

Cultural Commission

Selected Questions from Pan-Sectoral Questionnaire

Stakeholder Consultation Stage II

Response on behalf of the Edinburgh Arts & Social Inclusion Forum

3. Should cultural rights, entitlements and responsibilities reflect or link to other areas of social policy, such as inclusion or social justice and, if so, how?

14. How do we give grassroot organisations a stronger voice in the decision-making (planning and funding) processes at national level and how should the grassroots sector be effectively represented and consulted?

31. How can we improve the process for awarding 'initiative-based' funding to cultural organisations, particularly monies linked to other governmental initiatives (social inclusion, health, etc.)?

45. Do we need to define the term 'adequate provision' in regard to local authorities current responsibilities, including the requirement to develop local cultural strategies within the context of community planning, and if so, how?

59. How should the cultural sector as a whole seek and arrange suitable mutually beneficial partnership with other areas of government (education, sport, tourism, etc.)?

The above questions have been selected, from the 62 questions posed in the second phase of the Culture Commission consultation, as key to the Edinburgh Arts & Social Inclusion Forum (EASIF).

Whilst not providing direct answers to the individual questions EASIF wants to use this opportunity to reiterate the need for any future rights and entitlements to be focussed on, and have at their core, the ability to create and defend the space, resources, confidence and freedom of expression required for all Scotland's citizens to enjoy cultural democracy, **particularly** those experiencing socio-economic, and therefore cultural, disadvantage.

EASIF would encourage the Culture Commission to take on board two of the issues raised at the seminar on Cultural Rights, staged by the Centre for Cultural Policy Research at the University of Glasgow on 14th December 2004. Namely the difficulty posed by a 'top down' governmental definition of cultural rights, and the need to define what any future cultural rights will guard against.

Echoing EASIF's sentiments the seminar outlined a need for the creation of 'space for the individual to define for **themselves** in a meaningful way what their cultural rights are'. It could therefore be suggested that the Cultural Commission should focus on the guarding of this 'space' as relating to the individuals social and economic status, as opposed to the writing up of a list of detailed rights linked to the accessing of a pre-defined 'culture'.

EASIF, in its document 'Arts for Social Inclusion in Edinburgh' published in May 2004 sets out three ways of fostering the conditions required for the individual to be able to define for **themselves** in a meaningful way what their cultural rights are. The Forum asks for:

- further information exchange amongst and beyond the arts & social inclusion sector;
- greater links for grass roots and community based arts organisations into existing and future citywide planning structures
- new and sustainable funding routes to improve resources and build confidence within communities on the margin, to create the 'space' (physical and mental) needed for freedom of expression and the self definition of cultural rights

The Forum hopes that the continued work of the Cultural Commission will assist with achieving these aims.

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On behalf of the Edinburgh Arts & Social Inclusion Forum
14th January 2005