all staff are paid for by the national government and teachers are paid the same salary as if they were teaching in upper and lower secondary school.

Part-time arts education (DKO) is offered to all people in Flanders from the age of between six to eight years<sup>6</sup> onwards. For children, the part-time arts education offers a range of low cost opportunities. The cost per child is only around €51 and for this children can come to several lessons per week. For pupils in a particular social situation and children from the same family this is 33€. For adults the cost per year is €166, for adults in a difficult social situation and students between 18 and 24 years of age this is 96€. (See *Cijfers in het Deeltijds Kunstonderwijs XII, Toestand op basis van de leerlingentelling van 1 februari 2006*, OVSG, 2006, p.33).

The most common pattern of attendance for children studying music is to attend group instrumental classes once or twice per week and attend theory classes about once a week. Children may also be encouraged to do listening classes. Most schools stipulate that students can only learn an instrument if they also study theory<sup>7</sup>. The music taught is classical, with some jazz or folk music being introduced in some schools in recent years. Children tend to learn traditional instruments such as piano, violin or other string or woodwind instrument. Guitar and percussion are becoming popular.

While historically, the DKO have had little direct contact with schools, this pattern is changing and some DKO are starting to work more closely with feeder and local schools. There is a desire for collaborations between regular schools and after schools with the intention that closer links would be mutually beneficial.

*We have a very good local music school, but children once they get to high school don't like going, so we have made a partnership with them and we use some of the school budget to pay them to come and teach in our school, during school time and over lunch. Now we have a jazz band with 70 players in the school. The local area has a band too, but it is just not seen to be cool and sexy to go to after school music and play in a band.*

*I think more of what has been happening outside of school has to be connected to school. The children will say to us, "you want us to study, do sport, go to culture, go to band!" There are too many offers. The problem is some children are doing far too much and others are doing nothing. It depends on the parents.*

Similarly, while traditionally the DKO were primarily music and visual arts, some centres have expanded their offerings to include drama and dance. Though it has to be said, in practice, all the DKO visited were primarily self-contained units that focused on quite a traditional curriculum delivered to children of the higher socio-educations echelons. As one director of a DKO noted, "It tends to only be the upper class, educated parents who see the value of the top layer that the after school art classes give."

*We started as a 'music school' but now we do drama and music. There are six drama teachers and 50 music teachers. Every week we have over 1200 pupils. 80 percent of these are under 18 years of age. 60 percent are eight to twelve year and 40 percent are twelve to eighteen years of age. 40 students are in higher education. Of our students 80 percent come from higher general education, nineteen percent from technical education and only one percent from vocational education. 7 percent come from another country. Students must be able to speak Flemish well or we will not take them. Only about 60 percent of students continue once they start high school. Most children come for three hours a week for their instrument (one hour shared with a maximum of one to three other students); one hour ensemble; one hour of music culture and theory as well. The sign of our academic status is that out of 400 children 150 do Latin.*

The pattern of instruction is different in fine arts schools, but tends to focus on learning techniques and producing works for exhibition. The art schools offer a range of visual arts experiences including printmaking, drawing, painting and sculpture. Jewellery making and ceramics may be offered.

In schools where music is taught, drama and dance may also be offered. Music, elocution, speech development (wordcraft) and acting skills might all be available as options through this school.<sup>8</sup>

Where dance is taught, it is primarily classical ballet or contemporary dance. Some schools have tried to introduce folk dancing.

In all the centres visited, the practices were skill-orientated and quite traditional. Use of new technology was not apparent, except in one well-equipped music school that was using computers to teach music theory and musical composition.

The children attending the centres were mainly affluent, white, Flemish children. Attendance was quite good with officially 18 percent of children attending between six to twelve years and 10 percent after then (See *Cijfers in het Deeltijds Kunstonderwijs XII, Toestand op basis van de leerlingentelling van 1 februari 2006*, OVSG, 2006, p.36). All part-time arts schools reported that attendance falls rapidly after around three years with only those children with particular ability or where their parents are

<sup>6</sup> Visual arts and dance can generally commence at six years, while music, speech and drama generally commence at eight years of age.

<sup>7</sup> Children begin with one year of theory, solfège and singing. Only in the second year (around nine years of age) do they start to play an instrument. The general pattern for students is to attend theory, solfège, singing and instrumental classes.

<sup>8</sup> DKO classifies two major school systems: fine art schools and schools for music, wordcraft and dance.

particularly conscientious, continuing to attend. While there are economic subsidies for poor children to attend, all the schools visited had almost no children from lower socio-educational communities or from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

According to official figures, 161 013 students attended part-time arts education in the school year 2005-2006 (See *Cijfers in het Deeltijds Kunstonderwijs XII, Toestand op basis van de leerlingentelling van 1 februari 2006*, OVSG, 2006, p.12). However, accurate figures of actual attendance are hard to obtain, as a number of settings reported variable percentages of people who enrol into classes but rarely attend. There is a large drop out at an early age. 62% of the total number of pupils is under 12 years of age, 38% is between 12 and 18 years old. Around 75 percent of all students are under eighteen years, with 48 % studying music, 15 % drama, 6% dance and 31% visual arts (See *Cijfers in het Deeltijds Kunstonderwijs XII, Toestand op basis van de leerlingentelling van 1 februari 2006*, OVSG, 2006, p.12-13). Once again, figures are difficult to generalise from as Child x may be attending music, dance and drama, and so appear in the figure as being three people. Similarly, some pupils attend for only a summer school or similar, but are still recorded as being a separate student attending.

The content of the programmes tend to be based on models of the 'master' and the pupil and it was not evident that these were adapted to the context of the DKO or the diversities within the broader population. In music schools, students learn to play (classical) music from the past (from before the year 1900). In general, they are not encouraged to create their own music.

The teachers are also from a Flemish, upper class background and most of the teachers work part time, using teaching as a way to supplement performance income. Around fifteen to twenty percent of teachers teaching in the arts school has their arts school salary as their only or main form of income. Despite this, popular instruments, such as guitar and percussion teachers are difficult to find, as the following vignette outlines:

#### 1.13.1 Vignette: trying to be more creative

*It is hard to find teachers for guitar and theatre. This school has invested in the latest technology. We are a smart school and use the blackboard system of electronic learning. Our website is regularly checked. The pupils compose their own music and make recording scores. They can work on computers with headphones. We are very well equipped with digital studios. We try to make our school as accessible as possible. Pupils can rent their instruments. We sometimes put the pupils in mixed age groups. We think that if a pupils starts at 8 and is still playing at 18 we have done a good job. In reality, many leave when they go to high school. I think they have too much to do. We also don't get many children from an ethnic background. Each year about four or five of our pupils go onto the conservatorium. We are trying to be more creative. We don't just want the pupils to learn theory. We have to do that but we try to get them making music and writing words. To be creative you do need to know the rules and what makes good music. We do an annual self evaluation. The local university helps us to reflect and evaluate. We also conduct an evaluation with an external team. There is the inspection also, but as they are not trained their comments don't help us to improve.*

All arts schools receiving government funding are inspected under the same process as regular schools throughout Flanders. This inspection is conducted by inspectors with a specialism in the DKO field.

In addition to the more traditional music and visual arts schools some innovative options are available for arts education outside formal schooling. For example, the *KIDS* (vzw Kansen in de Stad) programme has a long-term vision to support both children and the people within the community who work with them. It aims to connect young people with cultural services and to form a network between educational and cultural providers. *KIDS* also aim to encourage young people to participate in the arts and culture and to visit cultural institutions. *KIDS* also aims, through the *Kids-Kanaal-Kunst* programme to provide artistic possibilities to less privileged children and young people.

Similarly, *Eigen-Aardig* holiday programmes in artistic activities for children of different financial and cultural backgrounds has a strong focus on the children and young people exploring their local context and environment through the arts.

#### 1.14 AIMS: WHY HAVE THE ARTS?

- **In the area of creativity and experience there is congruence between policy and elicited aims**
- **Culture, heritage and media are only minimally apparent in the stated aims**
- **There are too many aims for arts education**

The main aims for arts education according to world studies includes cultural transmission or understanding, transmission of artistic skills, personal, social and cultural outcomes.

The aims of the projects in Flanders are often unclear and evaluation of the children's learning rarely occurs. One respondent in reflection noted that the aims were vague and that "I have to create aims myself" This has led to a proliferation of aims but

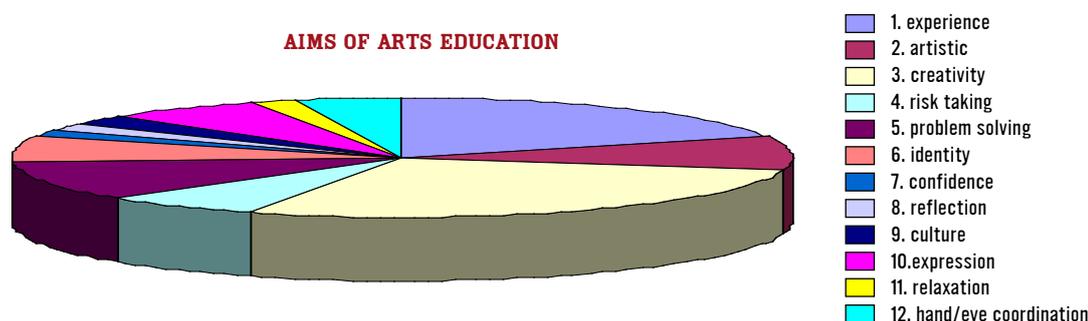
a lack of clarity about these aims. The projects tend to be focused on creative experiences. The aims do not generally connect ideas or work to any quality product and the children know it is “just some fun” and not part of regular learning.

Why should arts and cultural education be a core part of a child’s schooling? The following reasons have been cited:

- To enable children to gain a sense of making beautiful things
- To provide opportunities for children get to try and experience artistic things
- To gain sense of arts and culture
- For enjoyment to understand how artists approach creativity
- To experiment and be open to new ideas
- To develop the ability to create; to make something that has not existed before
- To experiment
- To discover novelty
- To cross boundaries
- To experience a wide range of activities
- To understand what it is to be artistic
- To develop and expand creative minds
- To develop a creative workforce
- To expand sensibilities
- To develop creative thinking
- To forge creative and original solutions and to develop new combinations of thinking
- To solve practical problems
- Problem solving
- To stimulate children
- Empowerment
- Self-esteem
- Critical thinking
- To know how to make choices
- Confidence
- Self-reflection
- Identity
- To be open minded
- To be open with culture
- To understand the environment
- Broaden the children’s world
- Provide ways for children to express themselves
- Change the climate for the better
- Things other than intellectual things
- If we don’t provide it, they will never know it
- Confidence
- Hand eye coordination
- Muscle movement

Categories of these espoused aims are displayed graphically in *Figure 1.14.1*. Apparent from this chart is that while experience, creativity and problem solving are at the heart of expressed goals, there is a huge and diverse list of accredited goals for arts education. This is somewhat problematic as the ideal blend would see the emergence of no more than around six clear goals. At the same time, while “experience” is stated explicitly in policy and backed by initiative and indicative in practice, the other two main aims (i.e. creativity and problem solving) were not generally apparent in the design or enactment of arts education in Flanders, indicating a mismatch between policy, aims and practice. Interestingly too, the three accompanying aims of arts education as stated in policy (i.e. heritage, media and cultural education) are barely mentioned (if at all). For instance, heritage education was not mentioned at all and even if we extrapolate meaning from areas such as ‘identity’ and civic pride, these represent a very small percent of the overall pie. Similarly, culture - which has had a major funding and policy push - represent a very small slice of the overall aims.

### 1.14.1 Figure: Aims of arts education



However, these aspirations must be set in context and it is important to note that the arts are not a panacea. As a respondent noted:

*Whenever there is any sort of issue, it is suggested that arts and cultural education can help. It is really important that we target groups and then work more specifically. For example, to improve language skills. There is no good saying 'the arts help people from diversity groups'. You need to be specific. What age? Which cultural group? You have to work with the local groups. Listen to people from the target group. Really understand them and then design a specific programme. There are a lot of positive impacts from the arts.*

On the one hand, arts education is seen to be something that is capable of almost anything, while at the same time, perceived within authority to be something that is not central to the aims of education and of a low priority, as this comment from a school director suggests:

*This school is a very structured school. Our priorities are mathematics and language. The arts are too distracting. I am new here and like creative things and some of the young teachers want to introduce the arts. I try to say every subject is of the same importance, but the other teachers do not agree. I don't think it would be a good idea for an artist to come into this school. The arts could make the children feel better. Also you can identify if a child has talent. If parents want their child to do art, there are choices outside the school. We have big classes. The teachers do not have the interest or the talent. We need special 'extra' money for the arts. In this school if I said I wanted to spend money on the arts the school board and other teachers would never support that idea. It is OK to say we have a global budget, but once all the bills are paid there is very little money left. I wanted to get music methods books for the teachers to use, but that will take six years just to save up the money for those. Then we will have the books, but no instruments! The inspectors don't care if we do the arts. I think if you want the arts in schools there will need to be major structural changes.*

By implication, it was also suggested that the aims of arts education perhaps should be differentiated to each of the levels of secondary education and that certain levels of students may be less receptive to the arts.

*Our students come to this school for technical training. They are like blinkered horses. They are not culturally minded and go through life not noticing the culture around them. I try to take them to the theatre. It costs 250 Euros just for one bus before we have even got anywhere. We specialise in welding and carpentry. The students don't design things for themselves. The teachers design and the children learn the skills of making. We integrate computers into every lesson and they use CAD systems. I would like to have more creative opportunities in this school.*

It was also surprising within the international context and within discussions that the value of the arts as a form of expression was rarely proffered as an aim. While the following comment indicates the value of the arts as an expressive language, it would appear that this view is not widely shared by Flemish arts educators.

*A universal language [and] aesthetic awareness helps children ask philosophical questions. Children learn to appreciate the nature of things: both the beautiful and the ugly. Arts are different from other subjects. Children respect arts and culture. Develop artistic skills. The projects tend to be very experience orientated with the main aim being to get children to have a 'taste' of the art forms. In many instances, the taste is really a morsel and unlikely to satisfy the hunger of adolescents.*

It was widely felt that parents were supportive of quality arts opportunities and considered this to be a high priority when choosing schools. Schools wishing to develop their profile saw artistic aims as an important part of that enhancement.

*The perception of the value of the arts is high among parents and then we could sort of start to subtly play one school off against the*

*other. So if a school is not doing any arts projects, they see the other schools around them. These schools are getting extra resources and their parents are valuing the arts and soon the schools are looking for our support. We then try and make them an offer they can't refuse!*

In official policy statements, it is noteworthy that *Erfgoededucatie in het Vlaamse Onderwijs* contains very little in the way of the impact on children of heritage education – or more correctly the lack thereof in primary and secondary education. This omission might be indicated in the low level of priority given to heritage education in the freely stated aims.

Creativity featured more prominently in the stated aims. This was also evident in associated skills such as problem-solving, cultural understanding and decision-making. Creativity was also widely associated with innovation in the qualitative data on aims. This focus of aims is pleasing as creativity is frequently mentioned in the policy statements and curriculum guidelines and is enshrined in statutory instruments although the use of this term is only vaguely defined.

Correspondingly, there is a widely held belief that the arts will “spontaneously manifest” creativity, and that this will - in and of itself - lead to a more creative economy. While this assumption is widely held around the world, and often cited in anecdotal evidence, it is yet to be empirically verified that there is a causal connection between the arts and creativity and that this is transferable to improved economic performance.

*A goal of arts education is to enable young people to make young people more creative.  
Being creative is about active participation and enjoying the arts. We need a structured platform for consolidating the work between the two fields.*

The role of the arts in promoting creative and innovative thinks is not fully recognised. Creativity is not the focus of the arts either in school or after school. Notions of experience (in school) and skill (outside of school) tend to be much stronger motives for the arts.

Whereas a number of developed and developing countries around the world see creativity as the hub of their future success, Flemish education is not seeing the value of the arts to the development of critical thinking, entrepreneurship, collaborative practice and innovation and there are almost no examples of links between the school and the creative industries (other than through the recognised arts agencies, such as theatres and galleries).

# Chapter 2

## { WORLD STANDARDS - BENCHMARKING }

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

For the positive impacts of arts education to become apparent, children must experience high quality arts education. The results from the global study of arts education (Bamford, 2006) suggest that in around one fourth of all instance of arts education, the quality is so low as to negatively effect a child's artistic and creative development. Given this, it is imperative that the arts education within Flanders reaches certain levels of quality. This chapter outlines the basic components that together form high quality arts education.

### 2.2 WORLD STANDARDS: DEFINING THE ALPHA OF QUALITY ARTS EDUCATION

Art education - like health - is not a mono-causal phenomenon but one which hinges on many variables pointing in the same direction. Statisticians have developed a measure of this. The so-called *Cronbach's Alpha* (Bogt, 1993) measures the consistency between factors in compound phenomena. The higher consistency there is between the qualities, the higher the *Cronbach Score*. Statistically speaking, total consistency equals 1, whereas no consistency at all equals 0 (Bogt, 1993).

This is certainly not to suggest that a Cronbach score can be derived for the arts by criteria, averages, and global means. Educational systems are deeply embedded in cultural and nation specific contexts. This is especially the case as regards education in the arts. More than any other subject, the arts (itself a broad category) reflect unique cultural circumstances, and consequently, so does the teaching of the subject.

So any *Alpha* developed must respect and encourage this diversity. Judd (Judd et al., 1993) refer to this more as a *gossamer concept*, where a set of abstract constructs are grouped together consistently to create a somewhat dependable phenomena. Just as 'health' may be a collection of measurable factors (e.g. steady pulse, low cholesterol and good metabolism etc), well-being comprises a number of constructs such as happiness, contentment, power, social roles and so on.

Related to arts education, we know that quality programmes have a number of measurable characteristics in common, such as inclusion of partnerships, performances and approaches to learning but equally they depend on attitudes of risk taking, collaboration, sharing and other abstract constructs.

These together form the baseline *alpha* that needs to be considered prior to the measurement of impact.

It is possible to draw certain overall conclusions and to find common denominators, which can serve as a form of *alpha* for arts education research. Just as social science, researchers have developed community 'liveability' standards, medical researchers have developed patient well-being indicators and the legal system is continually called upon to make judgements based on precedent and statutes. The arts community can now - perhaps for the first time - have a reasonable *alpha* to use for ascertaining quality prior to evaluating impact.

Throughout the results of the global survey there is an unequivocal indication that certain structures and methods of instruction are common to all quality programmes regardless of their context, scale, scope or resources. The question now is to determine if these structures are present at the national level.

### 2.3 THE NATURE OF QUALITY

'Quality' here is being defined as those arts education provisions that are of recognised high value and worth in terms of the skills, attitudes and performativity engendered. According to Pearsall (1998) quality implies something that has been achieved successfully.

In the case of arts education, quality is considered to exist as something that may include achievements (i.e. quality outputs), but goes beyond this to consider learning journeys, pathways, partnerships and recognition. Dewey (1934: 19) writes of quality as being characterised by a "heightened vitality" He further comments that quality signifies, "active and alert commerce with the world: at its height, it implies complete interpretation of self and the world of objects and events." Under this notion, quality is not a fixed disposition but rather as Kissick (1993: 27) notes, "quality is first and foremost an idea, its criteria are susceptible to influences from within a given society".

Quality arts education is the result of interplay of structure and method. It should be noted, that *alpha* does not specify

content. This is deliberate, as content should be derived in relation to local environments, culture and resources. In this way content and context can operate independently of the quality *alpha*. Similarly, these indicators of quality hold true for both *education through the arts* and *education in the arts*. In both these complementary ways in which the arts contribute to education, the indicators of quality remain quite stable and consistent.

These quality indicators are:

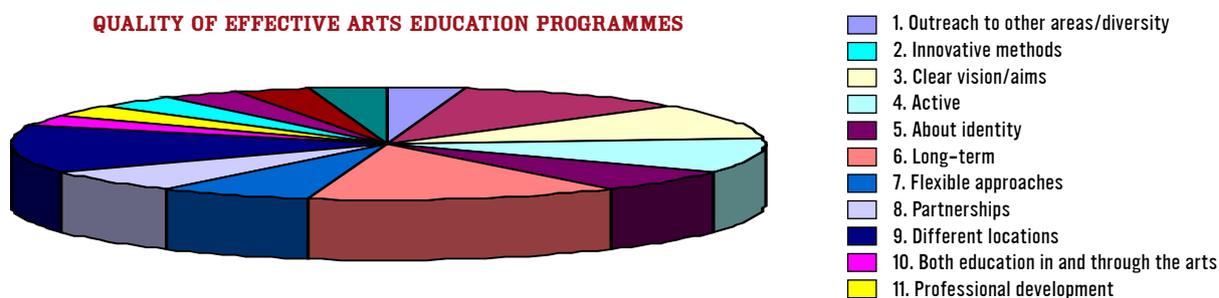
- Active partnerships between schools and arts organizations and between teachers, artists and the community
- Shared responsibility for planning, implementation and assessment and evaluation
- Opportunities for public performance, exhibition and/or presentation
- A combination of development within the specific art forms (education in the arts) with artistic and creative approaches to learning (education through the arts)
- Provision for critical reflection, problem solving and risk taking
- Emphasis on collaboration
- An inclusive stance with accessibility to all children
- Detailed strategies for assessing and reporting on children’s learning, experiences and development
- Ongoing professional learning for teachers, artists and the community, and
- Flexible school structures and permeable boundaries between schools and the community

These alphas of effective arts education will be used to organise this report and the quality of arts education in schools in Flanders will be discussed in reference to these world standard quality alphas.

## 2.4 INDICATORS OF QUALITY

Research participants were asked to suggest what they considered to be the indicators of quality arts education within Flanders. Figure 2.4.1 shows the graphical representation of these indicators.

2.4.1 Figure: Quality arts education



It can be noted in the nominated indicators of quality, that these correspond very closely to the international indicators. The list of eleven items suggests a comprehensive vision of quality by both practitioners and those in decision making positions. It can therefore be assumed that the **knowledge** of quality is well entrenched, but the **practice and monitoring** of quality may be less embedded. This is apparent in this comment from a decision maker within the culture sector:

*Instinct is the best way to judge quality. You just know quality when you see it. You feel it when you visit a school or a cultural programme. The policy plan can be good, but it is when you see it in action you actually know if the practice is good quality. However, it is difficult to define indicators of quality. Many organisations play the game. They just repeat back the policy in their supposed outcomes; give them what they want. What is needed is a platform for sharing. Some neutral space where we don't just talk 'policy speak' or technical questions, but we really reflect on methods and speak about real contexts, issues and problems.*



# Chapter 3

## { RESPONSES TO QUALITY }

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION – OVERALL STATEMENTS ABOUT QUALITY

Using the approach developed in the previous chapter, the following list of quality indicators could be used as an *alpha* for arts education – and I would argue arts projects more broadly – to determine ‘a wellness indicator’ that can be used for arts education prior to impact measurement. It may also act as a diagnostic tool for improving arts education programmes.

### 3.2. ACTIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH CREATIVE PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVING TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION

- **There are good practice examples of partnerships between schools and artists in Flanders**
- **These should be extended, both in terms of the number of schools involved and the duration of the partnerships**
- **Ongoing partnerships between the education and school sectors need to be embedded within policy and practice**
- **Developing longer term partnerships takes time, sharing and resources**
- **Consideration should be given to partnerships with industry and the broader community**

Active partnership involves the direct inclusion of a range of cultural and artistic organisations in the planning and delivery of arts education programmes. The most effective programmes have managed to build sustainable, long-term and reciprocal associations with cultural agencies and industries. Active partnerships include shared responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating a programme.

While the world study on the impact of the arts supports the use of partnerships in arts and cultural education between the professional arts world and educators, focus groups of artists within Flanders were less supportive of the way these operated.

The international research suggests that successful partnerships are sustained and involve shared responsibility for planning and evaluation. This is generally not the case in Flanders, where professional artists tend to come into the school for short-term ‘special projects’ or for school-based performances.

Artists (particularly within the cultural institutions receiving considerable government financial support) are obliged to make arts education offers for children. Within these offers, there is a strong focus on the performing arts, with theatre and music being the most common art forms. Film is also popular. Other art forms or the broader creative industries are rare. In reflections on the draft report it was noted by a pedagogical advisor that dance and choreography was particularly neglected and that this was “a pity because it is the moving body that opens other creative processes such as music and drama”.

These creative encounters tend to be ‘one-off’ experiences where a performance or other arts group will come into the school for a single performance. At other times, the theatre groups may visit a local community centre and perform a very short season (between one day and five days) in that venue, and local children would be brought to see the play by their school teachers.

The criticism was made that, despite artists often making attempts to send both pre and post performance kits and activities, the performances are generally disconnected from general school experiences, as these quotes from performers suggest:

*Often rather than make children have a good feeling about the arts, often when you do a performance for young children it just leaves them and everyone else with a bad feeling. You can instantly feel that the children have been pushed to attend and are not well-prepared. Performances don't connect to the children and seem so anonymous. The children don't understand the plays and so to them theatre is just boring. It is not nice for the performers either. Sometime the teachers don't even listen and talk through a performance.*

*The arts in school are so unnatural. Every play is 40 minutes long to fit into the timetable. Who goes to the theatre at 10am? And every performance lasts for 39 minutes so it can fit into the timetable. Most of the experiences are not relevant to the children's lives.*

*Children say to me, “I went to the theatre and it was boring”. Of course the theatre is boring if the children have not had the opportunity to develop skills of active drama making and have not had their sensibilities aroused.*

Projects are often run by artists without connection to the children's other learning. While a number of the artists interviewed

reported that they go to considerable effort to try to send preliminary material and to encourage links to other areas, it was their experience, that most children entered the project with very little experience and that teachers viewed the time as an opportunity for a break from teaching and rarely joined in the project. In fact, most of the artists preferred the teachers to not join in as their knowledge of artistic methods was so low that the artists felt they stifled rather than enhanced the children's learning. On the other hand, there was a reflective comment that suggested that it was important that artists acknowledged that when it comes to the arts, often it is the "teacher that is the pupil" and teachers should be encouraged to learn alongside their class.

The general feeling was that young children were more receptive to performances and less of a problem than older student, as this theatre director commented, "Children that are older than twelve years are the real problem". Another remark suggested that arts and cultural experiences rarely engaged children in the teenage years and that, "They don't understand anything and then this is when you lose them forever". This comment intimates that negative experiences of the arts and culture in the teenage years can make people reluctant to engage in the arts for the rest of their lives. It is also important to point out that developing a positive attitude to the arts should not be the sole responsibility of the school. Parents and members of the community have a vital role to play in providing children with access and encouragement to enter arts and cultural learning opportunities and environments. As was saliently noted, "Being *muzisch* is part of a child's culture" and like all aspects of a child's development, parents need to care for their child's development of creativity and allow it to grow and expand.

Criticisms made from the cultural industry sector and expressed by artists working closely with schools, were that the teachers lacked the sensibility to adequately prepare for, engage in, or evaluate the impact of the arts interventions or performances in schools. These comments from a selection of artists arguably demonstrate the perceived lack of knowledge and expertise of arts and culture within the teachers: "Lots of teachers simply do not have the knowledge. Maybe we <the cultural industries> should invest more time and energy trying to help teachers understand the arts".

In one case an artist made the observation that it may be better for children to not have cultural education at all within school as the quality of 'school arts' was so low.

*It is difficult for children to get anything out of it when the interaction with the school is only for one hour and even then it is all receptive time. There is no active learning.*

*The arts in school are not very good quality. Maybe we should leave it up to the parents to organise for their child to participate in arts education outside the school.*

This comment mirrors the international research that indicated that in many instances the level of arts education is so low, that children would be better not experiencing it. One pedagogical advisor termed this as the "level of animation" that needs to be brought into the education process. Arts and cultural industry workers suggested that often the contacts between schools and their sector are tense. This tension is caused by the lack of understanding between these two sectors, and it could be argued by conflicting motives for the partnership.

*You touch on the tension between arts and culture and education. Many arts companies want to reach schools. Large institutions expect the schools to accept what they design for them - a sort of "one-size-fits-all" approach. The really good projects are often in small scale institutions where the arts, culture and the education people are all involved. In many cultural institutions they put forward ideas and proposals but the door is not open. Their relationships with schools are only special projects. There are no structural connections between schools and the cultural institutions. The cultural institutions and artists don't understand education and this leads to tension.*

At other times it was proffered that the motive for the arts to contact education was purely driven by the need to generate extra funds or to build audiences for the future. Performances and contacts with schools were seen to be a lucrative market that needed to be 'tapped' in response to falling government subsidies for the arts groups. At the same time, young people were viewed as building a 'market for the future':

*People want things to happen, but this is only if they think they can get some extra resources out of it there is an attitude in the arts that young people are only important as customers and consumers. It is all about stimulating an attitude that the school is a recruiting ground for the future. I want to know how we can prevent this.*

*School performances have become a market in itself. There is already an over-supply of artists working in this market.*

To encourage more successful models for partnerships, a focus group of artists suggested that a closer relationship between the schools and the cultural institutions was vital, as these comments underpin. The education should be in cooperation with the cultural institution:

*It is no good cultural institutions developing product and then trying to push them onto the schools. Schools will not be active in that way. Communication is really important. It is about listening first and really working closely with schools and teachers - working together to match our needs. It is a sort of marketing in a way, but at least it is meaningful.*

*Schools and institutions do not discuss common goals. What are the goals of the school and how do these mesh with the goals of the institutions? This is a common grievance (that the goals of the school and the institution are different).*

*We need far more communication and shared planning. That would be a really good thing. But often there is only the influence of the marketing people within cultural institutions and not any influence of either artists or education. Yes it would be a good thing if there was more communication. People just do things the ways they have always done them.*

*The ways of doing things are not common. We don't share good practice. The goodwill of both education and culture are both needed if we are to have communication. There is not a structured idea between partnerships and collaborations. There is no real policy behind collaborations on both sides. As long this funding problem is not solved, the tension between arts and education is likely to continue.*

*Some companies make programmes especially for schools. You are starting to get the emergence of product based spin-off performances linked to children's TV shows.*

Countries that have effective arts and cultural education generally have active partnerships across sectors, disciplines and organisations. The notion of an active partnership involves the direct inclusion of a range of cultural and artistic organizations in all aspects of the planning and delivery. The best of these provide sustainable, long-term and reciprocal associations. These sustained associations are centred on shared responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating programmes.

While the most common partnerships in a world context are between the cultural and educational sectors, a number of countries have a range of agencies supporting arts education including private individuals (the most common one), enterprise, the community, trade unions and a number of other possible partnerships. These partnerships tend to encourage the pooling of financial resources, human resources and expertise to produce substantial arts education programmes.

There are very few examples of industry partnership in education in Flanders. The Ministry for Education is currently pilot testing a project examining the role of partnerships in education in fifteen schools. These schools are mainly community schools, but other schools can apply to be included in the programme.

Based on the idea that knowledge creation in schools sometimes needs collaboration with outside bodies, the pilot project (conducted over three years) attempted to evaluate the impact of partnerships on learning. As this programme only began in 2006, it is too early to determine the results (see later notes on the Broad school).

A number of reasons are cited to explain why there are a comparatively small number of partnerships projects in Flemish schools. The most common reason is the inflexible nature of both education and cultural providers and the lack of communication and collaboration between different networks and sectors. It was suggested that it was important that there should be more opportunities for professional development **between** professional advisors, inspectors, school directors, teachers and the arts world as these sectors tended to be largely contained within their domain.

Other arguments cited are a lack of awareness by teachers and artists of opportunities for greater linkages, lack of sustained commitment to arts education from the cultural sector and the additional time needed to organize such partnerships. Geographical isolation and expense are also widely given as reasons for not doing so, as this comment suggests:

*While it is possible to usually visit local sites for free, if the child cannot walk to the site, the costs escalate quite quickly and this can make the process of visiting these sites quite restrictive. This is especially the case for the schools in the far west, where travelling can be a major block to visiting cultural provisions.*

For example, one student teacher interviewed had not ever been in a museum before she began her teacher training as she was from a more remote part of the country.

While not specified by the respondents, it can be surmised that some schools are frequent and active visitors to museums, performances and galleries. In the most successful examples of these, schools work very closely with local cultural providers. They visit libraries monthly, make effective use of museums and attend professional performances. These activities ideally exist within walking distance of the schools, but it is not uncommon for schools to also visit cultural facilities in other parts of the country, within Europe or more broadly at an international level.

It was also noted that building partnerships takes considerable time and effort.

*We basically develop projects on a voluntary basis. It takes a lot of effort. We have to start from scratch and it takes so much time to prepare a project brief. We have many social problems we have to deal with as well. We have set up a band where teachers, students and some musicians from the music school are playing. That is working well. But it takes many years to build up that level of trust. You have to be very diplomatic. It is based on trust at all levels.*

In other schools, the involvement with cultural partners is somewhat marginal. It was suggested that local cultural policy may be responsible for this, though discussions with local authorities tended to point to other causes. The school might visit an exhibition, do a workshop or attend a performance, but these are seen more as 'one off' experiences than part of the general arts and cultural programmes of the schools. It is common that even for these more tokenistic relationships, both the cultural provider and the teachers will put at least some effort into preparing the pupils for the experience and reflecting about the experience after the event. This is evident in this example:

*The music teacher once made a CD recording in a music studio. We look for opportunities. No artists have ever come in for more than two days. We wanted to do a project and create a play. We found a director that could help us but he became a Director of another company and now he can't work with us. But maybe we will try for next year. The local theatre provides all kinds of cultural activities so it is not hard to get qualified teachers. It is just money and time.*

While many of the projects described and observed were of high standard, there was a general lack of both continuity and consistency. The project tended to be of a very short duration – often one day or less and lack any connection or follow-up within the arts or across other disciplines.

The major criticism was that these projects tended to be a great deal of work to organise and require making often lengthy funding applications. The process of application often took considerably longer than the project itself.

Importantly, there was a lack of a learning line through these projects, and so for both the teachers and the children, it was difficult to connect these experiences in a constructed manner to make meaningful conceptual developments.

Furthermore, the projects tended to occur outside the day-to-day structural components of the school, meaning there was little sustained embedding of the arts within the school. This is exemplified in this comment from a school director: "Practically all arts and cultural education occur as short, one-off projects. To do something consistent is hard."

Another school director noted:

*Because I really want this school to get ahead, I try to put applications in for as many special projects as possible, but I want to say two things: There are so many different projects it is very confusing. Too much energy is needed just to get a project. The extra time needed for paper work is enormous. We are only a small school so that burden often falls on me. It is all on top of my other work and then when you get funding it is like you are winning a prize or getting charity. It shouldn't be like that. You don't have to do that for other subjects. Arts and cultural education needs long term general funding and it needs to be ring-fenced money.*

### 3.3 FLEXIBLE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES AND PERMEABLE BOUNDARIES

- ➔ **Schools and cultural institutions have developed innovative ways to encourage more permeable boundaries around their organisations and more flexibility within the organisation**
- ➔ **Bureaucracy and attitudes can inhibit organisational flexibility**

In general it was acknowledged that the arts provided a valuable opportunity for children to go beyond their direct environment and to be more creative and to expand their horizons. While lip service was given to these ideals, the realisation of this aim was generally less successful. The following comment points to the need for the 'narrow' focus of schools to be broadened:

*Parents and the community only see the Wow Factor not the long-term benefits. Education currently has a fairly narrow view of thinking about impact, but we need to broaden the vision of education.*

Even within highly creative schools, bureaucracy and a number of health and safety issues were seen to limit the potential to take artistic risks. Lack of skills was also seen as a limiting factor on risk taking. Within general education it was considered that the pupils lacked sufficient skills in the artistic languages to really extend their practice and get to a stage of risk taking. It was suggested that having artists within the school enhanced the likelihood of risk taking as this comment from a school director suggests:

*The artists are changed through the process. It benefits not only the school and the children but the neighbourhood and the parents, both socially and economically. The benefits extend way beyond the school. It changes the way education works with parents. It unites people across the generations. Young people with old. Parents with teachers. The arts have been a real "win-win" dimension for this school. The school is no longer an island, but more of a network. It is all about pushing the school in a certain way and then letting go.*

Here the presence of greater involvement of parents and the community had meant that the school had taken on a fuller life within the town and was being recognised for its innovative practice.

Conversely, in the after school provisions their aim appeared to be to make the pupils skilled in the status quo and so did not provide opportunities for creative expression or risk taking. It could be argued, though, that specialist settings did encourage pupils to progress beyond the perceived scope of their personal skills or talents. This was certainly true in some instances, but also as there is a very high drop out rate in these settings, it appeared that many pupils left just at the point where their personal art making might be stretched, extended or challenged

Quality arts programmes flourish in situations where there is scope for organizational flexibility, as is shown in this example in a philosophy-based school:

*If you come to our school at 5pm there are still lots of things happening. I have to sometimes say, “go home!” When it is the end of the day, the children want to stay and keep learning and teachers are happy too. During this time there is a nice atmosphere because the parents will also join the children and everyone is working together.*

Increasing the permeability between arts, cultural and educational organizations are likely to benefit all these organizations. Both schools and arts and cultural organizations need to be prepared to open their boundaries, both actual and metaphoric to the influences of the community within which they exist. In such cases, flexible organizational structures and permeable boundaries maximise learning. But this process is not always easy. Despite this, schools and cultural institutions have managed to develop highly innovative ways to encourage flexibility.

*It is hard to get parents involved as most parents work and it is only 5-6pm when they get home each day. We found that if we can get parents, we only get one parent. So we decided to start ‘school walks’. We do this on the weekend. Teachers, parents and children, will all meet and go for a walk in the countryside or in the forest. As we walk we chat and we all sit and enjoy a picnic lunch. This way you get the whole family and mother and father. The children can also be open too.*

In several schools visited there was a strong sense of connectivity. This was used as a strategy to enhance learning and to achieve multiple aims through the same input.

It is reasonable to say that there is an enormous range in Flemish schools in the way learning is organised. This goes from highly traditional schools where the children sit in rows and learning is organised in very traditional and inflexible structures of timetabling, facilities and teaching approaches. At the other end of the scale, some schools are highly flexible in their approaches and reference the latest in educational thinking to try innovative approaches to learning. As parents can largely choose the particular school they want for their children -although in practice more popular schools are hard to get inscribed into- it is possible for schools to be quite individual and autonomous in their offerings and for parents to select a school that has the sort of approach they support or desire. It was pointed out in reflection, that even this process of selection is not done by the majority of parents, but rather is a pattern of behaviour of the social “better” class people.

The options of choice are less likely outside the larger cities and towns. It is also apparent that more educated and middle class families (across all ethnic groups) are likely to have better access to information that would enable them to make thoughtful choices. More economically or educationally disadvantaged populations are likely to be left to only choose from a place still available.

This description is of a philosophy-based school within a medium sized regional city. It describes a situation of a very high level of flexibility.

### 3.3.1 Vignette: Various places to learn

*We operate multi-age, shared classes. Usually it is two classes combined, but it can be three. We do not have a set timetable. Use of time is very flexible. Except for mathematics, the children have a list of the various areas we think they should cover and they make their own decisions about learning. All the learning is based around a theme. In the younger classes the teacher might choose this in discussion with the children, but in older classes they would decide what they wanted to focus on. The children use time as they wish. They can also use space as they need to for their learning. There are various places they can learn – at a desk, a table, on the floor, in special art studios, computer rooms, sitting on lounges – really wherever they want. Some continue on project even after the school day has finished or before school. The children are independent. For example, they might choose to design something to relate to a story or to make a connected role play about Egypt. They can cook, make art, and discuss whatever is relevant to what they are trying to learn. We find the children are very enthusiastic so they continue learning outside school - bringing things in from home, going to the library or on the internet. We encourage them to gather learning from a range of resources and to synthesise and adapt their learning and then to present their learning to others. School time is very flexible.*

Even in examples where there are generally flexible procedures within certain schools, there are almost no examples of flexible boundaries between elementary and secondary school or between schools of various networks or systems. Even when

these schools are geographically close – even being on the same site – there will be only limited, if any, contact between these settings. This means that good practices are rarely shared and learning can be disjointed and lack continuity.

For example, an excellent elementary school visited has no contact with the secondary schools for which it is a feeder school. The principal commented that the learning from elementary school was not acknowledged in secondary school and despite the high skills of the young children in painting this was not built upon in secondary school.

Similarly, community schools, Catholic schools, city schools all within close geographic proximity rarely meet and are even less likely to share practice or collaborate. In fact there is often a perception of competition between local schools and so good practices are not shared.

However, in a general sense, Flemish schools are very open. As members of a research team it was relatively easy to gain access to schools and we were greeted with genuine warmth and given access to teachers and classrooms. Similarly, parents are generally very welcome.

While schools historically are not known for their flexibility and adaptability, it has to be said that the same criticism could be levelled at galleries, museums and cultural institutions. As the tradition of many of these is from an elitist history and a position of privilege within society, it is not surprising that people working to make these intuitions more flexible face a challenge. As one education officer in a cultural institution noted:

*In a lot of cultural institutions the goodwill is there but the structure for integration with education is not there. I think these boundaries are even more rigid in the large cities.*

Criticism was particularly levelled at the large ‘out of school sector’ (DKOs) that is charged with conducting a range of arts education provisions especially in music and visual arts. These DKOs have a long and illustrious history, but such a history is built on tradition more than adaptability. Yet as society and education changes, the challenge is for the cultural sector to respond to these changes in a reflective way. This comment from the conductor of a classical orchestra emphasises this challenge:

*My kids do not go to music school <orchestra conductor’s children>. The music schools are too restrictive. Instead I rent a studio space where musicians get low cost rental in exchange for teaching music. My youngest is thirteen years old and he has been going to this space for two years. He meets top guys of the music industry and bumps into people. So much of the after school music schools actually kill a child’s appetite for music. They still largely operate on a brutal master pupil regime. They are little emperors of little kingdoms. There is a lack of flexibility and too much emphasis in theory. When children start music school they are put in a classroom with 30 other children and taught to appreciate music. Imagine going for swimming lessons and not being allowed to get in the pool! The added value of this type of music education is zero. We need a new learning plan for general education. There is no overlap between what happens in school and outside school. The boundaries of education are too well-defined and too strictly held.*

A particular aspect of this permeability is the manner in which education and culture can accommodate the needs of people from differing background. The next section examines the degree of accessibility within Flemish arts and cultural education.

### 3.4. ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL

→ **Accessibility for all is a highly prized belief in Flemish education but the reality is that arts and cultural education is generally available at the highest level to the affluent and educational elite of Flanders**

Arts and cultural education is compulsory in all primary schools under the expressive arts domain. This should be approximately one fifth of the school experience of primary school children. In reality, it tends to be generally a little more than one fifth of young children’s education and generally a lot less than one fifth for older classes.

In secondary school, children seem to receive around one to two hours per week of music education and a similar amount of visual arts and handicraft education for the first two years of secondary school. After that the provisions can vary considerably. So in terms of general accessibility, there is at least structural accessibility up until a child is around fourteen years of age. Yet, in terms of accessibility, that may be made through authentic and connected learning the picture is less clear. For example, despite the increasingly multicultural nature of many schools, curriculum in the arts is largely reflective of practices that have been in place for a number of years. For example, in one primary school, even young graduates were quickly becoming acculturated into forms of practice more aligned with handicrafts education of earlier times.

Quality programmes are built around inclusivity. All people should receive high standard arts provisions across the various art forms - using a range of creative and artistic approaches. This is particularly important in relation to initiatives that aim for greater inclusion of a variety of marginalized groups. In principle, Flemish education is very accessible to all. In

particular, there is a long history of making arts and cultural education as affordable and accessible as possible, as this comment highlights:

*The French were a bourgeois people. Access to the arts was reserved for the very wealthy and upper class. So in Flanders, as part of building our identity there has been a definite policy to make the arts more accessible. In Flanders, arts and cultural policy is all about social emancipation, community building, empowerment, access and equity. The core business of the Ministry is about emancipation, participation and community building. There are conscious attempts to make the arts less bourgeois and elitist. But the reality tells us that while the arts are part of the life for most people, it is arts without the capital 'A'. The Ministry though is primarily concerned with art.*

In terms of accessibility, there are a number of groups within Flemish education to be considered. These include children with special education needs, children with behaviour problems and children from the lower socio-economic classes. Access for those children coming from a background other than Flemish is also important, but that is specifically addressed in the next section.

For children coming from a special education needs group, accessibility to arts education within schools varies considerably from school to school. There appears to be limited specific training in arts education for special needs children.

*Students doing special needs education do an extra year of study, but I don't think there is any arts in that extra year, and we don't particularly talk about special needs in the first three years.*

Despite this a number of school settings have shown a real commitment to ensuring that children with special needs receive adequate arts and cultural education. Furthermore, several special education schools have included the arts within innovative programmes to enhance students' learning as the following vignette indicates:

#### 3.4.1 Vignette: the first thing I work on is getting them to laugh

*When I started here five years ago, there was very little emphasis on the arts and the teachers were not asking for more. They would say, "We have problems enough". There is an evolution underway in all education, so as a school director, I have had to push a bit and make the staff see the value. A few years ago, we received some money from the government because we are low achieving schools. I used this money to employ an arts teacher. The first teacher was too concerned about skills and could not connect with the children. It was very challenging. But now we have another teacher and we involve the arts specialist to team teach with the generalist teachers. She has been wonderful and we are slowly building bridges with other schools and the cultural faculties in the city. The teachers watch what she does and how she extends ideas and they are learning and picking up ideas and trying them in their classrooms. She works a lot with the teachers and gives them ideas. Mitsy <artist> is very good. If I could afford to have her everyday and working with all the teachers, you wouldn't recognise this school in twelve months!*

*We work on getting the children to express their ideas and to share opinions. The children here have very low self-esteem so the first thing I work on is getting them to laugh. Happiness is very important. You can't learn anything if you are not happy.*

*We try to go to museums but even one euro is a problem in this school. The biggest issue for us is transportation. The children have special needs and this means we need special coaches and staff. It makes it very expensive. If we can walk there it is OK, but some of our students have mobility problems. When we try and go to the theatre it is a problem as the start and end times of the theatre do not match our school day. Many of our students have to travel home on the government supplied mini bus so if we are late back to the school it causes a big problem. If we can't always take the children to museums, we do try to take the teachers. We went to the Museum of Modern Art for a workshop. It really helps the teachers and they have as much to learn as the pupils. Once a year we try to take the pupils also. It is hard though, as the museum staff are not confident about how to translate their programmes for children with special needs. They find it hard to alter the level of the language.*

*There is too little attention to the arts for special needs children. The teachers tend to fall back on ideas they have tried for ever, like making a card for Easter. Arts should start with small cultural moments from the children's background and build on that. I think the policy is too traditional. It is not creative enough and does not connect to our children.*

*The teachers are very frightened to take a risk. This is much more the case in special education. We need specific courses to help teachers working in special education to be effective arts teachers.*

The arts have also been effectively used to provide restorative care for young people who have committed a crime or could be described as being 'at risk'. These children attend a special residential school where a multidisciplinary team of carers, teachers, medical staff, advisors and social workers collaborate to try to provide trouble youth with a new perspective on life and to encourage them to be able to rejoin their families and society as soon as possible. This school uses the arts for socio-personal reasons to provide the youth with goals, purpose, talent development and a range of social outcomes.

While the arts are mainly accessible to the more affluent and educationally advantaged members of Flemish society, some schools and cultural providers have put special emphasis on making their programmes accessible as this comment suggests:

*Every programme in our museum is custom made to the needs of the school. Yet despite this we find that overwhelmingly it is the more affluent schools that come. The poorer schools do not come to the museum. They have financial problems. They can't give a bill to the family, whereas the richer schools charge the parents a lot of money. We run after school and weekend classes, but once again, these are full of the most affluent children. We try to make it affordable and only charge school the real costs it costs us to deliver a programme.*

The following section examines issues of accessibility directly related to cultural diversity.

### 3.5 CULTURAL DIVERSITY

- ➔ **Schools and cultural institutions are aware of the need for greater cultural diversity but in practice arts and cultural education tend to favour students from the more elite echelons of Flemish society**
- ➔ **There are some best practice examples of cultural diversity involving arts and cultural education**
- ➔ **Attempts to enhance cultural diversity in schools and cultural institutions have largely been unsuccessful**

While governed by a principle of accepting all pupils who want to attend a particular school, in practice more favoured schools are difficult to obtain places in and tend to be the preserve of more educated, middle and upper class families. Some popular schools have tried to redress this problem by adopting an ad hoc 'quota' system where they try to give preference to diverse ethnic groups. These schools view multiculturalism as being "good for education" and so specifically try to mirror within the learning environment of the school the same ethnic balance as is generally found in society. While this does build a more balanced student population, it is the case in practice that even though ethnic diversity has been somewhat achieved, this has still only been within the more middle or upper class proportion of the population.

*We want our school to mirror the outside society in terms of demographics but I have to say, despite how hard we try it is not working. We actually have targeted places for more disadvantaged children, but even then we only get the children of the most well-educated and ambitious parents. There are people who camp outside our school to get their children in! We have tried to let disadvantaged families inscribe one month before other people can inscribe, but as I said, we still only get the children of the most knowledgeable and ambitious parents. We have a policy on inclusivity and we make special offers to children with special needs. We have started to get the children, but then there is no support for them so that is a problem. The reality is we mainly have the children of the most economically privileged in this school. The top sector of every population is here.*

In one example, a school in the centre of a lower socio-economic area has incorporated the arts as a key part of their accessibility strategies. The school is a Catholic network school, but 100percent of children are poor Turkish immigrants, with the vast majority being Moslem. The school has undergone a major change brought about by profiling the arts. This is their story:

### 3.5.1 Vignette: in a mosaic, every piece is beautiful

*The former director of the school really wanted to improve the school. If you had visited this school 10 years ago, it was not a good place to be. We all wanted to do something about the image of the school. We knew that we could not improve the school without improving the neighbourhood. We also wanted to build our connections with the other schools in our neighbourhood. We changed the name of the school to “Mosaic” to reflect the cultural diversity in the school. We asked ourselves hard questions about what makes good education. We decided to start with the children as the context. We wanted to move away from a focus on outputs and products and more towards a focus on learning.*

*We want to bring every child as far as possible and to develop their potential. We say that in a mosaic, every piece is beautiful but put together it makes something that is even better. We looked at research and took from a whole lot of different approaches the aspects that we thought would work. We then really started to open our eyes to the pupils.*

*We visited each of them in their home. You can't see the child if they are isolated from their background. We speak about brugfigurer - bridge figures – people that link the home and the school. We employ people from the community to be these people. We have also applied for project money and have used this to supplement our programmes, such as employing an artist in residence. It is not about workshops, but it is about embedding the artist in our community.*

*The artist was challenging. He asked difficult questions, but that was good for our school development. The most important thing is the communication between the school and the community. We say, “You don't come to school to do something. You come to school to be part of something.” We plan together. The teachers, artists, children and parents all have skills and responsibilities.*

*Learning happens best through interaction. Projects are fully integrated and connected to the world. We focus on communication skills, confidence, competence and self-esteem. It is very hard for our children. We have quite a lot of traveller children. They have no papers so technically they cannot go to school. There is tension too between the Turkish and Romany children.*

*We have no money in this school apart from the money we get through the projects. As a school director, I have autonomy and so can make decisions and take liberties with how I organise the budget. I keep a lot of records and encourage my staff to take risks.*

Some schools, referred to as being “brown schools” (i.e. schools with a high number of ethnic pupils and generally less popular schools), have actively adopted arts focused approaches in an attempt to attract more “white”, middle class pupils. There are excellent examples of arts-rich education and some current research being conducted in several of these settings indicates that a strong arts focus not only lifts pupil attainment, but importantly changes the perception of the broader community towards the school.

In one example, the reputation of a school had fallen and the school was in risk of closing due to falling enrolments. The school conducted substantial consultation with the community and then decided to adopt a strong arts focus. That change was very successful with enrolments changing from being less than 60 pupils to more than 500 and a greatly improved relationship between the school and the community. It was also noted that it had led to substantial changes in the attitudes of parents and children's towards education, as indicated in this vignette:

### 3.5.2 Vignette: the children really opened their hearts

*Every year we have a school art project and the whole school is involved. One of our parents is an artistic director of an arts organisation. The parent is so kind to bring artwork of her organisation to our school. She explains to the teachers about the artists and techniques. The school director directs the complete project. We have been doing these projects for three years. The first year we looked at ‘identity’; the next year on ‘diversity’ and now we are working on ‘Me in the diversity of my environment’. We conduct multi-age workshops. It is so inspiring to see the way the big children and the little children can work together. At the end of the project we put on an exhibition. We worked also with people with mental disability. These adults had a wonderful effect on the children. The children really opened their hearts to those people. It was a big circle for collaboration between cultures, a visiting poet, parents, and people in the town. We have tried to make the outputs from this project as professional as possible, but for us the real learning is in the process. We have a lot of different languages in the school and so sometimes the children do not explain what is happening in the school, but in these arts projects the parents come because their children are performing and we can get our message across. The children wrote the letters inviting the parents. We even made the paper that the letters were written on!*

While, attempts may be made to ensure in school provisions for arts and cultural education encourage diversity, within the broader educational sector (especially in arts conservatories and DKO) diversity is more restricted.

The majority of students in arts conservatories and DKO are from the upper and middle classes. There are very low levels of students from immigrant, refugee or ethnically diverse backgrounds. One academy reported having one student with disability, but this had proved to be difficult because of access to facilities. In response to questions of diversity a fine arts academy responded, “They are just students. We are not interested in their cultural background. We don't collect data on

this. Our students are very international and there are a number of international fee paying students. We don't have any black students. That could be because of our history.

It would appear that despite a policy that favours diversity and access, the reality is still a quite elitist system. This is apparent in the DKO's where the low cost of classes has not led to more particular target groups joining these classes. It would seem that the low cost merely subsidises the more affluent students. The following vignette from a DKO director emphasises the complexity of these issues:

### 3.5.3 Vignette: I would say 90 percent are upper class

*Our pupils range from six years-92 years. The average age is 37 years old. A few years ago it was 45 years old, so you can see it is getting younger. We adopt a very classical approach. I would say about one third of our students improve in art. That is a very personal thing. We are sort of half way between professional and amateur. It is a very positive atmosphere.*

*The building needs a lot of maintenance and we have problems with electricity. Our students have a large exhibition once a year.*

*Each student has a value, so we have to have a lot of subscriptions. They pay €50 per year. We don't care if they come or go because it is the subscriptions that are important. There is a cut-off date. As long as we have their inscription by October we get the money. It doesn't matter how many are still coming by February. Our funding is based on how many pupils we had last year, not how many we have this year, so if we have too many this year, we don't get money for them. Our school is quite popular with students in grade five and six but once they get to fourteen to fifteen years old it is very hard to keep them coming. You find too, that the one child is doing art, music, drama, everything.*

*We have in total about 250 pupils, but only five come from a different background and they are mainly women from overseas whose husbands are working in Brussels. You can't join our classes unless you can speak a good level of Dutch. I would say 90 percent are upper class. About ten percent are from more struggling backgrounds. We visit a lot of studios and have a lot of teachers.*

*All the teachers are practising artists and they work around twenty hours per week. They also do seven hours per week in meetings and seven hours a week developing their professional practice. Some of the teachers are excellent, but others do not know how to teach children. Some have been here 30 years and it is really difficult to get rid of them. It is impossible to remove these teachers and they have a very dated view of the arts. You notice on a Wednesday. It is always the grandparents that bring the children. We are just cheap childcare. On Saturdays, the parents bring the children, so they can go off and do shopping in peace.*

*It is terrible really; the same children are getting all the attention. We are all fishing in the same water, trying to attract the same type of children. In the school where my daughter goes there is no arts education and no music education. What is the value of what is presented? Do we offer the big table or just the bread? There is no disabled access in this building. I would like us to do more with the schools, but here it is one-to-one, in schools we would be dealing with teaching 30 children. Our teachers could not do it. There should be more research studies like this. There is still such an elitist and colonial view of art in the DKO's. I want to know how we can change things for the better.*

This example from a secondary school shows the increasing challenge of relevancy within arts and cultural education. The school described is a large school in the centre of a city and has experienced considerable change over the last 30 years. If you were to step back in time it would be an 'all girls', Flemish Catholic school preparing girls for a life of cooking and sewing. But moving forward 30 years, this same school now has 560 pupils, still with 80 percent girls but with growing numbers of boys. The children come from more than 35 nationalities and only four percent of the school population is Flemish. Poverty is a problem in the school, with 93 percent of pupils coming from a very poor background. That background is not just poor in a financial sense, but also poor in terms of language ability; poor in terms of social status; poor in terms of the cultural baggage they can bring to the learning process. Bringing arts and cultural education to this environment is challenging, as the Principal explains:

### 3.5.4 Vignette: poverty is a problem in the school

*Our pupils have very restricted cultural luggage. Their families are very strict. They won't let the girls go anywhere. We have to be very careful always with the safety of our pupils. Even when we walk into the city for the day to go to the gallery or the theatre, some parents will keep their child at home. We are not just introducing a new culture to these children; we are introducing culture on total.*

*A lot of our pupils have parents that come from the mountains of Morocco or Turkey. They are peasants. They have very limited experience of culture at all. So it is not just an issue of ethnic diversity it is also an issue of social class and exposure to culture. So for these parents it is all new, and for the girls too. We have to take it very easy. Nothing too shocking! Even if we made it a little challenging, then next time the pupils would not be able to come. So we try and introduce art and culture under the cover of other subjects. For example we do some in Dutch, English, religion and fashion studies.*

*You have to remember that what we do in schools is likely to be the only cultural education the children get. We try to do some drama, but this is hard. If we want to do a school play in the evening no one would come. We tried a few projects, digital photography, drumming, making things from re-used materials, but that was three to four years ago. We have asked them back to do some more projects, but now it is far too expensive.*

*We are investigating becoming a community school with extra lessons after school. There are pupils that are really talented in music and drawing, but they do nothing with it. We are trying to show that there are more things to school than just studying.*

While these vignettes indicate that there are significant challenges in ensuring cultural diversity and accessibility within arts and cultural education in Flanders, there were also evident some good practice models where attempts have been made to focus less on 'delivery' and more on connection with diverse problems. These situations are characterised by a stronger student-centred approach.

*I think we are trying to be more student centred. Creative teaching takes a lot more space – both physical space of the classroom and space in terms of time and space in the day to think and make. If you are going to teach more creatively you have to individualise learning more. Notice the difference in pupils and make connections between what you teach and what you want the children to learn and their own thoughts, ideas and experiences.*

*There is always a dance performance at the end of the year. This is part of the total plan for the year and everyone gets involved. The cultural diversity means that dance is a real common language. Dance is very popular with the children. It is a good opportunity also for all the campuses of the school to come together. Participation is the real goal. It is important that all the children participate and that dance and performance is accessible to everyone. Children don't feel they have to be excellent to participate.*

## 3.6 ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ➔ **Teacher confidence and expertise to teach arts and cultural education is low particularly in the primary school**
- ➔ **Professional development opportunities are expensive and short-term and do not develop pathways of learning for teachers**
- ➔ **Postgraduate education is not generally accessible to teachers who are in full-time employment**
- ➔ **More connections are needed between the various providers of professional development**
- ➔ **While the professional development of teachers is vital, the professional development of artists is also a key issue**
- ➔ **Teacher education and research expertise in arts education needs to be developed**
- ➔ **Professional development in the value of arts and cultural education is needed for school directors**

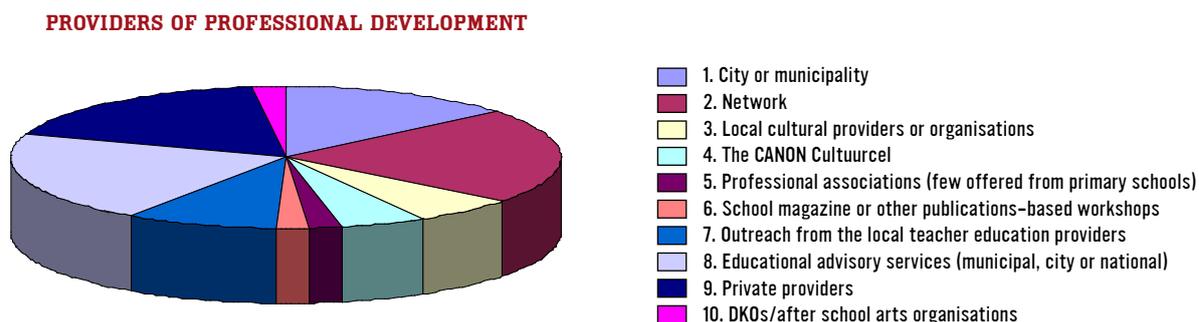
Arts education has been a mandated part of a primary teacher's role since the Royal Decree of July 15, 1997. Despite this being the case for a decade, there is a pattern of falling levels of confidence to teach the arts and widespread reporting of lack of skill, experience and expertise. Under the decree, primary teachers are required to have a level of expertise in teaching each of the arts disciplines (visual arts, music, drama, movement/dance, media and music). It is an expectation that the teacher has to start *muzische processes* with the pupils. They are not expected to be specialist arts teachers or to be artistic themselves. It was suggested that teachers should be able to organise "good processes" in the arts as part of their professional responsibility and without necessarily being personally artistic or creative themselves. In practice, though, particularly primary teachers have limited understanding and skills in teaching arts education and limited comprehension of the aims, vision and structure of arts learning. Policy states that, "Organisations for arts education can contribute to initiatives for children and young people in all arts disciplines and in cultural heritage. The policy suggests that "organizations can also play a role as an intermediary between education and the art and culture organisations" (Policy Memorandum, 2004-2009,

p 78). This document goes on further to suggest that they should be considered as “full partners”. Generally though, this connection is more project-based.

Widely reported was the lack of the teacher’s (or trainee teachers) own artistic skill. Furthermore, there is a lack of understanding of the creative or artistic process and almost complete absence of awareness to the aims or benefits of artistic education. There is also an absence of any notion of a theoretical underpinning or philosophical positions on arts learning. Noticeably, teachers from more philosophy based schools such as *Montessori*<sup>9</sup> or Freinet were able to more clearly articulate both aims and philosophical underpinnings.

Although somewhat limited, professional development programmes do exist in the arts. These tend to fall under a number of types. These types can be generalised as follows:

### 3.6.1 Table: Usage of professional development providers



These usage figures were derived from responses to focus group interviews on actual courses attended (not numbers of courses offered). All of the types of professional development described by the respondents tended to be short-term and aim to develop the teacher’s own experience. It was noted in reflection that some schools have developed long-term implementation targets and work closely with the guidance of the pedagogical advisory team and the school director to make a substantial professional development programme, but that such cases were dependent on the enthusiasm of the school to undertake such a programme.

In one example, the programme was very extensive, covering 44 Saturdays, spread over a two-year period. Unfortunately, there is a lack of pathways and even teachers completing the extensive models do not get formal educational credits for their work and it is not possible for teachers to gain higher degrees in primary education or early secondary education. If they did, they would still be paid at a lower rate than their upper secondary colleagues, even with the same degree and experience. At the same time, funding for arts education courses have been reduced and this has meant that even the very small number of provisions that were previously available have been stopped.

An innovative approach to both teacher professional development and children’s artistic provisions exists in *Het Veen Artistic Classes*. Supported through the local municipality, a centre was established in 2004-5 to provide substantial arts education to third grade children and their teachers. The programme includes both receptive arts experiences, such as galleries and museums and productive arts making. Pupils and their teachers attend the centre for one full week to be immersed in the arts. In the evening, teachers are asked to reflect upon the activities and to consider ways of continuing the practices back in the schools. The centre also tries to focus on those artistic disciplines not already covered in the schools. So for example, a school not doing dancing may be offered a programme in dance for the week.

Similarly, the *Summer Academy* provides further training for arts education workers – both in schools and in cultural institutions. It aims to use reflective approaches to broaden the vision and capabilities for those professionals working in arts education.

A series of summer schools for arts educators and those professionals interested and active in combining arts and education is conducted. The workshops expose the participants to the latest research in the arts and try to broaden views in the arts through exploration and reflection. It is also a valuable networking opportunity as the group comprises people from the educational, arts, youth work and museums sectors.

Colleges of Higher Education offer some master degrees in specialist areas of arts education and also provide a small number

<sup>9</sup> The “Montessori method” developed from the work of Dr. Maria Montessori. The Montessori methods is a form of education that encourages self-expression and spontaneity. Each child learns at their own pace guided by pedagogy promoting individual initiative and creativity.

of workshops throughout the year. In recent years, these options have been reduced and most accredited study cannot be taken in a way that enables currently employed teachers to effectively return to further study. This is particularly true for the lack of offerings for primary teachers.

Within the youth work arena, there are several training programmes designed to enhance the arts education knowledge and skills of youth workers. These are generally quite comprehensive, but not currently available to teachers. A consideration could be to determine whether these can be made more open to teachers and linked more effectively to accredited options such as professional masters' degrees.

It is very difficult to make generalisations about teachers' access to professional development in arts and cultural education as funds for professional development are largely distributed at the school level. The situation also varies within certain cities and across the different systems. So for example, the cities of Antwerp and Gent appear to have a number of high quality choices for teacher professional development in the arts. Similarly, some networks of schools, especially philosophy-based schools such as *Freinet* schools have good quality provisions including peer-to-peer learning.

In several cities within Flanders, educational advisory services have been established with a focus on arts and cultural education. These centres act as advisors to schools and cultural agencies and as mediators between these industries. They may also have direct connections to recreational and cultural centres and provide activities and further training. They appear to be able to effectively work across sectors and provide a clear structural way to create more unity between services.

*Pedagogical Advisory Services* are professional development centres attached to particular networks. They provide a range of support services to teachers and school directors. Within these services, there are many possibilities for arts education. These vary from inservice style courses to bespoke programmes specific to the needs of a school. While previously these services were free of charge or of low cost, in recent years a greater incidence of fee-for-service is apparent. The quality of the support given appears to vary from network to network and even to the personal qualities of the presenters, with teachers interviewed offering wide ranging comments, from highly positive to comments about a 'waste of time' and 'insufficient'. A common criticism was that there were very few staff and so help was hard to obtain and too infrequent. Schools in more isolated areas commented that they were particularly poorly served though technically these schools **should** be able to access the same support services as their city colleagues.

Conversely, some networks offer very extensive programmes of professional development. While these are still largely single days or short term options, they cover a range of arts topics. In addition to courses, teachers can follow, to a greater and lesser extent, a range of online options may be available for access by teachers. For example, one network has an extensive website that includes a number of excellent articles and teaching resources for primary schools in the field of the arts. The same site also has made some learning lines based on the curriculum and developed a programme for nursery and primary children.

Similarly, a number of arts and cultural institutions offer a range of short programmes and a lesser number of longer units. While the access to these and the extent of offerings varies across Flanders, there are good provisions for ongoing professional development to be found in both the education networks and the cultural sector. Despite this, the knowledge of teachers in the field about these offerings remains low and as they neither lead to improved qualifications or increased pay or opportunities, the take-up rate is low. Furthermore, many of the schools visited admitted that they had not fully used their professional development budget citing the lack of appealing options and the lack of teacher interest as the main cause of under-subscription.

*CANON Cultuurcel* has within its aims to provide professional development, especially to close the gap between education and culture. They achieve these aims through a combination of the development of materials, sharing of research, direct support and networking and dialogue. For example, they host a number of one-day events and discussion sessions. These are free or at low cost and have participation from both the educational and cultural sectors. They also work with both trainee teachers and 'master' teachers to connect them to museums and galleries and to encourage the expansion of new methods for art and cultural learning. In this way they present an interesting and varied selection of professional development options. In addition, they develop teaching resources that provide models of good practice and practical ways to incorporate arts and culture across the curriculum. They have been active in publishing a range of books, reports and materials to assist teachers and to synthesise research in the field. *CANON Cultuurcel* also contributes articles to the teachers' magazine, *Klasse* and participates actively with the various networks.

In March 2004 it was recommended that each secondary school and teacher education college select and train a cultural coordinator to ensure cultural provisions throughout the school. To accompany this process, 'an inventory of good practices of arts education' was to be established. These were not evident in the empirical research, suggesting that these initiatives were not widely adopted within schools. There is also some expressed disagreement about the advantages and disadvantages of having the school-based coordinators.

Outside these specific examples, the provisions vary markedly. On average teachers had between one to two days per year. At times there were whole school activities, such as in pupil welfare and ICT, but at other times teachers were free to choose their own options. The cost of these services varied markedly as well. For example, one primary school interviewed spent €1500 for a two-hour workshop for two teachers, while other provisions might be provided by professional associations, museums or teachers' publications that were less than €20 per person, or even free of charge. Lack of finance to engage in professional

development seems to be a limiting factor.

*We ran a series of one off workshops for teachers. We did it out of goodwill and were not paid for it. Teachers have to learn by doing it. It was a very big group but they all said it was very useful. (Teachers in ILBOs)*

*The value of in-service training courses is very unreliable in terms of both content and organisation. In contrary to other types FO education, DKO receives no financial support for inservice education. This is a real problem.*

*Because of lack of financial means, we don't organise professional development courses for regular teachers in the expressive arts.*

Some schools subsidise the time for teachers to attend professional development while the general pattern is that the school pays for the subscription to the professional development but the individual teacher goes in 'their own time', either Wednesday afternoon or Saturdays. It was also the general pattern that travel to professional development course was refunded by the school, but most teachers interviewed did not claim this as they felt the paper work was too involved, as this comment suggests: "I was suppose to get reimbursement but I had to fill out 4 forms to get a refund." These limited factors are combined with high prices and low levels of relevance and availability to make professional development for teachers inaccessible, as these examples suggest:

*We run workshops in the arts. We charge €500 for three hours. We also run half day programmes in the holidays and they cost €35 per teacher.*

*We can get the Catholic Education people to come to the school. We got a handbook from the CANON < CANON Cultuurcel - we are shown an unopened book that is 12 months old> but we have not looked at it yet. Maybe I <School Director> should have a staff meeting to look at it <It is then put away in a cupboard with other unopened resources.>*

*Teachers ask us <teachers in ILBOs> to do inservice courses, but there are so few of us and we have to do everything so we don't have time to do courses in schools. We have to teach 15-20 hours a week so with preparation that is all we can do. We do not have any technical support and have to prepare all our materials ourselves.*

These comments also point to the fact that the educators that might lead these workshops feel overworked and do not feel the professional development is their priority or remit.

Teachers were generally quite critical of the standard of professional development. Some of the criticisms included: "I had to travel a long way and it wasn't worth it."

"I went to a course on cultural signs and it cost €150 and it certainly wasn't worth it."

Professional development courses are isolated one half or one day events and do not link into further learning pathways. Teachers complained that they were not always given the choice of courses to attend and that where a choice was given, they were swamped with options, but very few options in the arts. Other criticisms included that the courses did not have a practical application or that the presenters were out of touch with the reality of the classroom situations. Selection of courses is often very ad hoc, with teachers choosing from professional development menus, rather than in accordance with a strategic need or direction.

*Every year I put a folder together of all the offers in professional development and then the teachers can choose. They have a preference for music and performances, but I try to encourage them to be adventurous in their choices.*

Some of the professional associates offered high quality professional development courses around practitioner sharing with 'guest' speakers providing valuable extra input. These were inexpensive and the associations tried to host the meetings in the different municipalities to assist to get services to more outlying areas. This event in cultural and heritage education was hosted by the history teachers association and was described by a history teacher in a secondary school in a western province:

*I am lucky I am a history teacher as I think we have the best professional association. The other teachers tell me that their associations don't do very much. The Associations holds a conference and a number of events throughout the year. About 100 people come to the conference, and you have to book very quickly because they book out really quickly. They also have a magazine and a website, and they keep me up to date on changes to the curriculum. The website has a place where you can exchange programmes and that is really practical, though I only exchange things with people who I know will give me things back. It's only about 20 euro for an individual to join for the year. I have to pay. The school doesn't pay. I think it would be better if the school took out a membership.*

An art teacher described an organisation that has started in the arts:

*A new organisation has started for arts teachers. I am not sure how long it has been going. It has young members. It holds four events per year and I have been to some. They were very good quality and practical. I think that there is not a centralised*

*organisation structure, but that each region organises things throughout the year. They have a website and there are a few lessons there, but not a lesson exchange. There are some ideas for artists' projects, but I think people want to protect their ideas. But they do projects all over Belgium. I tend to go to the ones closest to me.*

While the professional associations with a secondary focus are providing some professional development opportunities, for primary school teachers there is very little support.

*Teacher networks in primary school are almost non-existent. There are some informal meetings, but in a structured way, teachers never get together. It just does not happen. We do attend meetings about regulations and the Catholic system, but never get together with the teachers from the other systems. When you teach a technique the teachers just copy the technique. The children only learn that technique and it is very directed.*

There appears to be too many different teaching associations who compete, rather than collaborate to provide a good service for teachers. The teaching unions are more concerned with pay and conditions than providing professional development. Membership is low in most schools. Unions tend to have political affiliations and so consequently membership of unions tends to be linked to systems, for example, the *Catholic Union*, *Socialist Union* or *Liberal Union*.

Primary school principal, "We find that it is our middle-aged teachers who are really open to new ideas, not as you would think the young teachers coming out of college."

*I really want to encourage my staff to undertake professional development in the arts. Every year we have a big folder of inservice training. Teachers are free to choose individual needs, but I also structure opportunities for the entire staff to work together as team to develop pedagogical methods. I am noticing that since we started a greater focus on the arts, the staff have started to request more arts/cultural professional development, but there is not a lot available. I organised for trainer to come in to train us in pedagogy for expressive arts education. It was someone connected to the local teacher training institute. It was quite expensive – €900 for one and a half hours. That was like €30 per teacher.*

Once again, there was a great variation between available opportunities for inservice education. In larger cities where there was a supporting education officer, there were a number of ways a teacher could develop more skill and understanding in art. These tended to be offered by local council. Teachers showed a willingness to attend such events. Where curriculum support officers were available, they tended to provide quite high quality, and reasonably priced professional development.

Schools also had a small budget that could be used towards professional development. Additional budgets might also be available through ministerial led projects or other project related funds.

Teachers would attend on average around two to three professional development opportunities in a year, and these were available in the arts or at least related to creative learning. These could largely be described as informal provisions as they tended to be voluntary, have no formalised certification and were offered either as a 'one-off' or as part of a small sequence or programme. There were a number of providers of such courses including private educational publishers, local government, city pedagogical services, school system and local arts and cultural providers. Schools were generally well informed about these options and largely it was the teacher who made the choice about the events they would like to attend. Larger cities and towns tended to have greater opportunities than smaller village schools.

Arts and cultural education in the primary and nursery school is taught by four-year trained generalist teachers. In the secondary school, the arts education (primarily music and visual arts) in lower grades are generally taught by specialist. By contrast, cultural education (if taught at all) may be taught by a number of teachers including teachers of religion, history and Dutch. In upper grades cultural education may be the responsibility of a range of teachers under the cross-curricula provisions. It tends to be the case that history, language or religion teachers might take the lead in teaching the arts, without substantial arts training. This lack of training highlights the need for considerable professional development. This is a crucial consideration as in other systems around the world support might come from artists or cultural agencies working in partnership with teachers, but in Flanders, such partnerships are uncommon. Therefore it is vital that high quality professional development is provided. The challenge in relation to this is to be able to develop this across the separate systems (six in total) that largely exist as competitors with each other, or at the very least, do not tend to share learning across systems.

According to the school inspectors, it is the passion and enthusiasm of the school principal or director that is the most influential factor in whether teachers will adopt and continue an arts rich approach to education or arts education. Certainly, from the schools visited, the interest of the principal in the arts appears to directly impact upon the amount and quality of arts in the school. Given that, it is significant to consider the professional development of school principals. The schools principals generally applied directly for the position and apart from a block of preparation courses in aspects such as financial management and behaviour management; there is no special training they require. Several principals also noted that the extra salary awarded to principals is very little and so the motivation to take on this role is not the money.

Ongoing professional development reinvigorates teachers and creative professionals and builds the confidence, creativity

and enjoyment of these groups. The arts help to re-engage teachers and increase the quality of their overall pedagogy. For artists, working within education is stimulating, inspirational and enhances their incomes and professional status.

A number of organisations are registered to provide in-service education in Flanders. There are around ten main organisations that offer services concerning arts and cultural education. It is unclear how frequently they provide services to teachers for schools. The system is based upon funding per FTE teacher per school. The total budget for professional development in primary school education in 2005 was €4.3 million and for secondary education €6 million.

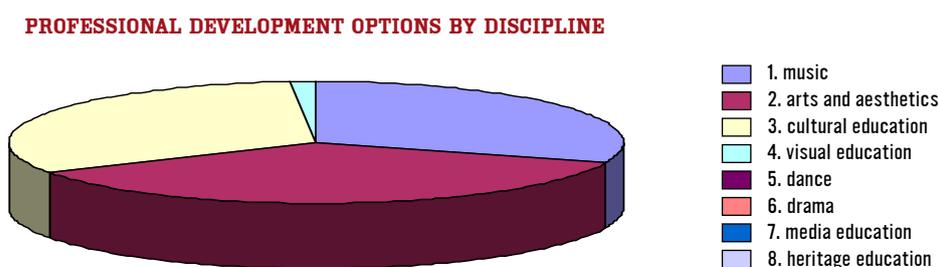
There is also money provided to the various school networks to provide professional development. In 2005 this figure was €1.5 million. In addition to these, municipal governments and city institutes might also provide options for professional development.

Some ILBO's also provide free or low cost options as do cultural institutions, museums, libraries and providers connected to teacher publications.

The geographic spread of agencies providing in-service is good, with most being available in each of the Flemish regions. Music seems to have the most offerings.

Visual education has only one specified listing and there are no specified options for dance or drama. Similarly, there are not listed options for media studies or heritage education, but these may be included under the other categories. This pie chart shows the spread of offerings:

3.6.2 Table: Discipline breakdown of courses offered



Since 1994, the start of the reorganisation of the *Hogeschool* forced the amalgamation of a number of smaller art schools. It also stressed the reorganisation of learning. In most arts *hogescholen* there has also been a reorganisation of the cycles and levels of learning to bring these more closely inline with the Bologna system<sup>10</sup> of masters and bachelor degrees. All courses in Flanders have to be accredited inline with the Bologna process by 2012. There was the concern expressed by a focus group meeting of programme directors of arts-related courses that “none of the arts courses will get the accreditation”.

The notion of practice-based degrees - and professional learning pathways - for people in education, the arts or cultural industries is only just emerging. By definition in Flanders, all Masters level degrees are inherently academic and this has been seen to exist as being contrary to ‘practical’. Generally too, the *hogescholen* have been linked to practice, while the university has been linked to research. In recent years, there have been examples of these two imitations becoming more closely associated. As one senior academic and practitioner within an arts academy lamented, “Where do we locate art? Is it practical or academic?”

There were similar problems noted in terms of the level of training of the teacher educators in the ILBOs and the researchers in arts education, “There are no doctorates in arts education as far as I know. Most of the teacher educators have a Masters degree. They went to the music or art academy and did a year of teaching”.

There are a number of institutes that are connected with Universities and Conservatories that promote practice-based research in the arts. While these offer excellent programmes of study, these are not generally appropriate for arts educators. These institutions frequently offer high quality congresses, seminars and workshops. Once again though, most of these are

10 The purpose of the Bologna process is to create a system of academic degree standards and quality assurance standards that are more comparable and compatible throughout Europe. The process began in 1999, but has been more broadly instituted throughout Europe since the Berlin meeting held in 2003. For Flanders, this has required a considerable review of their degree structures to try to make them more harmonious with general European standards.

targeted at professional artists and are not generally accessible to teachers. Many of the topics covered could be very applicable as part of a structured professional development programmes. In particular, focus days on arts research, performance and exhibition development, and skill enrichment.

Most postgraduate programmes are full-time, or are conducted during school time and so therefore are not accessible for teachers who are teaching full-time.

### 3.7 DETAILED ASSESSMENT, REFLECTION AND EVALUATION STRATEGIES

- **Strategies for assessment and evaluation are very limited within arts and cultural education**
- **Professional development is needed in this area so that teachers can track student learning and monitor the quality of programmes**

Formal and informal contemplative practices encourage people to view their work more critically and reflectively. Processes of journal writing were common in quality art programmes. In other instances, reflective processes were less formalised and would use conversations, images and actions to instigate and maintain the reflective processes.

*We ask the pupils to reflect and write. They set themselves goals for both their instrument and theory. The parents sign these reflections every week. We also have regular performances. There are many performance opportunities and we organise special playing clubs for the holidays. The room are always open and we encourage children to come practice even if there are no teachers.*

In terms of policy evaluation, Flemish education uses the CIPO model, whereby achievement is measured against Context, Input, Process and Output. It is acknowledged (p3) that quantitative and qualitative measures indicators do not easily describe some educational objectives.” (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2002).

In practice though, discussions of evaluation or assessment were generally met with silence. Any evaluation is only market driven. There are no restrictions and no control. It is all commercial driven, not about quality, as evidenced in these comments:

*We have the reputation for having a good education system but that was ten years ago. Then the focus was on knowledge, but now the focus is on creativity. We have to ask ourselves, ‘What is the new basic knowledge?’ When you look at Microsoft, all the top people are creative. The children’s world has expanded, but education has not. We live in a different world now.*

*<Very unsure>we get them to thank the artists. They give a surprise gift. Basically if they have experienced the arts that is all we know. I think they forget about it two weeks later<question: Do they do a report?> No. No report and no tests in art. We just get the pupils to look. A few years ago we had an artist do a mural painting in the school. It helped to decorate the school.*

The following questions and strategies were collectively used by artists to determine if children were learning in the arts:

- *Confront the children with an unpredicted experience where they have to respond to artistically*
- *Apply artistic skills in a new setting*
- *Children can plan and organise their learning*
- *Are the students open to the unknown?*
- *Can the students take the initiative and show ownership?*
- *It is not just about the change in the result, it should be more about the change in process.*

Research conducted in 2002 (Elias, 2002) indicates that philosophy-based schools have generally higher quality arts education than more traditional schools. While the empirical evidence in this study would tend to support that view, there is also though an indication that these schools attract the children of more highly educated and more culturally active parents. It is therefore not easy to make any causal assumption.

For instance, the gymnasium level schools also have better arts education on the whole than vocational or technical secondary schools, but once again if you look at the parents within these school settings, there is a stronger level of both educational and cultural engagement. In both philosophy and ‘academic’ orientated schools you also see higher level of outside school art participation (such as in DKO) so such variable are likely to negate any causality that could be established between philosophies of schooling and arts education. Having said that, this empirical research indicates that alternative schools do have general more thorough and comprehensive evaluation processes, strong links with the community and more flexible organisational structures, which are themselves key aspects within the alpha of good quality arts education.

A comment was made in reflection to these findings that indicated that, “Some traditional schools have adopted subtle mechanisms to attract children from middle and upper classes and <concurrently> keep out the other (lower social class) children with learning problems. These children then often become more concentrated in philosophy-based schools.”

There are detailed and innovative models of assessment in some of the philosophy-based schools visited. For example, one school kept detailed records in a *vrije tekstschrift*. This could be described as being a type of 'free textbook'. The best way to describe these would be to say that some schools might use a text book to show what a child **will learn** or cover, whereas a *vrije tekstschrift* is a detailed record of what a child **has** learnt and covered. The children are able to select the learning they want to document and should show pride in presenting their work. These form the basis for discussions and record keeping.

In this vignette, a primary school shows a very detailed approach to both formative and summative evaluation. They involve all the stakeholders in the process and use a range of evaluation methods. Such models could provide best practice examples that could be applied more widely across arts and cultural education in Flanders.

### 3.7.1 Vignette: We make a portfolio of learning

*We have a number of strategies we use for evaluation. We make a portfolio of learning. We also develop tests and give these to the children. We also do the external tests and ensure that the children in this school are meeting the national targets. The portfolio provides a useful way to talk with the parents. The children develop their portfolios as part of their Dutch lessons. We encourage them to write in a number of genres (such as, description, reflection, evaluation and so on). This allows the students to develop higher order language skills. Each year the pupils have to also make one major project. The presentation process is as important as the content. We also hold weekly meetings where the teachers reflect and once a fortnight, we have a sort of school board made up of parents, teachers, older students and also some outside members. This is where we can discuss directions. The aspect I would like to improve is longitudinal tracking. We want to see what happens to the children who graduate from our school. I would also be interested in following some for the students who leave our school to go to another school. We decided to do a research interview with pupils who left the school two years ago. We are tracking their success at secondary school. There is no money for evaluation and research but we try to do it within our resources. We learnt this technique from a school we are working with. We also do the Catholic schools test. We have improved the profile of the children. We had a good score in spelling and reading comprehension is improving. But this test is very limited. It does not cover learning skills, confidence, social skills or problem solving, and these are key aspects of our learning profile.*

In the subsidised cultural sector (which accounts for around twelve percent of the total sector), the audience is seen as being participants in the process. In the more commercial sector the audience is viewed as the consumer. The challenge in the cultural sector is the dilemma of having to have both artistic and educational quality. There was a feeling expressed that levels of quality control are higher when the sector was more subsidised and that the opening to a more free market approach is reducing quality. For example, companies are more directed to attracting school audiences than providing quality.

*There is no quality control of libraries, heritage and community sectors. There are no standards of quality and no quality control. Some libraries invite a clown in to do stupid things and then they tick the box that says 'education' but there is no quality. There are no standards, no criteria for quality, no regulation of the industry, and no frames of reference to judge quality from rubbish.*

*The idea of quality must be both top down and bottom up. Quality is a living idea in the organisation.*

*There is no frame of reference or structural basis for quality. If you are an artist working with schools, there is no way to situate yourselves in terms of quality. We do a small web based survey with 25 percent of the parents. We ask questions about the child's experiences of our school. As you can see, I am always sticking my head into class and seeing if the children are happy. We track the children's attainment after they leave here, if they go to the conservatorium. Students have to want to come. I think we need to develop more interesting teaching methods.*

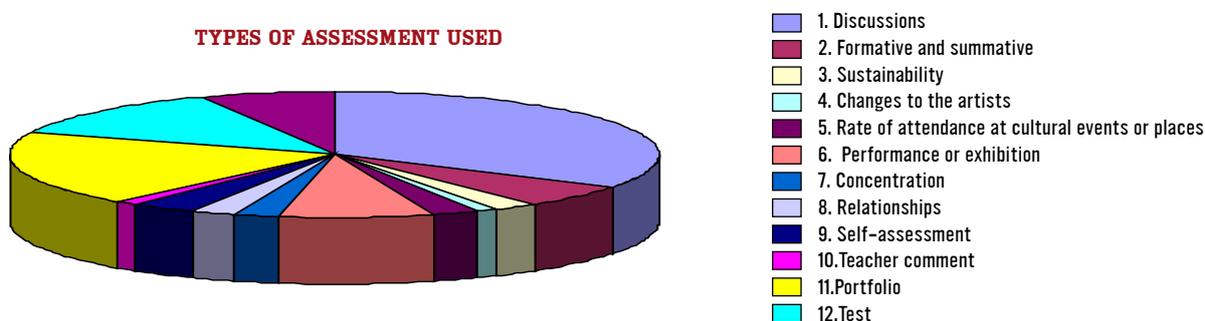
It was argued that the development of local cultural policy could assist to move practice away from issues of quantity and more towards issues of quality. It was contended that there was a growing awareness of quality, but that instruments need to be developed to test this. Similarly, it was accentuated that quality control measures had to encompass both educational and artistic quality and that these two elements must be in balance.

The suggestion was made that both education and cultural ministries needed to work to jointly develop authentic ways to determine quality. Such a process should be dynamic and should link context with aims and situate this within the framework of local education and cultural policies. A concern was expressed that quality control should not serve to perpetuate traditional practice and fail to acknowledge new art forms and arts forms emerging from community groups. So for example, pop music, ethnic music or classical music could all be of equal quality.

In this report, a distinction is made between assessment (the set of means and resources used to determine student learning) and evaluation (the set of means and resources used to determine more broadly the success of a programme, teaching strategies, policy etc).

Assessment can include reflection but, on the whole, reflection is a more informal short-term process. Conversely, pupil

assessment implies a more formalised attempt to determine the extent and nature of learning through the collection and analysis of evidence. The following chart shows the methods generally used to determine student learning:



There were some excellent examples of schools developing innovative ways to both assess children's learning in the arts and to report this learning to the parents. For example, in one school using the Freinet approach, each child had a detailed portfolio. These started when the child started school at two and a half years and were constantly kept and updated throughout the whole time at primary school. Children chose what learning they wanted to showcase through the portfolio and each piece of work included a reflective analysis, initially written by the teacher but dictated by the child and later entirely composed by the child. These portfolios were readily accessible within the classroom and regularly updated. Four times a year they would be sent home for parents to see and talk about with their children.

These portfolios provided a very beautiful and detailed record of the child's growth as a learner and learning achievement, and were a particularly effective way to showcase arts learning. To complement the portfolios, the same school had a very comprehensive reporting programme that was co-constructed by the children. Each quarter a detailed self assessment, teacher assessment and parent reflection was conducted. Instead of being norm-referenced (i.e. related to averages), the school reported on individualised growth against pre-determined learning criteria and reported using a system based on emoticons (e.g. smiley faces).

It appears that teachers lack the specialised skills and training to be able to effectively design assessment tasks in the arts and cultural education and to monitor a child's growth and achievement. Similarly, more generally under a systems analysis, there is a lack of structural capacity – at all levels – to adequately determine the overall effectiveness of arts and cultural education, as is described in the following vignette from a university-based teacher educator:

### 3.7.3 Vignette: you have touched on a raw nerve

*We mean arts education NOT cultural education. Arts education is quite different from cultural education. It is about visual arts, music, dance and drama. Teacher training has a very narrow approach and does not focus on arts education in the strict sense of the word. We look more at aesthetics and art history.*

*University trained teachers have specialised in art history or cultural studies. The teachers who come out of the university have completed a specific topic within cultural or art studies, but you would not say they have art education training. They can do a teaching qualification concurrently in their last year of study. Many don't even have a first degree in the arts and have come through a different pathway.*

*In the one year of study they look at pedagogical frameworks and theories. They do a subject about how to teach and a subject on cultural studies and another small amount on arts didactics, including curriculum studies.*

*The course has just been redesigned and will start under the new model in October. The students should be learning more about action research. They are not trained in evaluation. Evaluation is a debate in Flanders at the moment. We need to try and find a better balance between knowledge and skills. There are no skills without knowledge. In a one year programme, teaching evaluation is hard. We are aware that it is a problem. In your question you have touched on a raw nerve. It is difficult to even make students aware of the problem.*

The teacher educators themselves felt less than comfortable with issues of assessment and evaluation, as this comment acknowledges:

*This is a difficult idea even for us. We ask questions like, 'What do you think about?' It is a very delicate thing and the students don't like it. The most important thing is that they learn something. The process is more important than the product. Children can have a portfolio. You have to combine knowledge, practice and attitudes.*

Assessment and documentary learning is well illustrated by these quotes. According to a primary school principal:

*There is no tracking of children's learning in the arts. We ask the teachers to make plans for learning in mathematics and Dutch, but there are no plans for the arts. We try to make the teachers plan but they really don't know where to start. We find that children will say, "We did this last year". There is no learning line and children can do one thing year after year. We do have arts as a part of our reporting system to parents. We currently give the children a mark, but next year we will only give a comment. I have no idea how teachers work out the mark to give each child. There is also a section in the report for socio-emotional growth and some teachers link this to the arts.*

Conversely, a primary teacher with a passion and interest in the arts was making tentative steps to assess children's development:

*Whenever I give a lesson in visual arts, it is an evaluation moment - with respect. I ask questions. I ask the children about the ideas in the lesson what they consider to be the focus of the lesson. I stop the children and ask them to explain what they see or how something was made or achieved. I don't follow any particular theme and I don't limit the children to only 'school type of arts'. For example, even with young children we can talk about surrealism and Dada. For the children it is inspiring to ask questions and challenge their ideas. They can see that art can be about almost anything.*

In these simple discussions with young children, the teacher is encouraging the children to make critical reflections about their learning. These reflections can form the basis of assessment in the arts. In the following examples, assessment is seen to be a vital part of the learning process.

### 3.8 LIBRARIES

→ **Libraries form a valuable link between schools and the cultural and community sector, but this potential is largely under-utilised**

Libraries are not usually included as part of arts and cultural education in the international mapping. The inclusion of 'literature' - as an art form - is restricted to fewer countries than areas such as music, dance, drama and visual arts. Yet, libraries hold a unique role in the delivery of arts and cultural education in Flanders. They are a pivotal 'go-between' for the education and cultural sectors and have strong community links.

In General, every primary school child in Flanders is likely to participate in formalised visits to the library with the school. Yet, the representatives of the libraries themselves were disappointed by the lack of interest by the schools and the tokenistic nature of these visits, as these comments from library practitioners suggest:

*Every month the children come to the library. They can borrow books but that is about it. The visit to the library has just become a routine for many schools and a way to fill in time. It is not stimulating reading habits and kills the pleasure of reading. We try to do interesting things in the holidays, but children get dumped at the library and they are not interested. Too much of the time <when the children come to the library> is spent learning skills. It is not about expanding the children's interest in literature.*

*We try to work more closely with the schools and the teachers, but in reality this is not happening...I question myself as to how I can coach the teachers in getting the most out of the library and the services we offer so that they and their class will be more prepared when they bring the children to the library, but in reality, very little preparation ever occurs.*

*In every community there is a library but not every community has a cultural centre. Libraries and schools need to sit together around the table and share planning. They need to build up a programme together. It is all for free. The library pays for the service. We do it all for goodwill. We try to stimulate interest through websites. We try to be a catalyst to develop more structural connections with schools.*

Attendance at the local library is very common in the primary years, with schools on average visiting them once per month. In secondary school the frequency of visits drops markedly, with most schools visiting less than three times per year. Some libraries reported this drop is caused by the older children being able to attend the library independently of the school, but the more likely cause, suggested by the schools, was that the structure of the timetable made it difficult to get to the library.

During the children's book week, it was common for the local library to organise a short visit of an author to the school. The authors were in the school for between one and four hours and generally spoke to the children about books, writing and book illustrations and may also read or tell a story to the children. It was commented that some authors engaged well with the children, but others were boring and did not capture the children's interest, especially with older children. Libraries attempted to make connections with authors from diverse backgrounds and to place authors in schools that would connect with the demographic of the school. For financial reasons, an author would tend to attend several schools in one day. Often coinciding with these visits are book exhibitions. There was clearly an understanding of the library's potential.

*Children need to be exposed to literature. We have only fiction books in the school library. We motivate the students to read and they come to the school library three times a week. Every month we go to the local library and they do library lessons. The schools go to the library every week and we run special out reach activities for children. We have a very participatory policy. The library acts as a catalyst to connect local services. I don't think we exploit the libraries in the optimum way. Many people don't even know the services that are readily available in their local communities.*

Most local districts in Flanders have high quality libraries. These libraries act as a focus for cultural activities in the local area and also provide a valuable point of connection for schools – particularly primary schools. As could be expected, their promotion of literary arts is particularly strong. Children regularly visit these libraries. Teachers are encouraged to borrow resources to expand their teaching and they host a number of competitions and exhibitions related to literature. The youth book week (actually two weeks or longer!) provides opportunities for writers and book illustrators to visit schools and for schools to bring children to the library for enrichment activities. Children are encouraged to participate actively in literature through writing competitions, interviewing authors and exhibitions. The library provides a hub where the various schools from different networks all come together. While most libraries focus solely on literature, others have a wider attitude to arts development and perceive themselves to be more of a cultural resource, connecting schools with the broader local community. The following vignette shows the active level of engagement between education and culture, but the lack of structured nature of this collaboration:

### 3.8.1 Vignette: we have wonderful facilities for young people

*We run regular story telling with actors on a Wednesday afternoon. We contact the directors of the schools and tell them about our programmes and try to encourage them to come, both as a school group but also in the children's own time. There is not a structural collaboration with education, but we do at a practical level try to encourage children to become actively interested in reading and libraries. We have books in other languages and have started a Turkish section to try and encourage more cultural diversity among the library users. We hold regular exhibition programmes and also host a children's film festival. We are very fortunate in that the local government is very supportive and we have wonderful facilities for young people. Teachers can also bring children in and use our space. We do a lot for children's book week. We have also established homework space in the library so that children whose parents can't help them can come here and do homework and we can provide help for them. We are trying to do more with ICT as well.*

Outside the specific context of the library, a number of cultural providers highlighted the lack of structural connections. There is a sense that while good projects and experiences are available throughout Flanders, these are formed from personal relationships, individual interests and pockets of project funding, rather than holding a regular place within the policy, planning and budget of either educational or cultural organisations, as indicated in these comments:

*While you can find examples of good projects everywhere, we really need far stronger structural changes so these are not just one-off examples, but part of the core of education. We need more structure in:*

- *the curriculum*
- *financial support*
- *general budgets*
- *reflection and valuation strategies*
- *collaborations*
- *allocation of time*
- *sharing of good practices*
- *quality assurance*
- *management processes*
- *Training for cultural institutions and schools.*

*There is a problem of communication and connecting schools and cultural providers. There is not enough communication. Contacts between teachers and artists are really important.*

*The networks won't cooperate.*

### 3.9 CULTURAL CENTRES AND INSTITUTIONS

- ➔ **Cultural centres provide a large number of programmes for children**
- ➔ **There is a general lack of funding, interest and expertise in arts and cultural education amongst these centres**
- ➔ **There are some best practice examples, mainly in the poorer 'level C' category centres**

A government policy regarding cultural and community centres has been part of the *Local Culture Policy Decree* for several years. The key point in this decree is the clustering of cultural actors in the community: libraries, cultural centres and local initiatives. Together they should set the course of cultural life in the community.

Within Flanders, 61 cultural centres play a major role in the delivery of cultural experiences for children. Cultural centres have 3 main roles:

- ➔ Stimulate cultural participation
- ➔ Disclose the professional and amateur arts to the public
- ➔ Enhance the quality and cohesion of the local community.

Every city and town and many villages have a cultural centre. These centres are divided into 3 categories depending on the size of the town or village – category A (big towns) receives the most funding, B (smaller towns) the average amount and C (small communities) the least.

There are 11 'A' level cultural centres, 19 Level B centres and 31 level C cultural centres. The cultural centres in Brussels, Antwerp and Ghent are covered by a separate regulation. The level of basic subsidy received is:

- Level A 280,000 euro per year (to be increased to 325K)
- Level B 135,000 euro per year (to be increased to 190K)
- Level C 60,000 euro per year (to be increased to 110K)

The cultural centres work with a long-term policy plan that needs to synergise with the policy plans of other cultural actors in the community. This policy plan must be concretised and -if necessary- adapted into an annual plan of action.

In the 61 cultural centres, 9 991 activities were organised in the field of professional arts for 1 887 110 visitors in 2003. In addition, 499 artistic exhibitions were organised that year.

On average they hold 35-40 performances per year for children. They attract considerable funding from government and as part of this funding have to dedicate energy to education. Despite this, there was a lack of interest from cultural centres in participating in this research. Only a very small number of centres sent a representative to sit in the focus group for cultural centres (about 10% of centres attended, nearly 20% responded).

Staff in the cultural centres are paid by the Flemish Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media. They also receive additional funds from the city, community or province for programming. The third source of funding comes from the charges for services. Currently there is planning for a retreat where all the cultural centres can go to learn to cooperate: "We will invite people along to tease and inspire us!"

In most centres, activities for children are more than 50% of the centre's activities. Interestingly, it was reported that family and child related activities were the most profitable, but were not adequately staffed: "Activities for young people are more than 50% of our role but education only has 5% of the staff". It was also expressed that, "The money made out of children's activities helps to support the adult programme in the evening."

Problems of funding are especially apparent in the 'category C' centres that are in towns of less than 40,000 people. These centres get very little funding so have to apply to a number of municipal funding courses to finance their annual programmes. In these centres, activities such as workshops and performances for children are vital for financial stability.

Despite this, there are inadequate staff numbers. For example in one category C centre, the 1 part-time member of the educational staff had to organise events for more than 100 schools in a single year. The severe limitation of time means that the collaborations with schools are tokenistic and short-term as there is insufficient time and human resources for more thorough programmes. Centres can apply for extra funding if they cater for diverse or more difficult groups or expand to more regional and rural outreach.

There is an Association for Cultural Centres and it was acknowledged that as 2008 is the European Year of Cultural Education, the role of the cultural centres is likely to be more important. It was also recognised that the cultural centres could play a major role in policy planning for free time arts activities within a town.

The centres conduct projects across the year. Despite this, the cultural centres felt undervalued by schools, as these comments suggest:

*Teachers just see the workshops as a time to go and grab a coffee.  
Most teachers are not open-minded to the whole experience.  
Schools just come to the cultural centre. See a performance and then leave.*

It was felt that this situation could be improved by “more structural collaborations with schools.” It was also suggested that teacher professional development could be provided by Cultural Centres. In the interview, the representatives from these centres expressed concern about pilot funding for collaboration:

*They launched a project to build creative partnerships. But the deadline for applications was just 2 months. You can't build a partnership in that time!*

While all cultural centres play a major role in the delivery of arts education, there is a lack of interest from some centres in the important role they play. It could be argued that the role has been so institutionalised in the delivery of local cultural programmes that in some instances apathy has set in.

### 3.10 CULTURAL AGENCIES (MEDIATORS)

- ➔ **Cultural agencies provide high quality effective local support for arts and cultural education**
- ➔ **Cross sector agencies aid implementation of arts and educational policy by building cooperation between and within agencies**
- ➔ **Cultural agencies provide valuable support across networks**

City level cooperation provides an opportunity for financial stability of arts and cultural education funding (project based) and to develop a system of clearer lines of learning between and across projects. These city or regional centres have the further advantage of going beyond the boundaries between networks and can support both schools and cultural agencies.

By embedding these centres in a local area, the centre can develop a sustained relationship with key players in the sector, become increasingly aware of the context and needs within each school and can provide links to other agencies, such as child welfare and youth affairs within the area. It is recommended that locally-based arts, culture and education mediation services are a cost-effective and efficient way to pool project based funding into more substantial and long-term arts education initiatives. The following vignette shows the effective way these cultural mediators can build practical support for both education and arts and culture:

#### 3.10.1 Vignette: we exist and have a presence across networks

*We have been engaged in doing projects with schools for more than twenty years. We used to work with both the departments of education and culture in the city, but now we are an independent organisation with our own budget. This allows us to work more with proactive cultural action.*

*We work with a number of field workers. We coordinate projects with museums across the board. Really we have fundamentally stayed the same, but now our activities are wider and broader. Our sustained funding means that we have been able to work over the years and have had longer to learn. We can apply all that we know.*

*We exist and have a presence across all the networks. We can communicate across the sectors. For instance, the museums don't always know the new methods in education. We brief them on the final objectives, current philosophies and we share questions from the field. The projects are usually generated by the schools, but even though it is developed in theory by the school, the artists are usually connected with the schools and championing the process. Each year the artists help the schools to develop a project around a theme. For example an audio visual project or a theme like 'Living in the city'*

*We can provide either 'off the shelf' types of packages or we produce particular packages on demand. The best projects always start with a discussion around the table. All the partners are there right from the beginning and we discuss the process. We identify suitable partners according to their vision and our experience means we know the partners that will work well together.*

Cross sector agencies aid implementation of arts and educational policy by building cooperation between and within agencies and by allowing continuity of service provision, including the arts education received by children and young people in schools and more broadly within the community. Furthermore, economies of scale emerge, whereby funds coming into a

number of departments and agencies can be pooled to form more substantial amounts. For example, arts and education both in some ways support arts education provisions, but a number of other agencies including youth affairs, health, justice and so on may also give money towards arts related initiatives.

These funds can be joined in ways directly related to purpose, recipients or impacts. The possible negative aspect of this possibility is that it may be difficult for the various sectors to reach a common agreement on purpose, scope or context. For instance, in the arts sector, the aim is often to build skills and knowledges in the arts, whereas the educational sector may be more concerned with overall education values of participation in the arts. Conversely, a youth organisation might favour access over quality, while a health department might be interested in overall well-being as a measure of success. Such aims are not mutually exclusive, but any attempt to consolidate the various projects would need to show sensitivity to these differing demands.

There is a criticism that policy in arts and cultural education is too much a 'scatter-gun' approach with rapidly changing foci. The result is that teachers feel overwhelmed and disorientated and unclear about aims and structures. On many occasions in the research teachers called for fewer priorities and for these priorities to be more tightly focused over a longer period of time. It was felt that this would give more stability and aid the processes of school based planning. *CANON Cultuurcel* was criticised for having too many directions and being too influenced by 'fashion and politics' and changing direction too rapidly. As one teacher stated, "It is hard to get the director to see arts and culture as being important when the message coming out of the ministry is always changing. We don't know if we should focus on singing or media or heritage or going to the theatre. So we end up doing a bit of everything and not doing it very well". While it was acknowledged that organisations such as *CANON Cultuurcel* and network-based support had assisted in broadening the base of cultural education, there was a problem of the scope and breadth of the messaging and the difficulty in resourcing such an expansive vision.

Article Four of the "Protocol for Cooperation on Culture and Education" states that structural cooperation should exist between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media. While *CANON Cultuurcel* in theory forms part of that cooperation, in practice, the difference in priorities, aims and political will within the two ministries means that the actual cooperation and sharing of responsibility has not been realised fully - at all levels - to date.

By contrast, *CANON Cultuurcel* could form a vital role in coordinating the work of local cultural mediators. During the research, a number of successful examples of local cultural mediators were observed. The following case study describes the approach and strategies used by a city-based agency to get involvement in high quality arts education:

### 3.10.2 Vignette: making sure no one slips through the net

*Our organisation was founded through the vision of the City Council. Our resources come both from education and culture. Also, because we now have fifteen live projects, we are able to effectively leverage funds from other sources.*

*We work with all schools, from all networks and we include special education schools. We research and document our projects. For example, at the moment we are doing a project on teaching philosophy to Autistic children. It is an art project exploring how the world functions through the eyes of someone with autism.*

*Another project is more a heritage related project connecting major goals in general education with architecture.*

*In this area one in four of the schools experiences behaviour problems, so we target projects around social outcomes. We try to make sure no one slips through the net and all children have the chance to experience high quality arts education.*

In Flanders, local authorities make an enormous investment in arts and cultural education. This occurs through direct subsidies, special programmes, infrastructure support, salaries of artists and cultural agents. The 1998 reform of the constitution (de Rynck & Dezeure, 2006) expanded the power of communities over education. An effective model of greater community connections to education can be found in the planning and implementation carried out by the cultural agencies and this activity should be the focus of support.

### 3.11 PROJECT AND RESEARCH-BASED INQUIRY

- **Flemish education supports research and inquiry into education and culture**
- **All projects should be encouraged to include action or practitioner research as a part of their processes**
- **People responsible for delivering arts and cultural education and children should be trained in inquiry processes**

Flexible, research-orientated approaches, combined with project-based methods, encourage an educational climate where the teachers, artists and children engage in learning conversations and test their ideas. Enquiry-based approaches enable spontaneous situations to be incorporated to create interesting and meaningful art-based learning opportunities.

It appears that as a general principle, Flemish education supports research and enquiry into education and culture. In particular, *CANON Cultuurcel* is a leader in commissioning extensive, high quality research in the field of arts and cultural education. Furthermore, there is clear evidence that the growing body of research is being used directly to improve arts and educational provisions for children and to build best practice in arts and cultural education.

At a more particular level, there was wide support for this research. The cultural and education sector appreciated the opportunity provided by this research to share some of the issues surrounding arts education. They bemoaned the lack of research and praised the ways this research was allowing the on the ground voice to be amplified. They expressed concern that a lack of time and expertise prevented them from having more opportunity to get into the field, and there was widespread acknowledgement that there are lots of good interventions at the local level.

Despite a central commitment to research and inquiry based practices, many organisations do not have any funding to complete even the smallest reflective inquiry. To do research is not easy. Many organisations are modest, not-for-profit organisations. They do all the coordination and the teaching. It is just not possible for them to do research as well. Many schools do activities but they do not consciously know the impact of their work. This seemed to be particularly the case in heritage education, where many schools and children were initiating interesting inquiries in this field, but were not explicitly aware of the nature of their work. As it was noted:

*Policy makers defend their policies and activities. So the research is important because it is independent. Schools and culture both attract funding. We don't really have research to know what is really going on. Policy is one thing, but what is actually happening is another. Both schools and cultural institutions will argue they are doing a good job because they want to get more funding but the reality is often different.*

### 3.12 CENTRED AROUND ACTIVE CREATION, PERFORMANCE AND EXHIBITION

- **It is important that projects and learning lines culminate in a high quality presentation of the learning process**
- **Process and product should be clearly linked**
- **Passive arts and cultural education (such as seeing a performance) are valuable but should not be used as a substitute for children's active creative processes and opportunities for children to be performers and artists**

Engagement in active arts creation and performance engenders particular learning and achievement embedded within active practice. The positive benefits of performance and exhibition were evident in quality arts programmes. Exhibition and performance brings kudos to the participants and promotes the benefits of the arts to a wider audience.

*If the arts are centred you can do the arts but if schools don't centre the arts then they disappear. The cultural sector needs to be more proactive. There is no clear policy. But policy is only one thing. We really need to know what is happening in the classroom. We don't know what is happening there. Those in the cultural sector have no idea what is happening in the classroom. This research is a really good indicator.*

While a number of schools had performances to coincide with festivals, the religious calendar or events such as the *book week* and *grandparents day*, it is important that projects and learning lines culminate in a high quality presentation of the learning process. In some schools this was evident. Children's art work was well presented and labelled and framed in such a way as to position the child as an artist. In the performing arts, several schools visited had regular opportunities for pupils to perform in a professional or community environment. Performance and exhibition as part of a high quality arts programme build a child's confidence, dedication and commitment to the arts and are - for most pupils - memorable highlights of their school life.

It is important also, that following such performances, pupils are given the opportunity to reflect, articulate and evaluate their learning and propose future projects. This process is significant and it cannot be assumed that children will do this without a process of careful facilitation. The learning that occurs within the arts must be made explicit to children and derived from their first-hand experiences so that pupils have a concrete way to connect learning.

The processes of the arts and cultural curriculum as stated in the documentation are thorough. While stated variously at the different levels, it is expected that children are given the opportunity to:

- Observe artistic products (such as seeing artworks, watching plays, seeing movies and so)
- Actively make art works (such as singing, playing drawing, painting and so on)
- Articulate and communicate their experiences using the various languages of the arts, and
- Develop critical attitudes towards the arts

These processes are in line with many of the quality indicators derived from studying case studies of good practice in arts and cultural education from around the world (Bamford, 2006). In particular, the processes outlined in the Flemish syllabus support the quality indicators by:

- Incorporating active art making
- Encouraging children to develop the languages of the disciplines
- Being local in terms of the contextual focus
- The embedding of critical reflection as a core part of arts education

At the simplest level, this includes the manner in which the children are treated as artists. In effective schools, there was clear evidence that children's art making and performance was positioned within a context of professional artists.

For example, children's paintings would be signed and dated by the pupil; be professionally mounted and framed; be attractively displayed around the room and be effectively labelled. Schools with arts-rich education regularly changed displays and there was a general feeling of liveliness and care in the way the children's artworks were treated.

In some best practice examples, children were encouraged to present their work and critique the work of others. The following description shows this process in action:

*The children in the sixth grade are sitting comfortably on a set of lounges arranged in the corner of a classroom. The teacher is sitting amongst the pupils on the lounges. Three pupils are at the front of the group presenting their work. It is a series of artworks related to a thematic study of the Inca culture. Some of the work is mounted on cardboard. Other work is displayed on a computer screen. The producers are describing their aims and processes. The children on the settees are attentive and focused. A range of questions are being asked and occasionally the teacher injects with questions that are focused around the overall aim of the project.*

While most schools in Flanders either take the children to performances or have performers come to the school, such experiences – however valuable at other levels – do not equate to the active process of a child creating and presenting their work.

The challenge of balancing process and product was not a challenge contained solely within the educational sphere. For example, theatre companies who had decided to concentrate on more socially equitable and accessible practice had found that it had been difficult for them to balance performance expectations. For example, a theatre group visited had previously been funded out of the art and culture budget. But increasingly its work was becoming more educationally and welfare orientated (especially working with disadvantaged youth). Their work had become focused on process and on developing the talents of people with mental disturbances and psychological problems. Since then though, their 'high arts standard' of their performances had fallen and now they were likely to lose arts funding.

### 3.13 THE LANGUAGES OF THE ARTS

- **The arts and culture are vital languages for understanding the world, yet this aspect of the arts is not apparent in Flanders**

Learning the languages of the arts enables people to talk effectively about their arts experiences and express their feelings. The arts are a powerful form of communication.

The development of language skills appeared to be central within the design and implementation of arts-rich education. There are two aspects to be considered. Firstly, unless a child is fluent in the language of arts disciplines – such as the language of colour, movement, gesture and so on – a child's ability to express themselves in those languages is severely hampered. The second aspect is that even if the pupils in later life do not wish to be active in expression through the arts, they need to develop ways to talk about arts and culture so they can participate actively in the cultural life of their community and of the country. Language has an important function to perform in giving students the words to enable children to talk about their artwork, performance and the work of artists.

Children will develop this vocabulary with interesting questions from the teacher or artist and by talking to each other about their arts experiences. Concurrently, both the ability to express one self through artistic means and to be able to talk and write about artistic and cultural experiences, gives the child a greater range of ways to express feelings. In this way, the arts are a powerful form of communication.

The arts provide a language that enables society to pass on cultural heritage to young people. Importantly, it also allows young people to create their own artistic language and to contribute to their global development (emotional and cognitive). In this way it equips young people with the capacity to develop the cultural heritage of the future.

The arts are symbolic communications that act as a cultural driving force accentuating the role of the arts in social action, social reconstruction and the role of culture in society. For this purpose alone, there is ample justification to foreground the need for systematic development of artistic languages. Effective arts education combines development in the specific languages of the arts with creative approaches to learning.

Despite this, the idea that the arts are a form of language and that 'literacy' in the arts is vital for contemporary and future society - especially in the light of the rapid changes in communication technologies – notions of visual literacy, aesthetic literacy, sound literacies and so on are not apparent in either policy or practice in Flanders. As with media education, this area appears to be underdeveloped in debates and classroom practices in arts and cultural education.

### 3.14 RISK-TAKING

#### → Funding should encourage risk taking and experimental approaches

Quality arts programmes encourage people to take risks and allow them to make mistakes. 'Letting go' of control and being confident to make mistakes is an important part of the creative process. Uncertainty surrounds quality arts practice and this is to be encouraged.

Within Flanders there were good practice examples of projects that encouraged exploration and challenged pupils, teachers and artists to go beyond their perceived scope and ability. Yet the overall impression is that these are 'special cases' and that generally primary and secondary education is wedded to the status quo and generally does not encourage innovation or risk-taking.

Similarly, it could be argued that the after school sector (DKO) would be less constrained by curriculum and timetables, have more expertise and smaller class sizes and so may be better resourced to engage in more cutting edge practice and risk taking. But the observations conducted in this research would suggest that in the majority of cases the opposite is true. A reflective comment was made that:

In the DKO there is a striking discrepancy between, on the one hand the opportunities inherent in this kind of school system, and on the other hand teachers not making use of these opportunities in order to transform traditional practices with a more coherent and artistically relevant approach.

Risk taking seems to be most prevalent in the small, voluntary and independent arts and cultural sector. It was noted by major cultural agencies (especially in theatre) that taking risks was actually discouraged, and a few companies that had tried more experimental practice or practice involving more marginalised participants and audience had found their funding reduced. Similarly, the smaller cultural centres reported that in recent years they had become less 'risky' as they were increasingly having to fully economic cost their offerings so workshops and 'safe' plays were seen to be better than more experimental pieces that may not produce a cash surplus.

To this extent, the creative process, risk-taking and experimentation are more important than achieving an attractive or 'saleable' end product. Furthermore, an over-reliance on producing a high quality end product may be detrimental to the children engaging in exploratory and risk-orientated processes. Despite these caveats, performance, exhibition and audience are important in the artistic process (see section 3.12) and bring kudos to the school (see section 3.15)

### 3.15 PROFILING THE SCHOOL

- Arts education leads to an improvement in student, parental and community perceptions of schools
- Schools and cultural agencies engaged in art and cultural education could be assisted to develop communication plans and to present their good practice through the media

There is considerable competition between schools in Belgium and schools tend to want to 'profile' their school by highlighting key aspects. It is quite common for schools to choose the arts and culture to profile. Most schools produce

detailed information booklets about the activities in the schools. These can range from black and white, low budget reports to very extensive 'glossy' style magazines. In all of the reports sighted, there is an emphasis on arts and culture in the images presented and it would appear that the schools view the arts as being positive marketing and profiling adjuncts, as this vignette from a school director suggests:

### 3.15.1 Vignette: we try to really sell the message for the arts

*This school is very multicultural and usually parents don't want to send their children to a multi-cultural school. When I <The Director> came to this school three years ago, we had only 157 pupils and the school was not popular. Through the arts, our school is now full and even parents outside the area drive their children to our school. There are now 305 pupils and we have seven new classes starting in kindergarten! We have drama in every class. Our children make films to show parents. The pupils have created posters on the theme "Art is..." We try to really sell the message for the arts to parents and it has definitely worked to change the profile of this school. Two years ago the only creative activity in this school was colouring-in. you would walk into a class and see 22 pictures all the same! Now every child is exploring the artist inside themselves! They love coming to school, and it shows in their results. Before the children in this school come and went, but now the children that start in primary school never leave! Even if their families move out of this area, the parents continue to bring the children to this school.*

In the following example, a school has been able to successfully profile itself through a strong commitment to the arts. In this primary school, arts have been used to build the school community and to connect diverse students. Strong connections to local cultural providers have also worked to extend and develop the good reputation of the school. The school is evident of a high quality learning environment.

### 3.15.2 Vignette: The arts as a key way to profile the school

*This school is increasing in popularity due to its policy of taking children with problems. Many of the children in the school have come to this school after unsuccessful experiences at other schools. The school is in the centre of the city and over 70 percent of children come from a background other than Flemish. The school has several campuses and offers different programmes at each campus. For example, one campus has multi-aged mixed classes, whereas another campus offers a much more traditional curriculum with age based grades. The school has several specialist teachers in the primary school including a specialist gym (sports) teacher, ICT teacher, language teacher (as a large percent of the children do not have Dutch as their first language) and a specialist music teacher). The music teacher comes in weekly. She is a general primary teacher who has a love for music and so the school has reorganised classes to allow her to teach music as a specialist across the school.*

*The music programme is well-structured with children receiving an effective balance of choral skills, musical understanding and music and movement appreciation. The school also participates in a number of extra musical initiatives. For example, they are part of a European programme, where traditional instruments are exchanged and the children compose and perform music using the 'new' and unusual instruments and then this is videoed and sent to a school in the country of origin of the instruments.*

*The music teacher also works with the ICT teacher to compose music.*

*They have targeted Wednesday afternoon for after school music lessons and are actively encouraging all children to attend after school music classes. Currently about 80 percent of children attend. The goal is to get every child in one grade to all play an instrument and be able to perform. Before we started the targeted programme, only about 20-25 percent of children attended music school. They would start in third class, but most would have dropped out by fifth grade.*

*The school principal commented, "Having the specialist music teacher has made all the difference. I know all primary teachers are meant to teach music, but without criticizing my colleagues, some classes get music, but others never got any. Now I don't have to worry so much as I know all children at least get some good quality music education."*

*The school principal saw the arts as being a key way to profile the school and he was convinced that the growing success of the school was due to the emphasis on the arts. "Arts and culture are getting more important in our society. We have decided to profile the arts in our school. We are in the district known as "The Museum Mile" and so we say that our children have access to excellent cultural resources. We try to connect our learning with the museums. It was funny because we have always been here and the museums have always been next door, but it is only in recent times we have started really working closely together.*

*The city organised a project for schools to work with cultural institutions. The city offered a special service to work together with schools and museums. That really started us going. When the project was finished, we just kept on going. For example, the children are producing their own audio guides to the museums. When we worked with the museum, they provided specialist*

staff and material. It was brilliant and it only cost €100 for the whole class.

There is a special cell in the cultural Department called “Skin –to-Skin”. It included teachers with special training in artistic and historical fields and they worked closely with us. IT had a catalyst effect and staff developed a greater interest in the arts and began to integrate arts education across the board.

We always try to have exhibitions of what we do and open these for the parents. We do the whole thing in a professional way. For instance the children make art catalogues. All the school is getting involved.

In view of the need for school to build positive profiles, it is also important that they communicate their arts programmes effectively to children, school staff, parents and the wider community. This can be done through key events, newsletters and by using the media, as the following examples indicate:

*We try to connect a lot with local media. We really don't have any budget for this. We have found the media are more interested when there is an event to cover. In general though, the media does not see much to cover in arts and culture.*

*We are trying to put together an event to coach arts and cultural agencies and arts-rich schools to develop communication and media skills.*

*There are some publications, like ‘cultuurNet ‘*

Schools and cultural organisations would also benefit from more detailed communication plans. CANON Cultuurcel, or similar agencies, could work to provide schools, museums and arts educators in developing greater communication skills

*We would really benefit from some help to develop a communication plan. We need help with how to make a story attractive for television and how to present stories creatively. Small organisations simply don't have the budget for media and communication. If the choice I have to make is to deliver one more project for children or develop communication, I will always do the project.*

### 3.16 EDUCATION IN AND THROUGH THE ARTS

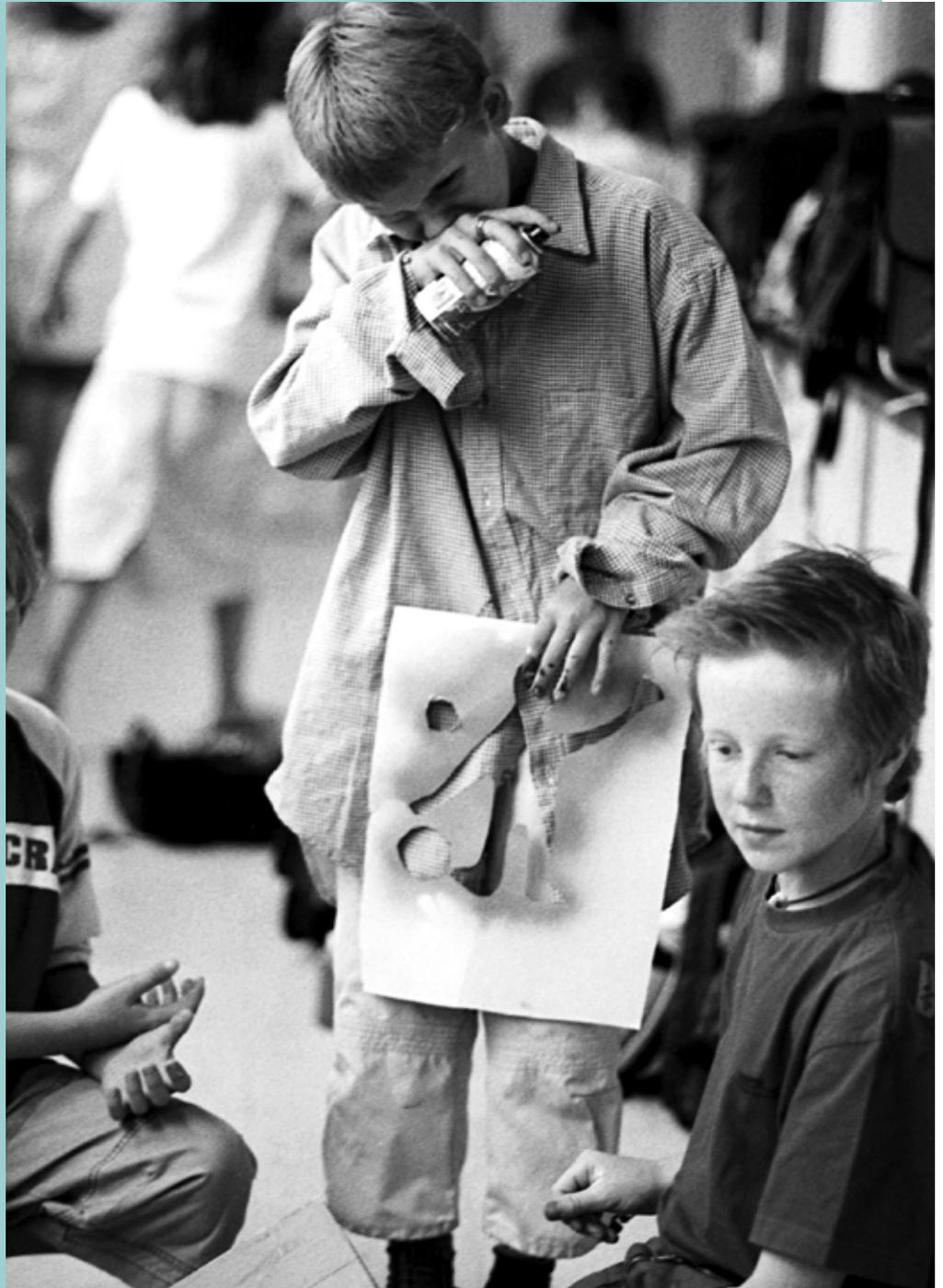
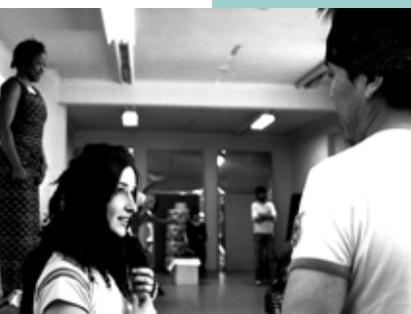
- **There is a difference between, what can be termed, *education in the arts* (e.g. teaching in fine arts, music, drama, crafts, etc.) and *education through the arts* (e.g. the use of arts as a pedagogical tool in other subjects, such as numeracy, literacy and technology)**
- **Schools need strong programmes in the arts AND artistic and creative ways to learn in an integrated way across the curriculum**

There were very high quality examples of schools that adopted flexible approaches to the delivery of curriculum. In these situations, learning philosophies were grounded around connected learning. Adopting meaningful thematic learning, they tended to relate at least three of the major *leergebieden* (learning domains) to a given theme. In the early years of school, these themes may spread over one to two weeks, while in later years they may extend up to a month or longer.

Similarly, in younger years the theme may be chosen by the teacher but in later years it could be chosen by the students and may also move from being a whole class theme to a theme of individual or small group exploration. With the exception of mathematics and gymnasium (sport), all areas of the curriculum were likely to be related to the theme.

There was clear evidence of, for example, spelling, reading comprehension, civics and the arts all being directly developed through theme work. In the best examples, this was indicative of both high quality learning in the arts (i.e. the development of particular visual arts, music, and drama or dance skills) and the extensive learning through the arts (i.e. the high quality use of the arts to enrich all aspects of learning).

There were also rich examples of the arts being incorporated into general classroom management. For example, in one school the children had “two songs” to get the room tidied in preparation for going home.



# Chapter 4

## { SO? TAKING THE LONGER VIEW }

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Following diagnosis comes prescription! Without taking the clinical metaphor to the extremes, it is necessary to have an understanding of the nature of the challenges to art and cultural education – and their causes – before prescribing a cure. The research has concluded that there is a discrepancy between espoused ideas and their implementation. Generally, Flemish schools are of a very high standard and education is highly valued. Moreover, there are pockets of world leading practice in arts and cultural education. That is a good beginning. But even the best of systems have room for improvement. The challenge is to transfer the knowledge and know-how from the “pockets of excellence” to the rest of the region. This chapter examines some key areas for development and the attempts being made to address quality learning.

### 4.2 CONTINUITY – ARTS IMPACT AND LEARNING LINES

- ➔ **Teachers are unclear about the aims and specific learning embedded in the arts**
- ➔ **Learning is characterised by a series of largely disconnected projects and experiences**
- ➔ **Links are not explicit for either the child or the teacher**
- ➔ **Continuity is vital if arts education is to have an impact**

A comprehensive study conducted in 2004 (Devos, 2004) implored schools and the broader educational sector to commence arts education early in a child’s life and ensure there was continued development of creative and cultural competencies throughout the entire school programme. The report cautions strongly that “a participation programme aimed at fifteen to twenty-five year olds would be far too late” (p 2) and that, “Within the entire educational trajectory the concept of creativity must be central” (p 2).

Despite this study now being more than three years old, there is little indication in the field that this sustained and articulated programme from nursery to tertiary education has been developed.

The experiences of arts education in the nursery (while better in general than later education) are of intermittent quality and tend to inhibit rather than expand creativity. The child’s experiences of arts and cultural education in primary school in most instances is likely to be patchy, with good quality experiences for children with enthusiastic teachers and no art, or lower quality experiences for children where the teacher is not interested in the arts. In secondary school, most children will receive some music and some visual arts education but the quality can vary from excellent to abysmal. This lack of consistency and quality was reported in high frequency during the focus groups and interviews, as indicated in the following samples:

*More continuity is needed for arts education in schools. There is a lack of continuity. Projects do not equate to continuity.*

*We are trying to change the lack of continuity. In our case, artists go into schools and stay. We have made an agreement with Leuven city foundation to give us sustained funding. That level of structure and continuity is better.*

*Continuity of programmes is important but who will finance it? Continuity is always the result of cooperation. Projects will feel success but then they finish. Continuity is the biggest discussion. There are a lot of good projects all trying to sell their services to education. There needs to be bigger funds that can be used to provide overall continuity and a linked structure with cultural institutions.*

While Article One of the *General Stipulations for Cooperation on Culture and Education* stipulates compulsory cultural education, this is not backed by specific, continuous, legislated time. Therefore, the looseness of the term ‘continuous’ means that in practice the time given to cultural education in schools is very limited and poorly defined. Further more, the emphasis on provisions in ‘free time’ means that there is an inequity and discrepancy between the cultural education a child receives, largely corresponding to their economic and educational status, with lower socio-economic and lower educational level receiving the least and the converse picture for higher classes and educational levels. Free time arts education is by nature voluntary and cannot be seen to be incorporated as part of basic entitlements.

In some schools learning has effectively been mapped across the school and within particular school years. Consistent and continuous experiences are vital if a child is to develop fully their artistic languages. In the following vignette, the children are evidently reaping the rewards of a school that values arts and cultural education and which has actively developed learning throughout the school.

#### 4.2.1 Vignette: the arts are very important

*We expect activities to be happening across the whole year. The arts are very important. Children are good at different things so it is important that in the plan for the year we offer a range of opportunities. Some children are good in drama, others in visual arts. You cannot make averages and compare. The children become themselves. When their work is strong they know it. We notice that the children here are more able to collaborate and their communication skills are strong. We compare our children to children from other schools and we notice many other children don't know where to start with the arts. Other children are nervous, but our children can plan their own experiences and explain what they are trying to achieve. They can accept traditional ways, but they also know you can do things in different ways. Sometimes if you walk into our classrooms it is hard to know who the teacher is and if the teacher leaves the room it does not make a difference as the children are so busy on their projects.*

### 4.3 THE BROAD SCHOOL AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES

- ➔ **New initiatives such as the Broad School are being trialled and evaluated at the moment**
- ➔ **Structural partnerships between the various arts and cultural (and sports) agencies is to be promoted**

In the last few years an experiment has been underway in Flanders to explore a model of education that extends the role of the school beyond the hours of 8:30-4pm to become a cultural resource for the community. At the heart of the Broad School programme are notions that acknowledge the value of lifelong learning and try to encourage greater community partnerships in education. While it is a choice of a school to become a Broad School or not, schools can receive considerable financial incentives to adopt the Broad School model as an approach to schooling.

Basically, the model encourages the school to form sustained partnerships with local arts, sports and cultural providers and other schools to offer a range of programmes outside normal school hours. Many of these programmes have an arts and cultural focus. The intention is that formal and informal arts and cultural providers (including cooking and sports) can provide additional services to the Broad Schools. The Broad schools also aim to increase the involvement of parents and the community in schools.

In recent years the social demands being placed on the schools have greatly increased. The schools are increasingly being asked to perform a broader role in the community and the social functions of the schools have increased. In previous years, it was enough that a school taught children to read and write, but in the current context the school is seen as a force to regenerate an environment and its people and issues such as ethnic diversity, social cohesion, unemployment, parental training health care and substance abuse issues may all fit under the role a schools sees as performing within a community. This increase in social perspectives of the school has led to the development of the Broad Schools. The Broad Schools aim to equalise the cultural experiences of children from different social classes. Pupils of lower social classes participate less in cultural and sports activities. The Broad School aims to provide these children with the offers and support to encourage their participation in arts and cultural programmes.

Beyond the Broad School initiatives, a number of educational setting sand communities are trialling the manner in which arts and cultural education may improve social cohesion. Internationally, the results (Bamford, 2006) suggest that from a social perspective the arts improve school and community relations. Within young people there is evidence to suggest that the arts assist in the formation of identity, self-esteem and confidence and that these - together with increases in collaboration - are likely to lead to enhanced social cohesion. It has to be noted though, that while these social outcomes are laudable, the arts should not be viewed as a panacea for social evils in schools and must be foremost recognised for their intrinsic artistic value.

#### 4.3.1 Vignette: the school are some isolated islands

*There are problems in secondary school. The teachers don't have the inside view of the pupils. They don't understand their heritage. They don't understand their music. There is not any connection between what happens inside the classroom and the rest of the child's experiences.*

*It's like the schools are some isolated island. Both schools and cultural institutions get stuck in their own world and this world is getting further from the real world of young people. Brussels is made up of everyone. You have your feelings and values inside.*

*We have this project we are doing at the moment about monuments and heritage. We are working in a vocational school so it could be really boring and disconnected, so we had to find a place to start. We started from looking at what heritage meant to the students themselves. We held a round table for the teachers and tried to develop practical and flexible ways to address the topic. The centre suggested loads of ideas and opportunities and mediated links to local agencies. At first the teachers felt it was too risky.*

*Sharing across boundaries and opening your classroom up to others can make everyone feel a little vulnerable. Teachers are not trained to take advantage of arts and cultural opportunities and artists are not trained to work with education. A lot of the social problems that are at the heart of creative and artistic activity are suppressed within education. Teachers and artists are often very fixed in their ideas and the whole system is not very open.*

#### 4.4 MUSEUMS

- **There are examples of excellent practice in museum and gallery education**
- **This tends to be undervalued in comparison to other aspects of the museum's functions**

Museums in Flanders receive considerable subsidies from the government. They each have a strong focus on education and have both ongoing 'core' collections and a range of temporary exhibitions. There is considerable expertise within these museums and they make a number of outreach programmes to both schools and the broader community. They conduct teacher development activities and provide introduction and enrichment orientations for teachers. There are also examples of the museums taking an active role in the development of learning resources. The following examples demonstrate the way museums actively contribute to arts education in Flanders.

*We have a project with the Museum of Modern Art in Antwerp. It is a shared project. They came with a planning book showing what they were doing but then we all sat down and planned together. This process was actually directed by the teacher. We are in walking distance to the museum, so if we want to go we can just go. They are very open to visits.*

*We have 75,000 visits per year from young people. We get more visits from primary schools than we do from secondary schools. It costs five Euros per pupil and that includes a guide. It is seven Euros if they want a workshop as well. We also work actively with schools and other departments to develop educational resources.*

Additionally, the museum sector plays an important role in encouraging teachers – especially trainee teachers – to see the museum as a resource for learning. This connection with teacher education is shown in the following comments:

*We find when groups of trainee teachers come to our teacher development days, usually none or only one of the teachers out of fifteen has ever been to a gallery before. Many of the trainees have a negative attitude to the arts so we have to start with very basic activities and try to win them over. It is not always easy to get the ILBOs interested in cultural education.*

*We tried to establish regular meetings with teachers, but this has been really difficult. There is a problem. There is no network of teachers that we can connect with. There is no structure to work within. We can design special projects, but these only happen on an irregular basis. We do some free events, like special preview nights for teachers. We invite a mystery guest and really make it a special night for the teachers. We get 200-250 teachers turning up to these events. We see these as a way to show our appreciation to teachers. We do this at the beginning of the school year. It is for everyone and teachers from all systems come, but then it is just a one-off thing.*

While the museums offer a number of services to assist arts and cultural education, these are largely under resourced and under utilized. From the perspective of the museum, often large education programmes are run by a small staff receiving only a fraction of the global budget of the museum. Similarly, schools see the museum as being a very marginal resource within their general curriculum. Additionally, the museums should be viewed as existing in the context of the broader arts and cultural education resources, including DKO and other after schools provisions.

## 4.5 OUT OF SCHOOL PROVISIONS

- **There is an extensive network of out of school provisions in arts and culture**
- **DKOs are highly subsidised but tend to attract the economic, cultural and educational elite as pupils**

There are two main types of out of school provisions. The first are formal art schools (DKO) offering substantial arts training primarily in music. With a smaller number of schools offering visual arts, drama, dance, speech training, poetry or other art forms. These receive direct funding from the Ministry of Education and are heavily subsidised. On average parents pay around €51 per year for their children to attend (see p. 46). Parents may also need to buy materials or musical instruments, but provisions are available to hire or borrow these for lower income families.

The other provision is the ‘informal sector’<sup>11</sup> being a collective description for a whole host of services and provisions run by church groups, youth affairs, community groups, and local authorities. Also within this group are some interesting youth-led initiatives and initiatives operated by volunteers at the very local level.

In addition to these, there is a network of around 60 youth music ateliers where music is taught in a less formal way. The teachers in these centres do not receive the same salary as in the DKO. It is a private initiative. They do receive a small amount of subsidy.

Within Flanders there are 167 main DKO or part-time arts education schools on 1131 different sites. Children can start attending such schools from about eight years old<sup>12</sup> and as they subscribe to lifelong learning, can continue until old age, though a large number of children leave by the time they are fourteen years of age (see p. 48).

The study conducted in 2005 into cultural participation in Flanders (Claeys et al., 2005) showed that around 86 percent of adults had never attended a classical performance, opera, ballet or dance (p 1). There were indications that this very small number had decreased even further in recent years. In keeping with this trend, participation rates in the DKO (after school classes) – where primarily classical programmes are offered) is similarly low. There is also a lack of diversity among the students who participate in DKO. One DKO director offered a possible explanation for this:

*I want to make this comment in reflecting on your remarks about the lack of diversity in DKO population. There are two possibilities to teach young people how to play an instrument:*

- 1) First play yourself and then let the pupil imitate this; or*
- 2) Stress the skill, explain the technique so that in the end the pupil can function independently.*

*In DKO the 2<sup>nd</sup> possibility is mostly used. It doesn't lead to immediate results (which is possible with the first option) and demands a longer investment. I personally think that children and young people from BSO would be more attracted to the 1<sup>st</sup> option which has more short-term results. They often find it difficult to sustain the discipline which is needed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> option. I don't think the DKO system should be changed completely. Skills are very important! On the other hand, openness, willingness to listen and flexibility are important qualities for the DKO teacher.*

On average the rates for primary school children is eighteen percent and the rate for secondary children is ten percent (See *Cijfers in het Deeltijds Kunstonderwijs XII, Toestand op basis van de leerlingentelling van 1 februari 2006*, OVSG, 2006, p.36).

In actual fact, the empirical research for this study would indicate lower rates with clear indications that rates of initial subscriptions (by which the official figures are calculated) are not a true indication of attending students as many ‘withdraw’ soon after inscription and there is a desire for DKO to enhance subscription rates as these are used to determine funding.

Concurrently, it would appear that a single student may undertake a number of activities. For example do drama, music and dance. This student would therefore appear as three separate people. Given these indications it would appear that a comparatively large percent (> 25percent) of the spending by the Ministry of Education on arts and cultural education goes to a very small percent of young people (1 out of seven)<sup>13</sup> and that the curriculum covered in these classes is not congruent with the interests and cultural participation of general Flemish society.

The cost of providing this service is very high. The average cost per student in the DKO is € 1 498.32 for music; € 747.11 for drama; € 621.72 for dance and 790.83 for visual arts. If you calculate the cost per hour this is € 12.65 for music; € 11.05 for drama; € 8.40 for dance and € 3.78 for visual arts. In comparison: the average cost per pupil in regular primary education is € 3 881.52 or € 3.47 per hour; the average cost per student in regular secondary education is € 7 157.19 or € 5.60 per hour. (See *Cijfers in het Deeltijds Kunstonderwijs XII, Toestand op basis van de leerlingentelling van 1 februari 2006*, OVSG, 2006, p.35) Moreover, the children receiving this government subsidy are primarily the children of the more affluent sector of society. The practical workings of this are outlined in the following vignette from an interview with a DKO director.

<sup>11</sup> Sometimes also referred to as the “non-formal” sector.

<sup>12</sup> Music, drama and speech training generally starts at 8 years of age, but dance and visual arts may start at 6 years of age.

<sup>13</sup> Note: the number of students has risen over the past 5 years.

#### 4.5.1 Vignette: Hard to show the impact

*The children who come here are a reflection of their parents. They are highly educated and high achieving. They are often doing drama, music and dance as well as visual arts).*

*Most of our adult learners are over 45 years old as they now have time to come to classes. We don't have a lot of teenagers. We try to do something to attract them but nothing really works.*

*I think we could do more with teacher training and especially working with primary teachers. We are part of this pilot test where we swap with primary teachers. We do this for 60 hours in a year. There are about 35 teachers in total involved in this project. Basically each hour of this project costs 100 euro and my feeling is that it is not working. But we won't know the results for two to three years. We are always in the school Friday afternoon and the main quality the directors look for is if we keep the children quiet. We don't have enough personnel. There is a lack of connection and to me the project is not working. Only about one or two of our students ever go onto Arts College. It is very hard to show the impact of this type of education. Maybe there should be ways to gain some sort of certification.*

#### 4.6 CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

→ **While the creative industries form an important and expanding part of the Flemish economy, this fact has not been taken-up in actions at all levels of education, including professional education**

In general terms the cultural and creative sector includes all those who work in the creative occupations across the wider economy.

The United Nations estimates that the creative and cultural industries account for about seven percent of the total GDP of most economically developed countries and that this sector is growing at ten percent per year, which is more than double general economic growth. Furthermore, democratic trends, such as higher levels of education, longevity and increased consumer spending are likely to continue growth in the cultural and leisure activities into the future.

Flanders is one of the world districts of creativity, and in 2004 the Flemish government established an association to expand the networking and awareness of the value of creative industries. This process has included the hosting of a major international forum on creativity. In theory, the association promotes the creative economy as being the pillar of future economic growth and sustainability.

In its research, the Flanders District of Creativity (Maenhout et al., 2006) highlights the value-added component resulting from a strong creative orientation. In particular within Flanders it points to the growth of core creative businesses (such as fashion and design industries), growth in cultural industries (such as museums, theatres) and consumer orientated industries that rely on creative input such as advertising, retail and promotional industries.

The Flanders District of Creativity conducts research and education in the field of innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity and builds international cooperation in the creative industries. It is committed to raising awareness of the value of the creative industries and to develop talent in the community for creative enterprise.

Flanders District of Creativity argue that the creative sector is totally reliant upon the input of creativity and that this is the way to building the economy where knowledge is making way for the value-adding that results from creative additions. They see this as occurring primarily across the arts-related fields of music, visual arts, audio visual, architecture, media, design and performance.

Flanders District of Creativity claim that the creative industries employ more than in excess of 55,000 people work in this sector. It accounts for two percent of the economy and has a growth rate of 1.51percent compared to the average economic growth rate of 0.95percent. While these figures indicate growth in the area, they fall below other economies in terms of growth, where the annual growth rate of creative industries is closer to eight percent (Higgs, 2006).

In addition to the economic effect, Flanders District of Creativity argues that there are considerable social effects including attracting tourism, inspiring innovation, improving products and urban improvement, attractiveness and liveability. While this represents laudable intentions and a clear commitment from government to creative developments, the research is based on sketchy evidence and a lack of clear and comprehensive data.

There is also no overt acknowledgement of the role of education and training and development in expanding and enriching the creative industries. Similarly, despite being active in school-based programmes, there have not been sufficient discussions between members of the creative industries and the educational and cultural community.

In conducting this research, there has even been some level of hostility between creative industries and education and a low level of commitment to the connection between these fields. For example, VOKA in relation to participation in this research stated that, “They did not see the point in coming as their affinity with culture is too small”. In the invitation creativity was stressed as the basis for the meeting, but this did not influence their decision.

Despite this, a number of industries are leading the way in making the arts a core part of their operations, these organisations and enterprises are supportive of the arts and acknowledge the value of the arts for economic expansion in Flanders.

For example, UNIZO champions the cause of small businesses and has witnessed the growth in the establishment of creativity based businesses. In another instance, the *Vlaams Radio Orkest* (Flemish Radio Orchestra) have an outreach and professional development package for creative businesses and are actively working with enterprise to bring artistic values to management processes and to make organisations more creative. This has not only enhanced business but opened the possibilities for the orchestra.

*The orchestra acts as a metaphor for businesses. We run business development courses. We focus on attracting talent and attracting creative people. This project is called “The art of Conducting”. There are basically five aspects that are covered:*

- *Identifying talent*
- *Talent to team*
- *Inspiring leadership*
- *Orchestrating business leadership*
- *Performance, then there is a concert*

In another interesting case study, a small and struggling textile company had managed to turn its business around by focusing on creative arts-based input and design through the cutting edge use of digital printing techniques. This family based business had faced closure, but a creative and artistic approach to manufacture, meant that the business was now world leading and expanding and had become itself an employer of artists and designers.

*We are a family owned company. The only way we have survived has been through constantly rethinking our products and approach to textiles. We have survived by being creative and by looking for niche markets. We are idea driven, not production driven. That is the future of industry in Flanders.*

Despite these success stories, the explicit connection between high quality arts education and economic and commercial developments have not been effectively articulated or communicated, by business, education or culture.

Conversely education in the arts (especially at the tertiary level) acknowledges the importance of arts and cultural education. For example, in one case “Around 80 percent of graduates from our art school will take up careers in the creative industries”.

While the demand for creative employees is high and increasing, it is questionable whether the graduates from the arts specialist training will fill this void. For example, dropout rate for arts colleges is between 50-60 percent. Interestingly, only 35 percent of students entering arts conservatories directly from school succeed in completing their studies. Conversely, those students coming into arts conservatories indirectly (i.e. not directly from school) have a success rate of 59 percent.

*Industry is facing a major problem in Flanders. It is moving from manufacturing and handicraft based industry to knowledge and creativity based industry. We now need talented people not labourers. The business leader of the future will need to be creative. The challenge is how do you get a group of creative people and get them to work effectively as a team.*

*We are finding it hard to recruit young designers. They know all about using Adobe programmes but they don't know how to think as designers. They cannot give shape to an idea. The best designers have a good general education in the arts.*

*The research in Flanders shows that people are creative but not creative in business. Their capacity to master and speak a creative language is limited. The creative industries have a marked effect on the economy. There are more people working in this sector and more acquisitions in this sector. At present there is a lack of conversations between the business and the cultural sectors. We have a rich cultural network, but it is an island by itself.*

*The life cycle of products has become much shorter. We need strategic and adaptive thinkers. We need people who can re-think products and services. There is a big difference between being an artist and being creative. We need both groups of people. In Flanders, being in education does not mean being educated! Our system is too focused on preproduction not on production. Education needs to develop people capable of thinking outside the box.*

The connection between the development of creative industries and the arts and cultural sector is somewhat unclear in Flanders. Partnerships between education and the creative industries should be encouraged.

*Flanders is only starting to realise the need for creative industries. Education is lagging behind the sorts of skills we need for the future. For example, there is so much focus on mathematics. But businesses do not ask new employees are you good at maths! The big message is that business needs creative people with a string aesthetic sense. But I don't see that this is happening in education. They are not stimulating young people to develop these skills. Young children are very creative but as they grow older, their creativity drops. They learn to answer questions not think for themselves.*

#### 4.7 RESEARCH AND SHARING

- ➔ **Flanders is supportive of research in arts and cultural education**
- ➔ **There is not a culture of sharing between schools and cultural agencies**
- ➔ **More sharing of good practice should occur**

There should be targeted money for sharing in these areas:

- ➔ Leadership
- ➔ Conferences
- ➔ Media development
- ➔ Cooperation structures
- ➔ Visibility strategies
- ➔ Engagement outside the sector
- ➔ Broadening organisational capacities
- ➔ Learning from mistakes
- ➔ Knowledge transfer and sharing

Within Flanders, a strong ethos of competition means that sharing of good practice is not common. This situation is exacerbated by competitive funding systems, where organisations and schools that should be colleagues, have to actively compete for resources, funding and participant/client/pupil numbers. As the following comments suggest, opportunities for sharing need to be increased.

*There is not a culture of sharing. There is a culture of competition because we are all fighting each other for money from the same pot.*

*There is a lack of a forum for sharing. We need more knowledge transfer. We can each learn from one another. We need a neutral forum for sharing ideas.*

*A 'good practices' conference would be really valuable. Maybe once or twice per year. We need a time when artists and teachers can share knowledge.*

This comment from an education and cultural support city-based agency demonstrates that good practice is happening and that attempts are made to promote these activities through a range of means, but also clear from this comment is the need for greater structured sharing of information and insights.

##### 4.7.1 Vignette: we don't really draw this all together

*We really do too little in terms of having a public profile. In every project there will be a moment – like a performance, exhibition, television coverage and other opportunities. But we often don't make the most of these opportunities. We have written books and made websites and we presented at the Day of Cultural Education in Brussels. We have an archive of DVDs of all the performances and exhibitions we have done. We have an information session planned for this year. It is the year of the teacher and teacher education as far as we are concerned. There are all these good things happening, but we don't really draw this all together and share it broadly within the educational and broader community.*

One way to increase the collective level of skills and knowledge is through research and publication. CANON Cultuurcel has been instrumental in commissioning a number of research studies into arts education. Within the arts conservatories, there is also a growing emphasis on practice-based research. As one academy reported, "There are now targeted funds for research. There is also more money for collaborative research with the university". It was noted though, that even though interest in and funding for practice-based research was increasing in Flanders, "Research still has to operate under the university models that control research funding and this limits the sort of research that can be undertaken". But in general, as these comments suggest, school education has not benefited from collaborations with the arts conservatories. "We have no partnerships with schools".

# Chapter 5

## { IMPEDIMENTS }

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

A number of factors have been identified as limiting arts and cultural education. These differ from situation to situation but can be summarised under the following key areas:

### 5.2 TIME

- ➔ **While there are recommended times for learning in arts and cultural education, in practice these recommendations are rarely followed and in most situations children receive far less than the recommended time**
- ➔ **Allocation of time to arts and cultural education is not evenly spread across the school years**
- ➔ **Arts and cultural education should be a compulsory and valued part of every school year**
- ➔ **It is vital to have arts and cultural education in all levels of secondary school as this is when the critical and performative language of the arts is developing and the impact of the arts is realised**

Despite there being recommended time for teaching and learning in arts and culture in school, actual time dedicated to the arts can vary widely. According to a school inspector, these variations are due to the different ways the arts might be defined. For example, one school might interpret meeting its obligations as being about including some arts and cultural activities as part of a language lesson or religion lesson, while the neighbouring school might include four hours of very specific, high quality arts education, as these observations from different schools highlight:

*In the senior years we have made the decision to value the arts so all students get one hour a week of aesthetic education. It is taught as a team by the history teacher and the Dutch teacher. We try to link this with other subjects, but the way the timetable is blocked means it is not easy. Everyone gets music education, which is one hour a week for three years. We have also made the decision to have practical arts for one hour a week for three years, but the timetable is very full. For the pupils in fourth, fifth and sixth form we also do a major musical production every two years and everyone is somehow involved. For this production we work together with two other schools in the town. Pupils like this very much.*

*We have trialled a new system that is working very well in the senior years of high school. We provide a free space in the timetable. This is a 50 minute lesson once a week, in addition to our culture lesson, and students with a special interest or talent can use that hour to work on practical projects or develop co-operation between subjects. They can choose science or anything, but we find they like the arts. It is project based time. They can also use this to go into the museum of workplace.*

There are recommendations for the amount of time spent on the arts in the primary school (four hours per week) and in the first two years of the secondary school (two hours per week). This represents about one eighth of the week for primary schools and around one sixteenth of the week for secondary schools, though this is only indicative as schools have considerable autonomy to vary from this suggestion. There are also recommendations for substantial inclusion of arts and cultural education within nursery school and this tend to occur in a creative and integrated way. While nursery curriculum values the arts, it is at the discretion of the individual nursery settings to determine the specific amount of time spent on the arts.

#### Nursery education

Generally arts education in nursery schools is better than in most of the primary schools visited. In a number of instances, nursery schools are attached to primary schools. They are generally on the same location and offer programmes of differing duration for children from the age of three years.

The organisation of time was similar in most centres visited. The nurseries tend to adopt a weekly theme, such as snow, spring, and farm animals and so on. The day is split between 'free' choice activities at organised learning centres or tables within the classroom (such as a craft table, writing table, construction table, role play table) and more structured art and craft activities, group singing and movement.

In the best examples, the environment was lively and stimulating with active engagement of children in learning. In one Freinet example, lighting had been used to create various moods with the intention of stimulating particular types of brain functioning. In all settings visited, the rooms were well-equipped, though in some instances the environment was too passive and overly structured.

The amount of time spent on the arts in nursery school varied between three to eighteen hours per week out of a standard 25 hour programme. All the aspects of art were evident, including drama, dance, visual arts, craft and music. Generally artists are not involved, though nursery children may go on visits and also see performances in the school.

Best practice in nursery education included;

- creative and imaginative room organisation
- self-directed learning tasks
- ownership of activities by the children (including care of material)
- different and enticing material

In lower quality examples, children were producing identical artworks to rigid patterns. Materials were chosen by the teacher and the tasks were overly regulated. The tasks were similar to ones that would have been in place for many years and the materials provided were 'clean' to avoid mess in the room. Pre-made patterns were common and identical works were produced by the young children - even to the extent of being 'fixed' by teachers where they were perceived to fall outside the regulated pattern. Children's choice of activities and time was inflexible and teacher-directed.

### Primary education

There are five subject areas in primary education – language, mathematics, environmental studies, physical education and expressive arts. These five domains of learning are the same as those within the nursery school. While there are nominal hours recommended for each of these five areas, once again, it is at the discretion of each school to determine how this recommendation will be implemented. Some schools have regular timetabled arts sessions, while others may opt for intensive blocks of arts and cultural experiences.

The flexibility of the primary curriculum means that it is possible to teach the arts in an integrated way or in their own right. In most cases it is the classroom, generalist teacher who teaches the arts, but in some schools there may be either shared arts teaching (i.e. where one teacher 'swaps' with another teacher to teach the arts, such as might occur if a particular teacher had special talent in music for example) or the arts might be delivered in partnership with a range of outside agencies or by a contracted arts teacher (such as a music teacher coming into the school).

Furthermore, within primary education, there is explicit indication in curricula to include aspects of the arts within some of the other domains of learning. For example, in physical education in primary schools there are specific recommendations to include "rhythmic and expressive" movement and in environmental studies to include cultural education, especially in relation to racism, migrants and cultural identity. While it might be assumed that the arts could be included within language study (and there are case studies to suggest this, such as the use of drama in language learning and literature in literacy learning) this is not specified. It is also not clear the ways in which mathematics might relate with arts or cultural education.

In interview, the school inspectors commented that while they are able to guide or encourage a school to do more arts education, that it is difficult to "push" them to do this.

### Secondary education

In early secondary education, there are specified hours for arts and cultural education. The typical pattern is for there to be one or two periods a week for the first 2 years of secondary education and then no arts education (though arts education can then be taken as electives again in senior secondary education). In later years (second and third grade of secondary education) there appears to be a lack of dedicated time for the arts. It is common that a child's artistic and cultural learning might stop at the end of the first year of secondary school. In these later years, expressive-creative education becomes one of the cross-curricular themes. Schools are free to determine their own way of implementing the cross-curricular themes (through subjects, projects, all kinds of activities,...). These objectives must be aimed for, they don't have to be attained. The inspectorate evaluates whether schools make sufficient efforts for these cross-curricular objectives but doesn't monitor pupils' attainment. Some schools have attempted to create cultural projects to counter balance this loss, but their marginal place in the curriculum means they receive very little time and resources.

*We have made it compulsory in the first three years of secondary school that cross-curricula teams are formed to deliver on the compulsory series of cultural aims, but where is the expertise in the school for these teams? Each school has to prepare a plan and fulfil the cross curricula aims. There is an obligation for collaboration, and yet in most schools it is one person that is given the job to do cultural education. Most schools give hour out of a 32 hour week. Giving only 1/32 of the timetable to arts and culture does not give much of a result! The schools are supposed to demonstrate to the inspectorate how they meet the cross curricula aims, but at the moment the focus is on student welfare and health, so questions are not asked about arts and cultural education.*

The overall view that arts and cultural education is seen as being an additional rather than a core part of education, especially in the latter years of school, means that teachers feel that they are using 'valuable' time that could be used for other education on the arts. As one respondent explained:

*This problem is exacerbated by the widespread part-time programme. While in itself this programme is a valuable adjunct, it occurs after school hours and there is a perception from parents that children are getting their arts education outside of school and so therefore school time should not be used for the arts.*

Furthermore, as much art is complete as a short term 'special' project, this falls outside normal timetabling. It is often geared towards a special event, such as an end of year concert, so is often focused on intensive practice and skill development to ensure a good quality end product, rather than being about the development of artistic ways of thinking, criticism or high level academic competencies. This makes it seem even more tokenistic and raises questions about its validity in the standard timetable.

### 5.3 FINANCES

- **Funding needs to be structural and long term**
- **Funding must be 'collared' for arts and cultural education**
- **Funding nominally given for the arts as part of school-based global budgets are unlikely to be used for the arts**
- **The introduction of a 'cap' for extra expenses paid by parents is likely to have a negative impact on arts and cultural education**
- **Targeted funding needs to be given for schools working with special needs children or children of greater needs**
- **Funding should be distributed directly through local cultural agencies to prevent system wastage and overlap**
- **Project funding should be easier to apply for, but subject to more evaluation and monitoring**

Funding for schools in Flanders is very much decentralised with the major part being held by the schools in the form of a global budget. The exception to this is teachers' salaries that are paid centrally, though even within this area, school principals have discretion to appoint and utilise staff (within the pupil - staffing ratio) in accordance with their needs.

While lack of money was often cited as a reason why there was not a lot of arts education, this issue needs to be interpreted with care, as the aspects of this discussion were quite particular and it is not recommended that merely increasing funding or available resources would solve deeper underlying issues.

In a general sense, schools are very well-maintained and have more than adequate arts facilities. All the schools visited had a hall or similar covered space that could function as a performance or exhibition space. Many schools had specialist arts rooms with most having a delineated music room and an art making room. Art rooms were well-equipped with schools having access to musical instruments and adequate art making material. Many schools also had higher end arts equipment including printing presses, computer suites, drama stages, kilns and so on. By world standards, this would suggest that the general resourcing is adequate to ensure good quality arts education could occur, as a teacher noted:

*It is not just a question of money, but expertise. We simply do not have enough staff expertise.*

In addition to the core funding, many schools accessed special project funding from a range of sources in the arts. While this provided valuable input and allowed special initiatives, such as employing artists, it was reported that this funding was often too short term. A problem of a lack of sustained funding is two fold. On one level, it means that too much energy is spent on applying for money and reporting on money rather than actually doing the projects.

The second problem is that 'short term' project money, while it can act as a catalyst, may instead only further perpetuate the view that the arts are about an 'event' or 'special thing' rather than being seen as a core and valued part of total learning. To avoid this problem, it was suggested that a scheme of ring-fenced funding could be introduced in the same way as for ICT to allow development in this area, but make it part of the core provisions and over a longer more sustainable period of time. Another suggestion would be to use the currently existing local based cultural conveners (made up of education and cultural personnel) greater budgets to use on broader, cross-sector projects within a region or local area.

There are a number of funded projects currently underway in arts and cultural education. The Broad School project from the ministry of education receives € 250 000 per year for three years. It involves seventeen schools. The broad school project from the ministry of culture received € 200 000 for 2007. There is also smaller project funding available, usually less than € 2000.

Within Flanders, parents and the community make a major contribution to adding resources to arts education. While it would be difficult to accurately map the scale of these contributions, it would be reasonable to say that they make up in total quite a large contribution. Contributions made by parents included donations at festival days or parent events; purchase of instruments, costumes or materials; transporting children to and from arts events; purchasing arts books and practical assistance in such things as building stages, making costumes, creating exhibitions and so on. Many schools also identified local government agencies or foundations that provided money for arts education. This was particularly in the area of transporting students; making equitable access to the arts for disadvantaged children; funding performances; and supporting festivals and organisations working with the schools. This problem is evident in this example from a multicultural secondary school in a poor, city area:

*Money is a big problem. We can't ask our parents for money. Even one euro would be a lot to ask. We always have to ask ourselves*

*‘What does it cost?’ We do get some extra money for equal opportunity funds, but these are only extra hours for more teachers so we can have smaller classes. We don’t have the option to put this towards the arts. There is talk that The Minister will change this. It would be better if we could have the money from the pupil’s rucksack and then we would have some permanent structural funding for the arts. Hours are hours and we can’t change that. More flexible funding would give us more money for arts and cultural activities.*

The parents in more affluent schools have been making considerable contributions but these are likely to be capped in the near future and there is a concern that this will limit arts projects in schools. This additional money from parents is generally not available to poorer schools, though these disadvantaged schools may get more teachers per number of children. This gives a lower teacher child ratio, but unless the decision is made by the school director to reposition some staff as specialists in the arts, the increased staffing rarely has any effect on arts education. There are questions regarding how the introduction of a cap on parental contribution will impact on arts and cultural education. These comments would suggest that parents are major contributors to arts education in schools:

*We need a specific fund for culture. If we try to ask the parents for money for culture they don’t understand. They feel they only have money for ‘important things’. If we say we want money to go to the mosque, they say why you have to do that? If we say we need money for the theatre, they say why are we paying for our children to go off and have fun? The parents are not cultural minded. To them arts and cultural is just throwing away money and won’t help their child get a job. We have a lot of work to do to convince parents of the value of culture before we even start with their children.*

*About three to four times a year we bring artists in to work over several weeks with the children. It costs about 50 euros per year for this. We explain where the money will go and the parents agree it is a good idea and they all pay.*

All schools in Flanders get a global budget. Public expenditure per student varies according to level and type of education. In 2005, the average cost of a pupil in regular primary education was € 3 691.63. The average cost of a pupil in special primary education was € 11 133.22. In 2005, the average cost to the Flemish Community of a student in regular secondary education was € 6 988.75. The average cost of a student in special secondary education was € 14 859.04<sup>14</sup>. In addition to this money, local provinces, school networks or the community can contribute additional funds to the schools. While most of the national money comes into the school as a global budget (i.e. one sum of money that can be spent according to the wishes and programmes of the director and in consultation with the schools boards), most local or provincial money is more likely to come as tied grants or ring fenced money for special purposes. The following comments caution that it is unlikely that arts and cultural would receive money under a wholly ‘global’ system and that ‘collaring’ of money may be a better option for arts education.

*It is also important to remember that the cost of teaching the arts is relatively high and spare resources within the schools budget are relatively low amounts.*

*The issue of whether we need more collared money for arts and cultural education is a difficult debate. On one hand, schools have to be more responsible. Directors should be able to think of the best use of money.*

The processes for distributing money varied considerably, from a very top down model to more democratic distribution to teachers. It appeared to most favour the arts where individual teachers were able to make individual decisions about the purchase of materials or resources for the classroom. While this tended to be a better approach for the arts, a lack of quality assurance meant that resources may have been wasted on low quality resources or initiatives.

There is also widespread criticism that the current approaches for distributing project funds are too cumbersome, and take too long and involve too much paperwork for the amounts of money being given to individual schools. This was particularly problematic for smaller schools or schools in disadvantaged areas where there is a shortage of administrative staff to assist in the application process. In several instances, schools had not applied for money because the process was too difficult. In one example, the school could not even afford to send a teacher to the training day to find out about the funding process!

*There is too much paperwork. You have to spend days making the plan and doing the paper work and basically at the end of the day CANON < CANON Cultuurcel > gives you the price of a coffee! It is a joke. The CANON had a professional meeting and I went to that meeting expecting to learn something, but all I learnt was how to fill out the paperwork. I had to pay to go. The school had to pay for a replacement teacher and then after I learnt about all I had to do to get next to nothing in terms of money. I thought why bother? Instead I thought of ways to raise money within the school and from parents and the community. Basically the problem with CANON is that there is too much paper work. It has to be too planned in advance. It is not spontaneous. The system needs to be more flexible and responsive. Just forget all the paperwork and get on with making direct collaborations. I have achieved more by just getting on the phone and starting connections with local artists. I just call them up and then I can take my class to visit artists working in their studio. We walk around there and it doesn’t cost anything.*

<sup>14</sup> Vlaamse onderwijsindicatoren in internationaal perspectief (Flemish educational indicators in an international perspective), edition 2005.

## 5.4 LIMITED ACCESSIBILITY

### → Both in school and out of school arts and cultural education do not in practice give equitable access to marginalised and disadvantaged pupils despite policy and intention that runs counter to this practice

In the global research (Bamford, 2006) a sad fact was that while the level of implementation of arts education in schools was generally poor, the provisions for the most disadvantaged and marginalised pupils were the worst. For example, immigrant children and children with special education needs received poor quality, inappropriate or no arts education. Similarly, internationally it was apparent that children of economic, social or educational disadvantage were the least likely to receive high quality arts and cultural education, while the children of educated, wealthy and upper class parents received the best quality.

It is lamentable within Flanders - where at all levels equity is valued and promoted - that the reality observed in the research suggests that the situation in Flanders is no different from the general world pattern. Of particular concern is the lack of access of cultural diverse students into after school provisions. Children of poorer or lower social or educational status also rarely receive systematic, high quality arts education in Flanders.

Schools specialising in educational programmes for children with special needs found it hard to attract teachers with arts expertise and there is insufficient specialist training for arts teachers to work with special needs children. There was also reluctance on the part of some cultural providers to offer programmes for special needs students. Additionally, the cost of involving children with special needs in arts activities (especially the adapted equipment and resources needed and added transport costs) meant that these children rarely received equitable access to arts education opportunities in the community. This level of access was also exacerbated by a parental and – times teacher attitude – that questioned the value of arts and cultural experiences for special needs pupils. All in all, the picture for arts education for special needs children was disappointing.

Despite this, within the research a number of special schools were visited and there were some excellent examples of innovative and courageous programmes from both schools and cultural centres targeting the requirements of special needs pupils. Insight into these issues is provided by the arts teacher at a specialist school for teenagers with intellectual disability.

#### 5.4.1 Vignette: you see them glow

*The parents of our school will never pay for their children to have cultural experiences. They have different priorities. They will pay to buy rubbish at the shopping centre, but not to go to a gallery or the theatre.*

*We have a volunteer who works with the pupils. For almost the whole year he works in Tunisia. There he is the boss of 20 artists. He is a Belgian and during his vacation he comes in and works with the pupils. We say he is the artistic director. It is very hard for our children to come out of the shadows and stand in the light. They have to dare to step on stage.*

*But you see them glow when they get applause and their self-esteem really increases. It is a fantastic experience and you can't stop the pupils singing and dancing even when the rehearsals are over.*

*I would like to organise artists to come into the school. We had more programmes but these have been reduced. The latest argument for attacking the arts is that they are too expensive! But I think there is more a view that we are training the pupils to be tradesmen, why do they need to be creative and think? We only have two hours a week, a very small atelier and no money to buy materials. The art we are doing at the moment is with paper. That is all we have.*

## 5.5 IMPLEMENTATION

- ➔ **The large number of ministerial players that influence arts and cultural education in Flanders brings a wealth of expertise, but makes implementation of policy difficult**
- ➔ **There is policy confusion between different ministries and a lack of structural implementation and monitoring**
- ➔ **Policy and innovation appear to be too short-lived and too rapidly changing**

There are a number of ministries that have an influence on the arts and cultural education. These include:

- ➔ Ministry of Education
- ➔ Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media
- ➔ Ministry for Integration
- ➔ Ministry for the Environment
- ➔ Ministry for Welfare

An agreement exists between the Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media and the Ministry of Education to work more closely together. However, one of the problems hampering implementation is that there are underlying discrepancies between the policy directions of these ministries, as is shown in this example related to multiculturalism:

*In terms of multiculturalism, there is a difference of views coming from the different Ministries. For the Minister of Culture there is a focus on respect for identities and rich cultural exchanges. The Minister for Integration expresses a view that is more that they have to know more about us and how our systems work and for the Minister of Education it is about cultures meeting together. In education, the view is that immigrants need to be able to speak Dutch to learn, but that all cultures need to be respected.*

Similarly, the issue as to whether to have a Flemish cultural canon is both complex and divisive.

*We see arts education as the perfect way to bring cultures together. The canon is a complex issue. Should we offer different cultures the canon of their choice? Then we could end up in schools with a Russian Canon, a Chinese Canon, and an Arab Canon and so on. Rather than start with a canon, I always start with the simple question 'Who are the children in my classroom? What cultural experiences do they bring to my classroom?'*

The multitude of differing views related to the arts is not a problem unique to Flanders. For example a study conducted in France revealed over 260 definitions of creativity as applied within schools! The international study would also suggest that diversity is symptomatic of the arts and should in fact be encouraged. This particularly applies to making the arts relate to the local context. In Flanders it is recognised that these are complex debates that are still largely unresolved.

*I think we need some core reference to base art and culture around, but then this core has to be adapted for every learning context. I know what I am suggesting is a big discussion. There are two sides to this argument – what every child in Flanders should know and on the other side what should we know about every child in our class. We need to know about each other's traditions and beliefs. It happens both ways.*

*Culture is still very tribal and so we need more intercultural learning between these 'tribes'.*

There are a number of bodies that provide the support to allow for implementation of policy. In part the policy management reflects the complex structure of school networks.

At the national level, in 2002 there were three advisory groups and one steering groups constituted for both arts/culture and education. While this was the formalised structure, the implementation of this management structure is less clear, with meetings not taking place and some groups being disbanded.

Schools are given a great deal of autonomy to make their own decisions about curriculum. They also appear to be governed by a number of authorities including school boards, 'network or system' boards, local or regional support agencies and national policy. This can be seen as a part of a general trend towards decentralisation in Flanders in recent years (de Rynck, 2005).

There are also two opposing forces in operation at the coalface of Flemish education. At one level, the schools feel that it is hard to introduce innovations, while at the other level, there is the feeling that policy changes occur rapidly and it is hard to get changes within school practices given the short-term nature of many innovations. In some instances, the response to this challenge has been to ignore the innovation altogether as the difficulty of implementing is so great and there is a perception that if you do nothing the innovation will 'pass' and you won't have wasted your effort. These trends are shown in the following comments:

*The new curriculum for aesthetics has been in place for three years, but we are still experimenting in how to get it right. I see my role is to try and open doors for the pupils. We link the work with language study and history. It's difficult to introduce*

*innovations. You have to take so many rules and conditions into account. This kills the dynamics and innovation.*

*It's difficult to invest in initiatives when you don't know how long they will last. There is a lot of uncertainty. There needs to be more research on the role of the arts in stopping social problems.*

The other way implementation fails to be realised is that often innovations are introduced, but given the freedom of choice inherent in the Flemish system, there is no obligation to adopt the innovation and inadequate mechanisms to determine take-up. Connected to this, innovations may be introduced as 'ideas' or 'suggestions' without systems of structural support within the schools or ways to assess children's learning under the new strategy. For example, it was suggested that upper secondary schools include a component of arts and cultural education in their curriculum, but as this is not assessed, nor is its implementation a direct responsibility of a certain teacher, the amount of time can vary considerably from school to school. In some schools students may choose to do art electives in music or visual arts, though the availability of these electives varies according to the size of the school and its focus. Other secondary schools have a strong focus on the arts, and allocate considerable time to the arts. Given these sort of haphazard patterns it is problematic to determine if policy is or is not being implemented in Flemish schools.

MUZES (a professional association) identified a number of difficulties related to the implementation of arts education. These include:

- Limited consistency, with art courses rarely having consistent, timetabled time within state schools, especially in the primary school
- Limited time (in practice most schools have less than 1 hour a week)
- There are limited materials and poorly equipped rooms
- There is a limited vision for arts education
- Old fashioned structures
- Too much pigeon holing
- Superficial cultural education
- Lack of trained teachers, and
- Lack of enthusiasm

The reflection was made that the lack of enthusiasm was not just an issue for teachers, but importantly was a lack of enthusiasm from school directors and administrators.

The democratic nature of the Flemish education system and the high degree of systemic autonomy means that direct implementation (including the processes of tracking and monitoring this implementation) is challenging. To add to this complexity, local areas, schools and teachers also have considerable power to make decisions related to curriculum and the organisation of learning. Within the Flemish system, value is given to the voice of the child, so it can also be assumed that students and parents play a quite major role in determining what is taught within a particular classroom, school choices, and are clear voices within educational decision making.

It should not be assumed that the complexity of this implementation chain in and of itself has a negative effect on the quality of arts education. In fact the opposite might be the case. The global indicators would suggest that flexible organisational structures; localised decision making, and a more direct relationship between those who develop curriculum and those responsible for the delivery of that curriculum are in fact likely to be conducive to effective curriculum. Concurrently, the presence of children's voices within curriculum design is likely to encourage a higher sense of ownership and a clearer connection with diverse cultures and local contexts.

When tracking the main conduits for implementation within Flemish education, it is possible to backward map the process starting from the teacher. The teacher's actions are largely governed by their personal interest, training (see chapter 6 for more details on teacher education) and the guidance given and leadership shown by the school director. In turn, the school director is also governed by a personal interest and passion for arts and cultural education, but is generally answerable to the school or network board and the inspectors. The school inspectors then have a direct chain of responsibility through the Ministry of Education.

## 5.6 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP/DIRECTORS

### → Arts and cultural education in schools need the support of a determined, passionate and inspiring school leader

Innovative, creative and inspiring school leaders encourage and promote the arts. During the course of the study, a number of these passionate and committed leaders were interviewed. In each case, their determination and commitment had been inspirational to the staff and had led not only to an improved profile for the school, but to the development of enthusiasm, collegiality and professional development among the teaching staff.

These high quality leaders are courageous and perseverant. They are reflective and value the individual talent and collective wisdom of their staff.

*We want this school to be profiled for the arts, but I will be honest, it is still not perfect yet. You can't choose the teachers you get. I mainly want to support the teachers and make sure they know that I see the arts as being very important. Also I try and say to the teachers, "You don't have to be good at everything. Look at someone who is good in the team at painting, drawing, dance, music, and then work together". I support the staff to come to these flexible sorts of arrangements. It is impossible for a single teacher to be good at everything. We have to make the most of the talents in the team. I also encourage lots of public performances and exhibitions. It is important to keep the arts visible all the time. Keep it alive and stimulate it.*

While the decentralised system in Flanders may make the implementation and monitoring of policy more challenging, it does, on the other hand, allow school leaders a large amount of autonomy and freedom. The inspirational leaders thrived in this environment and were able to use the inherent freedom to trial a range of ideas to enhance the learning in a school.

*Every school can do things if they want to*

*If there are not good leaders in the schools the dots will stay dots.*

Yet the need for a school principal to 'champion' an innovation – as opposed to these innovations being incorporated into the structure of the school – meant that sustainability is a significant issue. If a programme only exists because of the passion and drive of a single teacher or school leader, the danger is that this innovation will be short-lived. Management theory would suggest that innovations driven by autonomous individuals rarely stand the test of time as the individual – unless they are able to inspire others – become 'burnt out' or will be very successful and take their innovation elsewhere.

*Sustainability is the most difficult part. Schools and projects need a strong team and a strong school director. I think every school needs an input from the outside – a catalyst. I am emphatic about that. Then you need a talented and alert school director - good communication both within the school and with the partners.*

The following extended vignette from the Director of an arts specialist secondary gives insight into the challenges faced by school leaders and the courage needed to change a system, especially when education is so tightly bound by traditions and histories.

#### 5.6.1 Vignette: a kind of ivory tower

*We are a small school. We are known for music but we have 35 students majoring in music and 25 majoring in dance. Students can come here from fourteen to eighteen years. This is full time study. The students major in their chosen art form but also do all the normal school lessons. We are closely linked to the Conservatorium.*

*The pupils give three major concerts per year. There is an audition process to get into the school, though in reality under the Flemish system we can't refuse a pupil a place, but where someone did not have talent we would certainly talk with the pupil and his/her parents and counsel them. But ultimately, I can't force them entry. For that reason we get quite a few pupils who have had bad results in other schools and so they end up here.*

*We have a long tradition as a music school, but I am trying to move the school forward in new directions. The school was in crisis five years ago as there were so few pupils. As 60 pupils isn't enough to generate the necessary administrative personnel, technical personnel and ICT-support, the school is in crisis. With 1 full-time person on the secretariat and 19 hours of cleaning labour a week, it's hard to survive. In after school music (DKO), I'm afraid many of the children only learn to hate music. In some of the big AMC classes in which they are pushed by their parents. We have a long tradition of as a music school for classical music. When I took over as Director all the students learnt was music of 18<sup>th</sup> century Germans! With all respect for these great composers, this offer is not attractive enough to youngsters. You can't populate a school on an exclusive classical art concept. Listeners to Radio Klara consist of about 2.5percent of all the radio public. How many pupils of fourteen years of age are Klara listeners? So diversification is a must.*

*I have introduced folk music and world music and dance. The students do six to eight hours a week of classical dance and six to eight hours a week of modern dance.*

*The pupils are mainly Flemish. I would like to open the school more for foreigners and immigrants, but if I am honest we are exclusively white, but I am trying to promote diversity.*

*I am trying to change the whole tone of the music school. I have introduced electric guitar (which is already in other schools years ago) and I have mixed the pupils up so pupils of different ages and with different instruments now play together. Instead of the old maestro/novice model, I am trying to give the pupils choices – we don't force them.*

*When I first came here as Director I shut my mouth for six months. I just observed what happened. Music education is too orientated to the classics. IT is all 18<sup>th</sup> century Germans and 19<sup>th</sup> century Englishmen. Then you look at what children are doing in music in their own time! Where is the connection? They have studios in their garages. They are composing music and playing with their friends, but then they go to after school music and their love of music is killed. We try here to start where the*

student is at and then introduce things as they need them. You have to have a combination of the two approaches, but many of the famous and successful musicians of today cannot read music! It is not strictly necessary. To play electric guitar it helped to be aware of harmonies and some theory.

When I tried to introduce the reforms there was a lot of resistance, but I have been able to turn the school around and am starting to win the trust of thirteen to fourteen year olds. This takes time and perseverance. The schools have to reach out and tap into the music that is there hidden in garages or bedrooms. I have introduced 'connection classes. It allows pupils who have not ever attended after school music lessons, but are active musicians in a contemporary way to catch-up on theory. These are students that sing, play the guitar or drums. I try to go into the poor areas and immigrant areas and speak to parents to discover talent that is hidden in these areas. The Conservatory is just that CONSERVATIVE! Look at the word! It is just that. I have also opened up the forms they are studying. The pupils are currently doing explorations of Arab and Balkan music. The approach here is very practical now. I believe children have to play first and then write. The school is trying to become a pioneer of world music, but this is hard because we are not allowed to employ the right teachers. For example, this teacher <we are in a studio class packed with children working with a young, well known Flemish guitarist> is not really qualified to teach our pupils. Why? To teach, you need to have a degree from a Conservatorium and then a two-year teaching degree. People in alternative music do not follow that sort of pathway! This guy is world famous, and let I have to pay him less than some very ordinary teacher I might get who is officially accredited. The same is true for dance <we move to the dance studio>. The government needs to be more flexible about teaching qualifications in these specialist environments. For example, teachers should be able to team teach – a balance between teacher and performer. You basically need seven years of accreditation to be able to teach music! If Bono was here, he would not be qualified to teach!

My dream would be to be able to recruit Turkish teachers. They don't have the possibility to develop their musical talents in this country. For a Turkish child there are no educational possibilities in the arts. I would like us to work in partnership with the talent in the community and to specialise in world music. We are located in the middle of an area that is an incredible multicultural microcosm. There is incredible talent out there but these big doors <points to the enormous doors of the school> keep them out. I want to bring in a whole different type of pupil. The music schools have become a kind of ivory tower. They are so removed from contemporary music practice. The situation has become worse. The people at the top are not listening to the young people or the music teachers. There are teachers who know their pupils and have their respect but these people don't always have the piece of paper. Regulations from the Ministry of Education requires that teachers who are appointed for a certain volume of hours a week are obliged to give all the subjects for which they have the legal required certificate. For example, a violin teacher who's appointed for fifteen hours a week can't refuse to give art initiation, art history and so on. This is in case there are not enough students inscribed in violin. Even if the teacher has never taught art history and his knowledge depends on what he studied twenty years ago, he can't refuse to go into a class with this limited background. The number of subjects connected to a conservatorium certificate is very broadly interpreted. With this notion of 'Homo Universalis' teachers are considered to have the authority (or in this case the obligation) to teach nearly anything. I agree that an academic certificate teacher should be able to teach a wide range of subjects, but not without some retraining program. The ministry should organise for teachers in this specific situation to have some sabbatical period during which teachers can undergo re-training at a university or conservatory.

It is my impression that the myth of 'Homo Universalis' is missed for economic reasons. Regardless of the skills, appointed teachers should give any subject instead of being paid for doing nothing. Someone appointed to teach saxophone, is obliged by the law to give clarinet if there are not enough saxophone students and so on. The fact that the teacher never touched a clarinet is not considered by the regulations. Such things are disastrous for the quality of pre-professional music education, where a level of specialisation is required. The general views of the ministry are incompatible with the type of specialist education we are providing.

On the other hand, having a conservatorium does not guarantee a career as a good musician who can make a living from his podium performances or royalties. Flanders is too small for too many would-be stars. So many musicians teach for economic reasons, although their dream remains on stage or in the studio. Teaching becomes the second choice. This is not what a part of them wanted to do and they are not sufficiently connected to the young people in their care.

Teaching the arts is very expensive. At our school we have to have a pupil/teacher ratio of 3.9 and 4.9 hours of a teacher pupil. That means in practice we have 1 full-time teacher for every 4-5 pupils. Instrumental lessons are usually given individually, during two hours a week. It's a unique pedagogic situation which gives children who would have had difficulties in larger classes a lot of opportunities. I'm aware of the high costs, but it's worth it anyway. The only thing I feel uncomfortable with is that in the most 'difficult, labour class brown schools' (BSO) – let's say in a tough neighbourhood in the suburbs of Antwerp or Brussels – the teacher/pupil ratio is only half. Those kids deserve more. But I don't mean arts education deserves less!

Although we have enough teachers for the pupils here, we have not enough means for maintaining the building and the equipment. Most of our computers are too old to run recent music software. I've got 30 minutes a week of ICT support, so if anything breaks down, it stays that way. The building is very old and some urgent repairs are needed. Gutters are leaking, the heating is broken, there is a well in the cellar, paintwork has not been renewed for twenty years. The inspection of the ministry gave this school a bad report for safety and hygiene. I agree with this report, but I only have €2000 a year to fix all the things. So I beg at the school group, with restricted success as they are poor too. The so-called, "autonomy of schools and school groups" is in fact the self government of poverty.

Most of the teachers here are part-time. This is inevitable in a small school with a high degree of specialisation. They switch between this school, their lessons in DKO and their engagements in orchestras or the opera. From a teacher who's only paid for three to four hours a week you can't expect he joins in all the meetings, parent contact evenings, working groups, cross-disciplinary teams etc which are required according to modern school management. I admit some of them may juggle a little

*too much with their variety of activities and use this as an excuse. But I understand most of them have no time. They come and give the lesson and hurry to the next school or orchestra which is often miles away. We have no pupils with disability. In this old building it would be a problem, but still I would like to change this.*

The school directors are generally quite autonomous but the network directors and school boards also play a key role in education, though their interest in arts and cultural education may be only marginal.

## 5.7 SCHOOL BOARDS

- **School boards should be educated in the value of the arts**
- **Supportive school boards encourage arts and cultural education in schools**

While rarely mentioned in interview in Flanders, research in both Denmark and The Netherlands would suggest that the support and encouragement of a school board is an important factor in making schools feel that the arts are a valuable core part of learning. To this end, it would be valuable to more fully determine the attitudes towards arts and cultural education held by school boards in Flanders, and if required to instigate advocacy for the arts (based on research and evidence) to encourage the school boards to help to promote the value of the arts within a child's education. A good chair of the board can make all the difference as this comment suggests:

*Within our network we have a very supportive Chair of the School Board. Our Head of Education has a real feeling for education and knows a lot about different approaches to learning. He tries to give support and his decisions are always very transparent. This means that we have a good relationship with the Council and within the municipality we have built a strong rapport with politicians. It is very supportive and democratic.*

## 5.8 INSPECTORS AND PEDAGOGICAL ADVISORS

- **School inspectors have a vital role to play in monitoring the implementation of arts and cultural education**
- **The inspectorate seeks training in methods to evaluate the quality of arts and cultural education**
- **The inspectors view the arts as being core to education and vital for effective schooling for diverse pupils and for building innovative schools of the future**

Schools are expected to prepare annual self-evaluation reports. In addition to this, a team of two to four persons inspects the school once every six years. Their role is to assist the school development and improvement and to ensure all cross-curricula aims are met. The inspectors form part of the ministerial Quality Assurance team.

The role of the inspectorate is to provide advice and expertise to the schools. The inspectors themselves collaborate and form reflective groups to discuss the quality of Flemish education. While arts and cultural education has not historically played a major part in its deliberations, in recent years, and driven by key people in the inspectorate, it appears as a group to be both supportive and committed to the role of arts and cultural within a child's education and are keen to develop more tools to determine quality in this area. In particular they are seeking tools for evaluation that could be used simply for ascertaining if final objectives have been achieved.

Each network or system also has a team of pedagogical advisors. They provide advice and expertise to the schools. The extent of this team and their role varies from network to network. The inspectors largely see their role as being "to bring the vision of the Ministry into expression".

In a focus group, the inspectors expressed concern about the manner in which schools are keeping pace with changes in society. There was also concern expressed over the level of evaluative and reflective thinking within school management.

*Schools are becoming increasingly out of step with the needs of society. There is a growing gulf between the relationship with the school and reality. There is no feedback on schools from the outside. The only feedback they get is from more educationalists in the system. They are no longer connected to contemporary world truths. Parents don't expect anything. They say "that's good. That's what I did". I have to battle to bring the arts in to my conversations with school leaders. Many schools have never had the arts so parents don't know what they are missing.*

The general view among the inspectors interviewed was that arts and cultural education is not valued at a sufficient level within Flemish schools.

*When schools want to show themselves to parents they use the arts. But there is a difference when arts are really embedded and when the arts are just window dressing. I think the arts have been forgotten for about ten years. We say we have the best education system in Europe. We certainly have a very good system of education, but then when we compare it to Finland!*

It was purported that a level of complacency about arts and cultural education (and more broadly school quality) had crept into the thinking within schools. The assertion was that the indicators of quality and happiness that suggest that Flemish schools are some of the best in the world had resulted in an assumption that the status quo was 'fine' and so why change anything. It was further intimated that the media played a role in encouraging the self-satisfied myth: "The media tells everyone schools are good".

The inspectors acknowledged that the arts were undervalued in schools and were not seen to be an essential part of learning.

*The arts in schools should not be about isolated projects. You can't have artists come to the school for three hours one afternoon and then say, "There we have done arts education!"  
The biggest problem is that teachers do not believe in implicit learning. This is far more important than explicit learning.*

While the finger of blame could be pointed at the teachers and the schools, it was also pointed at the inspectors themselves. It was felt that they were at least in part to blame for the position of arts and cultural education due to their own inspection priorities which by default undervalued the arts.

*I have been an inspector for a long time and I can say the inspectors look at things in schools in this order: 1) Maths, 2) Dutch 3) World orientation 4) extracurricular and 5) French. There is no mention of expression.  
Expression can't be looked at objectively so some inspectors are reluctant to look, but I am trying to encourage the inspectors to look. After all, expression is about three fourths of what our lives are really about.  
Expression is important for young children. Someone has to come and bring the story of expression.*

The inspectors also acknowledged that while their job was to ensure the obligations of schooling were being met, that arts and cultural education rarely met the mandated standards and provisions.

*One fifth of the school day should be about the arts. This is one day a week but you certainly don't see this in schools. It is not treated as well as the other four areas in the primary school.  
I support the team of inspectors to try and make arts education better, but sometimes I feel I am the inspector of not good results.  
The problems in schools are complex and arts seem to be the last thing that schools address.  
The government are more interested in mathematics and language. You have to follow the programme and meet the objectives.  
When I left college and got a job in this school, there was almost nothing that was creative.  
The focus of the inspection is on basic targets.*

The inspectorates are very interested in developing an input and output tool for determining the quality of expressive arts and cultural education in the schools. The inspectorate also showed interest in determining the impact of the arts within schools in more socially deprived areas.

*Inspectors undergo a programme of professional development. They attend special workshops. We would be keen to develop a simple instrument for evaluating the quality of arts and cultural education. We need descriptive criteria of what is good cultural education. We want to stimulate quality and evaluate it.*

They also are seeking further professional development opportunities for the inspectorate to develop more skills in relation to evaluating the extent and quality of arts and cultural education. It was admitted that the inspectorate lack a depth of expertise in this aspect of the curriculum.

*We only have one inspector with any specialism in the arts and one for music. There are four inspectors for DKO. This is a problem and we are aware of this problem. There is a new decree from the Minister that we recruit inspectors with a range of talents.*

Members of the inspectorate also raised concerns about the expertise of teachers and the standard of teacher education in terms of arts and cultural education.

*The teacher education is not profound. It lacks depth and options.  
We are not asking teachers to be artists, but they should leave training with at least the basics of expressive learning*

Even if initial teacher education was to become an effective agent for training teachers to be arts educators, the fear of the inspectors is that the culture of school will soon erase any learning in the arts.

*Young teachers say that when they arrive at the school they try more expressive but they soon become unmotivated by the attitudes of other staff and the principal.*

*Too much of the arts education is about techniques not about expression. There is no creativity asked of the pupils. It is all copying and repetition. In music you are just there to reproduce thing.*

In the view of the inspectorate, the only option is to employ specialist arts teachers into primary schools; “I think the only answer will be to bring arts specialists into the primary school”.

The other challenge highlighted by the inspectorate is to make the arts accessible to all children. In particular it was felt that poorer schools and schools with a large number of children from different ethnic backgrounds may get the lowest level of arts and cultural education.

*There is a real danger now of arts education relating only to the elite. Opening the arts up to diversity takes time and commitment and it is just not there. Look at football. There is plenty of diversity in after school football clubs. People will say people from different ethnic backgrounds won't take their children to after school activities. But that is not true. Sports activities are full of different groups. We can try to get diverse students to after school arts classes, but it won't work because these schools are elitist and there are major structural problems.*

Conversely, the inspectorate spoke in glowing terms of examples of schools they visited that had ‘turned around’ the quality and the profile of the school by adopting more arts-rich pedagogy and promoting the arts within the school.

*Some culturally diverse schools have successfully used the arts to lift the profile of the schools and bring in more diverse pupils. My child goes to a school like that.*

In response to questions about what the inspectorate considered to be the main ‘blocks’ to more schools adopting an arts-rich curriculum, it was felt that the arts professional associations and cultural agencies had been too singular in their approach and had not effectively campaigned for greater inclusion of the arts: “One of the problems is that there has not been a combined voice for the arts.” Concurrently, that lack of learning lines in the arts, especially between primary and secondary school was also mentioned as a major area of need: there are no links between primary and secondary schools and between outside arts schools and what happens – or doesn’t happen - with arts in schools.

Crucially, the inspectorate saw the arts as being vital for making schools relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and urged schools to take a more innovative approach to creative curriculum implementation.

*Schools need to change for the future. No they actually need to change NOW! The expressive arts are a method that can help. We need to search for other ways to teach children. There is a necessity for change.*

## 5.9 QUALITY ASSURANCE

### → It is vital that arts education is of a high quality

In high quality examples, school staff collaborate to develop excellent cultural and arts explorations within the school curriculum. These may involve partnerships with cultural agencies. In other examples, the quality may be considerably lower, and in some cases, almost nothing at all will occur in arts and cultural education.

While it could be considered a strength to provide a flexible part within the secondary curriculum for the exploration of cultural themes, in practice that lack of specialist teachers assigned to this area means that the quality is highly variable. In many instances one or two teachers may be assigned to develop and run the cross curriculum themes programme. These teachers commonly come from history, religion, civics or language disciplines, and may have little interest in or knowledge of arts and cultural provisions. Other teachers from these disciplines appeared to have a good grounding in the arts and culture and were interested to teach in this way, but this was in part dependent on the training they received. It is possible that good programmes can emerge from this base, but it is also quite likely that a teacher will be told to take this role based on timetables or ‘spare’ teaching hours, rather than skills or commitment to this aspect of learning. As a teacher<sup>15</sup> said:

*I think that the poor quality of arts education has a lot to do with the formation of teachers. This is a hard thing to say, but 30 years ago the most intelligent students went into teaching, but now some of the weakest go into teacher training. Many come from vocational schools.*

Issues of quality underpin this report and it is vital to note that poor quality arts education not only does not produce positive impacts, but may actually be detrimental to a pupil’s artistic development and learning (Bamford, 2006).

One of the major determinants of quality is the expertise and enthusiasm of the teachers. Chapter 6 examines in detail teacher education in arts and cultural education within Flanders.

15 In a reflective response to this comment, it was noted that “this seems to be the remark made by one teacher” and that it was “offensive to young teachers” and “simply not correct”. While this counter view is important to acknowledge and highlight in the report, it should be noted that the quote selected was indicative of many similar comments made encapsulating a perception – be it correct or incorrect – that was widely expressed.

# Chapter 6

## { TEACHER EDUCATION }

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Above all, it is the quality, enthusiasm and skill of a good teacher that is at the heart of all successful arts programmes. Throughout the research, many of these wonderful teachers have given generously of their time and expertise to contribute to this research. High quality teachers are a powerful intangible resource that ensures the quality of arts education for children. Despite this, major concerns were raised about the overall quality of teachers with teacher education being seen as a major challenge.

### 6.2 GOOD ARTS TEACHERS

- **Innovative, passionate and committed arts teachers are needed if arts education is to reach a high standard**
- **There is a high degree of consistency about the attributes of quality arts educators**
- **While there were concerns about the overall quality of teachers, many instances of high quality teaching were observed in Flanders**

In selecting teachers, schools with strong arts programmes tended to concentrate more on selecting a personality type than a particular skill. For example, a principal of a philosophy schools stated that she could 'feel' if a teacher was creative and that this was more important as then she could match the new teacher with a colleague who could provide the skills and training in a mentoring fashion. She also felt that it was important that teachers learnt on the job and that risk-taking and failing was a part of this learning

As is the case with a number of aspects, there was a large range of methodological approaches observed in the teaching of arts education. At one end of the spectrum, there were highly original, creative tasks that were excellent examples of enquiry centred approaches. At the other end of the range, there were classroom walls filled with 30 identical pictures coloured in and very teacher directed and rigid activities.

According to the pupils, a good arts teacher is someone who:

- Is personally interested in the arts
- Has an enthusiasm for playing
- Can communicate to students
- Likes to come to class

In every context visited during the research, teacher education was identified as being a major factor leading to the lower quality of arts and cultural education. The criticisms were numerous and focused. In summary it was widely felt that standards in teacher education were falling; there was less time and emphasis given to arts and cultural education within initial teacher education and that teachers especially in the primary school lacked the basic skills to be able to teach arts education. These issues will be exemplified in the following pages.

### 6.3 RESEARCH INTO TEACHER EDUCATION

- **A number of studies have been - and are being - conducted into teacher education in Flanders**
- **The results of these studies need to be acted upon in relation to arts education**

In 2000 (Ghijs, 2000) the then Flemish Minister for Education spoke of the need to review teacher education so that teachers in all subjects could be equipped to include arts and cultural education as part of their overall teaching and learning strategies. Sadly, seven years on there is little evidence to suggest that this has happened. Back in 2000, the report cautioned that, "The full integration of culture into education can only be accomplished if teacher training colleges emphasise its importance and properly prepare their students" (Ghijs, 2000, 153).

It could be simplistic to blame only pre-service teacher education. Such an idea assumes that simply by improving initial teacher education that structural limitations in the system would be removed. It also fails to recognise that professional development of teachers in service (especially in the middle years of their teaching career) might provide a better key for unlocking the potential within schools. The UNESCO report suggests that while initial teacher education is beneficial, more overall impact can be achieved in changing attitudes and structures within schools by focusing on mid-career teachers (Bamford, 2006, p 74).

*Erfgoededucatie in het Vlaamse onderwijs: Erfgoed en onderwijs in dialoog* finds – on the basis of a survey of teachers of heritage education – that less than 10 percent have gained their knowledge as a result of postgraduate training. In all but the arts schools, the main qualifications were acquired through personal interests (*eigen interesse*) (p.126). There is a general consensus among teachers of heritage is too expensive - *te duur* – and that there is too little contact with the cultural sector (p.121).

One of the general problems reflected in the comparative literature is the problem that countries continually are involved in “a catching up manoeuvre”, as new media emerge (Van der Ploeg 2001, 29). Specialised courses are absent and there is a chronic sense that even the most recent courses are inadequate (*ibid*).

While the survey addresses many interesting issues it is perhaps indicative of all that the most common answer to the questions in *Erfgoededucatie in het Vlaamse onderwijs: Erfgoed en onderwijs in dialoog* is ‘no opinion’ [*niet ingevuld*]. It speaks volumes in every sense of the word that more than 40 percent of the schools report ‘no opinion’ to questions regarding the quality of materials (p.118), from whence they acquire information. To add to this these figures rise to over 50 percent of the respondents in the specialist art schools. That does not bode well for the level of enthusiasm among teachers that they seemingly do not have an opinion. As was noted, “Some schools have already chosen to make art an integral part of the learning process. In others it remains an embellishment. A frill on the edges of ‘real’ education” (Ghijs, 2000, 11).

At the time this research was conducted, a study specifically into arts education in teacher education is underway. Given that, it is important that any conclusions from this report should be interpreted on the light of the more detailed specific study and should also be interpreted and enacted in response to the earlier studies into teacher education conducted in Flanders. While there is a commitment to research at the policy level, there is less current research activity from the teacher education sector itself. Within the teacher education institutions for primary teachers and the early years of high school, research receives little priority. Most of the teacher educators interviewed had a masters or bachelors degree. There were no educators interviewed with a Ph D.

#### 6.4 REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL TRAINING

- ➔ **Although there are specified and mandatory requirements for arts and cultural education in teacher education these are not in practice being met**
- ➔ **There is a lack of monitoring of the quality of teacher education in the arts**

In recent years, educational training – and a standard of Dutch proficiency – has been mandatory for all people working in an educational context and funded by the Ministry of Education. While this is conceptually desirable, it has been problematic in its implementation for after schools arts providers and for specialist arts secondary schools. In these situations, many highly motivational, experienced and committed arts educators have lost their job as they fail to meet the basic requirements in terms of teaching training. For many it was difficult to gain the educational qualifications required due to the need to complete full-time blocks of practicum teaching or full-time components of the course.

It appeared to be the case that teachers would have to resign or forgo payment to complete these requirements. Also many practicing artists, who also taught, could not devote time to complete the course for teacher training and that doing so would have had a major negative effect on their artistic practice. This problem was further exacerbated as often arts teachers, especially music teachers, already have to work across a number of schools to get enough income and it was impossible within this situation to be released for the educational study.

There was also a perception among many of the experienced arts educators without formal training in education that the course was largely irrelevant. Comments such as:

*We need specialist training in our arts form, but being an educator is something you feel inside. I have been teaching now for 20 years and I don't need a piece of paper to tell me I can teach. I see it in my students when they have a good experience - when I see that they can work independently.*

In specialist after school provisions or specialist secondary schools, there was also a general feeling that teachers with too much education training were likely to be less creative and ‘dumb down’ the arts for young people.

Similarly, there was a view that the compulsory nature of education training in specialist environments limited the quality of the artists you could employ. For example, one director of a music and dance specialist secondary school commented that;

*We have a wonderful musician working on world music with the students. He is very famous and is wonderful at inspiring the young people and attracting more diverse students into music schools, but we can't pay him as a teacher as he does not have the teaching qualification. So he only gets something like 900 euro a month. IT is ridiculous. I also have to sit a qualified teacher in the room with him, so that adds to the cost too. Even if I could get Bono from U2 to come here, he would not be able to teach! It then means that all the teachers come through the classical pathway. They have been to the same conservatory and so they are all the*

same sort of people and teach the same sort of thing. Some of the most successful musicians started playing in their garage and don't have the formal qualifications, but this is not considered in this rule. For example, we had a wonderful dance teacher from the Russian ballet. A real expert and he taught here for ten years, but then he had to sit his Dutch language test and he failed. Yes you could say after ten years he should be able to speak Dutch, but he was an expert at speaking the language of ballet, the language of the body, but that did not count and so I had to sack him as I could not pay him as a teacher.

It is interesting to note, that arts educators in the tertiary arena (either Hogeschool or University) do not require teaching qualifications. They do however need to meet evaluation criteria and student evaluations are generally conducted annually.

## 6.5 STUDENT TEACHERS

- **Teaching is not generally viewed as a desirable profession**
- **It is perceived that the standard of students entering teacher education in the arts and in primary education is becoming lower**

The changing nature of student teachers was an issue that a number of both teachers and teacher educators commented upon. In summary, the contention is that the current batch of students does not have the same cultural and artistic experiences as their predecessors. They lack engagement and experience in the arts, though to be more accurate, the responses to questioning reveal that the perception is they lack skills and experiences in the **high** arts. While they appear to be receptive to the arts, the small amount of time dedicated to developing their talents in the primary teacher education programme is insufficient to actually equip them to be able to teach the arts, as these comments propose:

*There is a general lack of knowledge amongst the students. Most of them have not done any art or any music. They learn quickly, but most of them have never been to a gallery or to the theatre. They can't read music. Actually they don't read books either. It's not hard though to get them interested. It would be really interesting to follow a cohort of teacher education students as a research project to see what happens as they learn about culture and then when they leave here. Only 30 percent of all the students coming into our programme actually graduated. Their capacity is too little.*

*There is a generally low level of skill among the students. The level of both intellect and skills is going down. We surveyed the students and many of the teaching students had not even read one book in the last two years! Perhaps quality is better in secondary school teachers than primary school teachers?*

*The academic background of students has changed a lot. Before, you could start teaching from a world view. But this is no longer the case. It is hard to attract good people into teaching when the salary is too low.*

*Student teachers used to come from ASO. The majority of students now come from TSO and the minority come from ASO and BSO. They don't have enough theoretical background.*

*The majority of student teachers used to come from ASO and a minority from TSO. Nowadays, the majority of students come from TSO and the minority from ASO. There are even students who come from BSO. The students are not at all prepared for higher education.*

The student teachers themselves admit to finding it hard to achieve the demands of arts education:

*Music was difficult. I had to read notes. I had never done that before.*

*I had never been to galleries, concerts and things like that.*

*I only did a bit of music and art when I was in first year at secondary school and then at 18 to come and learn them here was a bit of a shock.*

Teachers in school were also asked to comment on whether they had noticed any changes in student teachers. Similar to the teacher educators they felt that the skills and knowledge had become less, but that creativity and knowledge of technology may have improved (though some felt that creativity had become worse). Conversely overall standards and professionalism had become worse.

*The knowledge is less but the creativity is more.*

*The students are less creative now. They are not so proud of their cultural heritage. Many have not been to the theatre or a concert. It is the internet and Coca Cola generation.*

*The trainee teachers are not so professional. There is a complete change in their level of respect. I try to get my colleagues interested*

*in the arts, but I have almost given up on them. But when I get despondent, I just remember the look in the children's eyes when they are involved in the arts and that tells me why I keep trying. The trainee teachers say to me 'we must teach mathematics. We must get good results. We must do more reading. We must. We must. We must. Soon all the 'musts' have taken over and there is no art. The sad part is, when the inspectors come, they have the same lists of 'musts' and there is never a spare 'must' for the arts.*

A primary school principal commented:

*The student teachers are less motivated. They are not open to experimentation. They want everything neatly framed. I always try to encourage them to take risks when they are learning and try something creative, but they are afraid. I worry for the future as a large percent of our staff are about to retire and we will need to employ new, young teachers.*

It was the general view that the standard of teacher education was generally falling and that art and cultural education may just be indicative of a broader trend in the falling status and attractiveness of teaching. It was not a 'first choice' career and was seen to be a highly pressured occupation now, with little financial return or community recognition.

*Teachers get pressure from everywhere. Most of the students entering our courses do not have any background in the arts.*

*I would have said young people entering our programmes have had more opportunities than ever before to engage in the arts and cultural, but I don't understand why our students are getting worse in their understanding of culture.*

*For most of the students we get here, teaching is their second or third choice. Most of them are actually between 20-25 years old. Often they have tried something else at university and it has not worked for them so they end up in teaching.*

## 6.6 TEACHER EDUCATION VISION, SCOPE AND PROCESSES

- ➔ **The aim and vision of teacher education is unclear and mixed**
- ➔ **There is insufficient time given to art and culture within teacher education**
- ➔ **Many students are leaving teacher education without having the skills and knowledge needed to be effective arts educators**
- ➔ **Opportunities for collaborative learning has increased in teacher education**
- ➔ **Knowledge and skills of evaluation, research and reflection are lacking in teacher education**

The vision and aim of primary teacher education in the arts appears to be primarily to encourage the student teachers to enjoy the arts and to gain some experience of culture.

*We aim to get the students to enjoy the arts. We do simple things to give pleasure. It is interesting because I really try just to get the students to sing. They are actually quite musical when you give them the chance, they just don't have any skills.*

*In primary education we run three hours per week of compulsory music and three hours per week of compulsory art. The students also do compulsory physical education and there is a little bit of dance in that. We don't do any drama.*

Gaining basic skills was also important as were the completion of 'success orientated' activities so that student teachers gained confidence.

*We focus mainly on technique. Simple things like painting for children.*

*We make sure the task can be successfully completed by any level or any or no experience. That is important. In the first year we really focus on skill. In the second year we work on collaboration and group work. In the third year the children work in groups to make a game about art education. There are ten lessons across the year.*

The majority of primary teacher education in the arts is very practical and students learn very little theory or about research in – or approaches to – arts and cultural education. Conversely in the academic training of senior secondary arts teachers, the opposite is true, with the students mainly receiving theoretical training with limited or no practical applications.

*You get theoretical background but not how to translate that. You don't get anywhere nearly enough experience.*

On the other hand, at another teacher training college specialising in primary school teaching, the student teachers felt that there was too much experience, but it was unclear why they were doing certain activities or the aims of arts education.

*My course was very experience based. It was like we were children. They treated us like children. We saw example lessons and then had to write about them. We had to do a drawing of a sculpture. We made a hand puppet and had to do a puppet play. We had to make an animal with things you throw away.*

Another primary teacher education student felt that the course really was very limited in terms of the arts and she was more reliant upon the skills she had developed herself at after school music classes and by growing up in a creative family.

*I followed art at school because my Mum was interested in art. I also went to after school music classes. Little children like the artsy. There is a very old piano in the school so maybe I could play that. I was lucky because I had done art myself. We do not do anything at college. It is only what you do yourself. I would like to do more. I have to be careful as I am only a student here and the other teachers would not like it.*

By international standards, the average amount of time within initial teacher education devoted to the arts is relatively high. It is lamentable, but the international research suggests that most teachers get between zero to three months training in arts education during initial teacher education (Bamford, 2006). The amount received by Flemish teacher trainees is especially good in nursery or early childhood training where the arts component might comprise at least one third of the total hours. Yet, as is the case for much of the arts and cultural provisions in Flanders, there are marked differences from one setting to the next, as these responses to questions indicate:

*Art is not taken seriously. The student teachers only get 6 weeks in the last year. We do one hour of recorder and one hour of drawing. We mainly learn technical things.*

*We have one and a half hours a week in the first and second year for music. The students learn to sing and play the recorder. There is no time to teach any other things. We try to do some musical appreciation and some folk dancing and moving to music.*

*We have one hour a week for one year. Basically in that time all we can do is get an overview of the very basics. I try to weave artists into the work I cover and to work with rubbish and other available materials. I want to stimulate ideas and creativity.*

*In the third year we have a subject on integrated arts. The students do cultural education projects.*

While the time allocated and the scope of activities covered varied markedly from one teacher education college to the next, there was unanimous agreement that the position of arts and cultural education within the overall education qualification was getting much worse. This was particularly concerning to the teacher educators as this reduction in provisions was occurring at the same time as there was a lowering of the standards for intakes into teaching and a view that the student teachers lacked basic artistic and cultural experiences.

*Teacher education is getting worse. The students coming to do practicum in our schools don't even know the most basic content in the arts.*

*I am a teacher in the arts. I used to work full-time as one, now I am doing three hours and that is only one hour for three groups in the first year. When you <the research team> came and visited us, during the interview our directors were with us. My colleagues and I felt that thing were very wrong but we really could not say this to you. The directors made it appear as if there was no other option than having this kind of education as you saw when you visited our school. But I know that this is not the case. Only six years ago, there were 24 hours in a week of arts and creativity taught. The big question is how do we make it happen in a school like ours? Our directors and the city just aren't that interested in arts and culture.*

The reductions in the time and scope of arts and cultural education within general teacher education have made the teacher education institutions have to develop a sharper focus for their courses. While these foci are very different from one institution to the next, they tend to all try to give a package of experiences aimed at developing skills.

*Our job is to improve their skill. The time is not enough and next year it will be even less. The practical subjects are being removed. They are even taking the facilities away. It is important that the teacher educators are not art experts, but rather have experience in the schools.*

The reduction of time means that integrated art projects also offer a way to cover content – albeit superficially – in the most time-economical manner. Sadly, as these comments would suggest, the lack of time means that considerable amounts of vital content are simply not learnt by trainee teachers.

*I am trying to include some content about special needs children, but we really do not cover that topic. I would really like our students to be able to play an instrument. I tell them all about the subsidised music schools and tell them they should learn an instrument. I would like to be able to say 'must' but I can't do that. Still about 95percent do learn at least the recorder. We also do some lessons on voice training.*

Despite the limitations, there are good practice examples within teacher education that are trying to provide the student teachers with the basic competencies need to teach arts and cultural education.

*We tell the students that they should have clear goals for arts education and that their lessons should cover both technical and aesthetic aspects. We tell them that children should not copy – absolutely not, we suggest tasks based around fantasy, and original ideas. Creativity is very important and getting children to use their imagination.*

*We are preparing new basic competencies for teachers. Cultural education will be one of the basic competencies. The arts account for 20 percent of the primary curriculum so should feature in 20percent of the teacher education time. In 1998 it was mandated in new objectives that culture should be one fifth of the time, but teacher education has not responded to this. In music we want the students to first feel. Then we try to train their voice and their ear. We are really only providing basic musical competence. We give a very little bit of theory. All our students must play the recorder. We get the students singing and moving to music.*

*I call myself an icebreaker. When the students come to me they are very scared to stand before a group. They say I am not good enough to draw.*

Group exercises, collaboration, integration and links with museums and cultural centres are also becoming more common. In this case, the work results in practical resource kits for use in primary schools.

*We have a project called ‘culture in schools’. The students work in groups and they choose a city or village and visit culture institutions and theatres and prepare ways to mediate these for children. They prepare a kit for the schools and give the kit to a school in the local area.*

## 6.7 SPECIALIST TEACHER EDUCATION

- ➔ **Specialist arts education tends to focus on skills and theory not on arts education pedagogy or on current research in the field**
- ➔ **Specialist arts education does not engender a critical and inquiry-based view of creative learning**

Teacher education for specialist teachers is very different from the training received by general primary and nursery school teachers. The usual pattern for student teachers is that within the first two to three years of an arts degree, students tend to cover a mix of general courses, critical or historical studies, technical studies and practical courses. In some HE institutions, students may enter in a specialised way, for example as a specialist in one or two art forms or genres, but in most courses where teacher education is an incorporated part, there is a broader focus.

Students who have completed (or are in the final years of completing) an arts degree through a specialist arts academy can complete a two-year teacher training course to be approved to teach in secondary school, after school arts education or adult education. In most instances it is possible for the students to complete this study concurrently with completing their arts qualification.

In music conservatory the majority of students complete the teaching qualification concurrently with musical study<sup>16</sup>, whereas in other arts disciplines, such as visual arts and dance, the rate of people completing this qualification is considerably lower. For example in large visual arts and media academy only 1.1 percent of all students undertake a teaching qualification within their study (or at the conclusion of their study). This compares with 86 percent of music students in a similar sized academy specialising in music. The content of the teaching qualification includes both didactics and pedagogical study. To become a teacher in DKO, the teacher education programme also includes an internship under the guidance of a mentor and the writing of a report.

Several of the conservatories interviewed reported that cooperation between the arts conservatories and didactic institutions had increased as the result of collaborative qualifications and that these models of co-operation “should be used as a model for research and collaboration for the future”.

Models of teacher education, with some exceptions, are largely based on practices that existed some time ago. There is an assumption that most music teachers will teach in either the DKOs or in academic secondary schools. This assumption is generally correct as there is a shortage of music teachers, especially for popular instruments like the guitar, so these teachers are able to pick and choose where they will teach and so therefore choose the most affluent and educationally advantaged schools. The conditions for arts teachers in these schools are generally better than the conditions in lower secondary and vocational schools.

<sup>16</sup> While the general case is that students study concurrently, a significant number of students also opt to undertake an extra year to complete their teaching qualification. It was commented that students find it “too heavy” to combine a masters degree with a teaching qualification.

In smaller schools, music and drawing teachers may be shared between three to six schools. They are not trained to teach middle school and yet that tends to be the main part of their job. The training of music teachers focuses primarily upon expertise in playing their instrument and vocal training.

In addition to arts education, teachers are also expected to be able to offer cultural and heritage education. Very few specific courses exist in this field. In some degrees for arts educators, cultural education might be an elective. For example, at a higher education college students can elect courses in community arts and participate in a sustained way in community arts and cultural projects.

Increasingly, the arts teacher may be called upon to also teach and coordinate cultural education. Concerns were raised about the capacity of teachers to teach arts and cultural education. Similarly, equal concerns were raised about the ability of artists or those trained primarily as artists to be effective arts educators. About 80 percent of graduates of music training will have teaching as their main form of income, yet teaching is not valued within the training or arguably in the profession. It was argued that artists tend to be conservatively trained with limited teaching experience or knowledge of arts education approaches, philosophies of pedagogies.

Music teachers are classically trained<sup>17</sup> and follow very similar career pathways.

*In a way, I prefer the students that have not done any music. The students that have gone to after school music are sometimes the worst. They have done theory and been forced to go to lessons and so they come to me hating music. The first things I have to do is win them back over to the importance of music for children and just having fun. Yes these students have the advantage of some skills and theory, but there is no fun in the way they have studied music.*

*I find the students that have done art in after school classes are very good. There is more possibility in art. I think arts schools are more progressive than after school music schools. The students can look at things in different ways.*

Within the profession, there is a perception that those artists who teach may do so only because they “are not good enough to make a living out of their art form”. In a somewhat derogatory way, it was suggested that the quality music teachers might be low in education because the best musicians become professional entertainers, while the lower standard become teachers: “The music teachers tend to be the craftsman, not the entertainers”.

The changing nature of the arts teaching profession and the nature of graduates is clearly outlined in this vignette from a specialist academic:

#### 6.7.1 Vignette: *they see music as a job, we saw the arts as our life*

*In the past students were well-equipped in the music schools, to enter our training. But in recent years, the level of skills and knowledge is much lower. The music schools I think are less focused than they used to be. There is also less and less musical theory and the training of the ear only happens until the students are twelve years old. So we notice that our students ‘ear’ has gone.*

*In terms of dance, it used to just be classical dance, but now there is a diversity of dance styles and that is a good thing. With both music and dance what you find is some students are technically strong and others are creative or vice versa.*

*One of the things I have noticed is that they have a number of interests outside the arts and often do not pursue the arts in their leisure. If I can explain, when I was a student, I lived and breathed dance. When I wasn’t at dance school, I was going to dance performances and performing on other times. But now, the students come to be music teachers, but they don’t go to concerts, they don’t play in an orchestra. They see music as a job, whereas we saw the arts as our life!*

*The course we offer here in music is still quite traditional, though they can choose jazz. Dance on the other hand is more contemporary. We are developing a professional bachelors and masters’ degree structure and have been approved to recognise prior experience as a dancer as they do in other parts of Europe. We call this ‘special admissions processes. In drama and music there is still a very strong academic focus and less opportunity to recognise professional learning. A new master’s programme for arts education is starting in 2008.*

*As a faculty, I would like to see more development for research, especially practice based research.*

*There is a shortage of good arts teachers especially in dance. We try to be as practical as possible in our training. We are also*

<sup>17</sup> It was commented that for DKO some teachers also graduate in ‘jazz’ or ‘light music’.

trying to give students a better understanding of the history and the context of the arts.

We also work with the students on critique. If I am honest though, I would say we only give basic training in this area. We do a few lessons about evaluation, but it is quite theoretical and based on regulation not on learning. For instance, we do some practices at being a jury and judging based on the formal criteria for music. But this does not mean how well did children learn? Have I as a teacher reached my goals?

Basically the teachers from here will end up teaching in a DKO. It is very hard for one of our teachers to get a job in a school, though a very small percent might get a job in a school.

## 6.8 TEACHER EDUCATION AND INSERVICE EDUCATION

- ➔ **Teacher education providers could become important in lifelong approaches to teachers' professional development**
- ➔ **It is reported that initiatives in this area have been reduced, rather than increased**

As noted in earlier chapters, the ongoing professional development of teachers is vital for high quality arts and cultural education. As was indicated in detail in earlier sections, the current opportunities for Flemish teachers are generally expensive, limited, not practical and lacking lifelong learning pathways. To counteract that, teacher education could play a vital role in professional development. But instead of this being a focus area requiring significant expansion, there has actually been a contraction of available offerings in all areas except cultural education.

*A few years ago we used to give professional development courses. We will try to do that again. There is a real need in the schools. Especially primary schools are begging for help but we just have not got the capacity to do it. Six years ago we used to do Saturday morning classes for primary teachers. These were really popular and helped a lot of teachers. But we don't have the money to continue, so these courses stopped. At the moment I think it is like we are on a balance. We tip one way and then we have to try and fill the other side to tip the balance back again. At one time, there was too much theory and not enough practice and then it will go the other way. It is very hard to integrate the academic world with the pedagogical world and the education world with the world of artistic practice. There are also financial problems. The government will only pay for a teaching qualification once it is complete, and then it is only 1300 euro and this is far, far less than the true cost of diploma, so there is not any commitment from management. It costs the university money to train teachers! The sad part is, the Ministry undertook a review of teacher education, but dance was forgotten altogether. It was like we do not exist. We have always been forgotten!*

*For us as teacher educators, we cannot do any more training. I would like to do a Ph D, but if I wanted to do that I would have to resign. There are only full-time courses.*

Despite the lack of expertise, especially in the primary school, very few of the ILBOs visited made direct links and work experience with the schools.

*There was a period where we did it always. Now it is difficult to get people into teach the arts. We don't have the skills or the materials. Now we really only do something when it is open day or grandparents day. We do have a teacher of music 1 hour a week. Every second year, grade 6 does a play in June.*

Sadly, in a number of cases, the arts education in teacher education did not meet the needs and expectations of the students, nor did it equip them to creatively initiate arts activities and to make learning transparent for children trying to learn artistic and cultural languages, as this conversational vignette shows.

### 6.8.1 Vignette: this is public relations. It is not the arts.

*In second year the students have a collaborative project involving drama, dance, visual arts and music. They meet on Wednesday mornings from nine to twelve to do the project. We want them to go to museums and performances. We also organise workshops with professionals. The students in groups try to make a performance. It is based on the theme, 'My sense of the world' and it must include at least 2 art forms. These are performed for the other students.*

*<Student Comments> "I thought it was interesting", "It wasn't really interesting.", "and I did music and movement. We used black lights and a white cloth. It was in groups of five and it was hard to get everyone to work together." "It was difficult to organise, but it was a good experience".*

*<Other lecturer comment> We were very disappointed. It was very traditional and really underestimated the capacity of children. It was "All make the same tree" "All make the same cloud". The students are taught one off ideas to put into practice. They don't know why they do things and they are not taught to look.*

<Teacher comment> It really depends on the school. It is so difficult for a young teacher. If the other teachers and the parents are expecting beautiful work for the back of the room, then that becomes the motivation. Not what the children learn, but what looks good. Really if one of our graduates is going to teach art it depends on if their personal experience and interest of the arts is strong.

Schools will tell us that they “make projects” connected to the expressive arts, but there is no understanding of the process. It is all about the product. The poor children have to dance the same dance a 100 times. We say ‘expressive art’ but look at us! There is nothing expressive about it. It is about making a good show to the world but not about the working process. Schools will do a performance for Grandparents Day.

This is public relations. It is not the arts. The performance is a fake. It is not a part of any process. The children are just doing a task for the parents... sometimes even it is the parent who does the task – like make the costume or learn the song! It is about the competition between schools, not about learning. Most children spend twelve to fourteen years in our schools and never make an artwork bigger than A4. My own children never painted, never made anything 3D. My daughter spent six years in a traditional school and never touched anything other than a pencil. Now she goes to a Freinet school and it is very different. My decision to change her school was based on the arts. Freinet is good in visual arts, but not as good in music. It depends on the teacher.

## 6.9 WORKING AROUND THE PROBLEM

- **There is an awareness in teacher education of the limitations and shortcomings of their preparation of teachers to teach arts and cultural education**
- **It is particularly noted that primary arts education is an issue of concern**

The teacher educators in the PBOs felt that there was little possibility of things improving in teacher education. They cited a lack of money, a lack of clear strategic goals and a lack of time as the main reason. Despite there being a number of studies into teacher education, it was also felt that things would not change as there was too much disagreement between the various associations and stakeholders and ‘infighting’ was going to reduce the effectiveness of advocacy or push to increase the position of arts within teacher education and to make it both structurally core and central to new forms of learning.

As change was unlikely, two ideas were suggested by the teacher educators to improve the quality of arts education. The first was to employ specialist art teachers in the primary school, that is:

*I think we really have to get arts specialists into the primary school.*

The second idea was perhaps less costly and involved a type of ‘talent sharing’ arrangement in schools, where generalist primary school teachers with an interest on one or more art forms could be structural ‘spread’ across the schools with another teacher taking on some other aspect of the curriculum in the artistic teacher’s class.

*If I had my wish, I would be the art teacher for the whole school. Then every class could have art for three hours a week. I have a real love for the arts and my talent could be used in this way. I would turn the loft into an atelier!  
Under the ten new areas of teacher competencies, there is the area of ‘teacher as a cultural ambassador’. Teachers must show that he or she is a person of this time. They should be alive to culture and participate in culture. They must demonstrate a cultural awareness. This has been obliged since 1996, though I know in practice it is not the case.*

It was also felt that having teaching experiences in more artistic philosophy schools during practicum would develop artistic skills and confidence to teach art. These options appear to be popular with students.

*Students can do a practicum in a philosophy school such as Dalton<sup>18</sup>, Montessori<sup>19</sup>, Freinet<sup>20</sup> or Steiner<sup>21</sup>.*

Also, more research needs to be conducted into ways to overcome the lack of teacher expertise and the drain of people away from the profession.

*Some serious research is needed into teacher education in the arts. We need to have a teacher with sensibilities to be able to instil*

<sup>18</sup> The Dalton plan (1919) is a philosophy of teaching and learning that was developed in Dalton, Massachusetts. It revolves around sub-dividing the work of the traditional curriculum into contract units, which the students accomplish in a specified amount of time. These periods of individual work and conversation are a significant aspect of the Dalton approach.

<sup>19</sup> See previous

<sup>20</sup> See previous

<sup>21</sup> In Steiner education there is a strong emphasis on physical and moral well-being as well as academic progress. There is a strong emphasis on social abilities and social inclusion is fundamental to the ethos. A Steiner education acknowledges the nature of childhood and child development. It has a focus on the development of creativity, initiative and the development of a strong moral sense of responsibility.

*children with a love of the arts. Teachers need an artistic attitude. I worry that if they don't have it when they start here, you really can't persuade them to gain that attitude. So much in the arts depends on the attitude of the teacher.*

There is the awareness in teacher education that there are challenges and complexities in their role. There were several examples of colleges and conservatories trying to address these issues with honesty and with innovative practices. In these cases there was a vision for the future but a feeling that limiting factors such as time and money were preventing that vision from being realised.

*We give classes for post-graduate arts students. We also participate in the extra year for the degree. We are starting a new department for community arts and live projects. We have a vision of the things we would like to see happening. We still get a little funding, but I think in the future our money will only be from projects. The government is letting the market decide.*

Similarly, there was acknowledgement that the gap between policy and research on one hand and the actual practices in the schools was large – and that teacher education had to take responsibility for this widening gap.

*The policy says that one fifth of the week should be on arts and culture in the primary school but the teachers are just not educated in it! Practice is not taken seriously. There are no links between policy and research on one hand and practice on the other. The researchers and policy makers need to spend more times in schools. How many of them have recently taught an arts lesson?*

Similarly, there was a gap between the educational and artistic development of students. It was clear in teacher education that there is a perceived conflict between the role of teacher education to induct the student into the arts and give them positive experiences and processes, and the need to develop competent arts educators equipped to teach children.

*In teacher education there's an almost permanent conflict between the artistic and the pedagogic side of training and also between product-based and process-based thinking.*

The focus within this chapter to date has been on the preparation of primary and secondary teachers to teach, but conservatories also prepare the artists, actors, dancers, musicians and creatives of the future. An examination of teacher education is also not possible without at least in part looking at the role of conservatories as in many instances – particularly music – a large percentage of their graduates will directly or indirectly become arts educators.

As the focus of this research has been on arts education for people under 18 years of age, it was beyond the scope of this particular study to examine in detail tertiary and professional education in the arts and the manner in which it prepares the creative and cultural innovators needed for the future development of the Flemish economy. So the following sections related to conservatories does not intend to give full coverage of the field, but only highlight aspects pertinent to arts education for young people and their teachers.

## 6.10 CONSERVATORIES<sup>22</sup>

- ➔ **Conservatories are not fully cognisant of their role as teacher educators**
- ➔ **Conservatories are inadvertently perpetuating the social and educational inequalities in Flemish arts education**
- ➔ **Dance and drama conservatories are more progressive in arts education and community practice than the music and visual arts conservatories observed**

While it is not uncommon for arts conservatories to work with universities, it was less common in the interviews conducted to find arts conservatories with close links – and importantly with research links – to the cultural or school education sector. In fact in some instances there were no formal links between the arts academy and the cultural institutions in their discipline located near to the academy. Furthermore, the interviews revealed that students coming into arts courses have surprisingly low levels of personal connection with the professional arts community.

For example, a major fine arts academy in Brussels reported that many of their students (who are all visual arts, or related fields, students) have never been to a gallery prior to the commencement of their studies and do not actively or independently seek out chances to attend exhibitions. Similarly, most students entering a regional music and dance academy had not previously attended live theatre.

Increasingly, though, the conservatories are looking to expand their practice beyond the walls of the institution to the broader community. These projects such as “the art in public space project” encourage groups of students to work collaboratively and

22 The term *conservatory* has been used to denote tertiary level arts education in music, dance, drama, and visual arts. In general practice, the term *conservatory* in English is only used to denote music education, and the term *academies* would be more likely to be applied to fine arts, dance and drama. But in Flanders, the term *academies* implies DKO, so for ease of distinction, the term *conservatory* has been applied to all tertiary level specialist arts training.

connect with people for the cultural institutions and education. There have also been attempts to connect students from the conservatories of different disciplines, for example dance students working with visual arts or music students. These appear to be positive experiences for all, but they are more isolated instances than structured initiatives. Under the Leonardo programme, conservatories within Flanders are also seeking opportunities for international collaborations.

During the interviews with staff from the conservatories, they were asked their opinions related to which type of secondary education made the best potential arts academy students. All conservatories agreed that students that have undertaken the 'academic' training were most likely to succeed.

In music conservatories, there was a preference for students who had attended specialist music secondary schools and after school music classes. In dance conservatories, the preference was also for students with extensive after school experience in dance, though students with strong natural talent may be admitted to courses.

Conversely in visual arts and drama, the preference from the conservatory was for students who had NOT attended specialist arts secondary schools and had NOT been to after school arts activities. In both the drama and visual arts examples, it was felt that both secondary school arts experiences and after school arts education were actually a disadvantage to potential students and that they would need to be 'untaught' before the real learning could occur.

The following is a list of comments that were made specifically about students entering the arts conservatories directly from secondary school and/or after school arts classes. The young people were reported to:

- "Lack intellectual potential"
- "Have been spoiled by too much positive comments"
- "Lack contextual and cultural knowledge"
- "Have low levels of aesthetic understanding"
- "Be damaged and we can't repair it here"

In music it was particularly noted that there was a falling level of knowledge in the area of theory and the development of an 'ear'. The responsibility for this decline was attributed to the changing focus and rigour of the DKO.

*Over the years there has been no difference in skills related to instruments, but the general knowledge and skills of the students has definitely diminished. This applies to general knowledge of music theory and hearing skills, but also more general cultural awareness.*

Interestingly too, the preference for music schools to select pupils coming from the highest academic level and having also attended DKO, gave ample further evidence of the inequality in arts and cultural provisions between the educational elite and the rest of Flemish society. Inadvertently, this practice of selection was further adding to this gulf and serving to further establish the imbalance observed and reported upon in arts education in schools and DKOs.

*The majority of students coming into a specialist music degree are from ASO (59 percent), then KSO (27 percent) and TSO eight percent. Most students have undertaken part-time arts education (DKO).*

*We mainly attract students from social classes where culture is already an issue; this means predominantly higher middle class.*

The social disproportion was embedded and cyclical as: "Most students <from a music academy> end up in education in ASO, TSO or BSO. A small number go onto to teach in DKO."

All teachers in conservatories need to have a teaching qualification. Most are practicing artists in their own right and are actively connected to the industry and creative communities. Full-time teachers in conservatories spend around 60 percent of their time directly teaching and the other 40 percent pursuing their practice, in meetings and in professional preparation.

They generally do not receive paid sabbatical to study, research or work internationally, though in most instances between one to five years can be taken as unpaid leave and there are several competitive support schemes that exist for developing an artist's professional or research standing.



# Chapter 7

## { RECOMMENDATIONS }

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The invitation to conduct this research is reflective of the openness of the Flemish system. Throughout the research, the respondents at all levels have been welcoming and honest and have shown the highest level of motivation to ensure all children in Flanders receive the best possible preparation in the languages of the arts.

It is hoped that this research report presents an authentic picture of these voices and that as it is read, arts and educational colleagues can feel a strong affinity with the strengths, challenges and recommendations being highlighted.

This chapter succinctly presents the main recommendations emerging from the report.

### 7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

There are eight major recommendations from this research:

#### → 1. POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 1.1 The implementation line between planning, delivery and monitoring of arts and cultural education need to be more simplified and made clearer to all
- 1.2 Cooperation between the Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media and the Ministry of Education must be structured and enacted
- 1.3 A steering group should be formed to monitor and implement cross-ministerial cooperation in arts and cultural education and children and youth
- 1.4 Distinction needs to be drawn between arts education and cultural education
- 1.5 Media education should be further developed
- 1.6 Clear lines of learning need to be developed for the arts to cover all of a child's education
- 1.7 Time explicitly allocated to arts education (both within existing courses in music and visual arts and in extra courses for drama and dance) should be specified
- 1.8 Mandated allocation of time to arts education needs to be extended at least until a child reaches 16 years of age
- 1.9 Quality needs to be regularly monitored

#### → 2. BUDGETS AND FINANCE

- 2.1 A committee should be formed with the purpose of simplifying the funding process across all sectors and levels and reducing the structural costs to release more funds for on the ground projects and improvement in the quality of arts education
- 2.2 Funding processes need to be simplified
- 2.3 Funding needs to be more embedded and long term, but remain as collared funds for arts education
- 2.4 Funding needs to be more targeted to long-term aims to improve quality of arts and cultural education

#### → 3. COLLABORATION AND SHARING

- 3.1 Moneys should be specifically tied to sharing good practice
- 3.2 There are excellent examples of collaborations between education and cultural institutions, but these partnerships needs to be made core and their duration, funding and occurrence extended
- 3.3 Stronger partnerships with the creative industries should be developed
- 3.4 Local cultural agencies provide effective and cost-efficient support for arts education and their role should be strengthened and extended

#### → 4. PART-TIME ARTS EDUCATION (DKO)

- 4.1 An independent committee should be formed to examine the role and reach of DKOs and make specific recommendation for change given that the current system is expensive per child and fails to attract diverse students

## → 5. ACCESSIBILITY

- 5.1 While equity is a major role of arts education in Flanders, it has not generally been achieved. A committee should be formed with the specific task of encouraging diversity and monitoring issues of accessibility
- 5.2 Cultural institutions including DKO need to more specifically address children with special needs

## → 6. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHER EDUCATION

- 6.1 Funding needs to be specifically targeted at providing ongoing professional development in arts and cultural education for mid career teachers
- 6.2 It would be timely to establish an expert group to ascertain a mechanism to link professional development courses to learning pathways into post-graduate education for teachers

## → 7. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- 7.1 Strategies for assessment and evaluation are very limited within arts and cultural education and this area needs further research and development
- 7.2 Simple models for determining quality in arts education need to be developed and applied

## → 8. TEACHER EDUCATION

- 8.1 A review of teacher education is currently underway and the results of this research and other research needs to urgently be enacted to improve teacher education in the arts
- 8.2 Closer monitoring of the quality of arts and cultural education within initial teacher education is required

### 7.3 AREAS REQUIRING MORE RESEARCH

While the previously listed recommendations are based on detailed evaluative research, there are areas that will require more research. These include:

- Teacher education
- Tracking of accessibility
- Development of assessment strategies
- Mapping of learning lines in the arts
- Development of simple measure from determining and monitoring quality

In addition to these areas, media education, links with creative industries and specification of aims should also be further investigated.

It would be timely to have a parallel study into pathways of learning for the arts in the post-school context, particularly in terms of developing the innovation and expertise required from the expansion of the creative industries in Flanders.

A committee should be formed to oversee the responses to the recommendations. Actions emerging from these responses should be evaluated to determine their success.

### 7.4 CONCLUSIONS/FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Quality arts education programmes have impact on the child, the teaching and learning environment, and on the community - but these benefits were only observed where quality programmes were in place. Poor quality and inadequate programmes do little to enhance the educational potential of the child or build first-rate schools. Poor quality programmes are detrimental to children's creative development and adversely effect teacher confidence and the participation of cultural agencies.

Given that, it is important that the rhetoric of policy that supports the inclusion of arts education within the total educational experiences of the child in Flanders is backed by substantial implementation and monitoring structures that ensure children receive high quality programmes. These programmes are no more expensive to implement than poor quality programmes and afford the opportunity to initiate sustained educational reform and greatly enhance the overall excellence of education.

Given the level of support for this research and the open and enthusiastic attitude and dedication and determination of the

Flemish education and arts community, it should be possible for Flanders to develop a world class reputation for excellence in arts and cultural education and for every child in a Flemish school to feel the joy of creative, meaningful and artistic means of expression.

## REFERENCES

- Alen, A. & Rusen, E. (1993) *Federal Belgium after the Forth State Reform*, Brussels, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Bamford, A. (2006) *The Wow Factor: Global research compendium on the impact of the arts in education* (Berlin, Waxmann Verlag).
- Bogt, W.P. (1993) *Dictionary of statistics and methodology* (London, Sage Publications).
- Claeys, J., Elchardus, M. & Vandebroeck, D. (2005) *The narrow entrance: An empirical analysis of cultural participation and the relationship between social participation and cultural participation*(Brussels, CANON).
- de Rynck, S. (2005) *Regional Autonomy and Education in Belgium*, *Regional and Federal Studies*, 15(4), pp. 485-500.
- de Rynck, S. & Dezeure, K. (2006) *Policy Convergence and Divergence in Belgium: Education and Health Care*, *West European Politics*, 29(5), pp. 10-22.
- de Troyer, V. (2006) *Heritage in the classroom: A practical manual for teachers* (Brussels, Garant).
- Devos, F. (2004) *Ambassadors for fun: About youth, culture and communication*(Brussels, Culture Network Flanders (CANON)).
- Dewey, J. (1934) *Art as experience* (New York, Minton Balch).
- Elias, D. (2002) *Art education in alternative schools*(CANON).
- Erk, J. (2003) *Wat we zelf doen, doen we beter: Belgian Substate Nationalisms, Congruence and Public Policy*, *Journal of Public Policy*, 22(2).
- Gelner, E. (1981) *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, Blackwell).
- Ghijs, I. (2000) *Art(s) at School: 5 years of cultural projects in Flemish schools* (Brussels, CANON Cultural Unit,).
- Higgs, P. (2006) *The creative industries topography and dynamics report*(Australia, CCI: ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation).
- Judd, M.C., E., S. & Kidder, L. (1993) *Research methods in social relations* (Fort Worth, Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc).
- Kissick, J. (1993) *Art: Context and criticism* (Bristol, Wm C. Brown Communications, Inc).
- Maenhout, T., de Voldere, I., Onkelinx, L. & Sleuwaegen, L. (2006) *The creative industries in Flanders*(Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School, Flanders District of Creativity,).
- Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department. (2002) *Flemish education indicators in an international perspective: Vlaamse onderwijsindicatoren in internationall perspectief* (Brussels, Ministry of the Flemish Community).
- Pearsall, J. (Ed.) (1998) *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* (Oxford, Clarendon Press).

Anne Bamford, Kwaliteit en Consistentie - Arts and Cultural Education in Flanders, CANON Cultural Unit, Ministry of Education Flanders, September 2007.

Photo's: Koen Broos (cover), Maaïke Buys

