



Access to Arts and Culture Through the “Latvian School Bag”: Investment in the Future of Each Child and Whole Society

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Latvian National
Centre for Culture



Culture and Arts Are All Around Us. So...?

"The true purpose of arts education is not necessarily to create more professional dancers or artists. (It's) **to create more complete human beings** who are critical thinkers, who have curious minds, who can lead productive lives."

*/ Kelly Pollock,
Executive Director, Center of Creative Arts, USA /*

"Thanks to culture and arts, we gain insights into the thoughts and emotions of others, the values of different eras. We come to understand that human existence transcends mere physiological needs. The earlier we embrace this notion, the higher our aspirations become to thrive in an **empathetic, inclusive, and harmonious society**."

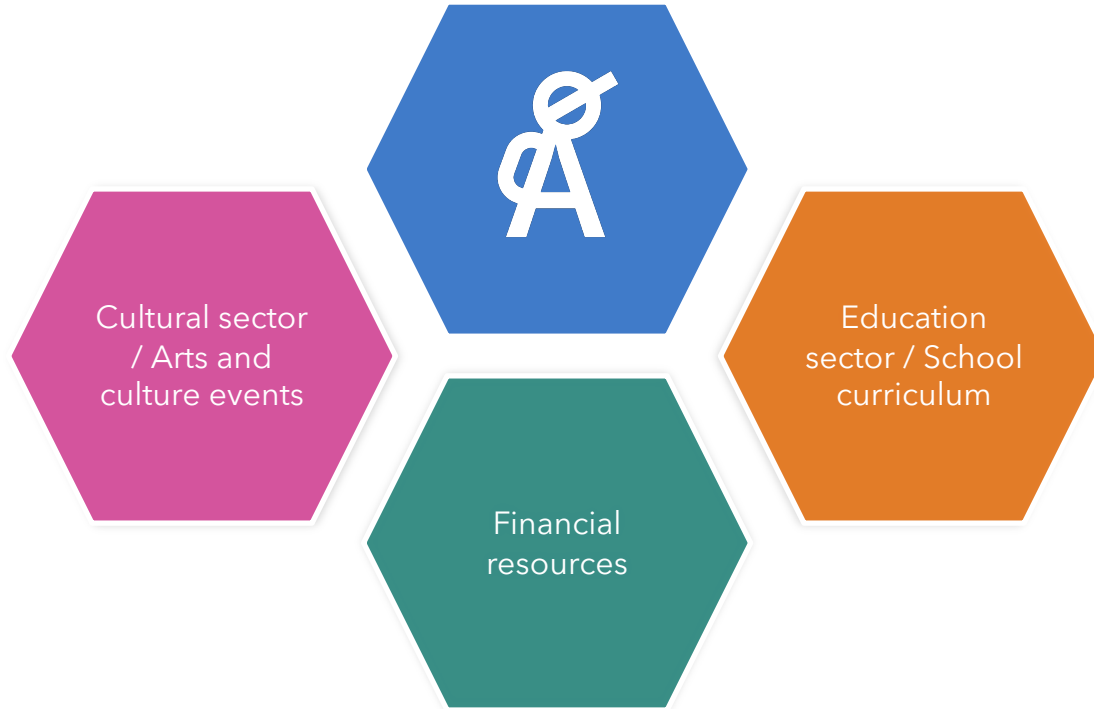
*/ Rūta Muktupāvela,
Rector, Latvian Academy of Culture /*

Centenary of the State of Latvia: How to reach out to children and youth?

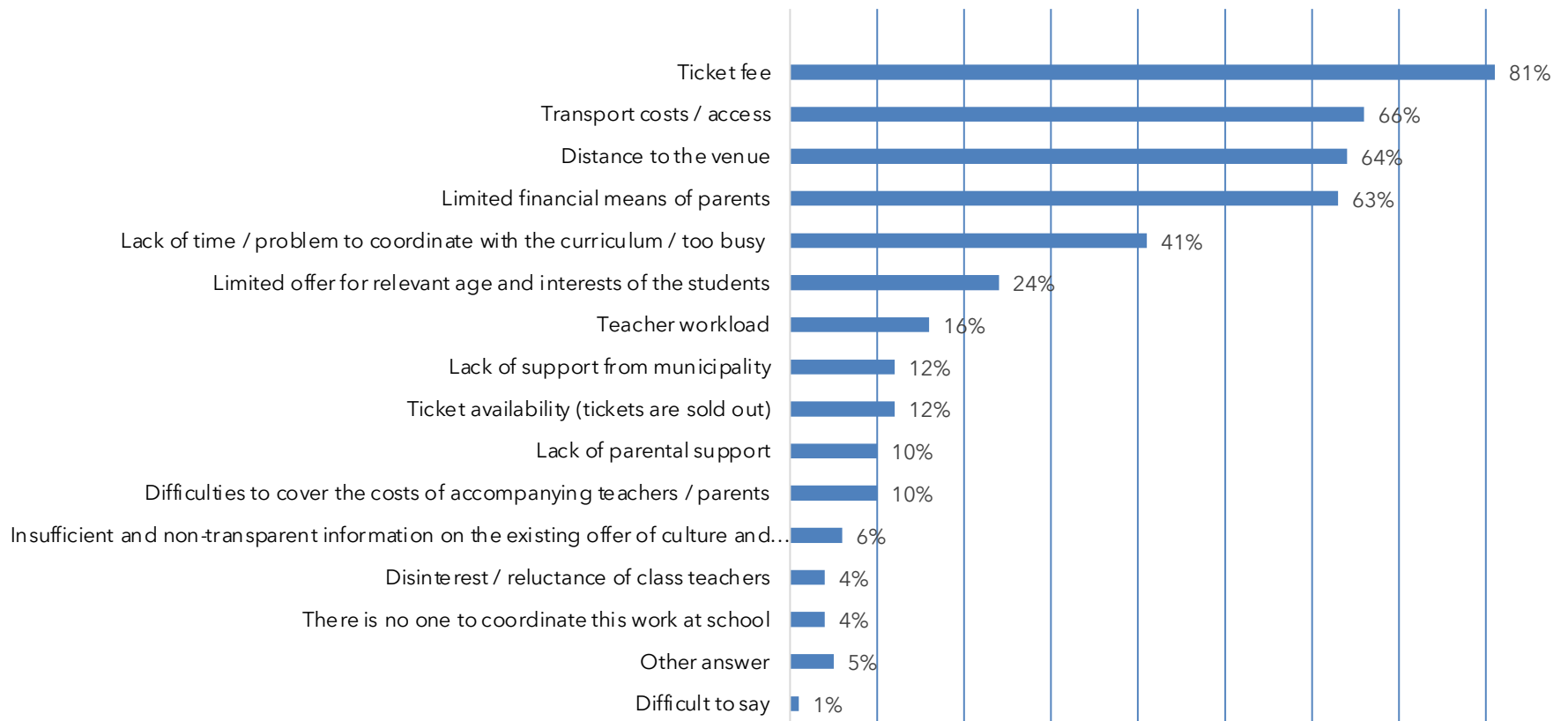
- The largest state-funded gift for every primary and secondary school student – through access to culture and arts contribute to their personal growth, social integration, and a deeper understanding of the world.
- The goal of the “Latvian School Bag” – to provide an opportunity for each school-age child in Latvia from the 1st grade to last grade of the secondary education to regularly experience high-quality Latvian culture and arts events as a part of the formal learning process.



How to Get Together, Maintain and Sustain Synergy



Obstacles Restricting Students' Attendance of Cultural Events (%; 2015/2016)





Culture and Arts Education Programme

LATVIAN SCHOOL BAG

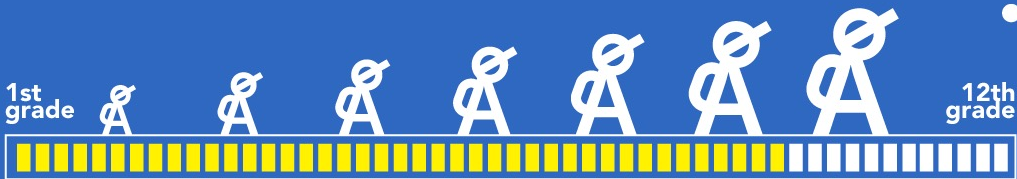
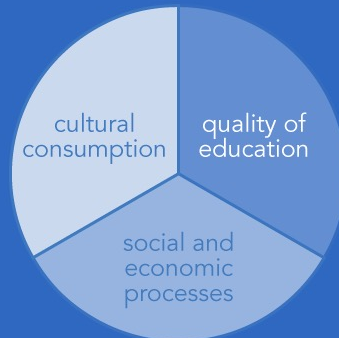


More than 230,000 Latvian children and young people have state-funded opportunity to experience cultural events every school semester.

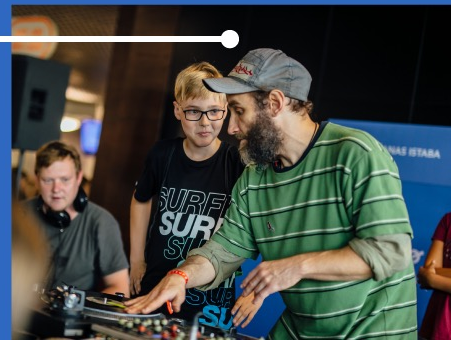


More than 10,000 cultural and artistic events take place each school year spanning the entirety of Latvia.

INFLUENCE



Goal: at least **24 different events** representing **10 cultural and creative areas.**





Building the Programme Step by Step

- 2015 Interdisciplinary task force established
- ... 2015-2016 Conceptual framework development
- 2016 Gathering data about current situation in schools
Developing a list of already available cultural events for children and youth
- ... 2016-2017 Pilot projects in schools and municipalities across Latvia
Developing legislation for implementation and funding
- 2018 Network of regional coordinators in all municipalities established
Opening event on 6th September
- ... 2018/2019 A nationwide programme commenced
Ongoing monitoring and assessment
- 2023 Programme stipulated as a learning resource in the Education Law
- Ongoing Methodological support for educators and creative professionals



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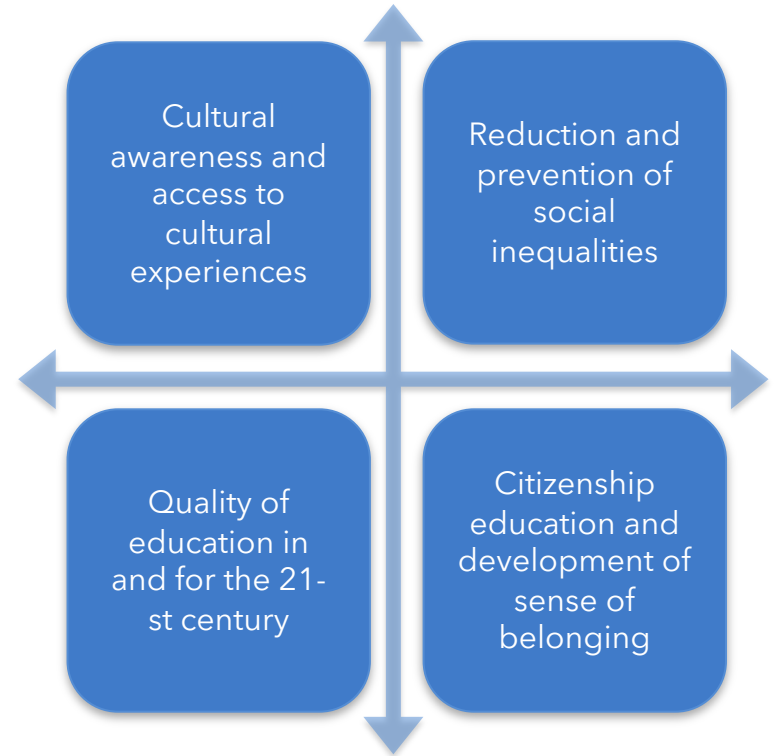
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Conceptual Framework: Four Pillars





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Information About Cultural Events

- About 650 constantly available in-person events.
- Around 300 ongoing digital events.
- The list doesn't cover events with fixed or limited schedules, such as special events or exhibitions.

[illegible]



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Pilot Projects in Selected Schools and Municipalities



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Opening Event of the Initiative

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Fundamentals of Implementation

Involvement
of all children

Equality in
access

Diversity of
cultural and
arts activities
(10 forms of
expressions)

Balance
between
traditional and
contemporary
culture

Funded
regularly by
the state

Cultural
events as a
part of formal
education
process

Opportunities
for students
active
participation

Cooperation
between
culture and
education
professionals



Visual art



Music



Theatre



Circus

Forms of Cultural Expressions in the "Latvian School Bag"



Literature



Dance



Design



Cinema



Architecture



Museums and cultural heritage



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Focus on Children and Youth: Changes in Cultural Sector

- Communication focus from “families with children” to “children and youth” as audience.
- Seeing schools as partners with students as the current and future audience.
- Cultural events become more dynamic and diverse both in content and form.
- Redesigning marketing strategies and adapting communication for educational purposes.
- Approximately 10,000 annual cultural events (impact on industry’s economic processes) each year.
- Employability in the cultural sector increases.



"Finally, the culture is not so elitist. We, artists go to schools with performances, we communicate with schools to convince them. Yes, sometimes you have to convince the school that they need it, that culture is important."

/ Beatrise Zaçe, Theater Director /



Teacher as a Gatekeeper: From an Another Burden to a Useful Resource

- Opportunity for professional, personal, and civic growth.
- New experiences encourage teachers to engage in learning together with students.
- "Before" and "after" activities as the crucial part of experience.
- Addressing important and difficult topics through cultural experiences (political events, bullying etc.).
- Cultural events as a bases for integrated learning and cooperation among teachers (including STEM).



Important Lessons Learned

In order to reach each and every child:

- creativity, flexibility, and openness is the key to overcome challenges;
- regular state funding is a crucial factor;
- ongoing monitoring and assessment is essential;
- administrative and accountability system must be user friendly;
- democratic principles should be ensured both in content and in all administrative processes.

As the programme becomes regular part of education process, general understanding of the role of culture increases.



“In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, countries have demonstrated adaptability by leveraging culture and the arts in their learning environments. The Latvian School Bag programme demonstrated this agility by including digital cultural events in its offerings.”

/ United Nations General Assembly's Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on Culture and sustainable development, 2023 /



Five-Year Anniversary. Time to Celebrate and Look to the Future

- Both cultural and educational professionals rely on the programme as a resource.
- Support from decision-makers is needed.

2015 > 2018 > 2022/23 > ∞

Access to culture is not only enriching but also vital for the development of individual and society as it can serve as a bridge between generations, connecting the wisdom of the past with the aspirations of the future.





luīze pastore

@iluizija

Aizbraucot uz skolām uzstāties, es vienmēr jūtos jauna. Jo viņi vienmēr gaida mirušu rakstnieku.

21:43 · 21 janv. 22 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

"I always feel so young when I come to schools to perform. Since they are always waiting for a writer who's dead; that's what they think about writers."

/ Luīze Pastore, Writer, 37 years old /



Es gribētu šādu darbu!!!

I would like to have such a job!!!



A group of children are sitting outdoors on blue and white plastic chairs. In the center, a young girl with long brown hair, wearing a yellow short-sleeved top and light blue denim shorts, is laughing heartily with her hand to her face. She has colorful sunglasses perched on her head. To her left, a boy in a blue t-shirt with a white graphic is sitting. To her right, another girl is wearing a blue patterned bucket hat. The background shows other children and adults, suggesting a community gathering or festival. The text "Thank You!" is overlaid in large white letters at the bottom of the image.

Thank You!



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