

CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

ARTS FUNDING INQUIRY

SUBMISSION FROM DUDENDANCE

As an artist led company Dudendance Theatre have been applying for project funding from Creative Scotland for many years.

Over the years the application procedure has become more demanding in terms of working with project partners and delivering outcomes and benefits.

As an artist led organisation with no regular funding, no office or staff the demands put on us by the application procedure are quite frankly too much. We are expected to do the same amount of preparation for projects as those organisations that have office staff and are being paid. I wrote a lengthy response for the last call-out of evidence which basically suggested there should be a different set of criteria, indeed a differently worded application form for artists versus organisations with admin. staff – the application process should take this into account and not put artists under pressure to produce the same outcome as organisations.

The other problem we face is partnership working and funding. In order to produce good art and ideas artists need a certain level of freedom to experiment and often this is complicated through working with partner organisations that have their own set of criteria and you, the artist, must please both the partner organisation (who often pay very little if at all) and the funders. It has been our, and many other artists experience, that working with RFO partners does not necessarily bring any income. It is a CS requirement to bring in 25% partnership funding which is very difficult from cash strapped councils, RFO's or other charities. Indeed, RFO's are mainly funded by CS for "staffing costs" and have little left over budgets for paying artists. This is ironic as RFO's depend on artists input for their very existence. The solution could be to have either better funded but fewer RFO's or give larger project grants to artists and artist led organisations without the pressure of having to partner. It seems that many RFO's suffer from over work and administrative procedure.

Artist led organisations who have been working for many years should be trusted to deliver, if they have built a reputation over the years. It should not depend on the verification of funding partners. Would it not be possible for CS to change its criteria that would give 100% cash funding for artist – led projects?

There are many examples in the Scandinavian model where artists are awarded grants depending on their level of career and past reputations. Levels of funding is graded according to this – giving young and first time artists lesser amounts than those with more experience. This seems fairer as funding does not depend on projected outcomes but rather on the quality of past work. You are able then to work

your way up as you become more experienced. This is very fair and gives artists different levels of career. Artist led organisations could also be able to apply for longer term funding allowing time to plan projects ahead of time and giving projects the time they need to fully develop artistically. Often artistic projects are under pressure to be completed in relatively short time frames to meet the demand for projected outcomes and dates set within the funding application. This is not how artistic practise works. Real creativity is at odds with bureaucratic outcomes- excellence should not be measured or judged solely by what is promised on paper. Peer group artists reviews could be one way as could artist led funding panels that are rotated giving artists a say on what gets funded.