

# THE SWEDISH ARTS COUNCIL'S STRATEGY ON CULTURE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

## **Introduction**

The Swedish Arts Council is dedicated to enhancing opportunities for children and young people to experience professional art and culture and engage in creative activities of their own. This mandate is discharged within the framework of the Arts Council's three principal tasks: monitoring cultural developments, providing the background information required for government cultural policy, and helping implement government cultural policy.

Art and culture create the necessary conditions for social inclusion, individual development and greater acceptance of the outside world. It is therefore particularly important that young people be regularly exposed to art and culture and that they pursue their own creative activities in their childhood and teenage years. The Swedish Arts Council has therefore adopted the present strategy to ensure that its efforts to make art and culture accessible to children and young people are carried out in an organised, focused and sustainable manner.

### *General guiding premises*

The Arts Council's child and youth culture activities are founded on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the norms, values and principles expressed in it, and on its mandates, which are promulgated by letter of instruction and regulations.

### *Guiding principles of the Swedish Arts Council*

The Arts Council's basic guiding principle is that all children and young people (slightly over 20% of the population, according to Statistics Sweden's Yearbook for 2007) are entitled to equal opportunity to enjoy a range of cultural and artistic offerings and to engage in creative pursuits of their own. This applies to everyone – regardless of age, gender, language or religion; national, ethnic or social origin; or living circumstances or functional ability.

### *General aim of the Swedish Arts Council as regards culture for children and young people*

The aim is to integrate a child perspective into the Arts Council's activities. The Arts Council makes a distinction between "child perspective" as a concept and the concept of "children's perspectives", analogous to the distinction between child culture and children's culture.

For the Arts Council, applying a child perspective means

- analysing the consequences of projected activities relating to children's and young people's access to high-quality professional culture

- monitoring cultural developments relating to culture for children and young people through reports from grant recipients and through internal and external evaluations
- providing background information for government cultural policy on culture for children and young people, through annual reports, budget input data, reports and assessments
- helping implement national cultural policy relating to children and young people, through grant allocation and outreach activities

The child perspective must be integrated into the Arts Council's equal opportunity, diversity and accessibility programmes, as well as into intercultural activities and the internationalisation of cultural life. Similarly, these perspectives must be integrated into the Arts Council's activities involving culture for children and young people.

## **The Swedish Arts Council monitors cultural developments**

The Arts Council monitors cultural developments through various means. These include dialogue with grant recipients, participation in conferences and dialogue with regional and county administrations, as well as media monitoring and other analyses of developments in the field.

### *Aims*

- The child perspective is incorporated into the Arts Council's dialogues with responsible public organisations on the national, regional and local levels through its consistently bringing up and stressing the child perspective.
- The child perspective is also incorporated into the Arts Council's dialogues with the country's cultural creators through its consistently bringing up and stressing the child perspective.
- It is incumbent upon the Arts Council to participate in relevant networks for culture for children and young people on both the international and the national levels.
- It is incumbent upon the Arts Council to cooperate with relevant government departments, agencies and organisations in all areas of art and all educational sectors.

## **The Arts Council provides background information for national cultural policy**

One Arts Council mandate is to provide background information for the development of national cultural policy. This applies to follow-ups and assessments

of areas included in grant allocation (in particular, government commissions) and producing statistics.

#### *Aims*

- The Arts Council shall be fully informed of the child and youth-focused activities of institutions and organisations receiving financial support, having directed questions regarding activities for children and young people and their participatory opportunities to institutions receiving financial support and to independent cultural activities.
- The Arts Council shall produce relevant, useful statistics relating to the area of child and youth culture.
- The Arts Council shall gather knowledge about child culture in a recurrent publication and contribute in this way to a better overall understanding of children's and young people's access culture, in terms of the range of both available offerings and educational initiatives, and of their own creative activities relating to these initiatives.
- The Arts Council shall keep fully abreast of relevant current research on culture in relation to children and young people, and shall actively support the planning and initiating of new research.
- At least 30% of the research funds at the disposal of the Arts Council shall be allocated to research into culture for children and young people.

#### **The Arts Council helps implement national cultural policy**

The Arts Council plays a key role in implementing national cultural policy. This is done through communication, cooperation with other players and grant allocation. Grant allocation not aimed at children and young people is also among the Arts Council's concerns, in that culture for adults may eventually be consumed by children and young people. The cultural consumption patterns of children and young people are often determined by the cultural consumption patterns of adults in close proximity to them.

#### *Aims*

- Issues of child and youth culture shall be integrated into activity planning and shall be followed up in the annual report.
- The Arts Council shall keep abreast of and shall

integrate a child perspective into its grant allocation operations. This will be assured through special training for Arts Council employees on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and on what it means to apply a child perspective to Arts Council activities.

- The Arts Council shall be an active cooperation partner in relevant networks relating to child and youth culture.
- Every year, the Arts Council shall participate in and arrange relevant seminars and conferences.
- At least 30% of the Arts Council's total grant allocation shall be to operations and projects that directly benefit child and youth culture. This will be assured by analysing the relationship between Arts Council grants relating to operations for children and young people, and grants relating to operations for adults, in both individual decisions and Arts Council operations as a whole, and to set priorities if necessary. In addition, it shall let different forms of funding interact with each other to obtain the greatest possible benefit with respect to culture for children and young people.
- The Arts Council shall keep well abreast of relevant current research and shall disseminate information about such research, through channels such as the Arts Council's website.

#### **Responsibility**

##### *Director-General*

The director-general of the Arts Council shall be responsible for the Arts Council's operations.

##### *Department Heads*

The department heads are responsible for ensuring that a child perspective informs the operations and is applied in the day-to-day work of the department.

##### *Coordinator*

The coordinator of culture for children and young people shall be responsible for monitoring developments, gathering knowledge and providing methodological support for operations relating to the child perspective. On the other hand, the coordinator should not actively drive the issue; rather, the responsibility for driving the operations lies with the director-general and the particular department head and unit supervisor involved.

# SWEDISH ARTS COUNCIL