



## 7.2 Conditions of employment in cultural mediation

The conditions under which cultural mediators work are as diverse as the occupational backgrounds of the mediators themselves. Many cultural institutions do not have staff positions devoted solely to cultural mediation. In such institutions, mediation either falls within the sphere of outreach and marketing or appears as one responsibility among many in the job descriptions of individual staff members.

However, cultural mediation as a field of work is now undergoing a process of differentiation, primarily with respect to the programmes offered in institutions of musical and theatre arts, but also in museums. This process is accompanied by a gradual growth in jobs. Kunstmuseum Luzern, for instance, created multiple permanent staff positions in connection with a development project it set up called → Kompetenzzentrum Kunstvermittlung [Art Mediation Competence Centre]. Many of the publicly funded theatres in Switzerland have specialists in theatre pedagogy on their permanent staff. This trend is certainly related to the increasing emphasis on cultural mediation in funding policies, but it also has to do with the institutions themselves. The trend has already resulted in quality improvements in cultural mediation in many cases, since augmented time and financial resources can create a good basis for improved activities.

It must be noted that cultural mediation remains one of the more poorly paid and insecure fields of work in the cultural sphere. The increase in awareness of cultural mediation which could be observed over the past decade has not yet had a major structural impact. Most cultural mediators work as freelancers for a fee that is based on an hourly rate which can vary enormously. Also highly variable is the understanding of billable hours: while some institutions pay flat rates for preparatory and follow-up activities for projects and programmes, others will pay only for the hours in which mediators are actually working with participants. Cultural mediators often bear the entire risk of cancellation alone; i.e., when an offering is cancelled at short notice due to insufficient sign-ups, the cultural mediator may receive no payment at all.

As specialization and professionalization in the field increase, efforts to obtain better working conditions are intensifying, as Text 7.3 describes in greater detail.

→ Kompetenzzentrum Kunstvermittlung <http://www.kunstmuseumluzern.ch/de/kunstvermittlung.html> [1.5.2012]