

LmunA 2023

Research report

Forum: UNESCO

Issue: Addressing the role of UNESCO in promoting accessible art and cultural programs for children and youth

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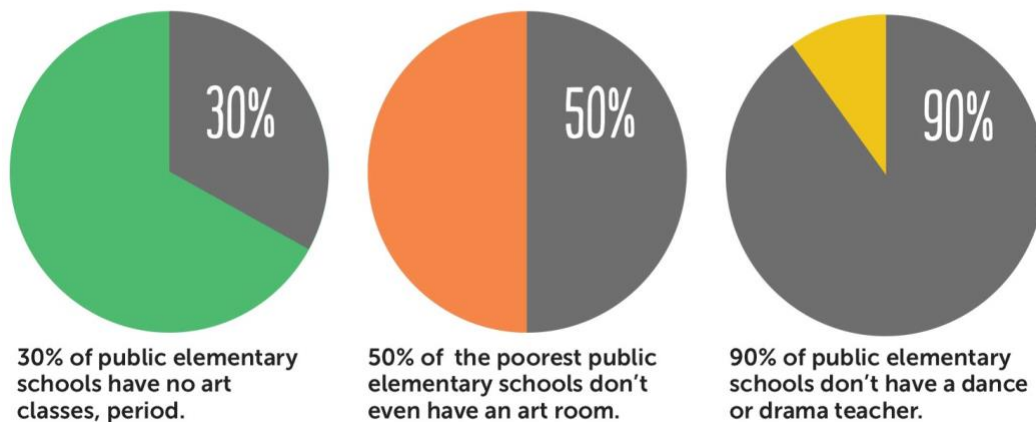
Introduction

***“Every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.”
Article 31, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.***

Exposure to art and culture is crucial in a child’s development. Access to a form of an artistic program like painting, musical activity or theatre continue to reveal its benefits. Art programs provide children the chance to enhance and evolve their creative side, something other subjects can’t provide in the same way. Art classes trigger children’s senses in a different way than subjects like math and English do. This creative simulation helps with creative and outside of the box thinking and develops further knowledge about vulnerability and emotional intelligence.

However, despite the significance and importance of an artistic upbringing, art programs for youth are far from accessible. In lower income family’s art is not seen as beneficial, and it is often not taught in lower income schools. In the United States of America, 73% of parents say their children have participated in a sport extracurricular in the past 12 months, whereas only 54% have participated in an art, music, or dance program.

The Art Funding Gap



This lack of cultural knowledge and artistic development worry the UNESCO. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation believes art programs should be accessible to all. Art can be expensive and is often not funded enough by governments. The UNESCO is eager to solve this issue and make art accessible to all children.

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General overview

“Creativity is intelligence having fun.” – Albert Einstein

Art cannot be checked in the same way as other subjects. You don't have to memorise dates or formulas, which makes it an abstract subject for pupils and teachers. Often, this is why art is seen as a subject of lesser importance. However, experts believe art enhances and develops skills much needed in modern society. Accessible art programs are crucial for several reasons, as they contribute to personal, social, and cultural enrichment while promoting inclusivity and diversity.

Inclusivity

Accessible art programs ensure that individuals with various abilities, backgrounds, and economic means can participate and benefit from artistic activities. This inclusivity promotes diversity in the arts and provides opportunities for everyone to express themselves creatively.

Personal Development

Art programs help individuals develop essential skills such as creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-expression. These skills are valuable not only in the arts but also in other aspects of life, including education and employment.

Emotional Expression

Art provides a means of emotional expression and can be therapeutic. It allows individuals to process their thoughts and feelings, reducing stress and promoting mental well-being.

Cultural Understanding

Art programs can introduce people to different cultures and perspectives. They enable participants to learn about and appreciate the cultural diversity within their own communities and around the world.

Creativity and Innovation

Encouraging creativity through art programs can lead to innovative thinking. Creative individuals often develop unique solutions to problems and contribute to advancements in various fields.

Academic Achievement

Art education has been linked to improved academic performance, particularly in subjects like math and science. It enhances cognitive skills and encourages students to think critically and analytically.

Career Opportunities

Accessible art programs can help individuals explore potential careers in the arts, including as artists, designers, educators, or arts administrators. These programs can also develop skills that are transferable to a wide range of professions.

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Promoting Equal Access

Accessible art programs are essential for breaking down barriers to participation, ensuring that people with disabilities, economic disadvantages, or other challenges have the same opportunities as others.

Fostering Lifelong Learning

Art programs promote a love for learning and can inspire a lifelong interest in the arts. People of all ages can continue to explore and engage with art throughout their lives.

Cultural Preservation

Art programs can play a role in preserving traditional and cultural art forms, ensuring that heritage is passed down to future generations.

In summary, accessible art programs contribute to personal growth, community development, cultural understanding, and inclusivity. They have a positive impact on individuals and society, making them an essential component of education and community enrichment. The significance of an artistic upbringing is proven repeatedly. Sadly, due to budget cuts and lack of investment these art programs are far as accessible as they should be. The chairs of UNESCO are looking forward to discussing and debating this topic with its member states during LmunA 2023.

Major parties involved

UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has taken great responsibility in improving cultural education all around the globe. UNESCO's mission is to contribute to the building of a culture of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication, and information. Since the organisation has been founded in 1945, they have contributed to creating accessible art programs for youth all around the world.

UNESCO's associated school network (APSnet)

The UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) connects more than 12,000 schools in 182 countries around a common goal to build peace in the minds of children and young people. Through concrete actions member schools promote the ideals of UNESCO valuing rights and dignity, gender equality, social progress, freedom, justice and democracy, respect for diversity and international solidarity. The Network operates at international and national levels with three clear priorities: education for sustainable development, global citizenship education and inter-

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cultural and heritage learning. Whilst in association with UNESCO, the APSnet schools make a significant effort to provide art programs to all their pupils.

World Alliance for Art Education (WAAE)

The World Alliance for Arts Education is a network of the four organisations: International Drama/Theatre and Education Association (IDEA), International Society for Education through Art (InSEA), International Society for Music Education (ISME) and World Dance Alliance (WDA) – a powerful voice for advocacy, networking and research. The WAAE promotes and engages in programs to make art more accessible to different communities and spreads their message about the importance of an art education.

The United States of America

According to the Century Foundation, US schools are underfunded by \$150 billion annually. Since schools mainly rely on state and locally based funds and get little federal investments, schools in low-income districts suffer. Due to budget cuts, art programs tend to be the first classes that are cancelled.

The United Kingdom

The number of arts subject teachers working in secondary schools in England has plummeted by 9,000 since 2011 – a fall of almost a quarter. Once again budget cuts and prioritising of other subjects led to the abandonment of art programs in many English schools.

Timeline of Key Events

2006	The World Alliance for Art Education (WAAE) was founded.
2008-2012	One third of all art teachers were laid off in the Los Angeles County.
2011	A quarter of Art teachers in the United Kingdom get laid off.
2012	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) launches the first International Art Education Week.

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Previous attempts to solve the issue

In the past action has been taken to allow students access to an art education. Institutions like the Ark in Dublin, Ireland, have tried to create a safe and affordable environment to explore artistic practices. Conventions have also been held. The UNESCO launched the International Art Education Week in 2012. The week celebrates the arts, in their diversity, and arts educators which play a critical role in fostering and transforming humanity.

Organisations have also tried to influence teachers and school staff on their approach to artistic education. Artists Schools Guidelines provides practical guidance for artists and teachers on how to design, manage and evaluate schools-based arts initiatives collaboratively. The guidelines were disseminated widely within the arts sector and to every school in Ireland. The Arts Council and the Department of Education and Science each contributed 50% of the total costs of this research initiative which was managed by a jointly established working group.

Possible solutions

The main reason schools do not have art programs is due to prioritising due to budget cuts. To create an environment where schools do provide art education to all a new way of distributing and receiving educational funds should be established in each individual member state. However, the UNESCO can help highlight the importance and significant effects an art education has by efforts like the International Art Education week. Also, more activities can be set up by the United Nations, specifically the UNESCO, to promote art programs and make them accessible to all. International action can also be taken by providing funds to museums. The UNESCO already takes serious action to protect museums and cultural sites in times of war and conflict but does not yet provide subsidies to museums. Providing extra funds to cultural institutions and museums would make them more accessible and easier to fit into the school curriculum.

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Further reading

[| Diversité des expressions culturelles \(unesco.org\)](#)

[| Diversidad de las expresiones culturales \(unesco.org\)](#)

[International Arts Education Week \(20-26 May\) | UNESCO](#)

[UNESCO celebrates the power of art and education across the globe | UNESCO](#)

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