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The arts and the sports sometimes compete on their societal impact. The sports claim cooperation, socal cohesion, learning to deal with failure and building resilience as effects of sport activity, especially through club activity. Culture claims more or less the same effects. But sports and culture handle these challenges in a completely different way.

Also the sports had to deal with budget cuts. As a result, at least in the Netherlands, the spending of central government funding has retracted up the pyramid. You know that pyramid: amateurs at the base, a middle of (semi)professionals and a top of the best in their field. And talent scouting and development as the tool for travelling from bottom to top. Less government funding is now spent on the base, more on the top. The direction of funding has also become more rigourous: only those sports with clear medal chances at EU, World or Olympic championships get a lot of funding.

Such a rigourous goal setting is absent within culture. Maybe luckily so, within culture there is no such system of World and Olympic championships. But here government budget cuts had more or less the same effect: retracting up the pyramid and supporting the winners. But it also annihilated in the Netherlands almost completely the existing places and schemes for talent development. Something the sports did not do. On the contrary, they concentrated their efforts in talent development, they brought trainers together, even across disciplines, they set up scientific programs to figure out the best traning and recovering programs, to take all factors into account that determine success. They developed Bodies of Knowledge: collecting up to date knowledge from trainers and scientists, put it together and made it available.

No such thing in culture. Culture apparently still runs on two beliefs: 1. talents will surface anyhow and through Darwinistic principles: only the best adapted to the circumstances will get to the top (which is not the same as the most talented will get to the top); 2. No central talent development, talent development is done within cultural institutions, within different disciplines.

Within culture the annihilation of talent development has seen a little repair. But how? Money is spread out through different sectoral funds to spend as they see fit. No combined effort in knowledge development, no research, no Body of Knowledge being

developed.

The same might happen with the new Dutch program on the impact of the arts. Altough here the sectoral funds will cooperate, no central program of (collecting) research is announced, no program of developing a Body of Knowledge on the impact of the arts is visibly set up.

If we acknowledge that talent development and measuring impact are crucial factors for the future of the cultural sector, and in my opinion they are, then who is taking up this challenge if the sector itself is too fragmented to do so?

We do not have to imitate the sports, but we should learn from them.