



Study

Cultural Associations

Self-concept, Structures, Volunteering

This study was carried out by the German Federation for Arts Education and Cultural Learning (BKJ) in collaboration with Civil Society in Numbers (ZiviZ gGmbH) within Stifterverband.

The results are primarily based on data from the 2017 ZiviZ Survey, a representative survey of all registered associations, foundations, non-profit limited liability companies (gGmbH) and cooperatives in Germany. Over 71,000 organisations were invited to take part in the 2017 ZiviZ Survey. The survey response rate was ten per cent, and after adjustment of the random sample, 6,334 data sets were available for evaluation.

These included 1,046 organisations from the area of culture and media (hereinafter referred to as 'culture'), which accounted for sixteen per cent of the random sample. This study presents the data from this area of activity and sheds light on historic developments, structures, self-concepts, funding and volunteering.

Due to the small number of charitable cultural foundations and non-profit limited liability companies within the overall 'culture' data set, the terms 'cultural civil society organisations' and 'cultural associations' are used interchangeably in the following.

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Preface

There are currently around 600,000 entries in the Association Registers of the District Courts in Germany. This is an enormous number and underlines the importance of civil society associations in our society. Associations are also the most important legal form in the field of culture, both in terms of cultural activities and as venues for voluntary work in the cultural sector. Cultural associations, such as the many volunteer-based organisations involved in music, amateur dramatics, municipal cultural associations, village community groups or local history and heritage societies, shape cultural life in Germany alongside public and commercial providers.

Cultural associations are part of civil society. The purpose of civil society is to work towards the common good and social cohesion. Associations are focal points of voluntary engagement. The cultural sector, which the associations described in this study state they belong to, is the third-largest voluntary sector in Germany after sports clubs and support associations, which are primarily oriented towards formal education establishments.

Motivation for voluntary work in the cultural sector is fundamental if we want to preserve, create and pass on material and non-material cultural goods together as a society. The work of cultural associations allows for cultural participation while promoting social interaction and community engagement. Cultural associations make an important contribution to shaping democratic and well-functioning local communities.

The German Federation for Arts Education and Cultural Learning (BKJ) and its members are part of civil society with a special focus on advancing cultural education. For the BKJ, strengthening civil society and thereby fostering a vibrant democracy is an important political goal. This also means supporting cultural associations and giving more weight to structures that encourage volunteering in the cultural sector.

There are many good reasons why cultural education associations should take another look at voluntary work in the cultural sector. Volunteering and cultural education have many similarities. Like cultural education, voluntary work is a co-production and takes place in social contexts beyond people's private lives. Cultural education and volunteering can be regarded as meaningful activities for people. The principles of cultural education, such as participation, self-efficacy, orientation towards interests, and voluntariness are identical to those of volunteering. Volunteering is ultimately also a form of cultural education.

This study of the current cultural association landscape shows the impressive range of cultural associations and voluntary service in the cultural sector and their important role in shaping cultural infrastructure. It also draws attention to the valuable contribution of cultural associations in the local educational landscape. This study therefore aims to give creative artists, cultural patrons and regional and national organisations the opportunity to gain a sound basic understanding of developments in civil society culture and identify the challenges facing cultural associations and organisations. The recommendations in the summary, which are directed at cultural associations and organisations as well as political and administrative stakeholders, aim to make the results of the study easier to apply in practice.

The German Federation for Arts Education and Cultural Learning will continue to pool various cultural activities and provide an information platform for voluntary work in the area of culture and cultural education in future. To achieve its aims, the BKJ works in close partnership with organisations and networks in the fields of culture, education and volunteering and with political and administrative stakeholders at local, regional and national level.



Professor Dr Susanne Keuchel

Chairwoman of the German Federation for Arts Education and Cultural Learning (BKJ)

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**Cultural organisations
as part of civil society**

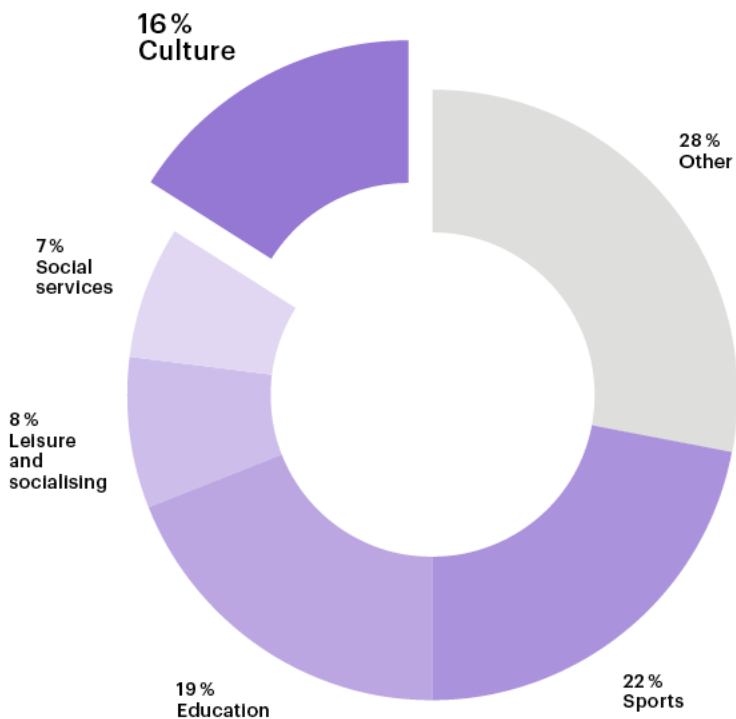
Culture is diverse. An estimated 90,000 mostly volunteer-based cultural associations¹ shape cultural life in Germany alongside public municipal and state institutions and profit-oriented establishments specialising in the cultural and creative industries.

Cultural associations in this sense primarily refers to bodies of people who together make music, act on stage or carry on their traditions. Their purpose is to create, pass on and preserve material and non-material cultural goods. People join cultural associations to engage in creative activities or to make culture accessible and participatory. Cultural associations target their activities at like-minded people, at the general public, and specifically at the young, the old and the disadvantaged. Despite being private-law organisations, cultural associations are a public service, especially in rural areas.

¹ Extrapolation from the random sample of the ZiviZ Survey (16% of 600,000 associations, Association Register 2017)

Figure 1

**Areas of civil society activity
(Percentage of organisations)**



Source: ZiviZ Survey: all organisations (weighted), total = 6,750,
culture = culture/media, other = churches/religious groups, healthcare, environmental protection/nature conservation, civil defence/civil protection, international solidarity, citizens'/ consumer interests, science/research, trade/professional associations, public services, other

Civil society

Civil society as a sector in its own right alongside the state and the market comprises, on the one hand, all non-governmental and non-profit organisations and, on the other, individuals and groups who engage in voluntary activities and help shape and develop public life and the political framework. Although civil society reflects the full spectrum of political opinions, it sees itself as an advocate for more democracy and offers diverse forms of participation, solidarity, social networks and opportunities for cooperation.

Civil society, understood as a social concept, means dealing with questions relating to the common good and social cohesion in all areas of society. Participation and co-determination through volunteering take centre stage. This requires individuals to commit themselves to the common good, be involved in (political) decision-making processes and accept responsibility. Associations are important places for voluntary involvement in this context. Their purpose is to create space for the voluntary commitment of each individual and thereby support and promote participation and co-determination.

In civil society, culture is an organisational area that is rich in tradition. New associations that focus on arts and culture are being formed every year. After sports and education, culture is the third-largest area of civil society activity, and sixteen per cent of all civil society organisations describe culture as their main area of activity (cf. [figure 1](#)). If we include organisations in the cultural sector whose work also covers other areas, the number of civil society organisation involved in culture rises to over one quarter (28%). Associations are the dominant legal form among civil society organisations in Germany² (cf. Priemer/Krimmer/Labigne 2017). The same applies to cultural civil society organisations: ninety-seven per cent of all cultural organisations are associations. Charitable foundations, which make up two per cent, and non-profit limited liability companies, which account for less than one per cent, form an exception. •

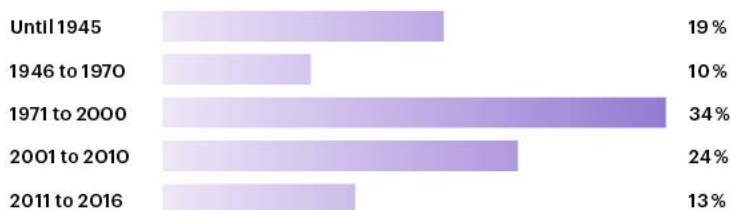
2 The term civil society organisation here refers to non-profit organisations entered in the public registers as a legal form such as charitable organisation, limited liability company or foundation.



**Development of cultural
civil society organisations
since 1945**

Figure 2

Founding years of (existing) cultural civil society organisations



Source: ZiviZ Survey: cultural organisations (weighted), total = 1,046

Like sports or civil defence/civil protection, culture is an area with relatively many organisations that have been around for a long time: nineteen per cent were founded before 1945. Between then and the 1970s, very few new associations were formed. This changed with the advent of a socio-cultural movement advocating ‘culture for all and by all’ and a new cultural policy in the 1970s. Two thirds of all cultural civil society organisations that exist today have been founded since then (cf. [figure 2](#)), and they shape and differentiate the cultural landscape to this day.

There are many new cultural organisations joining the ranks of the long-established cultural associations and their rich traditions: over a third of organisations (37%) were founded after the turn of the millennium. The practical experience of cultural associations shows that the number of newly founded organisations depends on the specific cultural field. This may be an indication of how much importance certain cultural sectors attach to tradition or how many young volunteers they can attract.

Compared to associations, cultural foundations or non-profit limited liability companies account for only a small percentage of organisations but their number is growing, especially among new cultural organisations, which include numerous support associations: about one in five newly founded organisations are support associations, e.g. friends of public cultural institutions or independent associations that aim to preserve local culture.

Many voluntary activities in arts and culture currently take place outside association structures, e.g. in temporary, often self-organised initiatives and projects (cf. BKJ 2017). These self-organised initiatives are usually formed outside the structures of existing associations and organisations.

The range of cultural civil society organisations covers a broad spectrum. Apart from traditional local history and heritage societies, volunteer-based lay culture, long-established cultural associations, organisations for cultural child and youth education and social culture, it also includes many new cultural

The BKJ as a cultural civil society organisation

The German Federation for Arts Education and Cultural Learning (BKJ) was set up as an umbrella organisation in the 1970s. The BKJ and its member associations share a common goal and the idea of 'culture for all and by all', especially by and for children and young people, whose political

interests the BKJ represents. The BKJ has become an established umbrella organisation with almost sixty member associations, some forty members of staff and an annual budget of over 11 million euros. The majority of the BKJ's member associations were founded before the turn of the millennium and can today be regarded as well-established.

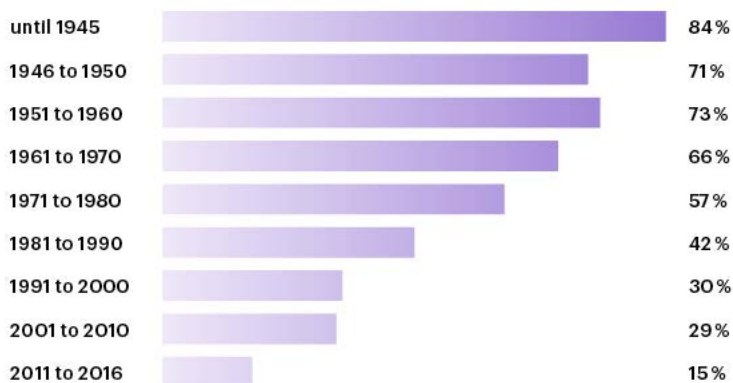
associations. Some of them were formed on the initiative of artists or cultural educators with the aim of promoting media skills among children and young people. Societies are also set up by local companies or private individuals to support cultural monuments or local theatres, or to enrich local culture by organising special events. It is interesting to note that newly formed support associations are increasingly involved in creating content and implementing their own projects instead of "only" raising funds. By doing so, they give their members opportunities for short-term involvement (cf. Priemer/Dette/Petzold et al. 2019). There is also an increasing number of cultural foundations dedicated to promoting local literature and reading or awarding dance or theatre prizes. Many of the new cultural civil society organisations are still predominantly or exclusively volunteer-based. •

3

**Association structures
and places of activity**

Figure 3

Cultural civil society organisations that are organised in an association by year of foundation



Source: ZiviZ Survey: cultural organisations (weighted), total = 1,046; here: association or member of an association

As members of genre-specific or specialist regional or national associations, cultural organisations can pool their interests and benefit from the knowledge and experience of other organisations.

It is mainly the long-established cultural organisations that are members of associations. Many of the more recent organisations have not joined an association, and consequently their interests are not represented at regional or national level (cf. [figure 3](#)).

Five per cent of cultural civil society organisations that exist today operate as cultural associations themselves and offer other cultural associations the option of membership.

Cultural associations are everywhere. They can be found in rural areas and in small, medium-sized and large towns and cities (cf. [figure 4](#)). However, they are particularly important in rural areas. In terms of the total number of civil society organisations, cultural associations represent one of the three most important civil society structures besides sports and education (cf. [figure 5](#)).

Figure 4

Regional distribution of cultural civil society organisations



Source: ZiviZ Survey: cultural organisations (weighted), total = 1,046

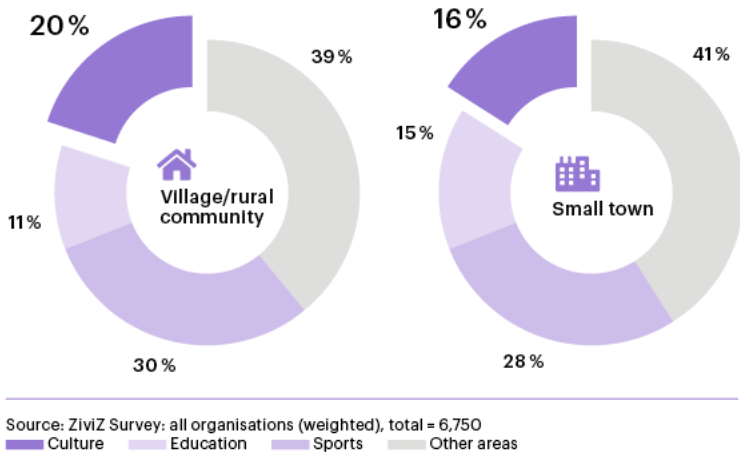
In rural areas, the activities of cultural associations are the mainstay of cultural life and have a positive impact on the quality of life and local living conditions. Many smaller communities often lack a diverse range of cultural programmes (cf. Bertelsmann Stiftung 2017).

The majority of cultural civil society organisations are based in the two large federal states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Bavaria. This is due to the fact that these two states also have the highest number of associations outside the cultural sector because of their large populations. There is a noticeable difference between the number of cultural organisations in the east and west of Germany. While ninety per cent of cultural organisations are based in the old West German states and two per cent in Berlin, the figure for the new federal states in the former East Germany is eight per cent. In relation to the total population of Germany¹, cultural organisations are underrepresented in the new states. This means that overall only about one in fifteen cultural associations

1 15 % of the German population lived in the new federal states, excluding Berlin, in 2016 (cf. Statista 2017).

Figure 5

Percentage of cultural civil society organisations in rural areas



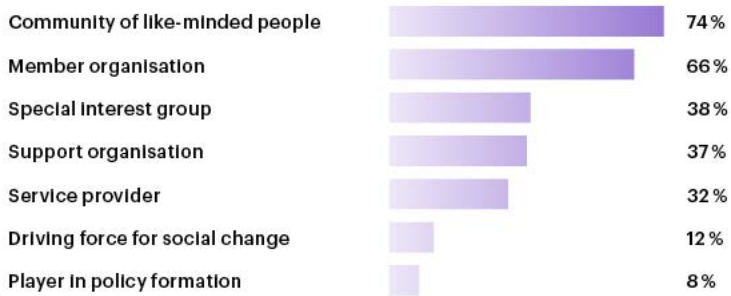
is based in the new states. However, this is not specific to cultural civil society organisations; other voluntary sectors have a similar distribution. This can be explained by historical developments in the new states and the associated lack of volunteering infrastructure (cf. Olk/Gensicke 2014) and by the significantly weaker economy of East Germany, which has a negative impact on the number of local associations (cf. Simonson/Vogel/Tesch-Römer 2017). However, the share of cultural organisations in the total number of civil society organisations is roughly the same in the old and new federal states; in fact, it is slightly higher in the new states (18%) than in the old states (16%).

4

Self-concept

Figure 6

The self-concept of cultural civil society organisations



Source: ZiviZ Survey: cultural organisations (weighted), total = 1,046, 'agree completely' and 'agree' are shown combined here

The majority of cultural civil society organisations see themselves primarily as communities of like-minded people and as member organisations. Almost a third of cultural associations see themselves as service providers. Cultural civil society organisations are less likely to regard themselves as political players. While over a third of the organisations see themselves as special interest groups, only about ten per cent define themselves as a driving force for social change or as players in policy formation. Just over a third describe themselves specifically as support organisations (cf. [figure 6](#)). These include both older support organisations linked to institutions such as theatres or music schools, and more recent organisations that were founded with the specific aim of preserving local cultural monuments or institutions.

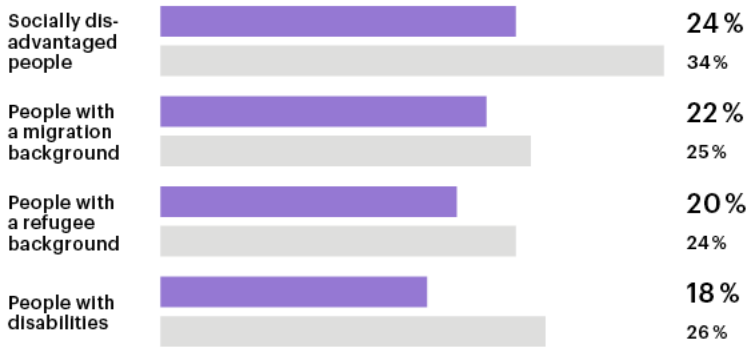
This means that compared to the total number of civil society organisations, a great many cultural civil society organisations, together with sports and many leisure associations, are oriented less towards politics and much more towards communities (cf. Priemer/Krimmer/Labigne 2017). Cultural civil society organisations that also see themselves as special interest groups are usually cultural associations that operate at regional and national level. However,

there are also smaller volunteer-based associations that see their role as representing people's interests or preserving and passing on local culture. Associations that describe themselves as service providers are more likely to employ full-time staff. Newer cultural organisations that have full-time staff and close ties with the public sector or that acquire public funds often consider themselves a driving force for social change or players in policy formation. By working with public bodies and local authorities they target their programmes specifically at disadvantaged people and are in a better position to include people from different personal and social backgrounds in their work.

The programmes and activities of cultural associations show how they make a practical contribution to addressing social challenges. Between one fifth and one quarter of organisations have developed special programmes for socially disadvantaged people, people who are disabled by societal conditions

Figure 7

Target groups of programmes developed by cultural civil society organisations



Source: ZiviZ Survey;

■ Cultural organisations (weighted), total = 1.046;

■ All organisations (weighted), = 6.750

because of their physical characteristics or learning difficulties, people with a recent refugee background¹, and people with a migration background² (cf. figure 7).

Cultural organisations were found to be less committed than other civil society organisations, especially when it comes to socially disadvantaged people and people with disabilities. In the area of refugee relief, cultural associations displayed a similarly high commitment as civil society as a whole. Fourteen per cent of cultural organisations took action in response to the high rates of migration in 2017/2018. In addition, one in three cultural organisations has organised local intercultural exchanges, such as face-to-face meetings, sponsorships or festivals. This shows how important the uniting potential of culture is thought to be.

1 The question included asylum seekers and people with exceptional leave to remain.

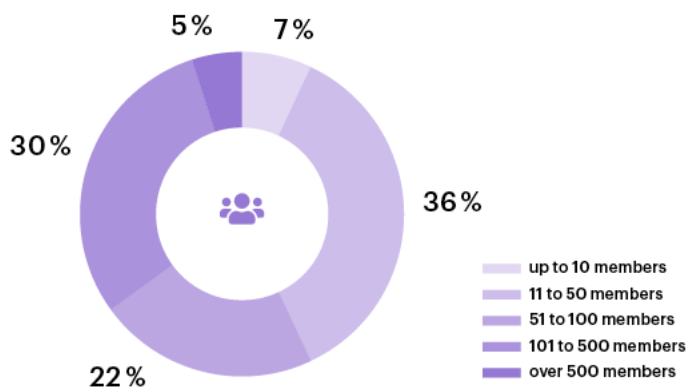
2 Questions referred to foreign nationals and Germans with at least one immigrant parent.

5

Memberships structures

Figure 8

Membership numbers of cultural associations (Percentage of organisations)



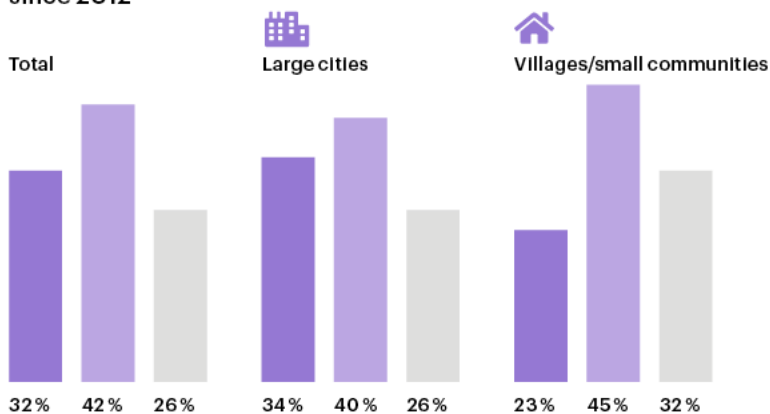
Source: ZiviZ Survey: cultural organisations (weighted), total = 1,046, here: associations/organisations only

Most cultural civil society organisations are small associations. About one third of all cultural associations have no more than 100 members and only about one in five are large organisations with over 500 members (cf. figure 8). This means that the cultural sector has a higher number of smaller associations than e.g. sports, where more than half of associations have more than 100 members (cf. Priemer et al. 2019). There is a certain continuity in membership development. The membership of forty-two per cent of cultural associations has remained stable. Thirty-two per cent stated that their membership had risen since 2012. However as many as twenty-six per cent experienced a decline in membership (cf. figure 9). This means that culture and sports are the two sectors with the highest number of associations reporting declining memberships. Associations in some rural areas are affected by declining memberships to an even greater extent¹. Some long-established cultural associations are finding it difficult to retain their members. Cultural associations

¹ Not all rural areas are the same. Regional economic conditions play a key role: there is a much more positive development in volunteering in “blooming landscapes” than there is in poor rural areas (e.g. East Germany, cf. BMFSFJ 2016).

Figure 9

Development of membership numbers of cultural associations since 2012



Source: ZiviZ Survey: cultural organisations (weighted) , total = 1,046

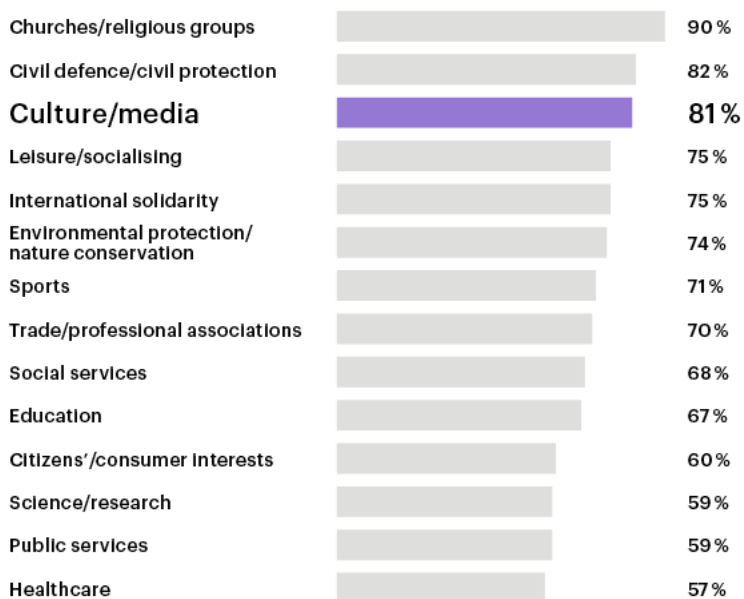
■ increased ■ no change ■ declined

are among the organisations least satisfied with their membership figures: forty four per cent complained that they did not have sufficient members. There are virtually no differences between rural and urban areas. Interestingly, dissatisfaction was voiced also by associations that are unaffected by declining memberships. This may be due to the fact that many associations fund their work through membership fees. Just under a third of cultural associations are genuinely satisfied with their membership numbers.

Associations therefore have a keen interest in recruiting new members. With regard to membership structures, it would be beneficial to attract people that are currently not represented in the membership. Eighty per cent of cultural associations stated that their membership structure was very homogeneous in terms of first language, religion and nationality. Similarly homogeneous membership structures are otherwise only found in religious groups and civil defence/protection organisations. In other voluntary sectors, especially in healthcare but also in the educational sector, organisations have already been

Figure 10

Homogeneous membership structures in terms of first language, religion and nationality



Source: ZiviZ Survey: all organisations (weighted), total = 6,750

able to recruit members with different personal and cultural backgrounds (cf. [figure 10](#)). By contrast, most cultural organisations (94 %) have not succeeded in attracting more new members with a migration background in the past few years. However, they are not alone in this.

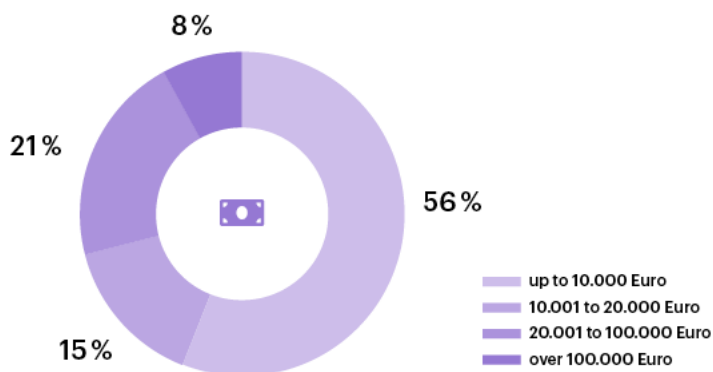
Other civil society organisations are apparently also finding it difficult to appeal to people with a migration background (cf. Priemer/Krimmer/Labigne 2017). However, the results of the 2017 ZiviZ Survey also show that organisations that specifically address people with a migration background were more likely to retain them as members and overall more likely to increase their membership (cf. Priemer et al. 2019).

6

**Funding and public
subsidies**

Figure 11

Financial resources of cultural civil society organisations (percentage of organisations)



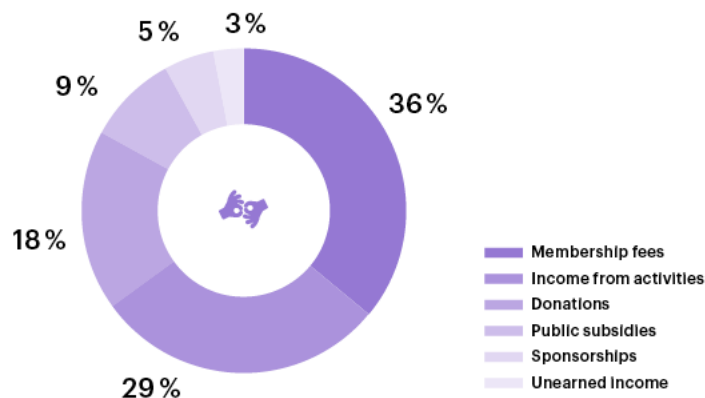
Source: ZiviZ Survey; cultural organisations (weighted), total = 1,046, here: income in 2015

Most cultural organisations have limited financial resources for their work. About half of the organisations have no more than 10,000 euros per year. Fewer than one in three cultural associations have an annual income of over 20,000 euros (cf. [figure 11](#)).

Nevertheless, about two fifths of cultural civil society organisations have enjoyed a certain level of financial stability since 2012. About one third of cultural organisations reported that their income had increased. However, one in five stated that their income had decreased since 2012. It is also worth pointing out that while the income of some organisations has remained stable, their costs have gone up in the last few years (e.g. hire costs for club rooms or event spaces). Cultural organisations therefore benefit somewhat less from the positive developments in income that are seen elsewhere in civil society. In stark contrast to cultural associations, sixty per cent of social services organisations reported that their income had risen (cf. Priemer/Krimmer/Labigne 2017).

Figure 12

Sources of financial resources of cultural civil society organisations



Source: ZiviZ Survey; cultural organisations (weighted) , total = 1,046; missing percentages = other

Cultural civil society organisations predominantly fund themselves through membership fees and income from activities, such as takings from theatre or musical performances. Donations also play an increasingly important role for many organisations. Public subsidies, on the other hand, are not a major source of funding for cultural associations overall (cf. figure 12).

Some thirty-five per cent of all cultural civil society organisations receive public subsidies. However, for many of them, the share of subsidies as a proportion of their total income is practically negligible. They account for only a tenth of the total budget of the civil society cultural sector. This means that culture receives an average level of government funding compared to other civil society sectors. It is interesting to note that in the educational sector, the share of government funding accounts for about one quarter of the total budget (cf. figure 13). Organisations providing formal or non-formal education are therefore relatively frequent recipients of public funding. The same applies to the cultural sector: cultural associations that provide educational activities or social care are more likely to receive government funding than other cultural associations.

Non-financial support

The provision of premises where members can meet for work can be an important source of support for civil society organisations.

These premises are often provided by local authorities. Donations in kind are another important resource for cultural associations. They include materials and items that the organisations need to carry out their activities, such as desks, computers, photocopiers, paper, envelopes or stamps.

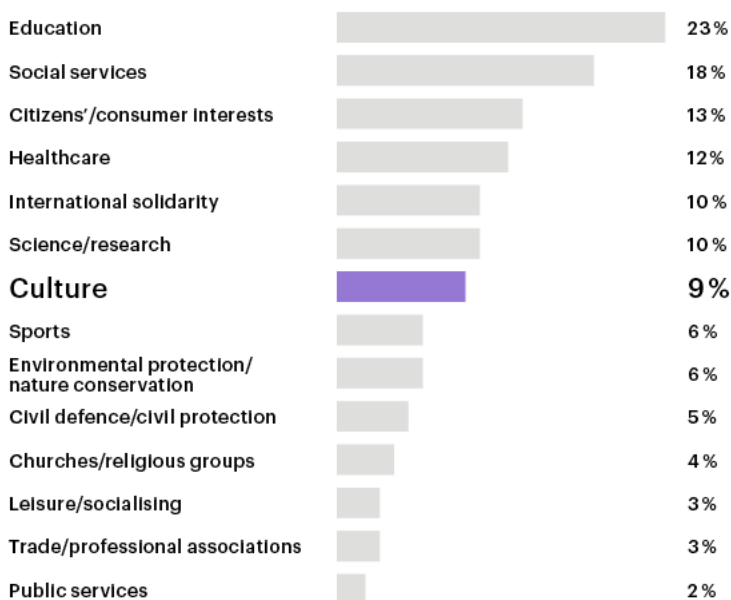
At sixty per cent, cultural associations are relatively frequent recipients of non-financial support. Almost half of the cultural organisations concerned (43 %) reckon they would not be able to guarantee their programmes and activities without this non-financial assistance. Especially small cultural associations with limited financial resources very much depend on non-financial support for their work.

There are differences in the financial situation of cultural civil society organisations. Smaller associations, which are more likely to have a lower income and whose funding comes from membership fees rather than public subsidies, exist alongside larger cultural associations, which are able to generate higher incomes and gain access to more government funding.

There is a correlation between an association's collaborative activities and its financial situation. Larger cultural associations with full-time employees work together with other civil society organisations, their local authority or regional economic stakeholders more often than smaller, exclusively volunteer-based associations. There are many reasons for this: smaller associations often lack

Figure 13

Percentage of public subsidies in the total budget by voluntary sector



Source: ZiviZ Survey; all organisations (weighted), total = 6,750

the money for staff, and their volunteers often do not have sufficient spare time. In recent years, the demands and responsibilities of collaborations have increased in the cultural sector as well without the necessary resources being available (cf. BKJ 2018). This has had a significant impact because cultural associations that spent more time on collaborations were more likely to see their income rise in recent years. They not only benefitted financially but also reaped the rewards of networking in a variety of ways. Cultural organisations that are well connected are more likely to receive non-financial support, such as donations in kind from companies or free premises from the local authority.

Cultural associations as part of the local educational landscape

Cultural associations – like other organisations – are places where a lot of informal education takes place both for members and for other participants and users of the association. In addition, thirty-eight per cent of cultural associations specifically provide educational programmes or social care. Culture differs from sports or leisure and socialising in this respect by having a larger number of associations that offer educational services (38% vs. 27% and 16%; cf. Priemer/Mohr 2018). Cultural associations are therefore both designated education providers and important education partners. Cultural associations that organise and run educational programmes differ from other cultural associations in several aspects. Based on their self-concept, they often regard

themselves not just as communities of like-minded people or as member organisations but increasingly also as political players whose agenda includes issues such as social (educational) equity and the assumption of responsibility (cf. Priemer et al. 2018). More than other cultural associations, they believe that their work should also be paid for by the state. They see themselves less as service providers and more as vital education partners. Cultural associations that organise and run educational programmes are in a better financial position than other cultural associations and often employ full-time staff. They are more likely to work together with their local authority and other stakeholders and consequently receive more non-financial support than other cultural associations.

This raises the question of how local authorities perceive smaller volunteer-based cultural associations when it comes to local authority funding and collaborations in the local educational sector. Educational services are provided not only by cultural associations with full-time staff; in fact, the majority are delivered by volunteer-based associations. Cultural associations are also places for informal education, which are used by people from the surrounding area and which offer great potential for collaborations with formal educational institutions.

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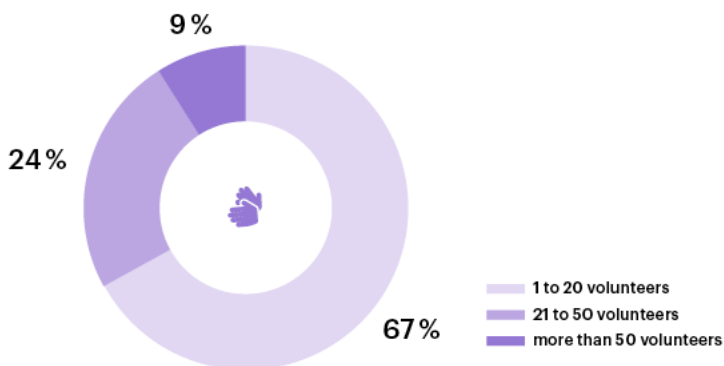
Volunteers

Civil society thrives on people's involvement and the same applies to cultural civil society organisations. Without the voluntary efforts of so many people, most cultural associations would not exist. Ninety-four per cent of cultural associations rely on volunteers to carry out a large amount of their work. In this respect, they differ dramatically from public cultural organisations, which were mentioned by only a few volunteers as places where they can get involved (5%; cf. BKJ 2017).

Seventy-seven per cent of cultural civil society organisations are exclusively volunteer-based and have no full-time staff. Twenty-three per cent of cultural organisations have (some) paid staff. This is eight per cent more than in 2012. This may be interpreted as a trend towards the greater professionalisation of cultural associations. At the same time, employment conditions in many cultural associations are very insecure with staff in marginal employment or part-time jobs with limited hours that are more like freelance contracts than employment. As a result, labour market neutrality is a key concern, especially for organisations employing full-time staff: how can we make sure that volunteers do not do the work of full-time employees? (cf. BKJ 2017)

Figure 14

**Number of volunteers in cultural civil society organisations
(percentage of organisations)**

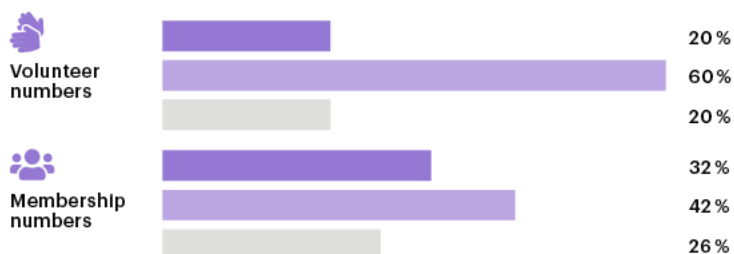


Source: ZiviZ Survey; cultural organisations (weighted), total = 1,046

The activities of cultural associations often depend on only a small number of people. In two thirds of cultural civil society organisations, the work is carried out by a maximum of 20 volunteers. Roughly another quarter have up to fifty active volunteers. Very few cultural associations have more than fifty volunteers (cf. figure 14). Cultural associations with more than fifty volunteers include various municipal cultural associations, village community groups or local history and heritage societies. This shows that in some cultural associations, there is a smooth transition between being a member and becoming an active volunteer. However, there are differences in the development of volunteer numbers and the development of membership numbers. The development of membership numbers in the cultural association sector is less homogeneous (cf. figure 15). There are more associations that have attracted new members but also more whose membership has fallen. The numbers of volunteers remain fairly stable. One in five organisations were able to recruit additional volunteers. Most of them were newer organisations (those that have existed for 25 years or less; cf. Priemer/ Krimmer/Labigne 2017). Another twenty per cent, which includes mostly older cultural associations, reported a decline in the number of volunteers. However the number of cultural associations af

Figure 15

Development of volunteer and membership numbers of cultural civil society organisations (percentage of organisations)



Source: ZiviZ Survey; cultural organisations (weighted), total = 1,046

■ increased ■ no change ■ declined

ected by this is smaller than the number of those that experienced a decline in membership. However, there is also a negative trend in volunteer numbers: compared to the period before 2012, the number of cultural associations reporting a loss of volunteers has risen from twelve per cent to twenty per cent. The effect of this has been worse for cultural associations in rural areas and mirrors their decline in membership numbers (23% and 20%). Culture is one of the voluntary sectors where an above-average number of associations have reported a loss of volunteers and a below-average number of associations have reported an increase in the number of volunteers. Leisure and socialising, sports, and civil defence/civil protection were the only areas with an even greater drop in the number of volunteers than cultural associations.

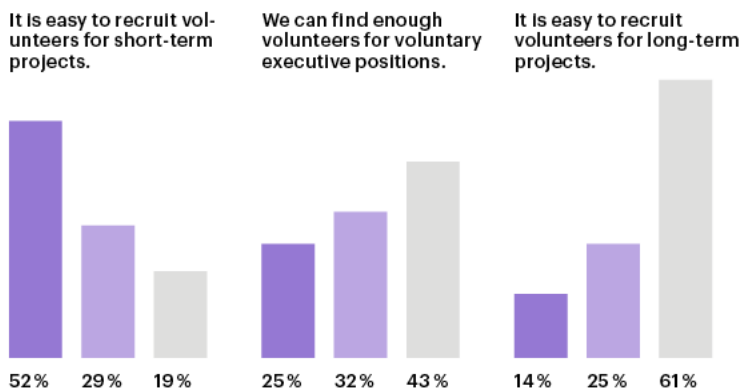
Newly-founded cultural associations are particularly reliant on volunteers. The majority of cultural associations founded since 2000 have no paid employees. Professionalisation in the sense of employing full-time staff seems to be gradually increasing in many cultural associations and often appears to be associated with proximity to local-authority structures. At least, this is what the data suggests. Cultural associations with full-time staff are more likely to work with

their local authority and receive more funding and non-material support than other cultural associations. Since most cultural organisations depend on the work of volunteers, it is vitally important for them to attract a sufficient number of volunteers to their organisation. This is turning out to be increasingly difficult for about half of them. Cultural associations point out that it is much easier to motivate people to get involved in the short term: fifty-two per cent of cultural organisations do not find it as difficult to recruit new volunteers for short-term commitments (cf. [figure 16](#)). This corresponds to the current trend, which states that people are more likely to be interested in short-term projects (cf. BMFSFJ 2016).

It is particularly challenging to recruit volunteers for long-term service. Only fourteen per cent of cultural associations found this easy whereas sixty-one per cent of associations regarded this as a problem. The situation is even more serious for cultural associations in rural areas where only around half as many organisations consider it easy. The mobilisation of volunteers for executive positions represents a key problem: only eighteen per cent of cultural organisations in rural areas are satisfied with the situation. The figure in large

Figure 16

Recruitment of new volunteers in cultural civil society organisations (percentage of organisations)



Source: ZiviZ Survey; cultural organisations (weighted), total = 1,046
agree neither/nor disagree

cities is just over ten per cent higher. The mobilisation of volunteers for long-term projects and for vacant voluntary executive positions are a particular challenge for rural cultural associations.

Full-time positions and the development of volunteering in cultural civil society organisations are closely related: cultural associations that employ more staff also have a correspondingly higher number of volunteers in their organisation. Young people are also more likely to work in cultural organisations that employ full-time staff (cf. BKJ 2017). Recently founded organisations with full-time staff not only find it easier to attract new volunteers but they are also more successful in retaining their volunteers in the long term (cf. Priemer et al. 2019).

Overall, apart from the association's age and its staff structure, the factors that have a positive effect on volunteer recruitment also include its self-concept. Cultural associations that collaborate with public stakeholders for their projects, provide educational programmes and/or target specific groups, are able to attract new volunteers more easily than other associations.

How do associations recruit new volunteers? One option may be to ask their own members if they would be prepared to carry out voluntary work for the organisation. New volunteers can also be found outside the ranks of the association's membership. Cultural associations would do well to appeal to people from different personal and cultural backgrounds because in many cases their volunteers share the same homogeneous characteristics as their members. This seems logical considering that volunteers and members are often closely linked. Overall, eighty-six per cent of cultural organisations reckon that their volunteers share similar traits in terms of first language, religion and nationality.

Many volunteers currently involved in the cultural sector work on a regular basis and dedicate a lot of time to their organisation (cf. BKJ 2017). This could be an indication of the fact that organisations have not yet adjusted to people who support their work for just a few hours or intermittently. Cultural associations should start here and launch projects that give people interested in volunteering opportunities to get involved. For people who value the social dimension or the educational side of volunteering, greater emphasis should be placed on the social aspects of cultural associations, such as working as a

Motives, tasks and general conditions for volunteering in the cultural sector

The volunteer survey revealed that people interested in volunteering are less likely to consider the cultural sector as an area they would like to get involved in. The educational and social sectors are more exciting for potential volunteers. It is therefore not surprising that cultural associations that

organise and run educational programmes are able to retain more volunteers than other cultural civil society organisations. The BKJ's special evaluation of the 2014 volunteer survey contains information on volunteers in the cultural sector and recommendations for associations, organisations and cultural institutions. www.bkj.de/publikationen

team and sharing experiences, or the educational role of the association. The reasons that encouraged people to become involved in culture can also give an indication of what makes the voluntary cultural sector an attractive option, e.g. getting together with other people or other generations and the aspiration to help shape society on a small scale (cf. BKJ 2017). •



Summary and recommendations

The cultural sector is the third-largest voluntary sector in Germany. Alongside public municipal or state institutions and commercial providers, it is the institutions and programmes of independent providers and the many volunteer-based associations in the fields of music, amateur dramatics, municipal cultural associations, village community groups or history and heritage societies that shape local cultural life. In total, over one quarter of all civil society organisations are involved in the cultural sector and sixteen per cent describe culture as their main field of activity. The association is the most important legal form in terms of cultural activities and as a venue where people get involved in

culture on a voluntary basis.

Cultural associations and organisations are places of self-determination.

Forty years after it was proclaimed, the postulation 'Culture for all' (Hilmar Hoffmann) has still not been fulfilled. However, it has become clear that it takes many diverse players to honour the individual's right to cultural participation that lies behind this demand. Cultural associations as civil society players complement the public and private-law cultural sector. About 90,000 cultural associations shape cultural life in Germany as part of civil society and account for an impressive share of the cultural infrastructure. Cultural associations are places of self-determination and self-efficacy, which are brought into being when people get together out of their own interests to collectively create, pass on and preserve material and non-material cultural goods. Only this collaborative approach can bring about 'culture by all for all'.

➔ **Political and administrative stakeholders have to recognise and value cultural associations as cooperation partners and important co-creators of a democratic society. To this end, it makes sense to integrate the associations' experience and expertise in matters relating to culture and education, to involve them in local decision-making and give them structural support.**

Cultural associations rely on voluntary commitment.

Volunteers take on a large amount of work in most cultural associations. Three quarters of these organisations are exclusively volunteer-based. Voluntary work in associations is both a prerequisite for and an expression of the existence of civil society because volunteering is more than just the pooling of individual and group interests; volunteers also work together in their associa-

tions at content-related, political, professional and organisational level. For example, cultural associations, especially in rural areas, can support local authorities in their duty to provide public services. This works because the associations' members and volunteers can work together on their personal interests, topics and concerns at local level. This assumption of responsibility is also an important motivating factor for volunteering and an essential aspect to make culture visible in the public sphere and accessible to everyone interested in it. This makes volunteering in the cultural sector one of the bedrocks of democratic and well-functioning local communities.

➔ **The role of volunteering in the cultural sector merits the attention of cultural associations, and political and administrative bodies at local, regional and national level.**

Volunteering in culture is a conscious act and promotes local participation and learning.

What makes voluntary commitment such an interesting proposition to cultural education is that it shares many of its principles, such as orientation towards interests, participation, self-efficacy and voluntariness. As members of societies or as volunteers of cultural associations, people want to champion causes they consider important. They often want to get to know other people in the process, shape their own environment and take pleasure in doing so. Many cultural festivals, socio-cultural venues, musical parades, amateur dramatics, museums, or cultural and especially cultural education events and institutions would not exist with such diversity and impact in communities without people's voluntary commitment to culture. Volunteering is also an expression of cultural and social participation and – if not local co-determination – at least local participation. Ultimately, volunteering in the cultural sector is an informal and non-formal learning field in arts and culture. Cultural associations are everywhere. They exist in rural areas, small and medium-sized towns and large cities. They are particularly important in rural areas where their programmes contribute so much to the local culture and to the quality and standard of local life.

➔ **The right conditions have to be in place for volunteering to have a positive impact on the community. Politicians**

and cultural associations have to advocate for and create the best possible general condition for volunteering. The main issues are reducing bureaucracy, professional advice, structural support, qualification of volunteers, and public structures that recognise and value volunteering.

Local politicians and local authorities have a responsibility to facilitate and promote volunteering in the cultural sector in collaboration with their local cultural associations.

The future development of associations calls for the involvement of people with diverse experiences and for openness to collaborations.

Culture is more than just an organisational sector in civil society that is rich in tradition. It is also one of the areas in which an above-average number of associations report a decline in members and volunteers. The mobilisation of volunteers for long-term projects and for voluntary executive positions represents a particular challenge for cultural associations, especially in rural areas. By contrast, there are also new associations that are seemingly better at attracting new volunteers and retaining those already working for them, and cultural organisations that offer (educational) programmes for members and non-members with great success. By adopting a self-concept that encourages them to be open to those outside their own membership, cultural associations send signals of acceptance and openness.

Associations and organisations have to be open to various forms of volunteering and a greater variety and diversity of potential volunteers. This may require identifying and eliminating structural deficits that exist alongside their own strengths, questioning existing processes and providing new forms of access to prevent exclusion and remove barriers. The creation of inclusive structures can rejuvenate established association structures. Although an understanding and awareness of inclusion cannot be enforced, it can be encouraged.

→ In order to attract interested parties, cultural

associations are well advised to make their (educational) programmes available to members and non-members. If associations are able to reach more people with their programmes, they can increase their membership and make themselves more attractive to potential volunteers.

With regard to their own ranks, cultural associations should ask themselves how much they involve their local communities. They should look at whether they still properly reflect current society and which groups they have not addressed so far. If people with different personal or cultural backgrounds and people of different ages are to join cultural associations, then cultural associations have to take the first step. Diversity and inclusion should be high on the agenda for the association's goals.

➔ Collaborations with (educational) institutions, establishments, associations and other organisations can help create new ways of accessing culture and the associations themselves.

Cultural associations need support with developing their organisation.

The development of civil society is also reflected in the interrelationship between voluntary and full-time work and leads to different types of associations. Which type is best suited to fulfilling the purpose of the association will become clear in the development process. The central aim is the acquisition and retention of members and volunteers. Volunteers are more likely to get involved long-term and take on responsibilities where association structures are successfully professionalised through volunteer management and qualification schemes. However, many cultural associations have a small budget and depend on external support to professionalise their association structures.

→ **The task of professional and umbrella organisations in the cultural sector is to support cultural associations in a conscious process of organisational development, e.g. the search for appropriate qualification programmes for their volunteers or the establishment of professional volunteer management.**

Cultural associations should share positive experiences and good practices to recruit new volunteers and members.

→ **Cultural associations can pool the interests and requirements of voluntary structures and act as a platform for discussion, consultation and qualification.**

The interests of new cultural associations are not yet sufficiently represented.

Cultural associations that state the arts and culture as their main field of activity are being founded all the time. More than one in three cultural civil society organisations were established after the turn of the millennium. In contrast to older cultural associations, many of the more recent organisations are not organised in associations. They are also not represented on the committees or as members and users of services, e.g. events and continuing education, of associations such as the German Federation for Arts Education and Cultural Learning (BKJ) and its member associations. Many voluntary activities in the arts and culture often exist outside association structures, for instance, in temporary, often self-organised initiatives and projects, where they help shape the cultural landscape. Young people often get involved in initiatives and new organisations without their interests being represented by associations. This means that they are less likely to benefit from their networks and tend to be less involved in political decision-making processes.

→ **Cultural associations are well advised to focus on the interests and potentials of cultural initiatives**

and new cultural associations and to approach them. Networking and collaborations are a first and important step towards giving a professional and political voice to voluntary structures that have not (yet) found a place in established associations and organisations.

In their role as special interest groups, associations are able to support cultural initiatives and new cultural associations with information, advice and qualification.

➔ Programmes and entry requirements for their own associations should be reviewed to see how up to date and attractive membership is for new cultural associations.

Cultural associations und volunteering in the cultural sector are important to local communities. Public support strengthens civil society and promotes a vibrant democracy.

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Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbildung e.V. (BKJ)
Küppelstein 34, 42857 Remscheid
Telefonnummer (021 91) 79 43 90
Greifswalder Straße 4, 10405 Berlin,
Telefonnummer (030) 48 48 600
info@bkj.de

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Culture is the third largest voluntary sector in Germany after sports and education. Cultural associations and volunteering therefore play an important role in our cultural infrastructure. Public support strengthens civil society and promotes a vibrant democracy. This study describes the current situation of cultural associations, identifies the challenges they face and makes recommendations.



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