

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

**ARTS FUNDING INQUIRY**

**SUBMISSION FROM GLASGOW LIFE**

**What are the major threats to sustainable funding of the arts in Scotland?**

Local government, lottery distributors, direct funding from Scottish Government and funding from Creative Scotland have all been impacted by the wider pressures on public sector funding. Ring-fencing of education and health and social care funding also means that funding available to services such as arts and culture have been disproportionately affected.

The pressure on public services to meet increased demand with reduced funding is acute. According to the Accounts Commission, by 2025 local government needs to spend an additional 4% to 5% to meet social care needs alone and without service re-design or policy changes Scottish local authorities are forecast to be spending nearly 80% of their budgets on education and social work [Accounts Commission, Local Government in Scotland – Challenges and Performance, 2018].

In 2007/8 local authority expenditure on cultural and related services was just under £3.2billion, by 2018/19 years on this figure at £2.19billion, was £1.01billion lower, cut by just under a third (31.56%) [HM Government, Local authority revenue expenditure and financing, 2018]

Although these figures are from across the United Kingdom, the trend and pressures are clear.

RFO via Creative Scotland is a very short-term cycle, only 3 years at a time which presents multiple existential challenges to organisations dependent on this funding, and on which in turn large parts of the cultural ecosystem of artists, musicians, producers etc, depend.

Other sources of funding have their own issues. For example, corporate sponsorship of the arts brings issues around the co-option of public and civic space by market forces. In addition allying brands and corporate messaging to art via sponsorship messaging can compromise artists, programmers and platforms and there can be ethical issues. These issues can also manifest in relationships with grant-making trusts. E.g Sackler foundation. However corporate and philanthropic support can also be extremely positive.

There are still perceptions of bias towards Edinburgh-based, and National institutions and Companies, which could perhaps be more effectively understood and addressed.

There are also issues around the administration in terms of timescales and bureaucracy of funding which make it difficult for organisations to operate sustainably.

Mismatch between the volume of artists, makers and producers; and the number of available sustainable platforms, festivals, and venues

Creative Scotland's form could be optimised to enable it to act boldly and to communicate clearly to the arts sector.

## **What are the main challenges for artists and cultural freelancers in obtaining funding in Scotland?**

Existing power structures exhibit institutional racism, ableism and classist discrimination. Fragile infrastructure for those who are and have been historically excluded.

Oversubscription to funding sources.

Creating the types of art that are not valued by funding bodies.

There is inconsistent work available, forcing freelancers to take on other roles. In addition there is no pipeline of support; from graduation to early career, to start up or stability through to evolving practice and networked.

Artists often do not have the skills to write funding applications or research the breadth of funding that exists. Fundraising skills and experience often lie with Producers and Programmers and these individuals are often too stretched to offer the support artists need individually. In order to build a case for funding artists often need in-kind (offer of space for development) or cash support from venue-based organisations. Artists also need to be networked out with Scotland to gain commissioning contributions from national organisations outwith Scotland. Often knowledge and relationships exist with the programmers and producers and are often venue based. These vital venues themselves are under local funding pressures.

The Scottish Government currently focuses on the five national organisations leaving less opportunity for experimental, contemporary artists or those specialising in other areas. Arguably one third of the total RFO pot goes to traditional theatre.

Larger venues and organisations - though under many more obligations - also are relatively more able to attract other forms of fundraising, for example, they have the capacity to employ specialist fundraisers and marketing teams, due to their infrastructure - compared to artists and freelancers.

Small markets and networks, particularly around literature, mean it can be very difficult to access training and skills development for individuals wishing to develop a career.

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

The Scottish Government could commit to long term protection of arts and culture in discussion with local authorities. There are international examples such as Canada and Singapore, which provide learning around this kind of ring-fenced funding which is linked to core national and cultural identity development and tourism.

In addition the Scottish Government could ensure the current funds are distributed more equitably across cities and city organisations that can form a nationwide network of support for individual artists and a wide range of art forms. Companies which are venue-based could be given public funding to support the development of fledgling companies and co-produce content and programming. Forming a sustainable network of support across cities. This would build capacity and sustainability and enable the development of the next generation of artists.

Consider rebalancing funding to the five national companies with distribution to artists and venues in other art forms.

Support could also be provided to develop brokerage between the private and public partnerships.

### **How could Scotland be innovative in attracting greater funding for the arts?**

Aligning current public funds differently would have a long term impact. For example, better understanding the positive impact of arts in relations to education, health and wellbeing, community cohesion, creative problem solving, and civic engagement could result in increased access to and legitimate and effective use of parts of those other budgets.

Philanthropy, grant making trust funding, and corporate support tends to flow towards larger institutions. Rebalancing grants in favour of promising small and mid-sized enterprises could help these organisations develop and better support artists by enabling the creation of a “pipeline” of career development support.

A focus on specialist festivals and venues to enable and support experimental new work and spaces for artists to develop will also result in international reach. The success of Manchester International Festival has resulted in a permanent home being purpose built with government funding, The Factory - a cultural space to commission and present dance, theatre, music, opera, visual arts, popular culture and innovative contemporary work incorporating the latest digital technologies to come together in ground-breaking combinations.

Other examples include the Australia Arts Council. This started an arm’s length organization whose role is to broker relationships between small and mid-sized arts organisations and small private family foundations and trusts. Art Support Australia meets with donors, talks to them about the importance of supporting the arts, and identifies organizations that might fit with their values. It also mentors arts organizations to help them develop realistic funding strategies and prepare effective proposals.

### **How should public money be made available to support artists and cultural freelancers in Scotland, including any relevant international examples of best practice?**

Further supporting artist focussed festival models that provide presentation platform alongside artist development frameworks with a focus on brokering international relationships and therefore further international investment

An award strand for venue-based organisations to facilitate but bringing together decision making panels that include diverse voices from within and out with Scotland to effect the decisions made

Examples include network organisations such as the Workroom which have an artists led focus and no commercial bias. Venues such as Tramway provide varying types and levels of support (and have the potential to develop this model) to artists and freelancers in different points of their career and within a protected environment.

In addition grants could be based on proposals that have an element of risk, equality and development to avoid repetition of programming offered in some traditional theatres.

Create a series of targeted grants to support grassroots, small and midscale production and development administrated by appropriate panels of practitioners and specialists

Funding for artists and freelancers could be made available to develop skills beyond art forms could be made available to support career development, Examples could include developing and showcasing CVs, building a national database of artists, performers and freelancers for procurement purposes. The Live Literature database is an example of this, although it needs to be developed.

Freelance musicians and small-scale grassroots live music venues and artists including rock, folk and jazz, should be considered in the same way as small theatre or other small-scale art form venues and organisations, as part of the capacity and pipeline that continually develops generates the next generation of talent.

**What factors should be considered and how should decisions be made about which artists or cultural freelancers should obtain public funding in Scotland?**

Existing power structures exhibit institutional racism, ableism and classist discrimination. Public funds should be directed towards artists and cultural freelancers in a way that recognises, addresses, and remedies this.

The cultural sector is not representative of the general population. Organisations and individuals in receipt of public funding should be required to meet more rigorous diversity, accessibility, and inclusion standards, particularly in relation to representation, leadership, industry and training resources.

Artistic and curatorial rigour drawing on specialist expertise, practitioners and artists, and a diverse and internationally connected range of voices to inform decisions.

Consider who is best placed to receive the benefits of cultural, social and economic prosperity

Funding decisions should be more locally devolved and integrated with the community empowerment policy agenda.

Culture is often used as an “instrumental tool” to integrate new communities, but there is less consideration of engaging with second, third or subsequent generations who are settled in Scotland.

Artist, performers and venues with social or political objectives should be prioritised. For example to enable young people’s human development, or acts civic catalysts to foster a desirable quality of life, democracy and collective problem solving and/or those who focus on cultural legacy via passing character and traditions or creating new ones.

If a pipeline of grant support is implemented then there needs to be clarity around the support offered at relevant stage. Funding decisions should also consider contemporary versus traditional work, involve experts in selection and ensure there are venues and platforms to support work produced.