EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Educational systems in the Asia-Pacific region are adapting to the new opportunities and challenges of increasingly knowledge-based societies. In the context of this shift towards a new educational paradigm, the mainstreaming of arts within educational systems can contribute to improving the quality of education and to human development and the safeguarding of cultural diversity through its role in forming creative, innovative and socially tolerant generations of people.

This process of adaptation implies a rethinking of the role of the arts in education. Conventional (Western) approaches to arts instruction stress the teaching of art history and aesthetics and the learning of artistic skills so the student is able to reproduce artistic forms and create new ones in a competent manner.

This approach was undoubtedly important, however, in increasingly knowledge-and information-based societies, the arts have become a vital instrument for communal expression, intercultural exchange, learning and professional advancement. They enable people to engage in personal as well as collaborative endeavours that contribute to community well-being and personal identity as well as fostering creativity and cultural diversity. As a component of arts education they have become a dynamic tool to challenge outdated ideas and stimulate innovative thinking in a manner that fosters social understanding and tolerance.

UNESCO is contributing to this process with the Asia-Pacific Action Plan (previously titled Action Plan Asia), which has supported the establishment a series of Observatories. The Arts in Education Observatories are functioning as clearing-houses of information about the instrumental uses of arts in education. The Observatories collect, synthesize and disseminate information from a regional network of input-providing institutions. This facilitates knowledge-sharing and information-utilization by the network of institutions and by UNESCO, its Member States and cooperation partners. In the long term, the Observatories are to provide the basis for informed advocacy processes, which lies close to UNESCO’s mandate and will also be supported by the Arts in Education (AiE) community. It is hoped that the Observatories will thereby contribute to mainstreaming arts, creativity and culture in both formal and non-formal education.
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1. Context and Background

In furtherance of UNESCO’s long-standing objective to mainstream arts education within formal educational systems, in 1999 the Director General issued the International Appeal for the Promotion of Arts Education and Creativity at School, which established a set of proposals to “ensure that the teaching of the arts [...] is compulsory throughout the school cycle, from nursery school up until the last year of secondary school”. In response to the International Appeal, the UNESCO Division of Arts and Creativity initiated and supported the organisation of six meetings on arts education. The aim of these pedagogical conferences was to strengthen arts education curricula and to create the conditions for the integration of arts education programmes into national education systems.

The six meetings on arts education were held in six regions between 2000 and 2004, in Africa, Latin America & the Caribbean, the Arab States, Europe, the Pacific and Asia.

The meeting for the Pacific region was held in Fiji in 2002, and focused on the promotion of arts in education as a means of safeguarding culture and heritage while enabling creative adaptation to new global realities.

In January 2004 the Asia regional symposium, organized by UNESCO Bangkok took place in Hong Kong. This meeting focused on the instrumental use of arts in education.

Seeking to supplement the traditional “arts for the arts sake” approach, the Asia meeting promoted the Arts-in-Education (AiE) approach which gives the arts a much expanded role in education. The box on the following page describes the AiE approach in further detail.

The Asia regional symposium explored the potential of the arts to:

- Contribute to children’s development (intellectual and social development through the arts); and increase creativity and innovation.

- Improve the quality of education by tapping into locally-available (cultural) resources to introduce local realities and challenges into the educational system (endogenous development, attainment of social objectives and sustainable development through the arts).

- Contribute to the safeguarding of cultural diversity (preservation of heritage and cultural identity, promotion of cultural diversity and innovation through the arts).
The Arts-in-Education Approach

Arts-in-Education (AiE) is an approach to teaching which uses art as a tool to educate students in a variety of subjects. This approach does not simply aim to bring art subjects into curricula (arts education) and it is not about teaching art, although artistic skills and art appreciation are also learned in the process. The AiE approach uses the arts to stimulate cognitive and emotional development and to encourage innovative and creative thinking so that students learn more effectively in a range of subject-areas (such as mathematics, science and heritage education).

Supporters of the AiE approach often explain the approach by referring to the concept of “multiple intelligences” and multi-literacies, which postulates that there are many kinds of “intelligence” and literacies that students learn and understand in different ways. Supporters of this approach argue that unlike conventional teaching approaches, which concentrate on verbal and logical thinking (and thereby favour the students with strengths in those kinds of intelligence), the AiE approach stimulates a wide range of types of intelligence. They argue that using the AiE approach allows educators to not only facilitate verbal and logical thinking but also encourage other kinds of intelligence, such as kinaesthetic, musical and interpersonal. By stimulating all kinds of intelligence, this approach enables all types of learners to become multi-literate and to understand the subject matter, making learning easier for all. Supporters of the AiE approach argue also that using the arts instrumentally in education makes learning more enjoyable and brings about active student participation in lessons.

There is an ever-growing raft of scientific studies of the brain in relation to arts learning and the benefits to intellectual development where the transference of skills learned in arts disciplines, notably music, to other subjects and activities such as language development, literacy, numeracy, measures of intelligence, creativity, fine motor co-ordination, concentration, self-confidence, emotional sensitivity, social skills, team work, self-discipline, and relaxation are measured. In addition, qualitative psychological and education studies on arts learning suggest that the positive effects of engagement on personal and social development only occur if it is an enjoyable and rewarding experience. This has implications for the quality of teaching, not only for the arts but for all curriculum areas. Research also tells us that teachers as learners, notably in arts contexts, who are actively involved in their discipline and in applying professional learning to their teaching, are most likely to fully engage their students, ultimately improving students’ achievement and their enjoyment of school (Hallam, 2010).

Supporters of the AiE approach also argue that the use of arts as a foundation for teaching can cultivate sound thinking habits in students and stimulate cognitive development. They argue that through looking at, engaging in and thinking about art (such as visual, plastic and performing arts) students develop better analytical and interactive skills and acquire broader, more creative, innovative, and clearer thought-patterns. Studies have shown, also, that the arts are a means of developing applicable skills. For example, learning about music enhances spatial reasoning abilities while studying drama builds verbal skills.

As well as making learning easier and more effective and cultivating better thinking habits, the AiE approach enables the incorporation of cultural traditions into education - particularly traditional and local forms of art - through drawing on local artists, craftsmen, and community elders and incorporating their skills and knowledge into lessons. Because much of our cultural heritage is often artistic (such as traditional music, dance, crafts and sculpture), when these art forms are used for teaching about other subjects, this enables the mainstreaming of aspects of local culture and heritage into educational systems. The AiE approach goes beyond educating students about culture, it enables the use of artistic culture as a tool for education. This applies not only to tangible, but also to intangible elements of culture.
As well as discussing the instrumental role of arts in education, the Asia meeting reviewed best practice case studies, relevant qualitative and quantitative research examples, and policy issues. A publication of the case studies presented during the meeting and entitled “Educating for Creativity: Bringing the Arts and Culture into Asian Education” was subsequently produced.
The Hong Kong meeting also discussed UNESCO’s future plans for action in promoting arts in education and mainstreaming the arts in national educational systems. One of UNESCO’s planned global actions was the convening of a World Conference on Arts Education in Portugal in 2006 which will “aim to promote research in arts education, enhance culture and education advocacy, and launch a strategy for implanting art in and out of the school environment”. Within the Asia-Pacific region UNESCO Bangkok developed an Action Plan for the promotion of the instrumental use of arts in education in Asia which later came to include Australia and the Pacific. This plan will commence with the establishment of a number of Observatories as outlined in the following sections.

The Hong Kong meeting further discussed UNESCO’s plans for action in promoting the Arts-in-Education and mainstreaming the arts in national educational systems. As part of UNESCO’s global actions the organisation convened the First World Conference on Arts Education in Lisbon, Portugal in 2006 which aimed “to promote research in arts education, enhance culture and education advocacy, and launch a strategy for implanting art in and out of the school environment”. The main outcome of the first World Conference was the publication of the "Road Map for Arts Education". The Road Map aims to (i) establish a basic framework of understanding of the concept of arts education, (ii) advocate the importance and essential role of arts education and (iii) offer strategic recommendations for policy related decisions and actions in implementing arts education.

Within the Asia-Pacific region UNESCO Bangkok following the recommendations developed in the Road Map for Arts education developed an Action Plan for the promotion of the instrumental use of Arts-in-Education in Asia which included Australia and the Pacific. The implementation of this plan commenced with the establishment of a number of Observatories.

The Second World Conference on Arts Education held in May 2010 in Seoul, Korea built on the work of the successful First World Conference. As well as reinforcing the many dimensions discussed at the first conference, it enlarged the scope to notably include the socio-cultural dimensions of arts education, embrace the diversity of learning environments and reinforce the role of arts education in social cohesion and cultural diversity.

The main outcome of the Conference was the “Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education”. The Seoul Agenda calls upon UNESCO Member States, civil society, professional organizations and communities to recognize its governing goals, to employ the proposed strategies, and to implement the action items in a concerted effort to realize the full potential of high quality arts education to positively renew educational systems, to achieve crucial social and cultural objectives, and ultimately to benefit children, youth and life-long learners of all ages.

The Seoul Agenda reaffirmed the importance of the work of the Arts Education observatories as an essential tool in developing and distributing arts education research as well as disseminating exemplary arts education practices.
2. Rationale for the *Arts in Education Observatories*

The main recommendation that came out of the Hong Kong meeting was that UNESCO improve knowledge-sharing and act as an advocate for the reform of current educational systems to incorporate the arts within educational systems. It was recommended that UNESCO create networks of institutions which will provide frameworks and useful data to support advocacy processes, influence policy making and encourage reform.

This recommendation was based on the fact that in Asia research and evidence supporting the benefits of integrating the arts into education are scarce, anecdotal and difficult to access. Even in cases of successful design and implementation, arts education programmes often fail to convey their theoretical assumptions or fail to document their outcomes. There are therefore few best-practice case studies in the region which can be used to support advocacy processes. This lack of a readily accessible body of information is deemed as a major setback for improving practice, influencing policy making, and integrating the arts into the educational systems of Asia and the Pacific.

There is clearly a need for better research and knowledge-sharing in the field of arts education. Qualitative research methods are particularly appropriate in order to reflect the richness and complexity that is often found in Asia realities and cultures, in particular to describe the role of artists, local artisans and holders of traditional knowledge. At the same time, quantitative research is also necessary to explain the linkages between arts instruction and intellectual and social development of children in a more general and non context-specific manner.

In order to influence policy-making processes, qualitative and quantitative research must be systematized and networked. This will be achieved through the establishment of a number of UNESCO Arts in Education Observatories, which will function as described below.

3. Arts in Education Observatories: Objectives, Organizational Structure, Research Focus and Scope

3.1 Objectives:

The UNESCO Arts in Education Observatories will function as clearing-houses of information pertaining to the instrumental uses of the arts in education. The Observatories will collect, analyze, synthesize and disseminate information from a network of input-providing institutions or individuals. This will ensure that information is adequately collected and appropriately utilized by the networked institutions, UNESCO and its Member States. In the long term, the Observatories are to become the basis for informed advocacy processes, which lies close to UNESCO’s mandate and will also be supported the Arts in Education (AiE) community. It is hoped that the Observatories will thereby contribute to mainstreaming arts, creativity and culture in formal and non-formal educational systems.

3.2 Organizational Structure:

To achieve these objectives, the Observatories will be part of the following organizational structure.
**Observatories.** Certain institutions with a solid background as a focal point for arts education and a demonstrated ability to act as a clearing-house of information will be requested by UNESCO to host Arts in Education Observatories. According to its own interests and capabilities, each Observatory will be assigned a specialized scope of observation (ref. section 3.4 and 4).

These UNESCO Observatories will collect the information provided by the network of institutions, synthesize it and repackage it for delivery in print and electronic formats to the networked institutions and other relevant organizations. In addition, the Observatories, being in the privileged position as a knowledge hub, will be encouraged to steer complementary research and to support advocacy activities (ref. section 5).

**Networked Institutions.** A voluntary network of teaching, research and support institutions or individuals (including universities, teacher-training institutes, educational NGOs, professional artists’ associations and artist support groups) will provide information on the use of arts in education to the Observatories in the form of best-practice case studies, analyzed research or raw statistical data. This information will be largely generated from their own research and the in-house experience of the networked institutions.

**UNESCO Secretariat:** The UNESCO Bangkok Office acts as a secretariat of the network and its primary function is to coordinate the work of the observatories and managing its membership base. The role of UNESCO is developed in further details under section 7.

**The Asia Pacific Arts Education Hub (APAH):** Aside from the online tools developed by each observatory, the APAH will serve as a virtual place for discussions and cooperation between members of the network and facilitate the information gathering and dissemination role of the observatories within the network but also to the arts education community in the region and beyond. The APAH will be hosted by Korea Arts and Culture Education Service (KACES).

### 3.3 Research Focus:

In furtherance of the Summary Statement of the Asia Regional Meeting, the Observatories will support UNESCO’s goals by collecting and collating data and facilitating or conducting research on the role and effect of incorporating the arts within educational systems. Research will focus on the effect of AiE on the following areas:

- Intellectual and social development; creativity and innovation:
  - (i) cognitive (skill-based) transfer: music and spatial reasoning; drama and verbal skills; reflective thinking and “multi-literacies” through arts; and
  - (ii) affective (motivation-based) transfer: artistic performance and self-concept; developing intra-personal and inter-personal skills through the arts.
  - (iii) relevant curriculum which cultivates reflective thinking, problem solving skills and capacity to innovate; promotes the interdisciplinary learning of arts and science; and uses the potential of ICT for self-expression and communication;
Quality of education:
(i) motivation and engagement of students and teachers;
(ii) the development of indicators to reflect the contribution of the arts to an education of quality;

Safeguarding of cultural diversity:
(i) integration of artists, traditional master artisans and bearers of traditional knowledge;
(ii) respect for and engagement with local communities and cultures by using the arts to reflect on topics such as local endogenous development, peace and social cohesion and sustainable development;
(iii) the promotion of heritage education through multi-arts programmes.

3.4 Scope of Observation

Each Observatory will have a different “scope of observation” according to its capabilities and interests. Ideally:

- Observatories should have a holistic approach to the use of different artistic disciplines (performing arts, visual arts, architecture, music or multi disciplinary research etc.) in education.

- Although the initial geographical scope may be national, Observatories should have the capacity to carry out their job beyond their national borders into a wider sub-regional cultural area (e.g. the Himalayas, inland Southeast Asia, etc.).

- Observatories should focus on best practice case studies from both formal and non-formal education - ranging from early childhood education through to secondary, tertiary and adult education.

4. Characteristics of the Observatories (Identification and Selection Criteria)

UNESCO will designate the Arts in Education Observatories according to the following criteria:

(1) Background as focal point of arts and education, including:
- Linkages to educational and cultural NGOs and networks;
- Relevant publications in the field of arts in education;
- Support from government and donor agencies;
- Capacity to work across borders and boundaries; and
- Institutional credibility and recognized leadership

(2) Ability to act as an active clearing house, including:
- Set-up and management of websites and databases;
- Synthesis and dissemination of information both in print and electronic formats;
- Virtual networking (running of discussion groups, information exchange and sharing procedures);
- Advocacy and promotion of clearing house activities and outputs; and
- Human resources (ideally a full-time director who can coordinate and mobilize assistance in the various aspects of clearing house activities)
5. Activities of the Observatories

Best practice pertaining to the instrumental use of arts in education is not easily available to practitioners and education planners. In order to overcome this limitation, the primary function of each Observatory will be to collect existing information and present it in a web-accessible manner (i.e. inventories of research and teaching/learning materials).

In addition to collecting and disseminating existing information, the Observatories are also expected to analyze to synthesize and repackage incoming information, presenting it in various usable formats (e.g. best practice series, production of teaching/learning tools, synthesis and analysis of research findings, policy briefs, etc.).

Observatories are also expected to present these outputs in various kinds of electronic and printed publications, possibly including separate/joint newsletters or a joint research journal. Steered by the Advisory Panel, the research journal will aim to encourage applied research in those areas where large information gaps remain, so that all the topics included in the research focus (ref. 3.3) of the Observatories can eventually be covered.

Below is a detailed list of suggested activities of the Observatories. They will:

- Compile an annotated inventory of research;
- Compile an annotated inventory of teaching/learning materials;
- Produce summarised (3 to 5 pages) accounts of successful activities or projects, i.e. a series of best-practice cases;
- Review good teaching/learning materials, extract ready-to-use lessons, and compile materials into a package for teachers and students;
- Synthesize and analyze present research findings from studies (between 10 and 20) on a particular theme or topic, which have implications for policy and practice;

The Observatories will also have an important advocacy role. In this regard, they will undertake activities such as:

- Produce policy briefs - short summaries of research with recommendations for policy making; or synthesis of several related research projects with policy implications;
- Produce or collate and publish advocacy and promotional materials (both print and electronic-based);
- Promote the Observatories’ websites;
- Organize or facilitate seminars with governmental bodies responsible for curriculum development, arts education and arts in education programmes (National Arts Councils, Ministerial Task Forces); and
- Produce subject-related publications to be presented at educational forums.
- Produce periodic newsletters presenting case studies, research findings and policy briefs, and disseminating the work of the Observatories; and
- Publish an interactive research journal, directed by an advisory board and a commissioning editor who would change with each issue – succinct monographs focusing on the success of best-practice cases and/or focusing on under-researched topics.
6. Operational Principles of the Observatories

- Objectives and evaluation: The Observatories will function as a “community of practice”. This approach will entail the establishment of commonly agreed objectives and accountability measures among the Observatories. This will be done through:
  - Annual face-to-face meetings gathering representatives from the observatories which will serve to assess the work of the observatories and mutually agree upon collective research objectives
  - Annual progress reports to be provided to UNESCO which will be collated in the form of an annual Network Activity Report

- Memorandum of Understanding: as part of the formal establishment of an observatory, the host institution will enter into an agreement with UNESCO through the signing of an MOU. The initial length will be 3 years and will be renewed upon an internal assessment of the Observatories activities and performance.

- Financial and human self-sustainability: The Observatories are expected to function within the scope of existing programmes and resources of the host institution

- Use of ICT: In the nature of clearing-houses for the instrumental use of arts in education, the output of the Observatories will be web-accessible. The Observatories’ websites will be linked to the Arts in Education website of UNESCO

- Virtual Networking: The Observatories draw their strength from the networked institutions. In order to ensure that the networked institutions contribute voluntarily and on a regular basis, the Observatories will encourage the networked institution to contribute to the Asia pacific Arts Education Hub (APAH) by submitting information and research.

7. UNESCO’s Support to the Observatories

The UNESCO Culture Unit provides coordination and secretariat support to the Observatories by:

- Acting as the primary liaison with members
- Promoting and administer the expansion of the network through recruiting new members
- Managing the database of the network, reviewing new application and establishing MOU’s;
- Organizing and supporting face-to-face working sessions;
- Advocate for the work of the UNESCO Network for Arts Education
- Ensuring that the work of the network is visible, keeping the UNESCO website updated and disseminating information as widely as possible; and

While UNESCO will assist in other ways, it is not able to provide regular technical or financial support to the Observatories (for activities such as website maintenance, etc) and hence effective and coordinated fund-raising activities will be essential for the development of this project.
Project-specific funding may be available through a number of UNESCO financing arrangements, most notably through the UNESCO Participation Programme.

8. Applications and Procedures for Hosting an Observatory

Universities, higher learning institutions and research institutes specialized in the instrumental use of arts in education are invited to apply to host a UNESCO Arts in Education Observatory.

The procedure is as follows:

1. Applicants submit the application form and an endorsement letter by the appropriate authority (e.g. Head of University or Association) to the UNESCO Bangkok Regional Unit for Culture. Application forms can be obtained upon request from the UNESCO Regional Unit for Culture.

2. UNESCO will select host institutions, in accordance with the identification and selection criteria referred to in section 4.

3. The UNESCO Bangkok Culture Unit will negotiate with the successful applicants and establish a Memorandum of Understanding.
Application for Observatories

UNESCO Asia-Pacific Action Plan - Arts in Education Observatories

- This form is applicable for universities or research institutions that wish to host an Arts in Education Observatory.

- The application form can be completed on your computer (it does not need to be printed out). Please complete the application form (in English) and submit it to the address below along with other pertinent documents.

- The application should be endorsed by the appropriate authority (e.g. head of university or association). A sample letter is attached for reference.

Contact details:

**Regional Unit for Culture, UNESCO Bangkok**
P.O. Box 967, Prakanong Post Office
Bangkok 10110, Thailand
Tel.: +66 2391 0577 ext 520
Fax: +66 2391 0866
Email: culture@unescobkk.org
# Application Form

**UNESCO Asia-Pacific Action Plan - Arts in Education Observatories**

## 1. General Information

Name of university/institution

Name of faculty/department/school

Name and title/Position of person endorsing the application

## 2. Contact Information

**Contact person**

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**Additional contacts to receive updates (names and email addresses)**

a.

b.

c.
3. Background as Focal Point of Arts and Education (ref. section 4)

(1) Links to educational and cultural NGOs and networks (list of potential network institutions)

(2) Relevant publications in the field of arts in education (list of publications in the last five years)

(3) Support from government and donor agencies (list of externally financed projects for the last five years)

(4) Capacity to work across borders and boundaries (list of international projects, organization of international events, etc.)

(5) Institutional credibility (brief description of the available human, technical and financial resources)

(6) Personal leadership (bio-data of the person responsible for the Observatory)
4. Ability to Act as a Clearing House (ref. section 4)

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<td>Set-up and management of websites and databases</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Human resources (ideally a full-time officer who can coordinate and mobilize assistance in the various aspects of clearing house activities)</td>
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4. Proposed Research Focus (ref. section 3.3)

Selection of topics enumerated in section 3.3. and/or proposal of new foci within the following topics:

1. Children’s Intellectual and Social Development

2. Quality of Education

3. Creativity, Innovation, and Safeguarding of Cultural Diversity
5. Proposed Scope of Observation (ref. section 3.4)

Reference to (1) sector scope, (2) geographical scope and (3) formal/non formal scope and (4) age group scope

6. Preliminary Action Plan for 2012 (ref. section 8)

Date and signature of person endorsing the application

Stamp of institution
Sample Letter of Endorsement

[Member Application]
[Date]

Dear UNESCO,

Subject: Application to host an Arts in Education Observatory

I endorse the application of [name of the faculty/department/school] in [university/association/organization/institution] to become a UNESCO Arts in Education Observatory.

I understand that [name of the institution] will function as a clearing house of information pertaining to arts in education and will:
(1) collect and disseminate existing information;
(2) analyse, synthesize and repackage information and identify applied research topics;
(3) collect information related to policy studies; and
(4) act as an advocate for arts in education.

The Observatory will function within the guidelines established by UNESCO and will promote the (instrumental) use of the arts in education throughout Asia and the Pacific to improve child intellectual and social development, enhance the quality of education and promote creativity and cultural diversity.

The [name of the institution] has been engaged in Observatory functions and activities in the terms which are detailed in the application form, and will be looking forward to furthering them within the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding which we aim to establish with UNESCO.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]
[Title/Position]
[Faculty/Department/School]
[University/Association/Organization/Institution]