



**PARTNERSHIPS:  
MUSEUMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS**

***Sharing of education in the joint construction of educational actions***

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***Abstract***

*We will present a brief look at the main partnership models developed by the Education Department of the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo.*

*We will focus our analysis on the partnership experiment that we christened Shared Education, setting out the ideal profile of participating partners for this system in which they are co-responsible for drawing up and developing joint educational actions.*

*In order to provide an example of this experiment, we will present a case study of the partnership between the museum and an NGO that is involved with young people from the lower classes by providing them educational training in video-graphic language.*



## **General Introduction**

### ***Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo***

Inaugurated in 1905, the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo is the oldest art museum in the state.

Subordinated to the Department for Culture of the State of Sao Paulo, the Pinacoteca currently has a collection of some 6,000 Brazilian works of art, which date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present time. Approximately 1,200 of these are on long-term exhibition, allowing for continuing education processes.

The museum's hundred-year history also encompasses the history of its oldest building: an architectural landmark of the old part of the city of Sao Paulo, on account of its imposing construction and its very visible brickwork, this building was originally designed and built to house Sao Paulo's School of Arts and Trades - the former Society for the Promotion of Popular Instruction, which was founded in 1875 and offered free vocational courses aimed at training craftsmen and workers.

Therefore, the process of creating and enlarging the Pinacoteca's art collection is interwoven with the contiguous occupation of the building by the museum and by different education institutions.

Apart from this building, the Pinacoteca has, since 2004, been able to count on the space provided by another historical building, called Estação Pinacoteca (Pinacoteca Station), thus increasing the possibilities in terms of cultural and educational actions developed by the institution.



## ***Education Department***

During the hundred years that it has been in existence, the Pinacoteca has pursued a great many education initiatives, and has a long tradition of highly innovative practices in the area of educational activities in art museums.

The current format of the Education Department was instituted in 2002.

Based on a preliminary survey that was aimed at establishing the profile of the museum's spontaneous visitors, we pinpointed a number of educational requirements for this public; however, first and foremost we identified those who are not a part of this universe.

As a result of the data collected and analyzed by the survey of the gallery's visitors, there was a change in the priorities of the Pinacoteca's Education Department. Now, the priorities are to develop actions of education in art based on the works in the Pinacoteca's art collection; to promote the quality of the public's experience when they come into contact with the works of art contained in the collection; to ensure the widest possible access to the museum; as well as turning members of the public who are not in the habit of visiting the Pinacoteca – into frequent visitors.

In keeping with the importance of the art collection in question, this series of educational challenges propelled the organization to undertake a number of different actions, which - although created as stand-alone programs - act in synergy, constantly exchanging experiences, under a common pedagogical guideline.

The theoretical thought that bridges the different educational programs currently developed are based on John Dewey's philosophical proposals, seeking an education that is capable of producing a meaningful experience in the visitor when he comes into contact with the work of art.



## **Partnerships**

In order to achieve the continuous development of these actions, we set up a number of partnerships, which helped us realize that this term is frequently used to convey various different meanings.

Very often the word partnership is used to convey the idea of patronage; in other words, a situation in which the institution receives financial assistance from an external third party, who in return for the aforementioned financial support wants to add value to his/her name or brand by having it associated with the world of culture and education.

We can also regard it as a partnership when we combine efforts with another institution which, by allowing us to use its name or brand, gives us institutional support; in other words, what it adds to the undertaking is not financial subsidies, but rather the prestige of its brand.

There are partnerships where support for the specific action takes the form of carrying out or helping with logistical or communications procedures, such as for instance where one of the partners uses their media communication resources to transmit information regarding the partner's actions.

Within the scope of this text, we will be dealing more specifically with a particular type of partnership which we have named jointly constructed educational actions. In this case, the contribution of the partners occurs via the sum of educational efforts and responsibilities in the construction of a shared education.

All these types of partnership are fundamental and equally enriching, and without them, educational actions, especially in the field of public institutions, would simply not be feasible.



It is also important to remember that each of these types of partnership requires a differentiated relationship model between the partners, because it implies specific demands and interests of each of the parties involved.

It is important to bear in mind that on many occasions, the same partner assumes different roles throughout the course of the partnership process, and knowing how to deal with this mobility and constant transformation is the challenge that solidifies the bond that is created between the partners.

### **Examples in the Pinacoteca's Education Department**

To give an example of the partnership systems explained above, we can point, within the context of our own activities, to VISA's sponsorship of the Educational Program for Disabled People (PEPE), which is responsible for promoting education at the museum for people with physical, mental or sensorial disabilities, by means of multi-sensorial resources.

Apart from helping with the financial costs, the institutional and logistical support provided by the State of Sao Paulo's Department of Education for the project '*Welcome teacher!*' is also well-known. This project is responsible for receiving students on educator-monitored visits to the Pinacoteca's collection of art and for training high-school teachers of different academic disciplines in how to use art as an educational resource as well as how to carry out educational visits to art and culture institutions.

In the three years since it was first set up, this project has already directly involved more than 2,000 teachers from different parts of the State and has welcomed roughly 55,000 students from the state's public school system.



### **Shared education**

We will now take a deeper look at the type of partnership we call “shared education”.

We regard shared education as being the joint construction of educational actions.

To this end, our experience has taught us that in order to create partnerships in shared education, it is of fundamental importance that there is a clear perception of the educational action in the museum as an opportunity for pedagogic and experience transformation, rather than a mere leisure activity, although the entertainment aspect, which is intrinsic to familiarity with the museum and with art, should be appreciated in the non-formal educational practice. It is also necessary to establish common or compatible objectives between the partners, in addition to an efficient flow of information and the guarantee of processes of sincere and open dialogue.

It is fundamental to establish that a fair division of responsibilities between the partners be made before, during and after the educational processes are developed, in order that none of them feels unfairly burdened.

Thus, we could define shared education as a process drawn up with a balanced breakdown of responsibilities aimed at achieving objectives that are common to the partners, in a situation of mutual respect.

### **Ideal partners**

The obvious partners are not always the ideal ones. Sometimes our neighbors, who on account of their geographical closeness could constitute potential partners, do not exhibit any readiness or willingness to give up their long-held practices to incorporate new education possibilities, making the processes unfeasible.



The ideal partners are those who, in addition to the fundamental aspects already mentioned above, show an interest in blending their practices with the educational potential offered by the museum, in a quest for common objectives and to this end, show a readiness and interest in a continuous undertaking.

In the same way, we understand that in order to establish shared education, the museum should take on the role of a democratic space, which is ideal for communication and the exchange of knowledge as well as for the construction of capacities (acquisition and utilization of knowledge and cognitive, experience and emotional abilities), which form a link with the work already developed at the partner's institution.

Therefore, it is up to the museum's educator to be sensitive and attentive to the fact that for a certain type of public this space - which is dedicated to art - may symbolize his/her own social constraint.

Therefore, it will be up to the educator to regulate his performance in accordance with the interests of the members of the group so that the visit and the contents covered, along with his educational performance makes sense to them, acquiring objective understanding or practical applicability. In addition, the educator should pay attention to the motivation aspects, ensuring that the education processes become triggers of spontaneous participation of individuals.



**Example of partnership in Shared Education:**

Among the educational actions developed at the museum, the **Sociocultural Inclusion Program (PISC)**, coordinated by Gabriela Aidar, has a number of general objectives: broadening the profile of the Pinacoteca's visitors; encouraging qualified access for socially marginalized groups of citizens to the cultural assets found in the museum; promoting actions that can work as triggers in social transformations, either in an individual or collective scope; expanding the participants' repertoire and sense of cultural belonging; developing their aesthetic perception, providing assistance for their creations as well as strengthening their critical capacity; promoting opportunities for dialogue in order to stimulate participants' self-confidence; operating in the acquisition and utilization of knowledge and cognitive, emotional or experience abilities.

These objectives and the program's systems of work were defined based on the profile of the target public, such as groups of homeless, residents living in sheltered accommodation, residents of beehives, cooperatives and groups of artisans aimed at income generation, groups of young people in situations of vulnerability attended by social education programs.

To host these groups, the PISC sets up partnerships with institutions that develop socio-educational projects and organizes meetings with these groups, with visits to the museum, which are tailor-made to suit their demand and profile. All of the actions developed by the program are evaluated and the results are constantly monitored.

As a result of the experience acquired, this year the program carried out a training course for educators of social organizations, aimed at training them in the pedagogical and socio-inclusive utilization of art and of the museum. This action was carried out via the partnership with an NGO, IMPAES – the Minidi Pedroso Institute of Art and Social Education.



By way of illustration of what we consider to be Shared Education, we present the partnership that was carried out during 2004 and 2005 between the ***Sociocultural Inclusion Program (PISC)*** action of the Education Department of the Pinacoteca and the NGO ***Educational Action, Assessment, Research and Information***, with a group of adolescents in a situation of vulnerability, participants in the project **Video: Culture and Work** offered by the NGO.

In this example of shared education, 5 encounters were held, with 3 of them taking place in the Pinacoteca and the other 2 at the headquarters of the NGO partner.

In conversations between the partners, apart from the objectives that are specific to each institution, we defined the following as common objectives: deepening the group's understanding of the video-graphic language through an approximation to the traditional languages of art, promoting interpretations of images in a collaboration aimed at assisting understanding of relationships between context, artist and creation, promoting the appropriation of public cultural spaces as artistic and learning references.

We used as an action strategy a visit to the institution of origin for the purpose of socialization and ascertaining the interests of the group's participants. Based on this, we established specific objectives for each visit, favoring a given selection of art works and guided visits, as well as establishing proposals for the carrying out of artistic activities, stimulating active answers to the contents covered in the visit, with the result that, at the end, the process acquired a cumulative learning character.

The actions were evaluated on a threefold system, contemplating the variety and subjectivity of experiences and learning. The results showed the satisfaction and range of the objectives foreseen for all the participants, each one of the partners and the participants in the group attended.



As developments and possibilities for the continuation of this partnership, we point out the perception of the building of a database for a joint reflection of the practices in terms of the evaluation processes developed, the video production developed by the participants, as well as the proposal of setting up internships in the Pinacoteca's Education Department for the young people in this group, with the aim of producing further videos.

To conclude, the example of the gratifying experience referred to above makes us believe in the possibility of jointly constructing educational actions and promoting a shared education. However, in order to achieve this much, it's necessary to be a partner. And to be a partner is to be an associate, to be a companion, to be similar.