

# Focus Experience

# 4

**Educating Cities**  
International Documents Databank



## Title

# Childhood, Art and Languages

## An artistic education project from Lyon

## Basic data

**City:** Lyon

**Country:** France

**Number of inhabitants:** 465.000

**Topics:** Art and humanities, social welfare, culture and leisure and personal development

**Principles of the Charter of Educating Cities:** 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 16, 17

## Summary

Lyon City Council's conviction that artistic and cultural education can be an incentive for children's learning process led to the creation in 2002 of the 'Childhood, Art and Languages' project, in collaboration with the Ministries of Education and Culture. There are three aims:

- 1) to coordinate a network of innovative educational and artistic practices, inviting artists to do residencies in nursery schools;
- 2) to develop resources for artistic and cultural education; and
- 3) to encourage research on art and early childhood.

The term "residency" indicates that the artist stays in a school for a long period of time. This enables the pupils to get a close look at the artist's discipline, be it theatre, dance, music, plastic arts, circus, photography or any other. The artist brings the symbolic, creative, imaginary dimension of the craftsman to the school, which is made available to the pupils and developed alongside the school's adults.



**Music workshop**

The residencies last two to three years, in nursery schools (children from 2 to 6 years old) in socially, culturally and economically vulnerable areas.

To carry out this experience, artists and specialized territorial agents from the nursery schools (ATSEM in French) work in collaboration with district inspectors, education advisors and cultural centres from Lyon (the House of Dance, the Music Conservatory, the Art Museum, the Contemporary Art Museum, the National Art School and so on.)

## Objectives

- To initiate children into art and culture through participation in a creative process by an artist.
- To offer an alternative to traditional learning methods, stimulating the children's sensitivity, imagination, curiosity, creativity, self-perception and the perception of the others.
- To work on other aspects of learning in class (language, coexistence, corporal expression, discovery of the world and so on) through work done with the artist in the workshop.
- To think about professional practices and new pedagogical currents.

## Methodology

Normally the artists do workshops with pupils, but the form their interventions take can vary. Their objective is not limited to putting artistic techniques across but also includes the creation of an artistic universe (a story, symbols, objects, movements, practices and so on.)

The project's objectives are suited to the nursery school, but the system allows to build, through collaboration between all the parties involved (teachers, artist and the ATSEM agents) an ambitious artistic and cultural project that feeds into the development and learning of the pupils. Pedagogical practices undergo progressive changes.

During September, the school's educational team and the artist design the project together. Over the academic year, the artist attends the school for three or four half-days a week, twenty weeks of the school year. The residency can be extended to three years, if both parties agree.

As well as the activities carried out at the school, there are also meetings and visits (to museums, shows, libraries, getting to know the city and so on). During the year, training and reflection courses are also offered.

Establishing an agreement between school/artist and one or more cultural institutions in the city means that the artist's discipline can be gone into in more depth and also to cross different artistic disciplines.

Throughout the school year, the teachers are monitored and supported by the National Institute of Evaluation of Education (IEN in French) of districts and by the teaching advisors. They work together on educational proposals adapted to these new artistic and cultural times.

A team of investigators from Lyon University has for years been observing and analysing artists' residencies in nursery schools, and every year brings out reports for consultation in the Childhood, Arts and Languages Project and on the website ([www.eal.lyon.fr](http://www.eal.lyon.fr)).

In the school year 2011-2012 the experience was renewed for the eighth time and the intention is to keep developing it through the establishment of relationships that help run artistic and cultural education projects across Europe. The "cARTable d'Europe" Comenius Regio program puts together the project Childhood, Art and Languages and the Dramatic Centre of Wallonia for Children and Youth (La Louvière - Belgium) from 2011 to 2013.



**Ear-telephone**



**Cups in the nature**

## Social and urban context

Lyon is the capital of the Rhône-Alpes region, and covers 47.87 km<sup>2</sup>. It has a population of 465,000, of which 36,000 are foreigners. The city has always taken in immigrants from the Mediterranean countries, Europe, Asia, North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. The unemployment rate is 7.8%.



**Old Town of Lyon  
UNESCO World Heritage**

Lyon is an outstanding example of a city dedicated to culture and creativity that vibrates to the rhythm of an artistic life supported by a number of different teams and cultural events: the House of Dance, the Dance Biennial and the Contemporary Art Biennial, the Art Museum and so on.

The experience is applied in nursery schools in the city's high-priority areas.

## Assessment

- There is evidence of a good working dynamic in the schools.
- The children become immersed in a cultural world through a new system of learning.

### Strengths:

- The duration of the artist's residency: three years for one artistic team in one nursery school.
- The establishment of collaborations with cultural teams.
- Observation and assessment of the experience by a research team.



**Open air activities**

### Future proposals:

- To share the experience of artists' residencies in children's education with other similar centres across Europe.
- To continue to disseminate the progress of the experience through the collection "Embarquement immédiat!" (paper and electronic bilingual edition).

### Presentation of the Project Childhood, Art and Languages (in French)

[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xggiuh\\_enfance-arts-et-langage\\_creation](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xggiuh_enfance-arts-et-langage_creation)

### Publication "Embarquement immédiat" (in English and French)

<http://en.calameo.com/read/000777068e8d991671726>

## Resources

## Contact

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You can consult more than 1.000 Educating Experiences in the website of the Educating Cities International Documents Databank (BIDCE):

<http://w10.bcn.es/APPS/edubidce/pubPortadaAc.do>