



*Arts Education: "To see a world in a grain of sand"*

## **Background**

This Conference takes place exactly a year after the 2009 Conference, jointly organised by the Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan (GI/MMB), Bangalore, and India Foundation for the Arts (IFA). That Conference bore the title "Contexts, Concepts and Practices in Schools," and it offered deliberations under six panel rubrics, and hands-on experiential reflections through four breakout sessions. A special issue of IFA's arts magazine ArtConnect has compiled with flair many of the important presentations of the Conference.

The 2009 GI/MMB/IFA Conference was also conceptualized against the backdrop of the joint GI/MMB -IFA arts pedagogy training project, Kali-Kalisu, which has been running in the state of Karnataka with government school teachers since mid-2009. Kali-Kalisu has entered its second year, during which the project is working to build capacity for teacher training from within a constituency of teachers that have already internalised a passion for Arts Education. The onward reach of Kali-Kalisu primarily aims at enriching education through the arts in non-metropolitan government schools in Karnataka.

The first year of Kali-Kalisu has been analyzed in a detailed article in the ArtConnect special issue, and was presented at the 2009 Conference through a documentary film, and the participation of Kali-Kalisu facilitators and teacher trainees. Kali-Kalisu was also presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Conference on Arts Education, convened by UNESCO and the Republic of Korea, in Seoul in May, 2010. The UNESCO Conference was designed to examine progress made on the Roadmap for Arts Education, a document which emerged from the 1<sup>st</sup> World Conference in 2006. Kali-Kalisu was appreciated for being closely aligned with many recommendations from the Roadmap. The 2<sup>nd</sup> World Conference has articulated clear and concise Developmental Goals for Arts Education, through a document referred to as the Seoul Agenda.

The Seoul Agenda was published in August, 2010. It proposes detailed action strategies that fall under, and emerge from, three main goals for Arts Education: raising its accessibility to all; securing high-quality activities and programmes; and resolving social and cultural challenges through it. Related concerns centre on the establishing of arts training on a regular basis for arts educators and artists, to enable good quality Arts Education. The document is available at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/artseducation>. GI/MMB-IFA initiatives have anticipated many of these worthy articulations, and the Conference will give them voice.

The 2010 GI/MMB/IFA Conference will enable the voices from Kali-Kalisu, and beyond, to debate the important links among the fields of arts and culture, development and education -- debates that Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller

Bhavan (GI/MMB), Bangalore, and India Foundation for the Arts (IFA) initiatives have set in motion. Ideas of development can differ widely in a globalizing world. In examining these links, the Conference will also allow for the articulation of multiple visions of Arts Education. It will also bring to light Arts Education interventions on the ground, especially those that have creatively forged and harnessed partnerships among stakeholders.

The 2010 GI-MMB/IFA Conference recognises and celebrates synergies with worldwide thinking about Arts Education priorities. It will remain faithful to the momentum of Kali-Kalasu, which derives from Arts Education initiatives at grassroots levels in school contexts. It will equally hope to catalyse conversations with broader Indian and international Arts Education activist communities that are engaged in the continual dialogue of global and local realities, ideas, theories and practices.

### **Aims of the 2010 GI-MMB/IFA Conference:**

- Articulating multiple understandings of Arts Education and arts in education
- Consolidating Arts Education as a priority within development discourse
- Encouraging cooperation and partnerships that widen the sphere of Arts Education advocacy

### **Structure of the Conference:**

Four plenary sessions are envisaged, each of which will address one or more of the above aims. Panels of three or four speakers each will present papers, and each session will allow for some open discussion.

### **Panels:**

#### **Day One**

#### **Arts and Learning in Education – Competence and Creativity**

Competence and creativity are concepts that draw various stakeholders to view Arts Education through a variety of lenses. In some contexts, Arts Education is seen as nourishing a burgeoning economic sector known as Creative Industries that generates economic value. In other contexts, Arts Education is valued for catalysing creativity, which, in turn, promotes competence and excellence in academics in general. Yet others look towards Arts Education as the engine driving innovation and creativity in India's emerging economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The votaries for Arts Education among educationists themselves would likely advocate the idea of Arts Education in and of itself, seeking no recourse to desirable, but extrinsic, outcomes to make the case. In recent decades, such viewpoints have clashed at conceptual levels. Can they, however, be put into dialogue with each other? Can this panel point towards overlaps and synergies, to help build broad based advocacy for Arts Education? Arts Education needs the widest possible advocacy coalition for it to be central to an educational vision.

#### **Development and the Self: The Role of Arts Education**

It is generally acknowledged that Arts Education nurtures the spirit of inquiry and the lifelong quest for learning. At the level of the learner as an individual situated in civil society, the term 'development' has a nuanced relationship with ideas of socio-economic development. The concept of 'life skills' is often used to bridge individual and the world. The World Health Organisation defines life skills as "abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life." The term 'skills' often evokes skepticism from Arts Education purists because of its easy association with an instrumental conception of the role of arts in education. Yet, the question of the value of the arts in skills development (and vice versa) is neither simplistic, nor cut-and-dried. The idea of 'skills' extends from abstract understandings of life skills, through to the conventional demands for literacy and numeracy, and all the way to arts-based activities that tap into multiple intelligences. An easily recognised example is the language learning class, which often adopts arts techniques and pedagogies quite effortlessly. Folded within this universe of skills development are pedagogies addressed towards children with special needs and different abilities who are placed within the educational system. This panel will bring to light theories and practices that connect the arts and personal development through the lens of 'skills'..

### **Breakout Session:**

T M Krishna- A Journey in Music

Gallery Tour- A guided tour of the National Gallery of Modern Art

### **Roundtable:**

**Artists and Teachers: A Dialogue**

## **Day Two**

### **Arts Education and Development**

The many connections between Arts Education and ideas of society and development have been central to the vision of Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan and IFA, in conceptualizing the Kali-Kalasu arts pedagogy programme. The Seoul Agenda says: "Arts Education can make a direct contribution to resolving the social and cultural challenges facing the world today." Yet, the arts and development share an uneasy relationship, not least because they are seldom discussed together in public forums. What is the relationship between development and education? Is education a necessary index of development? Or also its driving force? Are the arts a central pillar of meaningful education? Or a very useful means through which education that is 'utilitarian' can be sugar-coated and effectively delivered? Is culture an independent realm, which takes shape and evolves outside of policy and discourse? This panel will ask for fresh articulations of the complex inter-relationships of arts, culture, education and development, asking if these are paradigms that exist in a holistic higher ground that calls for synergy, understanding and solid grounds for dialogue and cooperation.

### **Partnerships Within and Beyond the School**

For Arts Education to move from being an occasional phenomenon to acquiring the status of a movement that has systematic contours, the field will require that partnerships be forged. There is a rich array of players with an interest in Arts Education. Policy makers and administrators; teachers, students and parents; artists and communities; arts institutions and museums – this is a partial list of activists that are (or should be) joining together in shaping the future of Arts Education. There is a pressing need for robust partnerships among the stakeholders; in general, partnerships in the field have been characterized by their tenuous and temporary nature. This panel will offer the opportunity to examine and understand various viewpoints on Arts Education activism and to initiate discussions and dialogues which may result in innovative and strong collaborative interventions in the future. The panel takes as understood that partnership-building is one solid basis for the advancement as well as the advocacy of Arts Education.

**Breakout Session:**

Kirtana Kumar- Theatre and Movement in Education

Dr Manfred Schewe – Arts and Language learning

**Roundtable:**

**Good Practices in Research and Advocacy for Arts Education**