

7.6 Funding of cultural mediation in Switzerland

In Switzerland, the Swiss Confederacy acts in a subsidiary role in the promotion of culture, supporting only projects of interest to the country as a whole, and supplementing the country's cantonal and municipal governments in doing so. In its support for cultural mediation, the → [Federal Office for Culture \(BAK\)](#) funds measures intended to promote language skills, literacy and reading and musical education, while the Swiss Arts Council → [Pro Helvetia](#) is responsible for funding arts mediation projects. In the course of its four-year Arts and Audiences Programme, Pro Helvetia developed a set of funding criteria, which it published in 2012 in the form of guidelines for grant applicants → [Leitfaden für Gesuchssteller_innen](#). Since cultural mediation projects generally take place at one location and interaction with the public takes place within a specific local context, proving that a project has national relevance can be difficult. For that reason, the focus is on promoting projects which, due to their high quality, can contribute to improving the practice of cultural mediation in the country.

One meets with a range of attitudes to cultural mediation at the cantonal and municipal level. Accordingly, funding activities at those levels are structured in a variety of ways. The greatest share of resources flow into partnerships between cultural institutions and schools (see → [Canton of Aargau](#), → [Canton of Bern](#), → [Canton of Zurich](#)). Increasingly, regional coordination offices are beginning to coordinate such cultural mediation projects, i.e. those for schools as well as discounts on cultural programmes.

While funding opportunities for school projects do exist in many Swiss cantons, there is no comparable support for cultural mediation activities outside of schools led by freelance mediators nor, in many places, is there for the non-school-related cultural mediation activities of institutions. Such projects often fall organizationally between the departments of culture and education, sometimes even in the area of social affairs. What is more, cantonal and municipal authorities tend to see cultural mediation as a standard part of the remit of institutions and thus covered by the agreements governing their activities. As a result, a municipal theatre is expected to finance any cultural mediation projects from its ordinary budget. The portion of the budget spent on cultural mediation is therefore a question of the institution's priorities. Resource allocation at privately financed institutions is also determined to a great extent by internal priorities. The cultural

→ [Federal Office for Culture \(BAK\)](#) see their Changing perspectives text in "1. What is cultural mediation?"

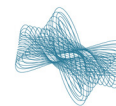
→ [Pro Helvetia](#) see their Changing perspectives text in "1. What is Cultural Mediation?"

→ [Leitfaden für Gesuchssteller_innen](#) http://www.prohelvetia.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/customers/prohelvetia/Foerderung/Vermittlungsfoerderung/2014/140708_Promotion_of_arts_outreach_at_Pro_Helvetia_def_EN.pdf [1.5.2012; see Resource Pool MFE070603.pdf

→ [Canton of Aargau](#) <http://www.kulturmachtschule.ch> [25.1.2013]

→ [Canton of Bern](#) http://www.erz.be.ch/erz/de/index/kultur/bildung_kultur.html [21.5.2012]

→ [Canton of Zurich](#) <http://www.schuleundkultur.ch> [21.5.2012]



mediation programme and the materials developed for it by the → [Daros Latin America Collection](#) in Rio de Janeiro – privately financed – provide an example of how this situation can be put to advantage. (see Valdes 2011).

In Switzerland, funding vehicles such as prizes and fellowships are rare or still up for debate. The City of Basel is an exception in this respect, having launched a free idea competition for → [cultural mediation projects](#) in 2012. At present, those → [fellowships and grants](#) which are awarded for cultural mediation in Switzerland are mostly destined for curators or critics, another indication of the open-ended use of the term.

In many cases, the only funding opportunity available to individuals working with institutions or independently is to submit grant applications to the foundations which fund cultural mediation. A list of the foundations particularly active in cultural mediation is being compiled under → [Infothek](#) at www.kultur-vermittlung.ch.

→ [Daros Latin America Collection](#) <http://www.goethe.de/wis/bib/prj/hmb/the/156/de8622841.htm> [1.5.2012]

→ [Cultural mediation projects of the City of Basel](#) http://www.educationprojekte.ch/fileadmin/daten/wettbewerb/kult%26co_Ausschreibung_Flyer.pdf [21.5.2012]; see Resource Pool MFE070602.pdf

→ [Fellowships and grants](#) http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/kultur/de/index/foerderung/bildende_kunst/stipendien.html [21.5.2012]; http://aus_schreibung.kurator.ch [21.5.2012]

→ [Infothek](#) <http://www.kultur-vermittlung.ch/de/infothek/foerderung.html> [24.8.2012]