

# Aims of the Culture for All Service at the Finnish parliamentary election 2023

The past years of struggle with the pandemic and cutbacks in the cultural sector have presented serious challenges to the actors in the Finnish field of arts and culture. Actors in the free field, freelancers and professionals belonging to various minorities are now in an especially vulnerable position. The financial distress has also hindered the realization of cultural rights throughout the society. At the same time, the crises of recent years have shown how important the arts and culture are for coping, wellbeing and inclusion. Moreover, various surveys and research projects have demonstrated the significance of arts and culture, not only to our wellbeing, but also to the national economy.

Finland needs a strong field of arts of culture. In the reconstruction of culture it is important to ensure that the cultural rights of all people are realized and that the position of the artists and cultural actors who are the most hard pressed is strengthened. The field is in dire need of more effective means and support measures for the realization of equality and inclusion as well as operating models to dismantle racist and otherwise discriminatory structures. The decision makers in the next government term need to also make sure that all public recruitments, decision making processes and appointments to positions of trust reflect the diversity of our society. New obligating strategies are moreover needed to guarantee unobstructed access to all cultural spaces (for employees and artists as well!) and that cultural services and basic education in the arts are accessible to all.

## 1. Equal work opportunities in the field of arts and culture

The Finnish field of arts and culture has to reflect the diversity of society – at every level. The path to becoming an artist starts from childhood. Arts activities and basic education in the arts need to be organized in a way that they are accessible to all. The path of an artist typically advances from childhood hobbies to second and third degree education, and from there to working life. Many studies have shown that minority artists, such as artists of foreign background, racialized artists or artists with disabilities tend to encounter discrimination on that path. Their competencies often go unrecognized, it is challenging for them to enter education in the field of arts and they might be bypassed in recruitment processes. Work facilities aren't always accessible to all, which excludes a large number of people with disabilities from the cultural field.

The work conditions in the field of arts and culture are also unfortunately often undermined by harassment and inappropriate treatment. Everyone must have the right to work in a safe atmosphere.

### What decision makers need to do

- Decision makers must oblige arts and cultural institutions to enhance diversity in their recruitment decisions. This can be done through, for example, funding from the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and other funding agencies. People of foreign background, racialized people and people with disabilities must have equal employment opportunities in the cultural field. The institutions receiving central government transfers must have quotas for minority employees. Affirmative action can be applied in the recruitment process.
- Decision makers must ensure that, for example, institutions providing education in the arts and culture (from basic arts education to university level) see to it that the education is accessible and that the students receive the support they need. The entrance exams need to be organized in an equitable and accessible way.
- The accessibility legislation needs to be tightened and overseen more carefully. For example, workplaces need to be clearly obligated

by accessibility laws: work sites, such as offices and digital platforms, must be accessible to all employees. In the renovations and construction of cultural premises attention must be paid to accessibility issues, also in the staff and performer areas. Currently there are hardly any consequences for construction that fails to meet with the accessibility requirements.

- The decision makers and funding agencies (for example, the Finnish Ministry of Culture and Education, Arts Promotion Centre Finland) must take stronger action against the harassment and improper treatment occurring in the cultural field and strive to prevent it. For example, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman should be given a broader remit in the context of working life. Employers in the field of arts and culture must be obliged to prepare an equality promotion plan (also those employing fewer than 30 persons).
- One way to tackle the harassment and discrimination would be through the proposed ethical council in the cultural domain. The establishment of such a council could be brought under consideration again.

## 2. Equality as a starting point in arts administration

In order for equality and non-discrimination to be realized in the Finnish field of arts and culture, efforts must be made to ensure that all activities in the field are guided by equality plans. The diversity of society must be reflected in the cultural administration, appointment processes, peer reviews, recruitment of managers and all other decision-making processes. Equality can also be enhanced by developing the competences in the cultural administration and practical field with regard to questions concerning equality, diversity and accessibility. This can be achieved by offering training for people working in the field and by hiring, for example, diversity experts in cultural organizations.

### What decision makers need to do

- Artists of foreign origin and background, racialized artists, artists with disabilities and artists who belong to gender minorities, as well as experts in the field who belong to these groups, must be secured representation in the decision-making processes, committees and working groups of the arts and cultural administration. Communication in languages other than the Finnish or Swedish in the committees and other decision-making bodies should be made possible by, for example, providing interpreter services.
- The decision makers must see to it that the people who offer consultation, serve in working groups or are asked for expert comments are always paid for their work. For example, serving as an expert by experience in a working group is work that a person is entitled to get paid for.
- The decision makers must manage the cultural field based on existing knowledge. The knowledge management could draw from, for example, the reports on equality and cultural wellbeing produced by Cupore, the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and Arts Promotion Centre Finland as well as the reports, guidelines and tools offered by the Culture for All Service for enhancing accessibility, equality and diversity. The Culture for All Service and many other experts in diversity, such as trained diversity agents, also provide

customized training packages for promoting equality and non-discrimination and strengthening inclusive management practices in the field of arts and culture.

### 3. Equal rights in arts and culture for everyone

Participation in cultural life is a basic right that belongs to everyone. Research has confirmed that arts and culture increase wellbeing. Equal participation can be realized by removing barriers to participation, seeing to it that cultural services are accessible to all kinds of people and paying attention to the diversity of people and their cultural needs. People's cultural rights and cultural wellbeing can be advanced through multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral cooperation between the social welfare and health sector, the wellbeing and health sector, cultural organizations and the cultural field. Moreover, public support needs to be focused on the kind of cultural activities that are reachable to all people, and not just those who are better off.

Among the means to advance inclusion in the cultural field are, for example, various cultural companion models, customer panels, cultural outreach services, cultural services customized for particular target groups and solutions for removing barriers to participation. One widespread example of these is the Kaikukortti system developed and maintained by the Culture for All Service. Kaikukortti is a card with which people who are financially hard pressed can obtain free tickets and study places from the cultural service providers and adult education centers that are part of the Kaikukortti network.

The Kaikukortti database (Kaikukanta) enhances knowledge management connected to cultural wellbeing, such as the targeting of services as equally as possible. Kaikukortti, supported by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, is now strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation in the promotion of cultural wellbeing in more than 50 Finnish municipalities and regions, with a total population of over 1.6 million people.

#### **What decision makers need to do**

- Cross-sectoral cooperation between the social welfare and health sector, the wellbeing and health sector and the cultural sector needs

- to be strengthened and state funding needs to be allocated to the cultural wellbeing services and structures produced in the framework of this kind of cooperation.
- Cooperation between different political parties, ministries, state institutions and working groups must be strengthened so that Kaikukortti can become a national instrument for promoting health and wellbeing and enhancing inclusion.
  - The decision makers need to work towards getting the funding for the Kaikukortti system into the state budget (as regular funding from the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Finnish Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health).
  - The statistics produced by Kaikukanta dealing with equality, inclusion and cultural wellbeing should be put to use in the knowledge management, decision making and strategies implemented by the state, municipalities and wellbeing services counties as well in the organizations' and people's assessment of their own work.

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