



# Brokering Migrants' Cultural Participation

## Project Conclusions AUSTRIA

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## INTRODUCTION

Brokering migrants' cultural participation is a two-year project (2013-2015) funded by the European Commission-Directorate General Home Affairs.

The general aim of the project is to enhance and stimulate the cultural participation of migrants by improving the capacity of their local cultural public institutions to interact with them. Public cultural institutions are part of the receiving society, which has to live up to the challenge of managing cultural diversity and ensuring intercultural integration. Central to these tasks is the enhancement of the intercultural capacity of public cultural institutions by diversifying their staff and governance bodies. The project has the following specific objectives: a) to promote the engagement of the receiving communities in interacting with the migrants, based on the mutual respect of their rights, obligations and different cultures; b) to ensure equal treatment and improve diversity management in the public and private work places, service provision, educational systems, media and other important arenas. Indeed, public cultural institutions are "important arenas" in which to promote equal treatment and improve diversity management.

Partners of the project are:

- Interarts Foundation (ES) – Co-ordinator
- Intercult (SE)
- EDUCULT (AT)
- CAE – Culture Action Europe (BE)
- ECCOM – European Centre for Cultural Organisation and Management (IT)

The project is based on 4 phases:

1. Realisation of a benchmarking tool in order to analyse diversity management in cultural institutions;
2. A pilot research exercise in order to analyse the sector's needs on how to promote integration;
3. The identification of public cultural institutions (PCIs), to which an accompanied Learning Partnership (LPs) will be offered in order to equip the sector on how to promote integration;
4. Benchmarking tool and LPs outcomes will be disseminated broadly for use and emulation

This report refers to phases 1, 2 and 3 of the project, i.e. the pilot research activity, the use of the benchmarking tool and the learning partnerships.

## RESEARCH

### INTERSECTIONS

The research has shown that migrant cultural participation is strongly linked to the socio-economic background. Relating to theoretical approaches which emphasise the intersection of different forms of discrimination<sup>1</sup>, the examination of migrant cultural participation in Austria by other actors has also shown that there is always a need to look at different factors influencing cultural participation of migrants.

As such the yearly Austrian migration report has shown that 45% of Turkish and ex-Yugoslav migrants in Austria are employed in low-paid jobs (Arbeiter) whereas the percentage among employees without migrant background is at 23%. Although the professional position of second generation migrants is converging towards the position of people with non-migrant background, this gap can also be witnessed in terms of education. People with migrant background have twice as often only the mandatory level of education (Pflichtschulabschluss) in comparison to Austrians without migrant background.<sup>2</sup> A detailed scientific report evaluating the perspectives of the cultural programme between 2010 and 2015 of the Viennese government in terms of migrant cultural participation has also pointed out that social challenges are also cultural ones.<sup>3</sup>

According to these findings, our interviewees from cultural institutions have emphasised that reaching out to people with migrant background is very often also a social question rather than a cultural one. This is furthermore reflected in the fact that staff from migrant background is often employed in customer service rather than in programming, education or the leadership of cultural institutions. Furthermore, a programme which by our interviewees has been repeatedly mentioned in helping to increase migrant cultural participation is the Austrian-wide programme of “Hunger auf Kunst und Kultur.” This programme guarantees free admission of socioeconomic weak audiences to cultural institutions. Our findings therefore suggest that evaluating and improving migrant cultural participation always has to take into account intersections with other factors, such as the socioeconomic position as well as the level of education of persons with migrant backgrounds.

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<sup>1</sup> I.e., such as the theory of intersectionality.

<sup>2</sup> Statistik Austria. *Migration und Integration*, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Akbaba, Ülkü; Bratic, Ljubomir; Galehr, Sarah; Görg, Andreas; Pfeiffer, Gabriele C. *Kunst, Kultur und Theater für Alle! Impulse für eine transkulturelle Theateroffensive Studie zu Perspektiven der Kunst- und Kulturpolitik Wien 2010 – 2015 mit besonderem Fokus auf Migrationsrealität* Ein Projekt von IODO – Kunst, Kultur, Bildung und Wissenschaft. Wien, 2009.

## WHAT MIGRANTS?

In addition to factors of wealth and education other issues influence migrant cultural participation as well, especially age. The terms diversity as well as diversity management inherently points at the variety of backgrounds, belongings and ascriptions of people. Therefore, fostering migrant cultural participation generally has to differentiate between stakeholders described by the term migrants. This is also reflected in the fact that no causality exists in the relationship of factors and intersections. That is to say that people with migrant background are not more limited by their economic means in consuming cultural goods than other Austrians, since an Austrian study has shown that expenditure on cultural goods is on average as high among migrants than among persons with Austrian citizenship.<sup>4</sup> So no person with migrant background equals another person with migrant background. That puts into question migrant background as a sufficient indicator for education and participation in programmes of cultural institutions.

According to this question, our research has shown that the structure and programmes of education departments in museums are generally divided along the line of the age of visitors. Migrant background rather functions as a cross-sectional issue. The Wien Museum as well as the Mumok and Kunsthaus Bregenz have projects for adults on the one hand and projects for youngsters, kids and schools on the other hand. Obviously, this division interrelates with each other, since children's inclusion in cultural institution can bring their parents to visit the establishment. As such children may function as multipliers in fostering cultural participation of their parents.

## WHAT ART? WHAT CULTURE?

Fostering migrant cultural participation while taking into account other sections and factors such as age, socioeconomic position and level of education very much depends on the vision as well as on the character of an institution. That means that approaches of museums clearly differ from approaches of theatres. Furthermore, a contemporary orientation of an institution brings forth different content than more traditionally oriented houses. Examples can be found throughout almost all of the institutions under consideration.

For instance the cultural institutions that are very advanced in terms of cultural participation of migrants are for instance the Büchereien Wien (public libraries in Vienna) or the WUK (an open cultural house in Vienna). These institutions are, due to their character and self-understanding defined as institutions of exchange and dialogue. Libraries for instance, have the public mandate to educate and provide space for education and exchange. Fostering

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<sup>4</sup> EDUCULT. *Kunst, Kultur und interkultureller Dialog*. Wien, 2008, S.65

migrant cultural participation is therefore an inherent factor of the work of the library. Similarly, the WUK has, since its beginnings, been understood as a protected space for minorities. As such work and integration of migrant cultural initiatives have a long tradition in the house. Even inside a specific form of cultural institutions, challenges may differ. Museums such as the MUMOK – a museum for contemporary art – are confronted with different obstacles in reaching out to people with migrant background than for instance city museums such as the WIEN MUSEUM which is directly dedicated to the representation of city life and its changes. Our research has shown that when discussing diversity measures the character of an institution, its history and specifically the art form, are factors that are crucial in identifying ways to include migrants as visitors, programmers or staff into the institution.

### RELEVANCE OF LEADERSHIP

In several of the examined institutions the attempts and efforts of diversity management and migrant cultural participation have changed with new leadership. For instance, the interviewees from the MUMOK have emphasised that the current director of the museums gives special attention to these topics. This can help to foster migrant cultural participation in view of obstacles such as the question of financing.

The already mentioned scientific report evaluating the perspective of the 2010-2015 cultural programmes in Vienna emphasised the need for leadership when implementing diversity concepts. This is of particular importance, since the diversity concept is a top-down approach which tends to reproduce established power relations in an institution. In order to be successful the leadership of a specific organization, institution or sphere therefore has to be committed to it.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Akbaba, Ülkü; Bratic, Ljubomir; Galehr, Sarah; Görg, Andreas; Pfeiffer, Gabriele C. *Kunst, Kultur und Theater für Alle! Impulse für eine transkulturelle Theateroffensive Studie zu Perspektiven der Kunst- und Kulturpolitik Wien 2010 – 2015 mit besonderem Fokus auf Migrationsrealität* Ein Projekt von IODO – Kunst, Kultur, Bildung und Wissenschaft. Wien, 2009, S.41.

## LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

### MIGRANT PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS – THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE TARGET GROUP

*Round Table Discussion, 17.02.2015, Vienna*

The first Austrian MCP Broker Learning Partnership focussed on the perspective and experience of migrants and migrant self-organisation towards cultural institutions. The aim of the Learning Partnership was to clarify what expectations can be formulated by the target group itself. EDUCULT invited representatives of migrant cultural initiatives as well as migrant artists to identify challenges as well as needs and requirements for migrant cultural participation. In a round table following participants discussed a range of relevant topics.

Participants from this LP also participated in the next LPs. The conclusions drawn from the first LP furthermore provided the basis for the debates in the next LPs.

### MIGRANT CULTURAL PARTICIPATION IN MUSEUMS – FROM THE EXHIBITION TO INVOLVEMENT?

*Workshop, 24.02.2015, Vienna*

Research on migrant cultural participation in Austria has shown that participation very much depends on the form or art in which it is happening. This workshop looked specifically into the area of museums. The following questions led the debate: What does cultural participation in museums mean and how does it influence the offers, form of exhibition and mediation in museums? What role does the economic background of the audience and the artists as well as mediators play? In which way can diversity be best integrated in the strategic planning of museums?

### ACTING MIGRANT BACKGROUND? MIGRANT CULTURAL PARTICIPATION IN AUSTRIAN THEATRES

*Workshop 25.02.2015, Vienna*

As mentioned above the research study of the project has shown that migrant cultural participation very much depends on the artform in which it is happening. That means that migrant cultural participation in theatres is challenged by other factors than participation in other cultural areas. Therefore, LP 2 focussed on the specificities of migrant cultural participation in theatre. The questions leading the workshop debate were: What does cultural participation in theatres mean and how does it influence the repertoire, the content

of plays, the form of acting and the choice of actors as well as the whole organisation of a theatre? What advantages and disadvantages in terms of migrant cultural participation can be detected comparing the institutionalized scene versus the independent theatre scene? What role does the socio-economic background play and in which way can diversity as a goal be integrated in the strategic management of theatres the best?

## **EDUCATING PARTICIPATION? MIGRANT ACCESS TO CULTURAL AND ARTS EDUCATION**

*Round Table Discussion 12.03.2015, Vienna*

Categories of difference and the participation of minorities do not seem to play an important role in institution of cultural and arts education in Austria. This is specifically surprising considering the international setting of these institutions, such as the high number of international students and tutors. The round table discussion therefore broached the issues of how educational institutions in the arts sector open up to migrant cultural participation by promoting diversity approaches in organisation, curricula, etc. Questions that were discussed with experts from music schools as well as from an arts university and with researchers in the field were: How can increased sensibility for migrant cultural participation be reflected in arts educational offers? What new forms of migrant cultural participation are there on student level? What forms of research can support the increase of educational offers in this area?

## COMMON CONCLUSIONS

### RECENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE RELEVANCE OF MCP

- ▶ During the recent years an acknowledgement and sensitisation in terms of migrant cultural participation can be recognised in cultural institutions in Austria.
- ▶ As such, a debate about the topic has been witnessed for instance in museums and has found its way to mission statements of cultural institutions.
- ▶ In general, a slow opening of the still very traditional orientation of cultural institutions in Austria can be seen.
- ▶ The focus on the integration and participation of migrants is understood as the next phase of opening cultural institutions, after the focus has been on other minorities, such as women and social classes in the past.
- ▶ Phases are supported by different terms, from multi-culture, to interculturalism to diversity. In spite of its economic bias, diversity as a term is understood as helpful since it also “fits our time”.

### RELEVANCE OF INFORMATION/EDUCATIONAL/NETWORKS

- ▶ From the perspective of migrant self-organisation mediating institutions are still necessary in order to promote migrant cultural participation. One specific demand is an ombudsman-alike institution that can also help in terms of financing and coordination.
- ▶ Such institutions are crucial in terms of providing a network of initiatives, possibilities and opportunities for migrants in terms of cultural participation.
- ▶ During the last years an increase of such networks and initiatives promoting migrant cultural participation has been specifically witnessed in Vienna (including „Wien Woche“, „Diversity Lab“, „Kültür Gemma“, etc.) However, visibility of such initiatives and existing information for migrant cultural participation are missing.
- ▶ As such, it has been shown that big parts of the migrant youth is not informed at all about possibilities for working and studying in the cultural field. There seems to be a gap in the educational system concerning information about cultural opportunities for the youth.
- ▶ The interconnection between the educational system and cultural institutions is crucial in supporting migrant cultural participation. For instance free entry for youngsters under the age of 19 years is very helpful in fostering diversity of visitor in

museums. In combination with the curricula for arts education and history, visiting museums is a popular activity for school classes.

- Increased information about cultural offers and possibilities, supporting networks and educational initiatives is necessary because the main challenge to migrant cultural participation is social code. Social code means the knowledge of behaviour, discourses and processes in the cultural field. Migrants often do not possess these social prerequisites to support their own cultural participation.

### **PARTICIPATION THROUGH UNUSUAL FORMS**

- In order to break the traditional setting of Austrian cultural institutions and open them up to new publics, new forms of cultural production have to be applied.
- In traditional cultural institutions the usage of unusual formats (such as festivals, community theatre, workshops, youth clubs, etc.) helps to foster migrant cultural participation. By these means it is easier to communicate and represent new narratives, forms of participation and engagement to the public.
- However, the importance of unusual formats to promote migrant cultural participation also reflects on the fact that migrant participation is not yet an inherent part in programming and management of cultural institutions in Austria.
- Such unusual cultural formats are often also characterized by the cooperation with migrant self-organisations and other external experts.

### **REACHING OUT**

- The cooperation with external actors and experts in the field of diversity and migrant participation is also necessary in order to break with how institutions traditionally work.
- A range of participants in the learning partnership have emphasised the need “to go out” of the buildings in order to open their institutions to migrant cultural participation.
- Therefore, unusual formats also refer to projects with migrant communities or schools and youth clubs that attempt to go to the people and cooperate with them rather than bring them as passive users into the institutions.
- Leaving the buildings also points out the need for participatory approaches. In order to understand why cultural participation of migrants does not work, initiatives have to apply a bottom up approach when analysing and promoting migrant cultural participation.

- Furthermore, community curators are understood as helpful in reaching out to migrant communities. That means that mediators who have a migrant background themselves or are able to devote their time specifically to working on this issue can provide strong support in fostering migrant cultural participation.

### **MEDIATORS AS MAIN PROMOTERS OF MCP**

- The relevance of mediators – such as theatre pedagogues and other institutional staff devoted to the communication with users – in reaching out to migrant communities has been recognized throughout the learning partnerships. It was also staff from cultural institutions that mainly followed the invitation to the learning partnerships.
- An increasing acknowledgment of the relevance of mediators from inside cultural institutions can also be recognized. Furthermore, there seems to be increasing interest from people with migrant, multilingual, multicultural background to work in the field.
- However, mediators criticize the reduction of migrant cultural participation to their field of work. That means that the inclusion of migrants into cultural institutions is mainly reduced to audience development, without being reflected in other parts of the organisation.

### **LACK OF INSTITUTIONAL EMBEDMENT**

- Pilot research has already pointed at the fact that migrant cultural participation in cultural institutions is also a leadership decision. Only clear support and interest from the management can ensure qualitative implementation of migrant cultural participation.
- This finding has clearly been supported by the debates during the learning partnerships that also reported from experience of how change in leadership can strongly foster the commitment towards migrant cultural participation.
- The leadership is especially a prerequisite for structural embedment of efforts to promote migrant cultural participation. That means that only through leadership decisions efforts to promote migrant cultural participation can be included in different departments of an institution.
- Best practice examples of institutions in which migrant cultural participation is developing well are characterized by an institutional embedment of efforts to foster migrant cultural participation.

- ▶ In museums, for instance, efforts are not only reflected in multilingual guides through the exhibitions and specific formats in the framework program, but through the cooperation of mediators and curators already in the development of exhibitions. Furthermore, museums as very object-oriented cultural institutions can also change the presentation and collection of objects in order to foster migrant cultural participation.
- ▶ In theatres for instance, this means that not only theatre pedagogues develop new formats in which they work with migrants, but that efforts to decrease the threshold of participating in the theatre is also reflected through ticket prizes, through new narratives in the repertoire.
- ▶ Best practice examples from the learning partnerships can therefore be characterized by the fact that migrant cultural participation is a cross-sectional issue in all departments of the cultural institutions, including communications.

## ECONOMIC, SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Some of the participants in the learning partnership have reported an opening up of their institution to different audiences due to economic pressure. That means that economic considerations can support efforts to open up to new audiences.
- ▶ However, audience development as the only instrument of migrant cultural participation has been criticized strongly since it also fosters a stereotyping of target groups.
- ▶ At the same time culture is always in the economic crisis and under economic pressure. During times of crisis culture will be the first to be cut financially. At the same time culture is a policy area in which difficult issues such as “integration” are likely to be shifted to. Therefore, policies motivated economically and socially always need to be reflected critically in the cultural field.
- ▶ Finally, the issue of fostering migrant cultural participation is clearly rather a social issue, than an issue of ethnic and cultural belonging. Although issues of language and ethnicity are relevant in fostering migrant cultural participation, crucial factors derive from social prerequisites. Many Austrian public cultural institutions are still very elitist institutions that generally have to open up in order to legitimize their high subsidization.