

### *Local government cultural provisions in financial figures, pilot*

Minna Ruusuvirta, Pasi Saukkonen, Johanna Selkee, Ditte Winqvist 2008. Cupore and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities.

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### *Abstract*

In 2007, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities carried out a pilot project together with Finnish local authorities to collect data on cultural functions in municipalities. The objective was to find out how much money local authorities spend on culture and to examine the service structure of the department of cultural services. In the project, the financial key figures for expenditure and revenues in art and culture were collected and the prerequisites for a more extensive and regular data collection were examined. The project was carried out as a survey covering the basic structures of cultural functions and economic data based on the 2006 final accounts. For the purposes of the project, libraries were mostly not included in cultural functions.

Local authorities participating in the project were actively involved in the different stages of the project. The Foundation for Cultural Policy Research (Cupore) also participated in the project. A separate report was drawn up on project implementation, experiences gathered from it and on opportunities for the development of data collection. The report is available on Cupore Web site <http://www.cupore.fi>.

Data was collected on 14 towns and cities: Espoo, Hämeenlinna, Joensuu, Jyväskylä, Kuopio, Lahti, Lappeenranta, Mikkeli, Oulu, Rovaniemi, Tampere, Turku, Vaasa and Vantaa. The results show that although the central government participates in the funding of local cultural functions, the towns and cities still bear the main responsibility for the funding. In all, the share of cultural functions of total municipal finances is still modest. The share of cultural operating costs of the town's total operating costs was largest in Lahti at 3.7 per cent. The smallest share was 1.2 per cent.

However, there are great differences between the towns and cities. Generally speaking, large cities spend more money on culture than smaller towns, not only when measured as absolute amounts, but also when calculated per capita. Of the local authorities participating in the project, the gross operating costs of cultural functions were highest in the bilingual town of Vaasa. The cities of Espoo and Vantaa, located near the cultural services of Helsinki, used less money for art and culture than other cities of the same size.

Local authorities also differ greatly in how they provide cultural services. Some local authorities provide most services independently while other local authorities give more support to actors which in terms of legal form are private (foundations, associations or limited companies). In many towns and cities, services are also purchased from private cultural actors. The majority of the municipal cultural funding is targeted at cultural services provided by local authorities themselves.

The established museums, theatres and orchestras have a strong position among cultural functions of local authorities participating in the survey. However, the towns and cities differ as to which type of institutions receive most financial support. The survey draws attention to cultural houses and centres as a growing form of operation that may have a prominent financial role in the local

authority's cultural budget. Also, in some towns and cities the share of funding for basic art education is significant.

The survey showed that information on some operating areas and practices of municipal cultural functions is still not easily accessible. This concerns in particular the funding for basic art education and cultural expenditure and revenues in other administrative sections (such as the departments of sports, youth affairs, social services or health). Many towns and cities organise or purchase art and cultural functions also outside the actual department of cultural services. Sometimes the general administration (often the town/city executive board) has a significant role in the funding for culture. To sum up, it is useful to further develop the data collection on cultural functions in municipalities.