

“Diverses cités - Hors Les Murs” Project

Background

The paradox of French “banlieues” (underprivileged urban districts) is their lack of recognition in terms of cultural and artistic input, in spite of the growing number of artists coming from these places and of the interest of well known artists to develop workshops and cooperations with young people in these “banlieues”. Let us quote the composer Nicolas Frize as an example. The idea of the scheme is to create a mobility fund, not only to have cultural diversity acknowledged inside our territories but also outside France. The idea is to link centres and peripheries, to support those who do not have proper access to information and to invest in these new resources for artistic and cultural diversity.

How it works

The organisation proposed is as follows: “Diverses cités” grants (to be launched in 2009) will benefit to international exchange projects in the fields of urban cultures, World music and intercultural and interdisciplinary projects. Know how exchanges and training workshops will be particularly favoured.

Calls for proposals will be launched at national scale and may benefit only to artists and cultural actors living in underprivileged urban districts. A jury will gather experts of urban cultures, representatives of involved corporates, and of CulturesFrance. As for “Hors les murs” grants (Case # 15), the scheme will be managed by the Département de la Coopération et de l’Ingénierie culturelle at CulturesFrance.

The expected potential effects on the mobility are the self-affirmation of artists and cultural actors, confronted to new partnership and opportunities. In this specific situation, the support to mobility in itself, is a way of breaking isolation. The National call for proposals will give the opportunity of promoting nationally and internationally chosen artists and cultural actors.

Results

300 000 EUR for three years will be launched through the support of three committed corporates. An average of ten 10 000 EUR will be distributed each year.

Furthermore, the participation to the mobility scheme will be included in the agreement which soon will be signed between Saint-Denis/Plaine Commune and CulturesFrance, concerning artists and cultural actors of Saint-Denis/Plaine Commune.

The success of the meeting organised both by CulturesFrance and Saint-Denis, with the support of Ile-de-France Regional Council, on May 21th, 2008 “Day of Cultural diversity for Dialogue and Development”, led to the conclusion that such schemes are needed and must be run in a very simple way, with a commitment of concerned local authorities.

It is a little paradoxical to discover that an arm’s length National agency such as CulturesFrance had the idea of launching a scheme the aim of which is evidently relevant. So far, local authorities as Saint-Denis have been very active on promoting international cooperation in the fields of Youth and Development but they dare not promote their contemporary emerging cultures. It looks like that at least in France, to exist, such a scheme needs the label of an organization known as the sponsor of well established artists. From the French point of view, another novelty is to associate corporates, as co-founders and co-responsibles of such a scheme, with a medium-term perspective.

Sources

Contact details: “Diverses cités Hors Les Murs”, CulturesFrance, 1bis, Avenue de Villars, 75007 Paris, Tél. : +33 1 53 69 83 00. Website : <http://www.culturesfrance.org>

“Comprendre la diversité pour mieux la promouvoir”, CulturesFrance report for Saint-Denis meeting (May 21st, 2008).

Participation to Saint-Denis quoted meeting

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