

8.9 Enhancing social inclusion through culture

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Fostering equality and youth involvement through cultural activities

Cultural activities as a tool for social inclusion is not yet a widely-recognised concept at the public policy level. [The State Inclusion strategy 2014-2020](#) mentions mainstreaming social inclusion in many areas, including culture, however, it does not bring any concrete actions in this field. Similar is the situation within the youth sector. The strategy seeks to integrate the socially disadvantaged into many areas of life, including cultural life. The aim is for them to have the same opportunities to participate in (among other things) cultural life, for that new tools need to be found.

The Czech Office of the EU Culture Programme already published a booklet '[Artists for society. Examples of cultural projects in the field of social inclusion](#)' in 2010. Some of these were focused on children and young people – in hospitals, in difficult life situations, Roma youth, etc. There is no newer similar initiative since then.

In 2019 a conference Culture connects was realized. The main topic of the conference was the need for long-term and systematic connection of culture to the social, educational or health spheres. By them culture is perceived as an opportunity to overcome obstacles in the mutual understanding of individuals and groups of the population.

There are no central, top-level policy initiatives in this. From the state cultural institutions, there are many local initiatives from museums, libraries, and theatres where we can foster equality in their educational or youth activities, programmes, exhibitions etc.

There is a [Museum of Roma Culture](#), created initially by Roma Activists and it became a budgetary organization of the Ministry of Culture since 2005. It runs several activities for young people and young Roma. There was a project **Social and educational activities of the Museum of Roma Culture 2005–2019** – program

aimed at supporting the education and personal development of children and youth, especially from the Roma community. They work with clients from families who cannot sufficiently support their children on their way to education. Since 2020 tutoring of socially disadvantaged children is run by [DROM, romské st?edisko](#).

From bigger public initiatives, there is a project [Inclusion with the National Technical Museum](#), implementation time 2018 – 2021. The goals of the project are four new educational programs designed for pupils preparing to enter the labor market. The programs are inclusive and focusing mainly on students with physical, hearing and visual impairments. In addition to a special program at the museum, students are also taking part in excursions and internships with employers.

Combating discrimination and poverty through cultural activities

There are some individual initiatives used at all levels, usually local or community levels, and by various subjects, and also varying in quality and impact.

From the activities of the state, the [Museum of Roma Culture](#) is very significant. This museum has strong educational and social work programmes, including for children and young people from their surroundings, which is one of the socially excluded areas. The museum help the majority understand the history and culture of the Roma minority. At the same time it provides support to the Roma community and young individuals with education, preparation for schools etc. They organize workshops for the general public and school groups under the guidance of exhibiting artists. Also they organize leisure time activities for children like drawing, dancing, landart, beatbox or collage, screen printing technique and paper engraving technique.

There is a Low-threshold facilities for Children and Youth as one of the social services and youth work activities for Children and Youth.

Another famous project with involvement of many public partners including the Ministry of the Interior and the Police is the [project called 'Úsvit'](#) (dawn). It focuses on improving the situation in the housing estate 'Chanov' which is one of the most notorious, and a symbolic socially excluded area in the Czech Republic with a very high proportion of Roma population. The project was in a way a pilot for similar activities. For the activities with children and young people, aesthetic education was used as well, and young people participating in cultural activities were also supported in their inclusion in society and planning their own life path.