

CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

ARTS FUNDING INQUIRY

SUBMISSION FROM A.R.Ts AFTERNOON

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

Having only just seen this call for evidence I have approximately 20 minutes to write this so not all thoughts are fully formulated and I have not got the time left to fully articulate, given that here goes:-

Our organisation, a charity, has been funded through the Youth Music Initiative for the past four years. It has enabled us to work with young people and put music into their sphere when it may have been something that would have passed them by. The funding is great, however year to year funding makes longer term planning difficult. Longer term planning is essential for ensuring sustainability.

The arts is very wide and varied and has multiple ways of presenting and I like many others feel that funding for the arts should be at a greater level. I am going to stick to the subject areas that I am involved in (music and young people) and not going to say I know about any other area.

I believe sustainability needs a number of different threads to be successful:-

1. For the arts to be sustainable it needs to involve young people in a meaningful way. Events and festivals need to actively create space for young people to be involved. An example would be the Edinburgh Festival Carnival. Each year we have a group of young people, Pulse of the Place, who participate alongside people from around the world. The young people that are involved are aged 7 to 18yrs and we usually form a band of approximately 40 young people. The feedback from the young people is that it is amazing, more interestingly the feedback from parents is that many of them had not witnessed this event until their children became involved.

In general other than the Chinese community entry, Pulse of the Place are the only band with local young people involved. One of the local headteachers from Drylaw (Ferryhill Primary) is very supportive of the project, but also stated at the start if you get any of our young people out of Drylaw you will be doing well. Most of the young people from the Ferryhill Drum club came up to the centre of Edinburgh to perform.

2. The arts needs to be able to appeal to more than the 'middle' classes. By involving young people from high SIMD areas to start the conversation of the arts are for all. Provision has to be easily accessible and not be one off projects that run tasters and

leave young people with no way to further their involvement. Accessibility needs to include free provision, access to instruments and a mixture of times when it is available.

We have had success in a small way of getting young people involved who would not usually be involved in arts events, by the introduction of the young people you often bring the families too. Spreading the art further than the initial targeted audience.

3. By using arts from other countries there is an opportunity to engage and not see other cultures as an outside threat. It changes the responses and enables people from high SIMD areas to engage.
4. Making arts a innate part of the curriculum and music tuition that enables group work. One of our young people said anyone can hit a drum. They are right. It makes this medium of music instantly accessible. This must be seen as more than just arts though. By working in groups you start to teach skills of listening and working together. There is a sense of belonging which enables relationships to build and that in turn helps build confidence. In essence, the work our group carries out ticks the boxes of the CfE.

The work also has been of value to schools in that we can work with young people who are having difficulties and the different approach has enabled progress for young people from ethnic minorities, who are looked after, with disabilities and who are bullied.

In short making the arts an important part of the curriculum with opportunities created for young people at major cultural events makes Scotland's footprint stronger. The arts should not be for the few it should be for all.