

CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

ARTS FUNDING INQUIRY

SUBMISSION FROM IMPACT ARTS (PROJECTS) LTD

1. Introduction

1.1 Impact Arts welcomes the opportunity to help inform The Scottish Parliament's Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee's work regarding the future of funding for the arts in Scotland. This briefing addresses some of the questions in the Committee's call for evidence regarding issues relating to arts funding.

2. What are the major threats to sustainable funding of the arts?

2.1 Established in 1994, Impact Arts is a national arts organisation using arts and creativity to enable and empower social change. Working collaboratively with children and young people, older people and communities, we help tackle inequalities in Scotland through creative engagement. We work with over 100 talented in-house and freelance artists each year, offering support and training, to ensure our artistic programmes, exhibitions, performances and events are of the highest quality. Last year, we engaged over 4,764 people through 67 projects and 36 events and exhibitions. For more information please visit www.impactarts.co.uk

2.2 As a fast-paced third sector arts organisation, we rely on multiple funding streams to enable us to work with thousands of people each year, and employ creatives and artists as well as a core staff team. We are currently experiencing unprecedented demand for our services; and the anticipated delivery of our work is expected to increase by up to 50%. This level of growth and demand places significant pressure on our resources and means underpinning the core, operational and support functions of our organisation is even more crucial.

2.3 Whilst we have been successful in securing various 'project' funding streams, we face the very real challenge of reducing the gap between required and available resources to ensure we can adapt and respond to the increased levels of demand that we are currently facing. Having the security of core funding can help leverage additional funds and resources that ensure the quality and sustainability of our work. We do not receive Regular Funding from Creative Scotland; all previous applications to this fund have been unsuccessful. The nature of our work sits within Creative Learning, and whilst this team recommended our 2018-21 bid for approval, the Specialism Team in Visual Arts did not, and we were ultimately unsuccessful. We appreciate that due to limited budgets hard choices had to be made, however, as a participatory arts organisation working across multiple art forms – not just visual arts – we feel this should be considered in the application process going forward. We also recognise the competitive nature of Creative Scotland's Open Project Fund and the limited alternatives that exist in the sector. We operate in an

environment in which arts funding continue to be at threat, and the realm of community arts is particularly vulnerable

2.4 As such, we are forced to look outside arts-based funding streams to continue to deliver our work. Of our £1.625m turnover in 2018/19, just 2.4% came from arts-based funding streams. Whilst we have so far been able to raise these additional funds, the increasingly competitive funding environment and lack of awareness and understanding of the value of participatory arts, put our fundraising abilities at risk. Too often, arts organisations/services are not seen as a funding priority and therefore these budgets are often most likely to be cut first.

3. What are the main challenges for artists and cultural freelancers in obtaining funding in Scotland?

3.1 Impact Arts employs 100+ freelance artists each year, supporting and training them to deliver impactful creative projects to communities in need, and helping to achieve artistic excellence alongside maximum social impact.

3.2 As an established arts organisation with a 25 year history, we regularly receive asks for help from under/unemployed artists struggling to get their foot on the career ladder. Many are facing financial barriers and a lack of funding opportunities prevents them from continuing their professional development. Many seek a career in participatory arts, but do not have the specialist skills to work with individuals experiencing a range of different issues (e.g. mental health & homelessness.) A lack of free training and professional development support have been cited as common issues among our artists, who struggle to obtain funding to develop a career alongside their artistic practice.

3.3 Impact Arts delivers a training calendar of opportunities that all freelance artists have access to. We also have an Artist Mentoring Programme (AMP) engaging under/unemployed artists in a unique placement and training programme, providing skills and experience working in community arts and the creative industries. Participants receive training, work experience, mentoring, time and space to develop their individual artistic practice and a platform to share skills with wider audiences. Having access to training programmes such as AMP is vital in inspiring and nurturing the talents of a new generation of artists, ensuring creativity and culture can thrive and flourish for generations to come.

4. What measures could the Scottish Government take to ensure a sustainable level of funding for the arts?

4.1 We would urge the Government to undertake a deeper analysis of investment in arts activity across Scotland to reflect the investment from non-arts funding sources and the socio-economic benefits which this has had.

4.2 There is a key role for Government in supporting sustainable enterprises and refreshed guidance on procurement of cultural and arts interventions and engaging with partners to ensure this guidance is workable and beneficial. We would also welcome greater advocacy among the different arts sectors and not a one-size-fits all approach to funding.

4.3 Greater support and consideration should also be given to those organisations working to support artists. Our developing approach around artistic talent development addresses the inequalities of opportunity amongst artists and deprived communities, and yet we receive very little arts funding to do this. We give prominence to naming our Lead Artists and provide regular spotlights on their practice and work in creative engagement, and offer best-practice in employing artists through pay, training, working conditions and pensions. Last year, we paid £476,501 of artist salaries and wages yet only 2.6% of our funding is from the arts. Enhancing the financial support of organisations such as Impact Arts is vital if we are to continue training and employing artists, making a positive contribution to the sector.

4.4 Like many others, it is becoming increasingly difficult to secure funding for core and wrap-around services, services that are vital for the successful delivery of our artistic programmes and the support we provide to beneficiaries and artists. For those small to mid-sized cultural and arts organisations who do not currently receive core funding from national cultural bodies, access to longer-term, core funding is needed to ensure we can continue to support, sustain and nurture culture and the arts in Scotland – particularly for those individuals and communities who may otherwise be excluded.