

GLOBAL ARTS LEARNING ACTION (GALA)

Concept note

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1. ABOUT US

Joe Hallgarten, Miriam Hockey and David Parker were directors for the programme Creative Partnerships which ran out of the Arts Council England from 2001-2011. Subsequently, Joe worked as Learning Director and Global Director for the RSA, while David was Director of Research for Creative and Cultural Skills, and Miriam worked for Plan and Pearson on global education programmes. In association with our organisational partners, we are now working on an idea related to arts education within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. Our mission is to encourage and enable low-income countries to place arts learning at the heart of their education systems, and to mobilise the world's artists, educators and cultural organisations to support these endeavours. We believe that any education system that takes a systematic, sustained and serious approach to arts learning can have a positive impact on:

- transforming children's life chances, supporting *Education for All* goals for excellence and equity; and
- creating vibrant civil societies, where creativity and freedom of expression are valued.

2. BACKGROUND: ARTS LEARNING CANNOT WAIT

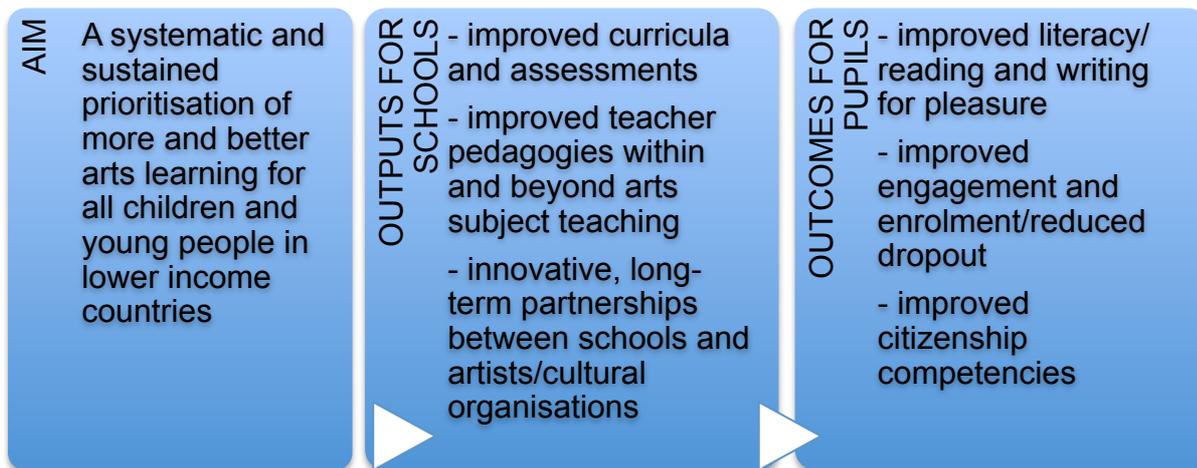
Whilst the Sustainable Development Goals are galvanising education reforms in low-income countries, arts learning is a very low priority within these processes. Although developed countries have established a place for the arts in schools, their status is perennially weak or vulnerable in comparison to other subjects, and there is an unevenness to provision that gives rise to inequalities and patchy impact. Lower-income countries are also tending not to prioritise the arts in national curricula, assessments or in depictions of effective pedagogy. Whilst, given the extraordinary and immediate challenges they face in terms of pupil enrolment, teacher quality and learning outcomes, this may not be surprising, it may also be a missed opportunity. There is growing evidence that high quality arts learning could help address these very challenges and support the development of key skills and values that are vital to any country's development. In addition, whilst resource constraints are clear, lower-income countries are starting from starkly different places in their system design than Western counterparts, so there is genuine scope for innovation that transforms provision, quality and impact.

In the current climate surrounding education in developing countries, with ambitious *Education for All* goals set for 2030, this may be crossroad moment for the arts in education. They will either be harnessed as effective modes of learning and skills development within developing countries, or potentially be sidelined by more traditional and often ineffective routes to improvement. At this critical moment in the growth of global education, many countries may miss an opportunity to 'bake in' arts learning to the foundations of their education systems.

3. AN EARLY THEORY OF INQUIRY

Although an arts-rich education can contribute to many outcomes for learners, our initial rationale – a theory of inquiry that we will develop into a theory of change – is predicated on three specific outputs and three outcomes:





4. DRAFT OBJECTIVES

To achieve these outcomes we are aiming to build a new programme that can make a systematic contribution to a transformation in the quantity and quality of arts learning experienced by young people across the world, through supporting:

System change: Working with leaders in individual lower-income countries or municipalities to design long-term strategies that prioritise high quality arts learning for all young people, in and out of school. Each programme will be led locally.

Policy change: Building a body of global evidence and establishing relationships with key leaders in both the *Education for All* and the arts and culture domains to advocate and provide solutions for a greater global focus on arts learning.

Practitioner change: Building a powerful global community of practice amongst arts educators – teachers, artists, cultural organisations and researchers - that can collectively advocate for the value of arts learning and improve each others' practices.

5. OUR FEASIBILITY STUDY

Following early positive responses from initial discussions, we are undertaking a feasibility study to refine concepts and explore the kinds of latent demand that may be emerging within the international development field for forms of education that more explicitly include the arts. We will examine the interplay of arts education policy and practice in higher-income countries and new opportunities arising in lower and middle-income countries. We will research and scope the need, potential and demand for a new offer, identifying both possible approaches and possible locations for pilot interventions. Our methods will combine desk research, case studies, interviews with key leaders and deep dives into specific countries. We will also carry out a theory of change workshop and policy seminar. The study is being carried out in association with *The World Alliance for Arts Education*, arts education charity *A New Direction*, and social enterprise *The Innovation Unit*.

6. GET INVOLVED

If you are interested in finding out more, we'd love to hear from you, especially if you:

- can suggest examples of promising practices and strategies that we should learn from
- would like to participate in our workshop and policy seminar in September
- can connect us to countries who could be interested in working with us
- can help us to share our thinking with to key audiences
- are interested in investing in our programme