



2.1 Target group categories

The arts provider tends to be the one who answers the question “who is cultural mediation for”. Only rarely does a group approach a cultural institution or individual artist to → request a cultural mediation programme on its own behalf.

→ request see Text 4.5

→ specialists in the arts and culture see Text 5.1

To define the audience or public for their cultural mediation activities, cultural institutions draw on a market research tool, the definition of target groups. Target groups are traditionally defined in terms of socio-demographic traits. Normally, the category of age or generation is the primary focus: children, young people, senior citizens, adults (less common though increasingly) are the most frequently defined target groups. In recent years, early development programmes (e.g. “theatre for toddlers”) have been seen in greater numbers, as have programmes for multiple generations. This last group brings us to another commonly used type of category: one based on societal institutions and groups, such as families, companies or occupations (e.g. managers or teachers). Alternatively, programmes can and often do identify target audiences by way of educational institutions, such as schools, universities and kindergartens. These invitations sometimes carry hidden target-group attributes, such as social status or educational background – an example of this would be offerings aimed at students in vocational programmes or at secondary schools which qualify for university admission. Target groups defined in terms of differentiation from the social majority, e.g. explicitly aimed at lesbians or gay men or at people of a specific ethnic origin, remain quite rare in the German-speaking world. There is a longer tradition of addressing audience groups with specific physical or mental characteristics – e.g. offerings for people who have learning impairments or impaired vision, hearing, or mobility.

A large proportion of the programmes offered by cultural institutions is addressed to an audience made up of → specialists in the arts and culture or people interested in the arts and culture. This group is almost never identified as a target group however. This is a case of an “invisible target group”, whose members are viewed as the obvious or natural users of programmes.