

[National Assembly for Wales](#)

[Enterprise and Business Committee](#)

[Inquiry into EU funding opportunities 2014–2020](#)

Evidence from Theatr Cynefin – EUO 06



Siân Phipps
Enterprise and Business Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

30.01.2014

Dear Ms Phipps,

I would like to submit evidence to the Inquiry into EU funding opportunities 2014–2020.

I was only notified of this consultation today and notice that the deadline is tomorrow so I will be brief and to the point.

Theatr Cynefin has been the most consistently successful applicant to Youth in Action funding from Wales over the last 10 years. We have facilitated the participation of hundreds of disadvantaged young people and NEET's young people from almost every county in Wales in transformative Youth Exchange experiences. We have supported emerging artists to attend our award winning trainings abroad and have hosted seminars and trainings in Cardiff, Llandudno and Aberystwyth almost every year since 2004.

The opportunities afforded by Youth in Action funding were very poorly accessed in Wales compared to Scotland and England and I don't see how this will change in Erasmus + without some public investment in a body that can support prospective applicants. Very modest funds directed to a body

that could engage and mentor new applicants, match appropriate partners, join up outcomes and publicize impacts would give huge social and financial returns and raise the positive profile of the EU project.

The requirement in Erasmus+ for applications to be cross-sector and product oriented only makes this a more essential component of any strategy for accessing EU funding opportunities in Wales. We are a country of small associations and NGO's that do not have the capacity to raise their proverbial heads from the daily crisis management and take advantage of what could turn out to be the most beneficial and transformative action for their clients or members.

We have referred small organizations to Connect Cymru in the past who have only referred them to the British Council website. This is not good enough! If we are to take advantage of the EU funding opportunities we need to –

1. Pro-actively engage and increase capacity of organizations that are small enough to react quickly to the opportunities available, and have the kind of relationship with clients to maintain the positive effects over the long term.
2. Match make cross sector between small and large organizations. All European projects that are between faceless organizations fail. Success is based on friendships and common cause – because intercultural dialogue is much harder than we think and demands creativity and flexibility.
3. Minimize the administrative burden by streamlining reporting and monitoring.
4. For Structural Funds in particular minimizing across the board the administrative cut of the cake and redistributing to actual project funding. Please avoid the Pythonesque scenario where 60% of EU funding is spent monitoring whether the funding is being spent properly...it is not! EU funding is not a job creation scheme for paper pushers. We need less paper pushers and more workers on the ground, because paper pushing is an infectious disease that diminishes in every way the face-to-face work that really makes a difference.
5. Europe desperately needs 'bigging-up'. Whatever the political standpoint, the story of how cultural too and fro – exchanges and friendships and collaborations and the implicit intercultural dialogue that ensues, is transforming our society positively, needs to be told at a grassroots level.

Many thanks for the opportunity to submit this evidence. Most of which, because of the time available, is more circumstantial rather than direct.

Sincerely,

Iwan Brioc
Artistic Director