

“Going global: Arts, culture and conflict transformation in education”

Article Abstract and Plan: Special Issue Arts Education Policy Review

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Abstract

The role of the arts in the promotion and protection of human rights has been recognised in international policy for over forty years. After Article 15 (3) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights came into effect in 1976 guaranteeing freedom of artistic expression, further cultural rights have been enshrined in policy frameworks nationally and internationally, valuing the importance of the arts in political, social, cultural and economic domains. This policy attention upholds humans’ entitlement to take part in cultural life and has furthermore amplified the multiple legitimate purposes of the arts and cultural practice, particularly in contexts of international development and conflict transformation. A 2018 report by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on cultural rights, for example, describes artistic and cultural action as the means by which:

individuals and groups can reflect upon their society, confront and modify their perception of one another, express their fears and grievances in a non-violent manner, develop resilience after violent or traumatic experiences... and imagine the future they want for themselves ... better realiz(ing) human rights in the society they live in. (A/HRC/37/55)

This targeted UNHRC recognition of the multi-dimensional value of the arts comes at an opportune time, particularly as initiatives to build global networks and infrastructure for artists working in conflict transformation are increasing. A number of large scale organisations and projects in the last decade, such as Theatre without Borders, the Acting Together Project, In Place of War, and the Mellon Foundation-supported IMPACT initiative, are contributing to a global movement towards sustaining arts and conflict transformation as a legitimate field of practice. This ‘movement’ is focused on developing policy, funding and research capacity; including engagement in raising awareness, supporting ethical practice, and sustaining the arts as a vehicle for third-track style diplomacy. Underpinning these activities, is a fundamental recognition of the arts’ place in education systems, and as a ‘way of knowing’ that enables, for example, Indigenous knowledge systems and practices to lead conflict transformation in culturally appropriate ways.

For all the leveraging that this UN recognition provides, however, it is a significant challenge to create a common set of values, principles and purposes for what is a very diverse and highly contextual set of practices. In a world of complex and contradictory cultural and geopolitical forces (Kester, 2011), what does it mean to *globally* support an integration of the arts in conflict transformation? What would international policy development in this field look like when the arts, by their very nature as a symbolic means of expression, are ‘always already’ invested in various regimes of value, contestations of social and political meaning, and dynamic cultural representations and resistances of power?

This essay takes these ‘wicked questions’ as a foundation to explore the role of education in building a global infrastructure of arts, culture and conflict transformation. Drawing on emerging and contemporary discourses and practices within established fields of arts education and socially-engaged arts, the essay seeks to reconsider the ‘global’ in global education and reframe its central tenets of

access and interdependency. Following the recent IMPACT Design Lab that sought to plan for a growing global infrastructure for the Arts, Culture and Conflict Transformation field, the essay will explore Margaret Wheatley's organisational emergence framework as it considers the purpose and possibilities of the intersectional ACCT and Education fields.

Essay Plan

Introduction

Setting the scene on global policy frameworks:

- UN HRC Cultural Rights
- UNESCO Arts Education
- Key National Exemplar: Melbourne Declaration, Australia Council, Australian Curriculum

Definitions of policy:

- "Policy is as much legislation as it is a set of practices, as much analysis as it is a disposition, as much a process as a set of outcomes" (Schmidt, 2017, as cited in Richerme, 2018)
- Actualising policy and introducing an 'ecosystem' of multiple actors in taking social innovation to scale
- Examples of initiatives of practice leading (or forcing the hand of) policy

Wheatley's "emergence" framework for taking social innovation to scale:

- Overview of framework
- Relevance to Arts, Culture and Conflict Transformation (ACCT) field
- Relevance to and intersections with education

Overview and analysis of current initiatives with reference to Wheatley's framework and an educational imperative:

- Acting Together
- In Place of War
- Arts and Resilience Roundtables
- Impact Design Lab

Focus on Impact Design Lab and questions of education:

- Overview of the IMPACT Design Lab and aims
- Speculative theorisation on:
 - education *about* ACCT
 - education/training *within* ACCT
 - education *through* ACCT
- Diverse and indigenous ways of knowing/pedagogies

Designing for impact in policy and practice

- Reframing and reengaging 'access', 'interdependency' and 'emergence' in the intersection of global education, arts education and ACCT
- What might active communities of practice look like?
- What are the resources required and implications for designing for impact?

Conclusion