

Task and Finish Group on Participation in the Arts in Wales

Inquiry into Participation in the Arts in Wales

Response from Breaking Barriers Community Arts

1. What organisation do you represent?

Breaking Barriers Community Arts

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

All groups of people

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

Budget changes will inevitably affect participation because funding is often required to enable activities to take place. Therefore the affect is usually negative even though creative people often find creative ways to meet the challenges less money means that projects have to be scaled down.

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

There is a chance that people with greater needs are affected more than others because money is not available to provide the extras to enable them to participate such as travel arrangements, childcare cover etc.

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

I am sure that there must be. The Valleys have been improving however I would guess that participation is behind Cardiff. I wonder if more rural areas of Mid Wales have the ability to participate in arts activities.

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

Funding sources are limited. It would be good to see some private funding for the arts – however public and private agenda's are completely different so a balance should be reached to ensure that there is a mixed set of outcomes, some commercial, some softer.

7.

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

I have seen the voluntary arts sector play a large role in promoting participation in the arts from jewellery making to amateur dramatics people volunteer a huge amount of time to share their skills and promote participation. People want to feel that their contribution is valued and often this is achieved through the activity itself. However once you step outside the group then the feeling of support no longer exists. Surely one of the role of Government is to ensure that Policy has the desired affect on culture and behaviour. People willing to share their skills and time on a no fee basis should be given some credit – at a previous place of employment we had the ability to call people out for work they had done and every month there would be a lottery of names and 5 people would win a prize such as £30 of vouchers etc it was a policy that rewarded people for good work and set a culture for good customer service and teamwork. Could something similar be implemented across Wales?

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

In my experience it is effective because the funding applications take into consideration the type of participation required and the area that the project takes place. Therefore strategy takes a role in the choice of project that gets funded. The difficulties come at the moment from the focus on project funding rather than revenue funding. Project funding will only increase participation for the duration of the project if more longer term outcomes are required then revenue funding would be needed. There is a need for a participatory arts model that is more stable so that participatory arts organisations themselves can be more strategic in their thinking and planning rather than short-term from one project to another.

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?

Yes, as long as the strategy can be pragmatically implemented. Logically if people are currently being left out of the model then new public sector equality duties should address this. I personally have never sought to leave anyone out of our participatory arts practice and we ensure that special needs are taken into consideration at all times. We pride ourselves in being able to work with anyone – anywhere and have good examples to show where this has been achieved.