

# No Education Without Media!

## <<Manifesto on Media Education>>

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The merger of new and old media, their 24 hr availability free from restrictions of place or time (think laptops and mobile phones), as well as Internet access provide people with new ways of learning and experiencing the world. These media offer possibilities for self realisation, and for participation in culture and society. Moreover, the different media offer important modes of interpretation as well as room for identification, orientation, and activity. They are a permanently accessible resource which adolescents can use to structure their identities. At the same time, they bring with them new development and socialisation problems, as well as social risks. These problems range from ethically questionable media content to social deprivation and the careless use of (digital) media. Disturbing trends have also emerged recently in the way that personal data is handled online.

Being media literate requires a person to have a sound knowledge of the different media, including knowledge of technical basics and aesthetic forms, of the conditions and forms of media production and distribution in society, and an awareness for the cultural and communicative, economical, and political importance that these media have in globalised societies. Media literacy is a capacity for sensible, considered, and responsible media use. This includes the ability to make considered choices, to understand and interpret media codes, and to make careful use of media during our leisure time, at school and in our professions. Active and creative design using the media for self expression, for articulating subjects which interest us, for contact and communication is another core area of media literacy. Finally, media education promotes media criticism, which refers both to media development in society, as well as to our own (self-reflective) media use and media creations.

In the last two decades, media education has progressed considerably in theory, research, and paedagogical practice. For example, a series of necessary, but by no means sufficient foundations for media education have been established: Theoretical and empirical studies show the multifaceted dimensions of handling media, and the importance of the media for socialisation and cultural everyday actions. There are plenty of excellent materials for media education in practice, an abundance of demonstrative model tests and impressive flagship projects, but there is a lack of the necessary *sustainability*. There are still shortcomings in infrastructure and in organisational framework conditions in educational institutions, as well as in the media education qualification of educational staff.

The social and cultural effects of globalised media environments, and the development of society towards an all-comprising information and media society challenge the education sector as a whole, thus including media education, in new ways. A *comprehensive promotion of media education* in science and research, as well as on all levels of educational practice is needed. This requires not only programmatic considerations, as well as strategic planning over several years, but in particular it requires investments in staff, infrastructure and finance at Federal Lander and Federal State level. All educational areas and their institutions, as well as out-of-school work with children and adolescents, professional training and further education schemes, and adult, family, and senior citizen education programmes must be included.

## **Educational Policy Demands of the Signatories of this Manifesto**

Today's *core task* is to translate media education from the model project and single campaign phase at a local and regional level into a phase of structural changes. It is no longer sufficient to offer selected measures and information and consultation contents on the Internet and on other media. Until now, media education has not *generally* had a set status in schools and universities. In many families and educational centres there is scarcely any time devoted to examining interactions with the media. Many parents and teachers from all educational areas are unsure of their responsibilities when it comes to media education. In this situation it is necessary to reinforce media education *permanently* in all areas of education.

### **We View the Following Demands as Matters of Urgency:**

- In order to give all children and adolescents the possibility to enhance their media literacy, programmes for media education need to be reinforced, especially in institutions for elementary education, as well as in education for adolescents, families, and parents.
- Media education as a multi-disciplinary task for all subjects has not yet been incorporated into everyday school life. In the present debate on school reform (e.g. all-day schools), educational standards on media literacy must be agreed for all school forms, and the integration of appropriate media education contents into the curricula must be binding. This process must be supported by evaluation studies and programmes on quality assurance, as well as with sustainable training measures for all teaching staff and educational personnel.
- Educational initiatives for adolescents with immigrant or educationally deprived backgrounds, as well as programmes for gender-sensitive activities form a special focus. With this in mind, extra-curricular work with children and adolescents must be included much more than before. An intensification of media projects in this area must be secured by improved infrastructure and staffing levels, as well as through continuous public funding. Media education within the context of cultural education must be promoted considerably more.
- In the vocational training of child care workers, teachers, adult-education teachers, and social workers, the basics of media education as a compulsory element of educational training must be reinforced. Moreover, specific training on media education in the form of Master's degrees and as elective subjects on other courses must be offered. A requirement here would be the significant expansion of professorships and chairs in media education with infrastructure at the universities.
- While there are several studies on quantitative media use, there still is a lack of in depth studies which analyse media use in social contexts with differentiated and process oriented approaches, also in terms of basic research. Significant expansion is above all needed in media socialisation research and concomitant and practical media education research.

## Initial Signatories of the Manifesto (March 2009)

- For the board of the Commission for Media Education within the German Society for Educational Science (Kommission Medienpädagogik in der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft):  
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- For the Expert Group for Media Education within the German Society for Media Studies and Communication Science (Fachgruppe Medienpädagogik in der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft)  
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