

SWICA
(South Wales Intercultural Community Arts)
response to :

**Communities, Equality and
Local Government Committee Inquiry
into Participation in the arts**

7th March 2012

Questions for organisations

Questions

It would really help us if you could answer the following questions.

1 Which groups of people participate in your organisation's arts activities?

Majority of participants are from disadvantaged or low income backgrounds.

SWICA works with people of all ages and the majority of the opportunities we create are free to take part in.

2 a) Do you think that budget changes have affected participation in the arts, either positively or negatively?

The effect has been negative.

b) Do you think that certain groups of people have been affected more than others?

Those on low income. Especially pupils and students now need to earn money in their spare time and so are less likely to participate in SWICA activities which often take place on weekends and school holidays.

3 Are there gaps in provision for people to participate in arts activities, either demographically or geographically?

SWICA operates primarily in South Wales – though is no equivalent provision elsewhere in Wales.

Our work is intergenerational – whilst funding was earmarked for young people in particular, intergenerational work is open to all ages is not properly supported or understood by funders.

4 Are there enough funding sources available other than the Arts Council for Wales? Are alternative funding sources accessible?

SWICA has responded to cuts in local authority budgets by successfully attracting our first commercial sponsor (not corporate giving as in the past).

Besides sponsoring Cardiff carnival 2012, our sponsor has commissioned a major Staff Training Project from SWICA – the profit from which will be ploughed into intercultural and intergenerational participatory activities.

5 What role does the voluntary arts sector play in promoting participation in the arts in Wales and how can this be supported?

Voluntary arts sector plays a key role.

However, it's not enough to have a passive umbrella organisation for voluntary arts in Wales – it needs to be a dynamic and forward thinking body which advocates voluntary arts at all levels, fundraisers from Europe and elsewhere etc.

6 Is the strategic relationship between the Welsh Government and the bodies that distribute arts funding effective in increasing participation?

Not really – ACW has not really taken participation to heart fully.

It's structures and funding streams reflect this – it's artform-based approach is archaic and not prone to developing participation in particular.

Some ACW officers still appear elitist and have disparaging attitudes towards participation.

7 All public bodies in Wales will have published a strategic equality plan by April 2012.

Do you think that these new public sector equality duties will help to increase participation in the arts among under-represented groups in Wales?

Only if dwindling resources are switched and actively target under represented groups.