

**Conference 'Music Education in Europe – Music For All'
Essen, Germany 15 May 2010**

Report German speaking working group

The following countries were represented in the working group:

- Austria
- Czech Republic
- Germany
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Slovenia
- Switzerland

These are different countries with very different histories and music school systems, so the delegates had different views on the topic. Especially the eastern countries were more sceptical than the western countries.

Only two countries have experiences with such projects, so the group focussed more on hopes and fears than on concrete findings. Nevertheless the results were similar to the results of the other groups.

Positive effects – hopes

- Transfer of knowledge from music school teachers to compulsory school teachers and vice versa.
- We can reach many – may be all – pupils, especially the ones without a musical background in the family.
- We bring the music to the people.
- Integration of different ethnic groups, migrants...
- We can find talents.
- Children can find their instrument, the one they really want to play.
- Social benefits, skills for the children and for society
- Strong political support
- Compensation for the loss of music lessons in compulsory schools and/or for the loss of musical tradition (singing in the family, folk music etc.)

Negative effects – fears

- The quality problem – especially with some instruments (e.g. strings)
- Wrong technique on the instrument
- Pupils might lose the motivation because of wrong technique or because the progress is too slow.
- There are different views on quality – there are different “qualities”.
- Music school teachers are “single players”, not “team players”.
- Teachers have to learn a lot.
- “Fun is not everything”.
- An instrument should not be mistaken for a toy – it is “sacred”.
- Music might be instrumentalized for other purposes.
- Funding these projects can mean less money for the traditional music school work or for talented children – competition for the means.
- It is not always good to be a “political weapon” – policy might change and then the education lacks continuity.
- What comes after the projects?
- There are open questions about the transition into a traditional instrumental education.
- There is not enough continuity in this kind of work (in the curriculum).
- We need concepts for the whole day schools.
- We are curious who will get the benefits in the end...

A part of the group thinks that it is not necessary to promote these projects in countries with a good music education in compulsory schools. Elementary musical education (singing, dancing, rhythm) seems to be more important than learning an instrument – especially in the first one or two years.

Despite all the fears the group hopes that the hopes may come true and the fears will not.

Gerhard Gutschik, Austria, May 2010

Report French speaking working group

Countries:

France, Spain (Catalonia, Navarra, Pays Basque), Luxembourg, Switzerland

The whole groupe was convinced about the vital necessity and value of all the presented projects between primary schools and music schools and admired them all, whether similar things exist or not in their own countries. Many questions received their answers and a few prejudices were corrected, just by watching and listening the videos.

The starting point of our discussion was the Catalonian project « 4strings ». Montserrat stated that there is a political process towards more and more democracy in Spain which started decades ago and is still going on. This process also concerns music education, and the main challenge is the following : we need to prove that it is possible to combine quality (an artistic and pedagogical issue) and quantity (a political issue).

We then listed the conditions to succeed this kind of projects :

- the core issue is the teachers' training in didactic skills for big heterogeneous groups, capacity to compose and arrange to find, create and develop appropriate repertoire and to make children create and not only imitate
- excellent organization and planification of the activities
- permanent communication, exchange and cooperation at all levels between regular schools and music schools (teachers, directors, school boards, political decision makers)
- evaluation and follow-up of the projects by different actors than those who work inside the project
- inclusion of both voice and instrumental activities, one project should not exclude another

Dangers to avoid :

- projects of poor quality more harmful than anything else
- business factors interfering, for instance what happened in France : the lobby of instrument makers went to meet politicians to introduce a project, but in reality the purpose was to sell a great amount of instruments with no pedagogical arguments nor teachers' training involved !
- we should never give any chance to send a political signal that class teaching could or should replace the music schools : both types of teaching are complementary and needed

What the EMU could do:

- mapping and evaluation of what exists in Europe
- middle and long time research and follow-up in order to guarantee the sustainability of the projects
- a chart of recommendations to guarantee successful projects
- emu4you : exchange of repertoire and teaching material, school exchanges, videos, practicum offered for conservatoire students

Lausanne, May 17, 2010, Helena Maffli