

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales  
Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu / The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee  
The role of arts and culture in addressing poverty and social exclusion / Rôl celfyddydau a diwylliant wrth fynd i'r afael â thlodi ac allgáu cymdeithasol  
CWLC(5) CP02  
Ymateb gan Datblygu Celfyddydau Caerffili / Evidence from Caerphilly Arts Development

## **How effective has the Welsh Government been in improving participation in and access to culture for people in poverty?**

The Kay Andrews commissioned report on Culture Heritage and Poverty was a welcome report. In the consultation meetings and years that followed the emphasis was on Museums and Heritage. Arts and regeneration projects in the UK don't have the recognition or awareness to inspire cultural regeneration projects in many LA's in Wales.

Culture isn't high on the agenda of LA's when developing work in communities and is often an add on, rather than part of core planning to bring communities together or address ill health, aspiration or be part of community planning. Much of this down to lack of cultural awareness and its benefits at a senior management level. The role of Welsh Government could be to encourage Councils follow the Future generations approach so that Culture and Welsh language are part of any community planning.

## **How effective have the efforts of Welsh Government sponsored bodies (namely the Arts Council, National Museum, National Library and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales) and local government been in using culture to tackle poverty?**

The Arts Council of Wales have tried a number of ways to engage communities through culture under Ideas People and places which has done some great work in many different ways. The methodology and outcomes and recommendations have not had a massive amount of awareness which results in any new programmes of work starting from scratch. Awareness of the work is higher within the arts world, but where you have LA's without arts services then the opposite is true and culture is not seen as high a priority for a tool to tackle poverty.

Local government has a history of not seeing the value of the arts to engage with and make change within communities. Within the ex-communities First model it was often difficult to get officers to engage or take creativity on board as a tool for change. This approach does seem to be changing with work done at a more local level with individual estates. But the advocates for change are coming from the arts sector in partnership with community groups and projects.

The Public Service Boards within Local authorities are not yet engaging with culture on a meaningful level when developing plans and this is often down to nobody from the cultural sector sectors being on these boards & advising when PSB plans are developed. The arts can be a meaningful tool for change in many areas such as health, community cohesion and regeneration and PSB's need to take advantage of this.

Within local settings the arts are already being used to address mental and Physical health through work in residential homes, schools & nurseries, with NEETS, the NHS and other providers. Although the value of the work is understood and appreciated at Welsh Government level, within Health sectors and Creative Industries, it's not fully part of LA thinking. Health and well being reports, policies and meetings are focused on the use of sports and outdoor activity with little mention of the arts as a tool for change. Therefore, there needs to be a better balance and greater awareness to reflect what communities access and want. Most communities will have community venues where dance sessions, choirs, music and performance occur. This is driven by need and which have a beneficial impact on physical and mental health and this needs to be taken seriously.

Within Caerphilly Council its procedure for setting up new creative suppliers has become a major barrier for schools and departments to the extent they are less likely to use creative practitioners in any context. This is at a time when the creative industries are expanding in South East Wales.

It will have a big impact on the willingness and ability of schools to use creativity within the new curriculum. This has become a constant barrier that impacts on the Welsh Government funded 'Creative Learning through the Arts', programme of work, with schools unwilling or unable to employ freelance creatives. There needs to be recognition of the expansion of freelance working and an easier way for schools and LA departments to support the creative industries and grow the creative economy.

## **What impact has the Welsh Government's Fusion programme had on using culture to tackle poverty?**

The Fusion Network of Torfaen and Caerphilly has worked hard to bring partners together and deliver training and raise the awareness of Culture and Heritage in a regeneration context. There is a lack of awareness at a senior management level within Local Authorities as to its potential. Its mainly a programme that works primarily with local and National cultural and Heritage Organizations and not senior management with LA's. It has quite ambitious aims that address core areas of community need where there are major gaps with the cutting of Communities First.

## **How effective have the Fusion pioneer programmes been in stimulating local collaboration?**

It has been very good in bringing cultural collaboration together and deliver on identified issues within hard to reach communities. It has opened up new partners to for the cultural sector to work with such as the County Voluntary Services, Colleges and national bodies (such as CADW, Arts Council of Wales, National Museums of Wales etc..) Its limited by the capacity of the workforce and resources to deliver work as there is no project budget attached for co working or match funding.