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## **Lithuania. Arts Education**

### **Introduction**

In the run of the Education reform implementation, the art education in Lithuania in the system of comprehensive education has undergone many changes. The major among them being: the development and announcement of the Art Education Concept (1992), (since 1992 the amount of lessons devoted to visual arts has increased in the already partially reformed schools from 5,5 to 9,6 %), at present the training will embrace grades one to twelve. The expansion of the art education tailor made programmes followed next after the general arts education programme for basic school was developed (1997), the art education standards were created (1997), the profiled art education recommendations were designed (2000). A survey of the national audit on arts education accomplished in 2000. In the year 2002 the Ministry of Education and Science approved general programmes and education standards of 4 arts disciplines (art, music, dance, theatre) for 11-12 grades. Actually, the general programmes and concentric education standards for 1 – 10 classes are in the process of revision. It is planed to approve and to publish programmes and standards in 2003 and it should come into force in schools starting from 2004-2005.

### **Arts in the curriculum**

The arts education at a comprehensive school is developed via traditional arts subjects – art, music and dance (included in most schools in physical education or sport), drama (in a few schools included in the curriculum) – during the regular lessons.

Arts education is included into all levels of educational programmes of the Lithuanian secondary schools. On the preschool level (children of 5-6/7 years old) the approach to art education is based on practicing and developing skills of self-expression in the fields of art, music, dance and theatre.

Music and art are compulsory in the curriculum. Schoolchildren of 11 and 12 grades (15/16 – 17/18 years old) can choose to learn 2 from 4 disciplines of arts education (art, dance, music, theatre). These disciplines are to be studied within the framework of generalised extended courses.

**Primary school grades 1-4** (6/7 – 10/11 years old ) - compulsory subjects:  
arts and craft - 2 hours  
music - 2 hours

4 hours per week for optional art activities.

**Basic school grades 5 - 10** (10/11 – 15/16 years old) compulsory subjects:  
art - 1 hour

music - 1 hour

**Grades 5 - 8** : art - 1 hour, music - 1 hour, 5 hours per week for optional art activities

**Grades 9 - 10** : art - 1 hour, music - 1 hour, 6 - 7 hours per week for optional art activities

**Grades 11 - 12** (15/16-17/18) - compulsory optional 2 subjects:

Arts, music, theatre, dance - 3 hours in general and 7 hours per week for optional creative activities. Students in grades 11 - 12 , according to the school curriculum, have an opportunity to choose art subjects from several possibilities.

### **Arts exams**

When graduating from secondary school, students have to pass matura exams. Art and music exams are developed since 1995 as optional ones. These exams are annually chosen and passed successfully by an increasing number of graduate students. They are organised according to examination programmes and procedures for carrying out the examinations and assessing the tasks. National matura exams are carried out in local examination centres; results are assessed centrally. Art exam consists from 2 parts: candidates should answer to paper questions (illustrated tests) and to introduce the practical work - portfolio, paintings, graphical works, drawings, design project, etc. The music exam also consists from 2 parts : candidates should answer to paper questions and to play by the choosed musical instrument or to sing.

### **Arts in non – formal education**

A comprehensive school is important learning environment for young people. However, pupils are involved in arts outside general education in non – formal learning environments. Municipalities have 18 art and 98 music schools, 1 dance school, various leisure centres which support in acquiring cultural competencies and focus directly on music, art, dance, theatre, media, design, film making. Integration of formal and non-formal learning implies change of traditional attitudes. It is interesting that music schools in Lithuania take over and still are on the top of list among other non-formal education institutions. These schools are being spread in urban areas and in rural as well.

In the year 2001 state music schools attended – 25129, art schools – 1749, dance – 2494, theatre – 255 children and young people.

3 secondary state art schools, National M.K.Ciurlionis Art School, several private art, design and music schools are situated in the capital and in larger cities. Young people have the opportunity to obtain a specialised arts education. Normally music schools are most important in this field, schools specialising in other art forms are still not very common. Such schools are subsidised by the state, because they have a certain prestige which seems to be very important to the cultural identity of the state. For young artists, especially for musicians, there are both governmental and non-governmental

funding opportunities. The Fund for sponsorship musicians takes responsibility for the realization annual touring educational programmes and concerts on classical music. It is very important while the official institutions are short of money for doing that.

### Teachers training

The Academy of Music, Vilnius Pedagogical University, Klaipeda University, Siauliai university offers a course for art, dance, music, theatre teachers training. There are also training courses for artists wishing to work in education at in-service training centres or at the universities. Artists seeking to work at school should have a knowledge of education system.

Ministry of Education and Science has recommended that schools should make an effort to incorporate art and cultural activities not only in traditional subjects, but in other areas, for example, collaboration with libraries, theatres, museums. Where possible schools should include artists and representatives from cultural institutions in their projects. Traditionally professional artists mostly take part in extra curriculum activities and less in regular classes. Funding for these activities comes from various sources including payments by schools, fund agencies, payment by parents, support from private sponsors.

Taking into account the increasing importance of various learning approaches and situations the web – based magazine “New dimensions” for the arts teachers appeared in [www.menas.lt](http://www.menas.lt)

### Data showing arts teachers by subjects, specialities and categories

	Subject	Total number of working teachers in arts education				Certificated teachers by category				Totally teachers	
		Total number	Specialists	Non specialists		Teacher	Senior teacher	Teacher – supervisor	Teacher – expert	number	%
				Number	%						
1.	Art	1809	1211	598	33,1	183	544	282	49	1058	58,5
2.	Dance	555	431	124	22,3	48	149	65	16	278	50
3.	Music	3783	3514	269	7,1	426	2090	525	47	3088	91,6
4.	Theatre	13	13	-	-	-	5	2	2	9	69,2

### Programmes and projects

Apart from traditional Song and Dance festivals for school children which took place in Vilnius every fourth year one of the best known programmes for school children is a music competition “The Song of Songs”. Even if being unattractive it has long lasting tradition and occupies children from pre-school to secondary education. The successful participants are awarded and invited to participate on the final TV Concert.

The Spring Academy for the Young Artists was invented in 1995. It's being organised by the Ministry of Education and Science. The main aims of this programme: to expand aesthetical - artistic education, to elevate and emphasize the cultural life at school, to aspire and fortify artistic culture at school, to encourage the creative community relationships.

The program consists of 3 phases:  
school, regional and national.

In the first phase the exhibitions are held at schools by participants (grades 10-12) and the authors of the displayed works presented.

While working out the second phase the works are displayed regionally and contest is carried out, because it is not possible to send everyone participant to the general event. After the contest is over the representatives from each region are invited to participate in the Spring Academy for the Young Artists. It's being organised annually at different places in Lithuania. Over 100 - 120 talented secondary school students are invited to the final meeting what's called Academy. During three days gathering they have an excellent opportunities for creative activities in various workshops under the leadership by lecturers of the Vilnius Academy of Arts, visits to museums and sights, meetings with professional artists at their studios. An important area covered by Academy for the Young Artists is teacher's training and collaboration with local communities.

International Project for Schoolchildren 'Nature's Fairytale' was invented in 1993. From 1995 it's being organised by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, Council of Europe Office in Vilnius and supported by a number of non-governmental organizations. Project possesses educational, environmental and cultural aims. The complete history of the project can be found on the website <http://www.menas.lt/>. The Project catalogue contains names of several thousands of participants, their art teachers and schools. It is very important that in schools local exhibitions are arranged in the framework of "Nature's Fairytale" – before the works are sent to final exhibition. Each author (participating in the final stage) gets a personal copy of the catalogue. Reproductions of schoolchildren's work and methodical material find their place in the catalogue as well. Postcards, booklets and posters as well as considerable amount of project-related information appears on the internet. Website is constantly developing, and becomes wider. In 10 years while project was underway teachers were encouraged to capture the workflow of the local projects at schools, by making photos or keeping "Project diaries". Children from abroad and ethnic minority groups in Lithuania (Polish, Jewish, Russian) are very active participants of the project. New feature of the Project - invited guests, professional as well as amateur artists in order to stress, that visual art does not have to be created by professionals.

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