

DENMARK DAMUSA

Danish Music School Association – EMU Report 2013

In Denmark we have 99 music schools. 50-75 % of the schools are offering education in other art forms than music. The model of art schools is an area in which Denmark has been learning from the other Nordic countries. DAMUSA welcomes this trend on the condition that additional funding is provided in step with the expansion of the activities. The local communities are apparently willing to support this trend.

The engagement of the government is one of DAMUSAs cardinal points - at the economic level as well as to assure the quality of the education. The Danish law demands that every community must have a music school, and the government support the musical activities with up to 25 % of costs. However this government subsidy has been falling, and is in 2013 approximately 13 %. The Ministry of Culture confirmed to DAMUSA in 2012 that the government subsidy has fallen by DKK 20,3 mio. from 1994 to 2012. Not because of savings at the music schools, but due to the general savings within the area of culture and lower purchasing power. Pupils fee is up to 33 % (approximately 24 % 2013) and local communities pays the rest - approximately 60 % of costs.

To the 99 music schools are affiliated seven centers with preparatory courses for conservatories. These are run by 7 different music schools and financed only by the state. All music schools have programs for especially talented pupils in cooperation to the seven conservatory preparing courses, and this work with talented pupils has been supported through several government plans – and also through the latest plan, which is running from 2012 until 2015. The last 10 years we have had a great success focusing on most the talented pupils. One of the challenges that we see at the moment is, that the music schools in the period 2007-2012 have experienced a 19 % decline in the number of children and young people who enrol at a music school. In 2012 the music schools had 102.000 pupils.

The report with the title "Why does your child attend music school – and why not" (DAMUSA 2011) revealed that 30 % of music pupils experience no connection between participating in music school activities and their elementary school activities. In this context – and in the context of the danish government's proposal for a reform of the elementary school with longer school days for the pupils, DAMUSA in 2012 made a complete national mapping regarding the cooperation between elementary schools and music schools in Denmark. This mapping was made by DAMUSA in cooperation with The Danish Pedagogical University and the elementary school music teachers organization and was presented to both the Ministers of education and culture at a meeting february 2013.

Beside the meeting with both the Minister of Education and the minister of culture, DAMUSA has since the proposal for a reform of the elementary school taken an active part to this discussion: In the media, and in a number of conferences and meetings that have been held on the subject. DAMUSAs approach to the reform is in short, that we will not blind us to the challenges and threats to the music schools - but first and foremost we have decided to see the reform as an opportunity for even more skilled musical activities out to even more children than now. This is also the message we take with us to the meetings we are now having with the spokesmen of the different political partys, -meetings, which is currently in progress (march 2013).

Another focus of DAMUSA is that the increasing fees may impact the fall in the number of pupils enrolled at the music schools in future. Figures from the Danish Arts Agency and Statistics Denmark for the calendar years (2007-2012) show that the cost rate of learning to play an instrument has increased by 27,7 % while the overall consumer price index for the same period has only increased by 13,6 %. It is important to note that the number of 0-25 year-old citizens in Denmark has gone up (by 3,9 %) from 2007 to 2012. Consequently, the explanation of the fall in the number of enrolled pupils (121.000 in 2007 – 102.000 in 2012) at the music schools is not that the target group has become smaller.

Therefore in 2012 some of the main focuses of DAMUSA has been cooperation with elementary school, recruitment of the pupils and keeping pupils in music school courses. Focuses that actually correspond perfectly with scouting, encouraging and nursing musical talents.