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MANUCULTURA:

Recommendations

Introduction:

The MANUCULTURA partners have identified and analysed successful project models from the partner countries. A questionnaire was developed, used to evaluate the best practice examples, and was continually updated. In this document, the MANUCULTURA consortium provides a number of recommendations for the successful implementation of cultural education activities in the dual system of introductory vocational education and training¹. These recommendations, benefits, and principal points are presented from the perspectives of:

- ⇒ businesses
- ⇒ VET schools
- ⇒ cultural institutions

While analysing the various best practice examples and considering the perspectives as listed above, the MANUCULTURA partners have determined that in order to adequately present all the central conclusions, we would need to create more than a simple list of recommendations. Therefore, we have created a compendium of lessons learned and subdivided the following text into three main sections.

¹ Sources used as a basis for the recommendations:

- Results of statistical analyses in the best practice questionnaires
- Special aspects filtered out of the best practice questionnaires
- Telephone dialogues between the partners (businesses, VET schools, and cultural institutions)
- Personal observations of best practice examples
- Keywords (verbalised as the "Viennese Cloud" in the meetings in Vienna, in Bickenbach and in Copenhagen)

In the first section, the consortium answers the question "WHY is it important to provide cultural education in the context of vocational training?" The second section outlines HOW to do so, presenting a list of necessary resources, frameworks, and success factors. Finally, the MANUCULTURA partners hope to inspire the readers by presenting the main points to keep in mind when implementing educational projects for apprentices.

Why is it important to provide cultural education in the context of vocational training?

Proposition:

Upon analysing our sources, one result is evident to the MANUCULTURA partners: The main benefit of cultural education for apprentices is the acquisition of personal skills and competencies. Obviously, the type of skills and competencies enhanced by cultural education depends on the type of cultural education provided. Is it "Education in the arts" or is it "Education through the arts"? But regardless of the subject matter and direction, the MANUCULTURA consortium is convinced that young people in vocational training benefit from cultural education, which helps empower them to contribute to culture and to cultural institutions, and thus have a stronger voice in culture and in society.

MANUCULTURA partners identified two possible learning processes developed through cultural education that deserve closer attention.

On an individual level: Through artistic activity, a special form of creative ability can be developed which enables people to approach challenges in their vocational context differently, namely artistically (in an open, present, flexible way and according to the situation, or in a "playful-explorative-dialogic manner").²

On a social level: Dialogue and collaboration co-produce meaning. The differences, divergences and tension among different voices create opportunity for a deeper understanding and for new thoughts.³

The general positive effects that can be achieved with and through cultural education have already been described in detail in numerous European project handbooks. During recent years they have been verified in various studies such as Ann Bamford's *The Wow Factor* (2006). This kind of educational work has been supported through various initiatives like the UNESCO Roadmap of Cultural Education, with the intent of using cultural education to support social cohesion. Continuing the findings of these studies and initiatives, the MANUCULTURA consortium focusses on some special results inherent to cultural education within the dual system of vocational training and using "Education through the arts" in this document.

² See Michael Brater, Sandra Freygart, Marlies Rainer, Elke Rahmann: Kunst als Handeln – Handeln als Kunst. Was die Arbeitswelt und Berufsbildung von Künstlern lernen können. Bielefeld, 2011, S. 187 – 195

³ See Bakhtin cited by Olga Dysthe in various publications

Benefits from the perspective of businesses:

- ⇒ The ability to lead an open and respectful dialogue – the basis for clear and binding communication in the world of business.
- ⇒ The ability to deal flexibly with new and unusual situations – a crucial skill for young professionals in the modern business world.
- ⇒ The ability to act spontaneously and on one's own initiative – a fundamental leadership quality and a pre-requisite for taking responsibility.
- ⇒ The ability of apprentices to "think outside the box".

Benefits from the perspective of VET schools

- ⇒ To increase the motivation of apprentices/students in their learning process.
- ⇒ To give the teachers fresh input regarding new ways to learn and teach (using the experience of cultural educators).
- ⇒ To use the space of cultural institutions for learning purposes.

Benefits from the perspective of cultural institutions

- ⇒ Fulfils the commitment of the cultural institution to offer cultural education to all groups of society.
- ⇒ Establishes the cultural institution as an intercultural meeting place and underlines this as one of its key aims.
- ⇒ Participates in mutual learning. Learning from new target groups may provide useful knowledge and inspiration for improving own practice.
- ⇒ Addressing a target group which represents a large percentage of youth is also valuable from a marketing perspective.
- ⇒ Enables development of new partnership models with businesses (for instance, offering cultural workshops with apprentices of a company in exchange for sponsorship deals).

How can cultural education be realised in the context of vocational training?

General remarks:

- ⇒ The analysed best practice examples show that the number of professional people responsible for the successful realisation of a project should be proportionate to the number of apprentices. It is important to have enough people to ensure that small group work is possible. The organisers/teachers should be educators and/or artists (as was the case in most of the best practice examples we analysed). In some cases it might be valuable to enlist a (museum) curator, a media expert or a social worker. Keep in mind, however, that at least one person from the project team should be pedagogically and artistically trained.
- ⇒ Always maintain transparency regarding the project setting.
- ⇒ Do cultural education in a participatory way and/or empower apprentices to take part in culture actively.
- ⇒ Communicate on an eye-to-eye level.
- ⇒ Use cultural institutions as a space for active learning and generation of meaning.
- ⇒ Establish relationships and make the apprentices feel welcome in the cultural institution. (This is also a question of atmosphere: Make the apprentices feel like VIPs.)

Necessary resources, frameworks, and factors for success...

...from the perspective of businesses

- ⇒ It is valuable to have a clear division of responsibilities and to appoint contact persons in the company, in the VET school and in the cultural institution. (The perfect set-up would additionally include a "cultural agent", who mediates the process among the three different partners).
The aim is to create good cooperation among all partners with clear task division and reciprocal information exchange.
- ⇒ It is important that the management is positive towards cultural education in vocational training and will clearly communicate within the company the need for and effects of cultural education.
- ⇒ Along with technical education, cultural education should be an inherent part of the trainee program of each company.

...from the perspective of VET schools

- ⇒ It is helpful to have clear responsibilities.
- ⇒ Training teachers about non-formal methods of cultural education supports the integration of cultural education and use of art in school curricula.
- ⇒ Create a cooperation with local cultural institutions and with external experts.
- ⇒ Appoint a responsible person in the school who secures the sustainability of cultural education by:
 - serving as a liaison between the school, the businesses, the cultural institutions and external experts in cultural education;

- creating sound cooperation with and clear task division among the partners;
- supporting reciprocal information exchange.

...from the perspective of cultural institutions

⇒ Didactic factors

- Use a variety of creative pedagogical methods.
- Incorporate multimodality (textural, oral, linguistic, spatial, and visual modes of expression).
- Set a clear framework but enable an open-ended outcome.
- Allow heterogeneity of voices (a "multi-voicedness" or diversity of voices).
- Make sure to connect content to the reality of the apprentice.
- Allow time for reflection.
- Make room for intercultural awareness and intercultural exchange.

⇒ Relational factors

- Establish a "feel-at-home" atmosphere.
- Enable a view behind the curtain of the cultural institution.
- Offer possibilities for "docking". (Give the apprentices clearly defined opportunities to revisit.)

⇒ Framework factors

- Prioritise building meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships with VETs/companies.
- Enable processes for mutual learning.

GET INSPIRED

Main points to keep in mind when implementing educational projects for apprentices

1. Build a bridge between one's own image and different cultural expressions:

For example, involve apprentices personally in the process of creating art, or let them become part of an (exposed) art work, and let them revisit it.

Best practice examples: Identity and Community (ARKEN Museum); Between towers (ARKEN Museum); Language Learners in the art museum (SMK – Statens Museum for Kunst); Language unlooses art (mumok – museum moderner kunst stiftung ludwig wien); Movement Session (CESIE)

2. Use the concept of participation:

Give apprentices the opportunity to be actively involved in the process of a cultural education project by being informed (the most basic level of participation), by joining in a conversation, by co-deciding, by co-creating, and by creating on their own (the highest level of participation).

Best practice examples: Abenteuer Kultur (Alnatura); Between towers (ARKEN Museum); trick-my-film (Birte Brudermann and Bartek Kubiak); FilialART (Alnatura); Log In – Log Out (MSU – Muzej Suvremene Umjetnosti Zagreb); Creative thinking Session (CESIE)

3. Initiate artistic work in the companies:

Allow apprentices to create art in their place of work. Use workplace materials for the artwork. Let the apprentices make their own artwork and gain new perspectives on real work life.

Best practice examples: trick-my-film (Birte Brudermann and Bartek Kubiak); FilialART (Alnatura)

4. Use simple language:

Try to avoid long sentences, technical terms, and/or loanwords.

Best practice examples: Language unlooses art (mumok – museum moderner kunst stiftung ludwig wien); Between towers (ARKEN Museum); Identity and Community (ARKEN Museum); trick-my-film (Birte Brudermann and Bartek Kubiak)

5. Change the power structure of language:

Empower an alternate use of language alongside "the language of the expert".

Best practice examples: Identity (ARKEN Museum); Language Learners in the art Museum (SMK – Statens Museum for Kunst); Language unlooses art (mumok – museum moderner kunst stiftung ludwig wien); Movement Session (CESIE)

6. Use art education to empower language skills:

For example, design a conversation-focused lesson or series of lessons in an exhibition which might inspire and facilitate apprentices to train their language skills.

Best practice example: Language Learners in the art museum (SMK – Statens Museum for Kunst)

7. Let apprentices serve as role models:

For example, apprentices can give guided tours to other apprentices.

Best practice example: Part of Vålby (Nikolaj Kunsthal)

8. Give apprentices the opportunity to be on stage:

Let them present their creative work on stage. Play role games to train their self-confidence or to practice dealing with difficult customers, etc.

Best practice examples: Abenteuer Kultur (Alnatura); Log In – Log Out (MSU – Muzej Suvremene Umjetnosti Zagreb)

9. Use the company as an area for presentation:

Plan the project presentation in cooperation with the company while respecting the needs of the company and the needs of your project.

Best practice example: FilialART (Alnatura)

10. It's okay to make mistakes:

Mistakes are an important way to gain experience, or as Samuel Beckett put it:

“Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better.”