

Response to the Culture, Welsh Language & Communications Committee Inquiry: Non-public Funding of the Arts

Introduction

'Art is part of the culture, but it is not aligned with the logic of contemporary economics; and this is a wicked problem. Until, as a society, we have found a way to reconceptualize art's relationship with society, and to account for the true costs of making creative work, this problem will not go away.' Arts Professional

What is **culture**, how do we define it? One definition is from Brian Eno in his book *A Year With Swollen Appendices*: 'Culture is everything we don't have to do. We have to eat but we don't have to have cuisines, big Macs or Tournados Rossini. We have to cover ourselves against the weather but we don't have to be so concerned as we are about whether we put on Levis or Yves Saint-Laurent. We have to move about the face of the globe but we don't have to dance. These are things we choose to do'.

The logical conclusion being we could survive if we 'chose' not to. Therefore it will always be a choice to support culture, but without it life would be very perfunctory and dull, lacking reflection, discussion and entertainment and so how would we change, adapt and learn?

The Creative World has traditionally been bifurcated between art for art's sake and popular, commercial entertainment: in the last 20 or so years, we have seen the rise of a 'third way'; Arts for Society or Social Change. Cultural activity that produces societal change, community cohesion, social (and physical) regeneration, the raising of aspirations in our young people, the preparation in terms of skills, for a world where many jobs, we now know, will be done by robots, we need to develop other skills such as team building, problem solving and measuring success. How we measure the impact and contribution of arts and culture in these areas is becoming increasingly important and cannot be ignored in conversations about where the money comes from.

An integrated strategy

Efforts to increase non-public funding of the arts in Wales should start with an integrated strategy, to include targets for:

- earned income;
- philanthropy;
- investment.

And also for

- measurable impacts beyond the economic: social, education, regeneration etc

An integrated international strategy could look to:

1. Shape our global future and align tourism, trade and inward investment to help take forward the international ambitions of our cultural sectors.
2. Use the arts, and education, to help build a stock of international goodwill towards Wales; they are the foundation of our 'soft power' capital.
3. Learn from higher education and vocational education and training sectors who are deeply connected internationally. Currently research collaborations and strategic partnerships link our institutions to the very best.
4. Allow our artists and companies of Wales' to be our international 'calling card'. Whether it's Welsh National Opera leading a year of creative collaboration in Dubai, or the vibrant artistic conversations supported through the India-Wales programme – the arts help form an international view of Wales as a creative and outward-looking, modern nation.
5. Do more to ensure that these significant assets are recognised, nurtured and strategically deployed so that they can create a much greater return for Wales in terms of global influence and investment.
6. Look to establish a high profile international culture platform in Wales – an industry focused annual biennial arts festival or education expo, like those developed in Scotland, for example. This could sell Wales to the world and should be prioritised over one-off events.
7. Global Wales, which brings together partners from higher education, tourism, trade and inward investment, to promote Welsh universities in overseas markets, is a model of integrated international engagement in Wales that could be extended or copied by the Welsh cultural sector.

An introduction to the British Council's work in Wales

The British Council exists to promote a 'friendly knowledge and understanding' between the people of the UK and wider world by making a positive contribution to the countries we work with, and in doing so making a lasting difference to the UK's security, prosperity and influence.

We work in over 100 countries, connecting millions of people with the UK through programmes and services in English language, the Arts, Education and Society. We believe these are effective means of engaging with others, and we have been doing this work since 1934.

Established in Cardiff in 1944, British Council Wales is part of a UK operation spread across five British Council offices. Since 2014, our presence in Wales has expanded significantly following the decision to base the Erasmus+ programme in Cardiff. We now have 95 staff delivering a wide range of front line and back office services for Wales, the UK and internationally.

The Wales-focussed team has eight staff within a larger UK team of thirty-five. We focus on **education** and **arts**, working closely with Welsh partners and across the British Council global network.

1. Our strategic approach in the UK

The British Council is committed to representing and engaging with **the whole of the UK** as part of its broad cultural relations mission and this is reflected in our long-term presence and growing footprint in Wales.

We are working to create an **internationally inspired, globally connected Wales** through the delivery of our UK strategy. That strategy has five aims:

1. Represent and serve all parts of the UK and the particular interests of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales
2. Engage with UK cities and city regions
3. Build trust between the UK and the rest of the world, through exchange and long-term relationship building
4. Promote internationalism within the UK, ensuring every young person has an intercultural and international experience
5. Help enhance the world's understanding of a contemporary devolved UK.

Rebecca Gould
Head of Arts
British Council Wales
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