

Task and Finish Group on Participation in the Arts in Wales

Inquiry into Participation in the Arts in Wales

Anonymous response

1. What organisation do you represent?

No Response

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

all ages, all abilities, different cultural and religious backgrounds, different sexual orientation

3. Do you think that budget changes have affected participation in the arts, either positively or negatively?

Negatively

4. Do you think that certain groups of people have been affected more than others?

yes, people on low income who depended on subsidised provision

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

the gaps are widening as funds are getting harder to access. There is a lot of emphasis in schemes to apply to on pathways to work and the work ethic, confidence, creativity and lateral thinking that the arts can provide is not seen as eligible.

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

There are many, but they are funding less. e.g. some Trusts and Foundations can now only respond to less than 10% of applicants. Some as low as 4% so many good projects are going unfunded. Business sponsorship is hit by the recession. I am not aware of any Welsh Assembly schemes that arts organisations can apply to. My organisation used to access Communities First funding for community regeneration through the arts but that is not now possible.

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

A huge role. I would say that the voluntary arts sector provides the majority of participatory opportunities, especially to people in areas of economic and social

deprivation. Not only do they give access but they provide many social benefits – social networks, health issues (especially community dance) informal education, integration, therapy and social change

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

We believe there is currently a good relationship between Welsh Government and The Arts Council of Wales. We have concerns about how decisions are made in funding bodies such as The Heritage Lottery as I have personal experience of them questioning how dance can deliver a heritage project and when I sent them extensive proof when alternative funding was found and a heritage project involving 700 local people was successfully staged (and with a legacy that still continues) they only sent a standard reply with no recognition of our achievement. Awards for all Wales also doesn't support the arts. Art is generally undervalued and its transformative power unrecognised.

9. 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?

Partially. Hopefully local authorities will see how the voluntary sector arts organisations in their areas are helping them deliver their obligations. My organisation submitted 30 applications to various funding sources in 2011, the majority to support work with people from under-represented group....the money just isn't there. Only 4 were successful and apparently that is a good outcome these days.