

**CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**ARTS FUNDING INQUIRY**

**SUBMISSION FROM CREETOWN INITIATIVE LTD**

**Funding the Arts in Scotland**

Creetown Initiative a local charity in Dumfries and Galloway has been active in the arts via several projects.

- We own a building that supports an arts and craft cooperative
- We have funded 8 major pieces of public art which sit in open locations around the village
- We were Creative Places winners in 2012
- We have just secured funding to create a performance venue in a former church
- We ran two, year-long arts projects designed to engage local people with different art forms
- We operate a consultancy arm which has supported several major arts projects across Scotland
- We are experienced fund raisers who have secured in excess of £8m for many projects across Scotland since 2009. For example, "Theatre Royal Dumfries"

**Future Arts Funding**

We believe it was a mistake to allow the creation of other lotteries. By doing so money is being taken out of the system because each new lottery needs staff, administration, marketing, operational premises etc. This means money that could be going to projects is lost. In our view more money would be available at the coal face if the running and administration were just in the hands of the Big Lottery, who are qualified and experts in their field.

However not everything the Big Lottery does is in our view in correct. The price of tickets has in our view reduced the number of people buying tickets. This is purely anecdotal evidence, but it is a comment we hear on a regular basis.

Another criticism is the projects that are televised public voting events are not effective or best use of funds. We believe again that the money required to deliver such programmes could be better spent, and that public votes generally favor larger communities.

In-terms of raising money one idea might be to mimic Red Nose Day or Children in Need. A Big Lottery television marathon where we celebrate the work of the National Lottery, show

case the many wonderful projects, whilst using it as a fund-raising exercise at the same time. Add in the ability for people to win money prizes during the event would attract a large audience.

### **Threats to Artists and Cultural Freelancers**

The biggest threat to the artists and freelancers is themselves. There is a distinct lack of knowledge on how to apply for funding and there is also a lack of business sense. Some artists also take the opinion that they have a divine right to secure funds.

Of course, there should be arts for arts sake and arts projects should not be dependent on the commercial value of a project. However, in many cases there is a case for a commercial partnership, which if engaged properly could help attract future funding, or remove the need for funding a specific project, which then releases money for something else. Training artists to become more financially savvy should take place in arts college. Alternatively, organisations such as DTAS, SENSCOT should be equipped and resourced to support artists and arts projects.

There is also a case to better match arts and business. The past Arts and Business funding has been restrictive in that it tried to manipulate additional outcomes. This should be relaxed and simplified, based on pure arts sponsorship, without the additional outcomes.

Regional arts support. Traditionally provided by councils this model is under increased threat as councils struggle with reduced budgets. Another by-product of this reduced funding is that staff who are not qualified to support the arts are shoe-horned into arts posts as a result of council re-organisation (something which seems to happen on a weekly basis). So, you end up with the wrong people in the wrong jobs which weakens the depth of knowledge and support available.

### **Government Measures to support the Arts**

As said previously, restrict the number of funding bodies (lotteries) to reduce money being lost to management and administration. Improve financial management training to artists at college and art school and better equip and increase the capacity of the support agencies that can help artists.

But crucially open the world of art to the wider public. Without doubt access to the arts is seen as elitist, and Jo Average does not think it is for him or her. But by increasing opportunities for the wider population to engage with the arts, across all genre's effectively creates a new income stream through bigger audiences and future sponsorship. The Creative Places project which Creative Scotland used to run was an excellent vehicle for engaging the wider public and is sadly missed. Too often the arts elite and arts practioners are the focus of funding, whereas if an increase focus on greater public support was developed, the long-term benefits would be significant.

### **Innovative Funding**

Open community shares to allow support for major art works and events. Or if not shares, another mechanism where individuals can offer financial support to projects, effectively becoming stake-holders, whilst not expecting financial return.

Encourage wind farm companies to allow their funds to be used over a wide area, and to encourage them to support local arts projects. At present they focus on community assets, facilities and services which is all good. The benefit of communities engaging with the arts should be promoted to the wind farm funders, demonstrating the health and well-being benefits the arts can deliver to communities. In Dumfries and Galloway if just 5% were committed to a central pot for arts projects, it would generate in excess of £500,000 pa. This would encourage more local arts decision making, thus engaging more people.

Charge for events, including museum visits, but keep the charges minimal. No charge devalues the product. The national museum of Scotland attracts in excess of 2million visitors a year. Even a small £1 fee would generate a significant sum. This money could be split two ways. Half kept by the museum, half goes into a central pot which could fund the arts, heritage etc. Free access to places like this does not encourage greater attendance, neither would a small entrance fee. NB. These charges should be fixed for a 5-year term which would allow long-term budgeting.

### **Public money and artists**

The current systems work, though we would repeat that community arts are extremely important, and we would like to see more local decision making. At the same time artist's and practitioners should be challenged to be more entrepreneurial when it comes to planning their projects. This is not to make applying more difficult, but to ensure that artist and practitioners look at every option. If a relatively simple application process exists people get lazy. Some communities in receipt of windfarm benefit funds have stopped looking beyond their wind farm benefit fund, missing out on other sources of income. This is not using the wind farm benefit funds to best effect, similarly if arts funding is not linked to leveraging other funds, it too is not used to best effect.

### **Who should be funded?**

Funding should be spread across funding artists and arts practitioners and community arts projects. It is in our view very important to develop wider interest and participation by the wider public in the arts. The logic is that the more people become engaged with something the greater the market strength. In the arts world this can mean bigger audiences, improved sales, increased media exposure and increased participation which helps develop future talent.

Repeat what we said previously, more local input into funding decisions. Maybe there should be regional decision making with funds split between regions. Local people should have more input into local projects, whereas now, decisions are taken by a national body. National bodies have national agenda's, agenda's that don't always work in a rural setting.

Funding could be spilt for example:

- National Projects (decision made by national body)
- Regional Projects (decision made by regional body)

Such a set-up would require cooperation between the regional and national bodies to ensure that there was no duplication.

Each groups budget should be calculated via a mixture of population size and area covered.