



“Every Child To Play An Instrument” (06/2010)

The name of this exceptional programme says it all: By 2010, all the 43.000 first graders in the Ruhr region shall be given the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. The programme is an addition to existing music education in primary schools.

All first-year students in the participating primary schools automatically take part in “Jedem Kind ein Instrument” – “Every Child To Play An Instrument” (also translated: “An Instrument for Every Child”) and then decide at the end of the first year whether they would like to continue participating. The small fees to be paid as of the second school year for the participation may, in certain cases, be paid for by a scholarship or exemption may even be granted. The most important goal is to provide all children with the same opportunities. The first graders are getting acquainted with melodies, rhythms, beats and notes. Apart from learning the basic musical elements, they also get to know 16 different instruments. One after the other, violin, viola, cello, bass, trumpet, trombone, horn, flute, clarinet, guitar, mandolin, accordion, recorder, percussion instruments and at least two instruments from immigrants’ home countries are focus of the lessons. The children can try the instruments and even construct some of them themselves in order to understand the principles of sound production. Soon after the Easter holidays, they will finally decide which instrument they would like to start learning in the following second school year.

In their second school year, the pupils can borrow their chosen instrument free of charge for lessons and for practising at home. Tuition in the third and fourth years is based on two pillars -instrument tuition in small groups and making music together in the "Ensemble Kunterbunt" (translated: ensemble “Potpourri”). Children practise playing together in the school orchestra once a week. An annual event at the end of each school year allows the ensembles to present their new skills to an audience.

34 music schools in the area started with “An Instrument for Every Child” with the beginning of the 2007/08 school year. In August 2008, 6,219 of these children continued learning to play an instrument in their second year – nearly 88 percent.



Currently 55 music schools in the Ruhr region work together with 541 primary schools. Music school teachers and their colleagues at the primary schools work together – we call it a “Tandem” – in teaching a total of 27,811 first graders. The Ruhr region initiative is continuously growing with the number of admitted little ones starting school.

The main challenges are

- to find enough music pedagogues to teach the increasing number of instrumental learners
- to succeed in fundraising for 50% of the money for instruments
- to organize the lessons in the elementary schools, especially in the morning hours instead of lessons in the afternoon.

Some further information:

- Children have to pay in the first year no money, second year 20 € monthly. In the third and fourth year 35 € monthly – including the instrumental lesson and the ensemble in each elementary school.
- In April 2009 a huge programme of research has started.

“Every Child To Learn An Instrument” is a music education programme on offer within the framework of the Capital of Culture 2010. As early as 2003, the music school in Bochum, with support from the organisation GLS Treuhand Foundations for the Future, went into the primary schools to present the idea. Their concept and their success were convincing: The German Federal Cultural Foundation, the provincial government of North Rhine-Westphalia took up the idea and continued developing the concept in cooperation with the GLS Treuhand Foundations for the Future. They initiated the programme “An Instrument for Every Child” for the entire Ruhr region and support its realisation with the help of the local authorities of the Ruhr region, the participating families and private sponsors.