

J. MacNeil

(7)

valerie

From: Liz Gardiner [liz@fablevision.org]
Sent: 07 September 2004 16:36
To: info
Subject: initial submission from Fablevision[Scanned]

Dear James Boyle

I am attaching some initial thoughts from a Fablevision perspective which I hope will be useful to the culture commission deliberations.

I think it is important for the culture commission to know that the mechanisms for the delivery of cultural entitlements exist at the moment. They do not need to be invented - merely strengthened.

There are grass roots neighbourhood artists and artist led social enterprises in all kinds of art forms from theatre to radio, visual arts, story telling and music that are developing powerful networks. There are local, national and international networks developing which are serving and supporting these organisations who all share a commitment to quality in the aesthetic, to social justice and to training and development for sustainability.

Fablevision has for example, is working in Greater Govan Glasgow North and Paisley at the moment to develop local neighbourhood organisations and networks. This kind of grass roots work linking to networks is happening throughout Scotland. In Edinburgh, for example, the Arts and Social Inclusion network is promoted by Capital City Partnership. Fablevision sees itself as an important part of the bigger picture: an interventionist organisation capable of mounting action research projects which set examples, create pilots (which often float off as independent organisations like Birds of Paradise, Paisley Youth Theatre, Royston Road Project and Bolt FM) and develop models of practice.

We work in partnership with the Arts and Communities Association for Scotland developing a national web based network training resource, Connector (www.connectorscotland.org) and we work with Banlieues d'Europe to develop a Europe wide network delivering training and development throughout the European Union.

There is a sister strand of cultural development in the third sector which also shares the same values and ethics in terms of quality, learning and social justice. Running alongside the artist led cultural enterprise is the community led cultural enterprise - an army of volunteers who develop projects, employ artists, serve on boards and are linked and represented by Voluntary Arts Scotland.

VAS is the lobby voice and development resource for the voluntary arts sector. VAS is the sister organisation to a&c and the work of VAS and her membership base helps to complete the picture in terms of the key resources required for the successful delivery of cultural entitlements for every citizen in Scotland.

I look forward to hearing your response and wish you all the best with your deliberations. This is indeed a very important initiative requiring careful cultural planning and resourcing.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Liz Gardiner

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03/03/2005

Fablevision: Action Research in Cultural Planning for Scotland

Some Initial Thoughts in Response to the Call from the Cultural Commission

1. On the question of education: How do we develop artistic, cultural and social skills and provide cultural knowledge?

* "Banking" education (education which is based on the transfer of information) is insufficient in terms of developing citizenship. The socially engaged cultural sector must lead education in discovering new ways to unleash the full creative potential of every citizen.

2. In terms of institutional infrastructure: how best to organise and support the cultural sector to provide accessible culture and cultural facilities, encourage creativity at all levels of society and deliver the maximum value in the most effective manner?

* There is a need for new cultural institutions and new forms of leadership from the grass roots. Neither the public nor the private sector can be asked to deliver on this agenda. Rather, these sectors are best placed to support institutions within civil society on the delivery of sustainable cultural development towards a civil society.

3. In terms of cultural rights, what legislation is required by at national government level?

* We don't really need new legislation. What we need is nation states and their governments like the Scottish Executive and the UK national government to:

- a. understand what cultural rights for every citizen means (access to and participation in appropriate cultural forms which are freely chosen and allow the creativity of each human being to be acknowledged, respected and contribute to the building of civil society)
- b. use the existing legislation powerfully and ensure it is put into practice within Scotland starting at grass roots neighbourhood level.

4. Responsibility for ensuring the cultural rights of every citizen are respected:

* The key question is about responsibility. Where in Scotland does responsibility lie for implementing cultural rights? This cannot be left to governments, arms length government agencies or local authorities, as they are always going to be required to prioritise the political agenda of the day.

* The key agents for delivery of cultural rights exist within civil society: the third sector and in particular third sector cultural organisations, artists and cultural workers who engage with people at neighbourhood level.

5. Planning for Delivery of cultural rights to every citizen

* Ensuring cultural rights for the Scottish citizen and those of its creative community requires careful planning. Socially engaged artists and arts organisations can assist the cultural commission of the Scottish executive in the development of a sustainable cultural development plan for Scotland

* The key sector for delivery of cultural rights and ensuring sustainable cultural development creating civil society within nation states is neither the private nor the public sector. Rather, it is the independent third sector: the voluntary sector; those cultural social enterprises which are employing socially engaged artists, the socially engaged artists themselves and the networks (locally nationally and internationally) which represent them.

6. Fablevision, Action Research in Cultural Planning for Scotland

Fablevision is positioning itself as Scotland's cultural planning action research organisation and can be viewed by the Scottish Executive as a key resource in the delivery of the cultural rights agenda. Working in partnership with socially engaged neighbourhood arts organisations and networks as well as national and international cross sectoral agencies and networks, Fablevision is developing a five year action research plan to support the Scottish Executive in the development and delivery of the new cultural vision for Scotland in the 21st Century

Liz Gardiner (5th September 2004)

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From: Liz Gardiner [liz@fablevision.org]
Sent: 28 September 2004 18:09
To: info
Cc: 'Connector'
Subject: submission to culture commission from the Arts and Communities Association for Scotland
[Scanned]

Dear James Boyle

Please find attached the initial submission to the culture commission from the Arts and Communities Association for Scotland

The Arts and Communities association represents socially engaged artists and arts organisations in Scotland: the professional strand of that cultural third sector which is hailed in recent Council of Europe reports as the most important sector for the delivery of culture throughout the nation states of Europe. It is important for the culture commission to acknowledge that the mechanisms for the delivery of cultural entitlements exist at the moment in the shape of cultural social enterprise and the intermediary bodies/network organisations (also cultural social enterprises) which support them. These delivery mechanisms do not need to be invented - merely strengthened.

There are grass roots neighbourhood artists and artist led social enterprises in all kinds of art forms from theatre to radio, visual arts, story telling and music that are developing powerful networks. There are local, national and international networks developing which are serving and supporting these organisations who all share a commitment to quality in the aesthetic, to social justice and to training and development for sustainability.

The Arts and Communities Association for Scotland is developing a national web based network training resource, Connector (www.connectorscotland.org) and we are working with our mainland European connectors, Banlieues d'Europe to develop a Europe wide network delivering training and development throughout the European Union.

There is a sister strand of cultural development in the third sector which also shares the same values and ethics in terms of quality, learning and social justice. Running alongside the artist led cultural enterprise is the community led cultural enterprise - an army of volunteers who develop projects, employ artists, serve on boards and are linked and represented by Voluntary Arts Scotland.

VAS is the lobby voice and development resource for the voluntary arts sector. VAS is the sister organisation to a&c and the work of VAS and her membership base helps to complete the picture in terms of the key resources required for the successful delivery of cultural entitlements for every citizen in Scotland.

I look forward to hearing your response and wish you all the best with your deliberations. This is indeed a very important initiative requiring careful cultural planning and resourcing. There is also an urgency in terms of finding non-intrusive ways of supporting this important sector: as is pointed out in the latest findings from the Council of Europe (Ericarts - "Creative Europe") the danger is that the role of the public sector is downsized before the third sector is capacity built and fit for purpose to take on the expectations and responsibilities of its new role.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

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03/03/2005

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Culture Commission, Scotland

2004

A Submission from

**The Arts and Communities Association
for Scotland**

INTRODUCTION

Socially engaged arts practice emerged as a distinct strand of cultural development during the latter years of the community arts movement in the UK and has continued through to the present day when practitioner thinking has moved from the community arts standpoint to a more holistic, cultural development approach to ensuring cultural entitlements for every citizen through engagement in arts and cultural activities.

The projects instigated by artists and organisations in the Arts and Communities Association network are leading in planning, social inclusion, regeneration and other processes. Most are benchmarking with other European examples through the partnership between Arts & Communities, Banlieues d'Europe and other networks.

BACKGROUND

Recent research has indicated that there are knowledge gaps in the area of socially engaged arts. There is much written about formal education and teaching; the role of creativity in the development of vibrant, sustainable cities and the new professional roles emerging within cultural industries. There is some literature which documents the history of the community arts movement of the 1960's and '70's, but little which assesses its historic importance from a 21st Century perspective and places it within present day national Social Inclusion Partnership priorities, emerging Community Planning priorities and the new Scottish Executive emphasis on cultural rights and entitlements.

In 2004 the empowering and transformatory potential of socially engaged arts and culture is being recognised by all sectors. National governments, local authorities, cities, planners, enterprise agencies, housing associations, the police, health boards, youth services, child care, social work, are a few of the key players who are trying to harness them for positive benefit to society. Without a real overview and proper guidance, however, all sectors are struggling to identify the key attributes of the empowering and transformatory strands as distinct from the rest. Rather than a strategic approach, different sectors cherry-pick bits they imagine might suit their needs leading to tokenism or limited impact at best or bewilderment when it does not work.

Lack of clarity in distinctions therefore leads to instrumentalisation on a grand scale as other sectors with different agendas seek to engage socially for different reasons. For example in the commercial sector, shopping malls are able to cloak the aim of increasing corporate profit in the language of social responsibility.

Without clear distinctions and shared dialogue the different sectors with shared agendas are unable to develop complementary strategic plans and artists/cultural operators who are skilled in the methodologies of empowerment are vulnerable. Rather than taking centre stage and leading in the process, they are used in a piecemeal uncoordinated way by all other sectors with shared and/or opposing agendas.

The ability to engage with the most marginalized groups, give those groups and individuals within them a voice, promote and develop cultural democracy, diversity and ensure respect for the cultural rights of every citizen, are skills which the socially engaged

artist has in abundance and which are recognised as priority requirements for the 21st century. The only question is how best to harness them and how to create the appropriate structures and delivery mechanisms which allow them to flourish without exploitation of the artists and arts organisations who are the skilled professionals in the field

FURTHER QUESTIONS

There are several questions deserving of further enquiry by the Enterprise and Culture Committee:

- * Is there a link in methodology between cultural engagement and the outcomes of the socially engaged cultural activity in terms of skills training towards employability, neighbourhood and city regeneration, social inclusion, celebrating diversity, developing civil society etc. ?
- * Is there a need for a new dialogue/discourse to describe this type of activity and what it achieves? If yes, is it possible to create a dialogue which is accessible and comprehensible locally (at the grass roots), nationally and internationally - which is understood by all sectors (public, private and voluntary) and includes the cultural sector, politicians and decision makers?
- * Is there a recognizable organizational structure/system of delivery which fosters optimum capacity for delivery in the socially engaged arts sector?
- * Are there particular political and policy influences in the different situations which impact upon the way socially engaged arts and culture is recognised/supported in Scotland and other European countries?

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

In Scotland, socially engaged cultural activity is now recognised as the main area for future development and concentration of available cultural resources. The Arts and Communities Association (a&c) is making a positive contribution to that development in Scotland: sharing dialogue, expertise, knowledge and experience across sectors and including politicians, funding bodies, the cultural community, community organisations and other stakeholders in order to facilitate a shared understanding of the possibilities and help create a strategy and practical implementation plan.

There are distinctive methods of engagement and systems of governance in the delivery of in cultural activities, which have different outcomes/results. There is need for a new dialogue between these differing methodologies and approaches in order to establish a coherent cultural planning policy.

There are 3 main strands discernable in past and existing socially engaged culture:

1. Access to High Arts
2. Service Delivery
3. Cultural Democracy

From the "access to the high arts" strand of development has emerged myriad forms of outreach and education programmes attached to arts institutions of all types. From the 1990s and the rise of the "avant garde" has emerged the artist -in- residence form of

engagement where local people are allowed access to the artistic process through involvement in the artists' vision.

From the "service delivery" strand has developed the local authority "service provision" model - aimed at spreading the possibility of access as widely as possible.

From the social impacts agenda of the 1970s and the economic agenda of the 1980s has grown an instrumentalist approach where different agencies and communities "use" the arts and/or artists to solve specific social or economic problems.

These methods of engagement have different outcomes from more democratic approaches. Equally, the democratic approach can take many different forms: the populist anti-professional approach, ('the tyranny of structurelessness'), the hierarchical approach which demands centralised control or the organic approach which nurtures and encourages without dominating and controlling.

Running through all of these strands has been one constant form of engagement. This form of social engagement is a dialogical and collaborative approach which has the virtues of being flexible, open-ended and hence creative: oriented to problem-solving, mobilising talents, energies and confidence and so empowering people – even those whose talents have never been recognised or developed. Working on the subconscious and the subliminal this approach leads to multiple forms of knowledge, learning and development and can impact on every aspect of life: social, economic and environmental.

Each of these approaches has different aims and objectives. Each employs different methodologies and each will result in different outcomes.

The Arts and Communities Association is Scotland's network of artists and arts organisations working in socially engaged practice and the network runs a project intended to support the sharing of learning and practice for members. In pilot form at the moment, Connector (www.connectorscotland.org) is a web based learning resource designed to support practitioners in socially engaged transformatory arts: to link them with each other, help them to link with local and national networks with shared values, reach out through debate and dialogue to other sectors, help all sectors to access the latest research, national and international networks etc. and help to create/disseminate a shared discourse and understanding.

Our sister organisation, Voluntary Arts Scotland, exists to provide a similar support network and resource bank for the essential army of volunteers throughout Scotland who create cultural initiatives, serve on boards, share the same values and ethics and often work in partnership with the professional artists and arts organisations who are members of Arts & Communities. Together, these two network organisations, their respective membership bases and their associates represent the cultural "third sector" – those socially engaged cultural organisations within civil society which operate independently from the public or private/commercial sectors and are now recognized as having an important contribution to make.

These strands of cultural activity are empowering and transformatory. Their practice methodologies have grown and developed in scope, sophistication, strategic implementation and impact but the founding principles remain located in the practice of the community arts movement of the 1970s and 1980s. and to newly emergent local, national and international networks and forms of governance within socially engaged arts today.

There is a need for more research which concentrates on the strands of cultural development represented by a&c and VAS and makes clear policy recommendations on how best to support, nurture and develop it.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS FROM ARTS & COMMUNITIES:

Every human being needs meaning and purpose in their lives

Every human being has the right to a living culture in which we feel involved, which is of relevance to us and in which we feel our contribution is valued

This type of living culture continually sorts out for itself the significance and quality of everything it does; building on its circumstance, available resources and assets.

This type of living culture takes on a life of its own, feeding off its past and responding to an unfolding future. It is bedded on a system of values flowing from the structure of relevance to any identified group as well as from elsewhere – e.g. politics, religion and art

Socially engaged artists and cultural institutions are powerful in the support of these processes.

The cultural sector is not a homogeneous unit and some cultural institutions may have rival agendas. A strategy is needed to turn those institutions with rival agendas into allies.

The arts were traditionally divided into two strands: "high arts" (which have historically attracted most of the available funding for arts and culture) and the "socio-cultural sector".

There is a tension between "high arts" and "the socio-cultural sector" which is based on mistrust and a sense of threat. This tension arises from the defense and critique of elitism and it divides the cultural community, alienates other sectors (including politicians and the general public) and weakens all areas of the arts and culture.

This tension is bridgeable with dialogue and mutual understanding of the role of each cultural strand in the narrative.

High arts have traditionally been classified in terms of their artform (theatre, visual art, opera, ballet, music etc.) the "socio-cultural sector" does not neatly divide along these lines and some alternative classifications could be teased out.

New cultural forms, new professions in the field of culture and new organisational structures for management and delivery are emerging from the "socio-cultural sector". Whilst there is research in existence, which classifies these new professions, there is little available which distinguishes the different processes and methodologies of social engagement which are being adopted.

While acknowledging the importance of the body of activity classified as "high arts" and the necessity of sharing vision and dialogue with cultural operators in this field, this body of activity is not the area of interest represented by Arts & Communities or Voluntary Arts Scotland. There is a need for research concentrating on the "socio-cultural sector" which distinguishes and focuses on those particular strands of socio-cultural methodology, which are powerfully transformative. (see appendix A "Call for Research").

The traditional boundaries between "high" and "low" arts/arts institutions are blurred and shifting in the early years of the 21st Century. The "best" is not necessarily the traditional, the classical or the non-commercial, and creativity is no longer the preserve of the artist.

In the process of moving away from traditional high arts and cultural provision, we are in danger of losing some of the positive attributes, which those traditions brought: the recognition of the particular skills of trained artists, the training, support, nurturing and development of new artists within cultural institutions under the tutelage of practicing artists, and the lobby voice and support for the individual artist provided by the cultural institution.

Those attributes also include inviting structured discussion and argument about core values and choices. It is important that we do not block the transformation as it occurs but that we engage in the debate during the process in order to understand what is happening. In the case of socially engaged arts and culture, this may entail the development of new forms of discourse, support for new cultural institutions, new arts organisations and new types of artists.

Recommendations

The Arts and Communities Association calls on the Scottish Executive to

- a. commission research in to ascertaining what structures, resources, policies etc need to be in place to support all of this.
- b. recommend support for key organisations: artist led grass roots socio-cultural enterprises, intermediary socio cultural enterprises and the networks which serve and support them.

**Arts and Communities Association for Scotland
September 2004**

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS:

'culture' is defined, as Raymond Williams defined it, in the broadest terms as a way of life.

"cultural processes" are defined as projects and activities which are consciously engaged with and are recognised as artistic expressions.

"socially engaged" refers to arts and cultural processes which involve the artist or the cultural worker in an active reciprocal relationship with people - a relationship which intentionally shapes the outcome of the artistic or cultural production.

"community arts" refers to a European movement in the 1960's and '70's which was a political movement for radical democratisation - was closely linked to other "ism's" of the time (feminism for example) and in Scotland, had strong links with the Labour movement.

"holistic" refers to an approach to any subject (physical planning, cultural forms, ways of tackling problems) which takes the interaction between a wide range of different factors into account: social, economic, historical, geographical, environmental, political and spiritual.

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