

4th IFACCA Researchers' Meeting

7 – 9 September, 2014 Hildesheim, Germany

The 4th IFACCA Researcher's meeting, held in Hildesheim Germany, was attended by 14 people from 13 different countries.

The meeting was organised to coincide with the International Conference on Cultural Policy Research (ICCPR) taking place in Hildesheim on 9-11 September and Berlin on 12-13 September (<http://iccpr2014.de/>). IFACCA also presented a panel session during the ICCPR on *Knowledge and strategy: Cultural policy research and its impact on long-term policy planning* chaired by Sarah Gardner, Executive Director of IFACCA.¹

The objectives of the researchers' meeting were to:

- Share information on current research priorities, projects and methods
- Discuss the role of arts policy research and its connection to cultural policies
- Provide feedback on IFACCA's research activities and upcoming research projects
- Discuss specific research topics
- Discuss the role of the IFACCA research network and WorldCP

The presentations and discussions evolved around various topics, including the impact of restructuring in the agencies; measuring public and intrinsic value of the arts and culture; scoring and peer assessment systems; economic impact; developing arts index; the relationship between research and policy; evaluation, statistics and indicators, among others.

The themes that were common to participants' organisations were

- How research can be used to aid good decision-making by informing policy-making and establishing strategic initiatives and infrastructure that addresses areas of need
- Working towards aligning policies and strategies with the activities of funded organisations; this requires good relationships with the sector, developing policies that aid sustainability, and balancing access with the support of excellence
- Transnational comparisons of statistics and research outcomes – learning from the experience of other countries
- Evaluation and evidence gathering. Identifying and agreeing on indicators of success through statistics and case studies; assessing both economic and social impacts/public value. There's a need for constant vigilance, advocacy efforts need to be effective. Much discussion on indexes, e.g. the Arts Index (model from the US)
- Partnerships/co-operations to undertake research (with the sector; ministries and councils; academic and other research institutions; policy-makers; other countries; federal agencies and other important stakeholders) but conscious of their different agendas; commissioning private research companies and how that is done. There is a need for further development of tools and methodologies.
- Collecting data on specific policy issues e.g. regional support, gender balance etc.

¹ The panellists were Sharon Chang (National Arts Council Singapore), Randy Cohen (Americans for the Arts), Richard Russell (Arts Council England) and Matias Zurita (Consejo Nacional de las Artes y la Cultura, Chile). In addition, Annamari Laaksonen, Research Manager of IFACCA presented the preliminary results of the IFACCA Member Research Survey.

- Change management – monitoring what is happening and assessing impacts. Broadening the concepts of culture, understanding creative industries etc.
- There is great emphasis on research on community, regional and local governance. Making the audiences and artists part of and owners of applied tools was considered central to the further development of these tools. Building evidence-based policy-making means also balancing positive news with more critical assessment and constant vigilance.

The participants called for long-term funding for research and evaluation. 'Information and evaluation should be understood as an investment not as an expense.'