

Educational Reform Through the Arts —Initiatives from Abroad and the Challenge for Japan



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More artists are providing creative education in schools across Japan. Their origin can be attributed to arts outreach programs serving schools and welfare facilities. Meanwhile, other countries have taken the lead with arts in education (AIE) programs coordinated and funded by government agencies. These programs focus on the role that the arts can play in creative education and the impact on children. In Japan, while local arts NPOs have launched initiatives, the significance of AIE and creative education is not yet fully understood. Progress in this area is important particularly for the development of human resources necessary to sustain Japan's economy and industry.

1—Education Meets the Arts in Outreach Programs

All across Japan, a growing number of schools are offering distinctive classes taught by artists. This development is closely tied with the growth of arts outreach programs since the late 1990s, in which cultural institutions and arts groups arrange for artists to conduct workshops and concerts in schools and communities.¹

For cultural institutions, the programs expand constituencies by reaching out to residents and communities whose access to music, theater and the fine arts is limited. For elderly persons unable to visit cultural facilities, they bring the cultural facility to them. The aim is to discover and develop new audiences and markets.

The most popular outreach destinations are schools and welfare facilities.² Young children's faces light up with smiles when they attend their first violin concert. In drama workshops, students rediscover the positive attitude that they lost in the classroom. Elderly persons rejuvenate to the beat of music and dance workshops. In so many ways, outreach programs reveal new and diverse possibilities for the arts.

To date, however, outreach programs have been conceived and initiated by the arts side. As a result, they tend to lack the perspectives and input of the education and welfare side.

Looking abroad, we can find many programs actively exploring the potential for the arts on the education side, including how the arts impact the education of children, and the role of the arts in the healthy development of children.

This approach is captured in the phrase *arts in education* (AIE). Compared to the more familiar approach of *arts education*, wherein different forms of art are taught, the new approach explores the possibility of creative education through the arts. AIE programs have existed in the U.S. and U.K. since the 1990s.

AIE is beginning to take root in Japan as well. This paper introduces cases from Japan and abroad, and explores the possibility for the arts in education, as well as the challenges and future direction.³

2—Leading Role of NPOs in Japan

In Japan, AIE is being promoted by local arts NPOs. As Exhibit 1 shows, their activity is growing nationwide, led by the pioneering NPO *Geijutsu-ka to kodomotachi* (artists and children). It operates ASIAs (Artist's Studio in a School), in which artists collaborate with teachers to conduct workshop-type classes at elementary schools. Begun in 2000 with seven schools and 350 participants, the program has steadily grown by 20 to 30 schools each year, and now has around 2,000 students participating.

In the ASIAs model, the NPO matches teachers with artists, who then carefully plan and prepare a curriculum and conduct classes over a period of several weeks to several months.

While local NPOs perform an intermediary role between schools and the arts, we should note that programs are generally sponsored by corporate philanthropy programs and private foundations. ASIAs's sponsors include Toyota Motor Corp., Asahi Breweries, Kao Corp., Nissan Motor, NEC Corp., and Matsushita Electric, as well as private foundations. In 2003, Toyota launched *Toyota kodomo to artist no deai* (Toyota encounter of children and artists) in collaboration with NPO *Geijutsuka to kodomo-tachi*, NPO *Kodomo to artist no deai*, and executive committees around the nation, with the aim of nurturing diversity of values and sensitivities.

A leading collaboration of local government, NPO and high schools is NPO ST Spot Yokohama, established by a civic group that operates a small-scale local theater of the same name. In 2004, the NPO launched the Program for the Development of a New Educational Model Through the Arts with a grant from the prefectural government's Kanagawa Voluntary Activity Promotion Fund 21 Program.

ST Spot Yokohama received the grant by signing a collaborative agreement with the prefectural government's cultural affairs division and board of education (child education support and high school education divisions).

Demand for the program has expanded rapidly, growing from four high schools (representing 777 students) in fiscal 2004, to one junior high school and six high schools (839 students) in fiscal 2005, and 16 schools including elementary and disabled children's schools (1,861 students) in fiscal 2006. The number of participating artists has reached 20.

Exhibit 1 Japanese NPOs for Education and the Arts

NPO (city, year est.)	Description
S-AIR (Sapporo, 1999)	Sapporo Artists in Residence was founded in 1999. Building on its success and network, it launched Artists in Schools in 2003. This long-term program converts vacant classrooms into studios where artists can engage in creative activity with children after school hours or on non-school days. Aims to become independent in fiscal 2008.
<i>Geijutsu to kodomo-tachi</i> (Tokyo, 1999)	Established with the aim of providing a space for children to meet artists. ASIAs sends artists to elementary schools for workshop-type classes in cooperation with teachers. Action! is a community-based arts program housed in <i>Nishisugamo Sozoshu</i> , a cultural facility converted from a vacated school building.
CANVAS (Tokyo, 2002)	Established with support from national government and Foundation for Multi Media Communications with the aim of "providing the space and events in which children can share and exchange their creation and expression on a worldwide scale." Conducts workshops at various sites to nurture children's creativity and expression through movies, animation, robots, and advanced digital technology including the Internet.
ST Spot Yokohama (Yokohama, 1987)	Opened as a small scale experimental performance space in 1987. Set up an arts education unit in 2004, and launched the "Project to Develop New Educational Activities Through the Arts" in collaboration with Kanagawa prefecture.
<i>Kodomo to artist no deai</i> (Kyoto, 2004)	Aims to create a rich educational environment through the arts. Artists hold workshop classes for children at elementary schools and children's centers.
Art Support Fukuoka (Fukuoka, 2002)	Sends artists to schools and communities and coordinates children's workshops to experience the arts. Publishes Artists Catalog of artists and arts groups in Fukuoka prefecture who offer arts workshops for children.

Note: Shows year of start of operation. Includes non-NPO groups

Sources: Publicly available materials and web sites of NPOs; Arts NPO Link, Arts NPO Databank 2006; and Toyota Motor Co., "Activity Report of *Toyota kodomo to artist no deai*."

Like ASIAS, schools are matched with artists through the following process:

1. interview of school, discussion of curriculum, and class observation;
2. selection and interview of artist;
3. artist's presentation;
4. discussion between teachers and artist, class observation by artist
5. curriculum development; and
6. program execution.

This meticulous process reflects a more contemplative, long-term approach compared to outreach programs, which are temporary in nature. Artists and teachers are required to consult on educational issues and the school's needs, and ponder the role of arts in the sound development of children.

Moreover, ST Spot Yokohama's emphasis on collaboration with the board of education and local government points to the overriding objective—to build a sustainable consensus for arts education in government policy. As such, it exemplifies the AIE concept.

The artists do not simply teach music, theater, dance or art to children. Instead, they use their talents and the intrinsic nature of the arts to awaken children's imagination and creativity, and instill the power to live in ways that other class subjects cannot.

Mr. Yasuhiko Tsutumi, founder of ASIAS, explains the approach as follows: "Artists devote their lives to creative expression and the creation of new value. By connecting with these artists, children learn diverse ways of seeing, thinking and expressing things. Workshops are important for children to subjectively experience things through trial and error—in other words, to sharpen their sensory sensitivity—and perceive things not only with their mind but with their body." ⁴

NPO S-AIR (Sapporo Artist in Residence) operates a program called Artists in Schools, which takes this concept one step further—vacant classrooms are converted into temporary studios where artists can work while interacting with children in an informal environment. Instead of imposing the roles of teacher and student, the artist becomes an "intriguing presence at school for a limited period." This arrangement encourages dialogue between children and artists in a natural manner.

In this sense, S-AIR resembles the preschool education approach of Reggio Emilia, a city in northern Italy. A key feature of this approach is the specialized artist-teacher called the atelierista, who stays and interacts with children, carefully documenting their thoughts.

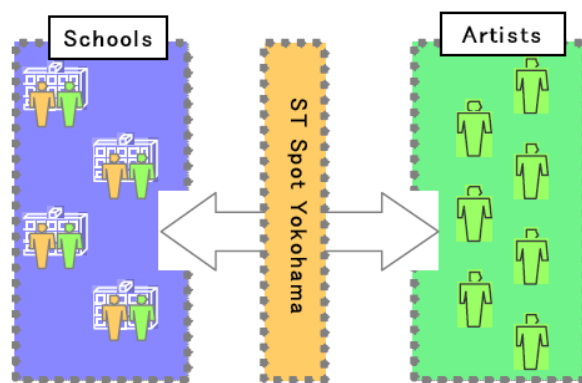
3—AIE in Europe and the U.S.

AIE began in Europe and the U.S. in the 1990s. In the U.S., arts education suffered a setback in the fiscal crisis of the 1980s. Then in the 1990s, leading cultural institutions, arts groups, and arts organizations responded by expanding collaborations with schools. Meanwhile, studies also showed that students who are exposed to the arts perform better academically and earn higher SAT scores.

Amid this trend, state arts boards around the nation began coordinating AIE programs. In these programs, a wide range of artists are selected through auditions and other screening methods, and brochures containing their profiles and proposed educational activities are distributed to schools. Teachers then contact the artists, jointly draft a proposal to the state board, and if approved, receive partial funding.

Thus state boards perform both an intermediary role (which in Japan is performed by arts NPOs) and funding role (which in Japan is performed by entities such as Kanagawa prefecture's Fund 21 and corporate sponsors).

Exhibit 2 ST Spot Yokohama's Model



Source: ST Spot Yokohama, Arts Education Program.

In the U.S., local cultural institutions and arts groups also offer AIE programs. A leading example is Carnegie Hall's LinkUP! Program, described in Exhibit 3. Classes that teach non-arts subjects using the arts—known as “learn through arts” as opposed to “learn arts”—have gained popularity in the U.S.

1. Creative Partnerships

Two outstanding programs in the West are Creative Partnerships and Artsmark, both in the U.K. ⁵

Creative Partnerships aims to make learning in school more creative for children. The program, established in April 2002 with funding from the Department of Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) and Department for Education and Skills (DfES), is managed by Arts Council England.

In the program, artists and other creative practitioners are sent to schools to develop and deliver a bold, balanced and contemporary curriculum. The program describes its development aims as follows:

- the creativity of young people, raising their aspirations and achievements;
- the skills of teachers and their ability to work with creative practitioners
- schools' approaches to culture, creativity and partnership working;
- the skills, capacity and sustainability of the creative industries

A pilot program was launched in 16 of the most economically and socially deprived communities in England, and slated to end in March 2004. But due to the program's initial success, the government extended and expanded the program, and plans to invest a total of £ 100 million from 2002 to 2008.

At present, 1,100 schools in 36 communities actively participate in the program. Another 1,500 schools have received projects for young people and continuing professional development for teachers, and still another 7,000 schools have received guidance on best practice. Overall, one in three schools in England has had some contact with the program.

The program's nationwide scope is also evident from the fact that 550,000 children and 50,000 teachers have participated thus far, and 32,000 teachers and creative practitioners have received training.

A long-term impact study released in February 2006 tracks the achievements of 13,000 children who participated. ⁶ Compared to non-participants, participants scored higher English, math and science scores. Moreover, in a survey of teachers, 92% responded that the program improved students' confidence, while 91% said it improved children's communication skills, and 87% said it increased children's motivation.

2. Artsmark

Since 2001, Arts Council England has also managed a program called the Artsmark arts award for schools. By establishing a benchmark for arts provision, the program “encourages schools to consider the opportunities they offer in art, dance, drama, and music.” The stated aim is to promote arts provision in schools and raise the profile of arts education. ⁷

Specifically, schools apply to the audit committee for one of three award levels—Artsmark gold, Artsmark silver, and Artsmark. The application form, which varies by type of school and is 30 to 40 pages in length, requires schools to describe their arts education policies and practices.

The application form itself serves as an auditing tool for schools to recognize their present arts provision and to determine what remains left to be done. Before applying, schools must meet several criteria, including having an overarching policy for the arts, providing the opportunity for all students to participate in all art forms (art, dance, drama and music) within curriculum time, and providing opportunities for all students outside of curriculum time.

Approximately 3,500 schools currently have an Artsmark award, which is valid for three years. The award not only attests to the school's strength in arts and creative education, but encourages other schools to qualify.

Both Creative Partnerships and Artsmark were inspired by a seminal report on the future of education,

entitled *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education*. The report was issued by the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE), an advisory body established by DCMS and the Department for Education and Employment. It is a fascinating document that details the national strategy in creative and cultural education.

Notably, the report ties creative education to economic development. Stating that “economies increasingly depend on the ability of individuals and organisations to generate new ideas,” the report argues that “creative abilities are being seen as fundamental in meeting the challenges of economic development.” Creativity can be accessed through creative education, defined as “forms of education that develop young people’s capacities for original ideas and action.” The central theme is that creativity is not limited to the arts or to particular individuals: “Our concept of creativity recognises the potential for creative achievement in all fields of human activity; and the capacity for such achievements in the many and not the few.”⁸

In sum, arts education in the U.K. stresses the value of creative education from the perspective of education and the arts, with a view to developing human resources for the economy and industry.

4—Initiatives in Asia

Important developments are also underway elsewhere the world. In Asia, the National Arts Council of Singapore quickly followed in England’s footsteps by launching a government-led arts education program. The NAC-AEP website contains an extensive directory of endorsed arts education programs, cross-indexed by art form, art type and education level.

Recognizing arts education as “crucial to achieving harmonious national growth,” in February 2005 Korea’s ministries of culture and tourism (MCT) and education and human resources development (MOE&HRD) jointly established the Korea Arts and Culture Education Service (KACES) to oversee all programs and policies for arts education.⁹

KACES engages in R&D, communication, and policy formulation in six areas—arts education in schools, arts education in communities, training for trainers, advocacy and public awareness, artE (online training & resource center), and international exchange.

Prior to KACES, MCT issued the Arts Education Plan in April 2004, in which arts education policy received top priority within the “Creative Korea” 24-point cultural policy vision.

In addition, the Arts Education Supporting Act of December 2005 set out policies on arts education, training of arts education professionals and educators, operation of training institutions, recruitment of educators at public arts facilities, and collaboration between the public school system and local communities.

As these developments show, Korea regards the arts and education as a national priority.

Meanwhile, in September 2006, the Hong Kong Institute of Contemporary Culture (HKICC) opened the Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity, a senior secondary school whose curriculum combines liberal arts and a creative profession-oriented program. Also in Hong Kong, the first conference of the UNESCO World Alliance for Arts Education is slated for July 2007 (Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3 AIE Programs in Other Countries

Program	Description
Creative Partnerships (Arts Council England)	Established in April 2002 with a £ 40 million budget from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), it is engaged in "nurturing the creativity of learners and educators, and developing creative approaches to teaching all aspects of the curriculum." The pilot project, slated to end in March 2004, was extended by the government, which plans to invest a cumulative total of £ 100 million by 2008.
Artsmark (Arts Council England)	National school recognition program that aims to "encourage schools to increase the range, quantity and type of arts that are provided to children," and to "raise the profile of arts education." Recognizes three levels of achievement based on basic policy and practices in arts education. disseminate outstanding examples of arts education, evaluate acceptance of arts curriculum, and encourage collaborative classes between schools and artists and arts groups.
LinkUP! Carnegie Hall (U.S.)	Started in 1985 by Carnegie Hall to promote music education at elementary schools in New York City. Provides music workshops in classrooms, concerts at Carnegie Hall, and workshops for teachers. In collaboration with city's elementary school teachers, develops and disseminates lesson plans for history, literature, math and science using music.
Arts in Education (Minnesota State Arts Board, U.S.)	AIE is a major program of the MSAB, which was established to promote the arts. Schools collaborate with artists, who are registered in five areas--theater, dance, music, fine arts, and literature--to draft and present proposals to the MSAB. If accepted, partial subsidy. Program aims to bring together schools and artists in many ways to promote AIE.
Arts Education Programme (National Arts Council, Singapore)	NAC assesses education programs proposed by arts groups, and provides schools within formation and funding in three areas--arts appreciation, experience and participation. Web site provides searchable directory of programs by art form, art class type, and education level. In fiscal 2005, 360 schools and 350,000 students participated.
Korea Arts & Cultural Education Service (KACES)	Established jointly by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development to advance and promote arts education. Engages in R&D, communication, and policy formulation in six areas--arts education in schools, arts education in communities, training for trainers, advocacy and public awareness, artE (online training & resource center), and international exchange. As a catalyst for partnership between the government and local community, KACES links cultural institutions and public schools nationwide to develop greater awareness and interest in the arts and culture.
KHKICC Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity (Hong Kong)	Opened in November 2006, the school is Hong Kong's first direct subsidy scheme secondary school devoted to creative education. It provides "all-rounded creative learning experiences and opportunities for self-fulfillment" to develop creative professionals for the knowledge-based economy with minimum exam pressures and a curriculum that integrates liberal arts and a creative profession-oriented program(consisting of four parts--multimedia performing arts, film and digital arts, design and visual communication, and environmental and spatial studies).
World Alliance for Arts Education (WAAE)	In 1999, the Director General of UNESCO issued an appeal on arts education that called on schools to emphasize "the teaching of artistic values and subjects in order to encourage creativity, which is a distinctive attribute of the human species." This led to the announcement at the 2006 World Conference on Arts Education in Lisbon o the joint establishment of the WAAE by the International Drama/Theatre and Education Association, International Society for Music Education, and International Society for Education through the Arts. In July 2007, the first World Creativity Summit in Hong Kong will discuss concrete plans.

Sources: Public available materials; web sites.

5—The Challenge for Japan

In Japan, the Agency for Cultural Affairs operates a program that allows children to encounter authentic performing arts by attending performances and receiving instruction and workshops from arts and cultural groups. In addition, in February the Cabinet approved the second basic policy for promotion of culture and arts, which emphasizes the enhancement of arts and cultural activities of children.

Unfortunately, Japan's national policies in the arts and education remain inadequate. As a result, Japan lags far behind other countries for several reasons. First, there is little recognition of the significance of arts and creative activity for children, and of the educational impact. Second, while existing programs show hints of ingenuity, they are sporadic in nature and lack a long-term perspective and strategy. Above all, Japan lacks the type of bold national initiative spanning across ministries as seen in England and Korea.

According to Professor Manabu Sato of the University of Tokyo, "*Geijutsu* (arts) represents all the creative skills for expressing our encounter and connection with an alternative truth or reality." He thus defines *geijutu* (arts) broadly, pointing out that "the problem with arts education lies in the rigid mindset of the school curriculum, where art is taught in 'art class', and music is taught in 'music class.' In arts education, art class and music class both need to teach *geijutsu* (arts)." ¹⁰

In Japan, outreach programs have slowly raised the general awareness toward the significance and role of the arts in education. However, they still represent a one-sided approach led entirely by the arts side. The education side has yet to respond commensurately.

The environment confronting children today is grueling. Advances in IT have expanded the virtual world, which some people believe may have a negative impact on children. Artistic expression through the physical body can help restore the physical sensations and communication skills that children are missing in contemporary society. In addition, teaching the arts in classes can instill confidence and nurture critical thinking and discipline.

While the arts may not solve all the problems of contemporary education, the initiatives seen in Japan and abroad suggest the possibility for discovering new solutions. Indeed, it is time for the government's Education Rebuilding Council to revise the low status of arts classes in the curriculum, and to approach education from the perspective of the arts, including the possibility of collaboration with arts NPOs.

The reason is clear—promoting the arts and creative education not only nurtures children's creativity and sensitivity, but is of paramount importance in developing human resources for Japan's future economy and industry.

End notes

1. For more details, see M. Yoshimoto, "Outreach Programs Bring the Arts to Children and Local Residents - The Possibility for Social Service Through the Arts," NLI Research, October 2001. Another resource (in Japanese only) is M. Yoshimoto, "Outreach seirigaku" (Outreach mapping), in *Chiiki sozo*, vol. 14.
2. For more information on the possibility of the arts and welfare, see A. Tsukada, "Social Inclusion and the Arts—Cases of Collaboration with Social Welfare," NLI Research, June 15, 2007.
3. We use the term "arts" broadly to refer not to specific types of art, but to all of the arts. It even includes arts appreciation at theaters, concert halls and art museums. As such, the term is intentionally open-ended.
4. Y. Tsutumi, *Kodomo to artist ga deau toki* (when children meet artists), "Activity Report of Toyota kodomo to artist no deai" (2007).
5. For more information, see the Creative Partnerships web site (<http://creative-partnerships.com/>).
6. National Foundation for Educational Research, *The Longer term Impact of Creative Partnerships on the Attainment of Young People*, February 2006.
7. For more information, see the Artsmark web site (<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/artsmark/>).
8. National Campaign for the Arts, Creative and Cultural Education, "All Our Futures: A Summary," September 2000.
9. For more information, see the KACES website (<http://arte.or.kr>).
10. Manabu Sato, "Sozoryoku to sozosei no kyoiku he" (Toward creativity and creative education), in *Kodomotachi no sozoryoku wo hagukumu · art kyoiku no shiso to jikken*, (Fostering the creativity of children—thought and experiment in arts education), University of Tokyo Press, 2003.