



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee

**Thursday 19 September 2019**

**Session 5**



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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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**CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**21<sup>st</sup> Meeting 2019, Session 5**

**CONVENER**

\*Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

\*Annabelle Ewing (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)

\*Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP)

\*Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green)

\*Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD)

\*Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

\*attended

**THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:**

Julia Amour (Festivals Edinburgh)

Ken Hay (Culture Aberdeen)

Jennifer Hunter (Culture Counts)

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Stephen Herbert

**LOCATION**

The Robert Burns Room (CR1)



# Scottish Parliament

## Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee

Thursday 19 September 2019

*[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:01]*

### Arts Funding

**The Convener (Joan McAlpine):** Good morning and welcome to the 21st meeting in 2019 of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee. I remind members and the public to turn off their mobile phones, and ask anyone using electronic devices to access committee papers to ensure that they are switched to silent. This morning, we have received apologies from Claire Baker MSP and Mike Rumbles MSP.

Agenda item 1 is an evidence session, which is part of the committee's arts funding inquiry. We are joined by Julia Amour, who is the director of Festivals Edinburgh; Ken Hay, who is from culture Aberdeen; and Jennifer Hunter, who is the executive leader of Culture Counts.

The purpose of the session is to investigate some of the findings from the comparative research that the committee commissioned from Drew Wylie Ltd to support its inquiry, particularly those relating to data collection, policy analysis, international benchmarking and collaboration. We may also explore other issues that were raised in earlier evidence sessions. I thank the witnesses for their very useful written submissions, which touch on all those areas and more.

I turn to international comparisons and data collection. As we all know, the national performance framework has an outcome on culture, which the Government's cultural strategy supports. There is an increasing understanding of the important contribution that culture makes across all areas of policy making, but how do we measure that really important element? Some evidence that the committee has taken around the country from artists and arts organisations is that the burden that is placed on them to prove the value of culture is far too heavy and that someone else should be doing that. Do you have any thoughts on how the impact of arts funding should be measured and assessed? Should that be via individual funding applications on a sectoral basis, or by some other means?

**Jennifer Hunter (Culture Counts):** We have been looking into that issue recently, so this session is quite timely. We have found that

different measurements happen depending on where you are. Local authorities measure some things, national companies measure other things and Creative Scotland measures regularly funded organisations in different ways again. It would be good to streamline the approach, so that we can learn more from the measurements in an organised way and create data. At the moment, all the data that we have is quite messy, so it does not really add up to anything that we can use coherently.

In Australia, a planning tool called WhiteBox measures the inputs into and the activities, outputs and outcomes of the cultural sector. That private enterprise system enables the analysis of the data. For example, say I have a group of teenagers whose confidence I have to improve, WhiteBox would give direct access to data that would tell me what the best activities would be to do with them.

The Australians are really getting a useful understanding of how culture works and what works where; the system also keeps all their data in one place. The only problem with it is that, being a private enterprise, it measures only those people who have signed up to pay for the software. The Scottish Government could provide an open-source version of that tool. It could be a world-leader in how culture works, if it creates similar software and enables all the different players to sign up and feed back into it.

**Julia Amour (Festivals Edinburgh):** I really like that idea of making a nationwide enterprise of the business of collecting and using the evidence.

I have read some of the reports of your previous evidence sessions. A lot of the witnesses covered the fact that the input-activity-output-outcome model is not straightforward for culture, because it is deeply embedded in psychology and community. We have to take a wide view—it is as important that people study each other's evidence of how things work as it is to be able to say in a wide scale way that culture works. I think that that is one of the areas where large clusters of organisations such as Edinburgh festivals can play a leading national leadership role.

The evidence study that we commissioned collectively in 2010, which has been studied around the world, was one of the first to look not just at the economic impact of our group of festivals, but at the measures of cultural, social and environmental impact. That study can stand for Scotland's record in this area. However, we could make a lot more of that. We have been trying to work with universities. We have spent quite a lot of time working with the University of Edinburgh, particularly because of the Edinburgh and south-east Scotland city region deal and the funding that it will provide to the university to

become a data centre of excellence. We are looking for opportunities to mine the huge amount of data that exists and put it to use.

It is the same with the data that Creative Scotland holds. It asks for a lot of reporting for the regular funding, the project funding and the special funding that it provides, but it does not have the capacity at the moment to mine the data and learn from it.

We were very lucky last year to secure funding through an Arts and Humanities Research Council grant for a researcher from the University of Edinburgh to look at training researchers to work with industry, so that we can mine 10 years'-worth of the Scottish Government's festivals expo fund data, which supports new Scottish productions to find international audiences and buyers through the platform of Edinburgh's festivals. The information that we got was fascinating. We found out that, each year, an audience of half a million is attracted to new Scottish work as a result of the expo scheme, and that 20 per cent of the productions are presented in community settings, even though that is not the purpose of the scheme. Everything that we have learned has helped us to develop how we use the scheme; it has also helped other festivals that have recently come into the scheme, such as Glasgow international and Celtic Connections, to understand how the fund can best work for the benefit of the whole of Scotland.

**Ken Hay (Culture Aberdeen):** I reiterate the point that a lot of information is being gathered from many organisations, and, on the whole, I have no idea what happens to it. I am here today representing culture Aberdeen. As well as running the Edinburgh International Film Festival and the Edinburgh Filmhouse, the Centre for the Moving Image also runs Belmont Filmhouse in Aberdeen, as part of a collaborative network.

Our challenge is that we report to the local authority in Aberdeen, to the City of Edinburgh Council as a business, to the Scottish Government and to Creative Scotland. All ask different questions, but there are overlaps, too. The data is inconsistent and unco-ordinated. There is an issue of capacity for whomever has the data, but there is also an issue that is to do with why they want the data in the first place. A better starting point would be to go back up the chain to ask what the key things are that we should be looking for and, on that basis, gather the data that allows us to work out whether the approach is working.

**The Convener:** One of the recommendations from the research that the committee commissioned is to have a national cultural observatory. Would that reduce the bureaucratic burden on the sector, or would that add another layer of bureaucracy?

**Julia Amour:** That would be a great idea. We said in our written evidence that working with academia is fantastic, but that is not straightforward, because there are different drivers and business models. Some of our recent work on the Edinburgh city region deal is about aligning those drivers and making sure that we get outcomes that work for the university and culture sectors and for the wider audiences and citizens.

Once observatories are set up, they often have to chase funding for article publication or for certain metrics in the research excellence framework. The important thing would be for an observatory to be a genuine cross-sector partnership.

The report that you commissioned surveyed different countries. I read that the Irish Research Council provided funding for the cultural policy observatory Ireland network to get off the ground. That is an excellent idea. In our written evidence, I think that we said that a Scottish funding council ought to be part of a strategic nationwide effort to look at how we pull data together and use it to make our system better and for us to become a beacon in the world.

**The Convener:** In your written evidence, you touched on international comparisons, which is another major theme of the research from Drew Wylie. What else can you say about what countries we should be benchmarking against? What is your view on the research report's recommendation that Scotland should consider establishing an international network of countries to benchmark itself against?

**Julia Amour:** Edinburgh Festivals has relationships with a lot of the countries that were examined. Those countries seek to develop relationships with all Scotland through us. Canada is a good example. As a result of the relationships that we have developed over the past five years, there has been a very strong Canadian presence for three years at the Edinburgh festivals around CanadaHub, which is a new venue. There have also been nationwide initiatives. An indigenous producer and artist from Canada held a seminar for artists in Arran and has worked with artists from across the Highlands and Islands and the central belt in presenting work in Edinburgh. Benchmarking happens in the act of developing such collaborations, which is very positive, and I think that Jen Hunter has ideas on how we can build on that.

I am more attracted to the national infrastructure being supportive of such links developing than I am attracted to forming an overarching benchmarking club to which countries would contribute. We have differing interests across different parts of the culture sector. That is a good thing. Across all the 11 Edinburgh festivals that I

represent, we cover 85 countries. Those are obviously not all of the same strategic importance to us. Many things can be done with an important cluster of Nordic, European or Commonwealth countries, and that is an obvious area to focus on. However, the Scottish Government's policy interest will be at a different level from those of independent artists, who want to meet other independent artists, producers, promoters and presenters who can feature them internationally. I am not sure whether the observatory idea would speak to some of the objectives that Edinburgh Festivals has, although it might speak to other objectives.

**Jennifer Hunter:** Yes, I agree with all that. We recently chaired a group of United Kingdom music export companies in Glasgow. An issue that arose is the importance to businesses of moving around and making connections, particularly now that we no longer have the big models that we used to have across the creative industries, including in the record industry. It is really valuable for people to be able to move around and make connections with people and work in partnership, and we would prioritise the actual work over measuring ourselves against what other countries are doing.

09:15

**Ken Hay:** I agree. Being part of a club is great. As a starting point, however, we need to get ourselves sorted and then work out whether there are others with whom there might be sufficient commonality in objectives and methodologies and so on and with whom we want to work. Absolutely—we should learn from others, but we need to do stage 1. We seem to be starting from a position where we have a lot of stuff, but we do not have an observatory and we do not have the right kind of partnership in place to deliver one. It would be my priority to get a partnership in place first.

**The Convener:** Stuart McMillan has a supplementary question on this topic.

**Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP):** On the point about an observatory, instead of establishing a standalone organisation, which would no doubt incur a considerable cost because of the bureaucracy, would it be better to have some type of organisation within an existing body, so that the bureaucracy could be reduced and more money could go to delivering culture and the arts?

**Jennifer Hunter:** The main job that I would give the observatory—if I was allowed to give it a job—would be to build an open-source framework that would let us understand what works. That would be valuable.

As for who would be in that network, I have a big list that I could read out—which would bore

everyone—but I could provide that as evidence if people would like that. As has been mentioned, it would include the Data Lab, the school of informatics at the University of Edinburgh and so on. That is what I would have the observatory do. Having the framework, the model and the digital tools: that is what I would want an observatory to achieve. I do not know whether it would be necessary to start up a long-term thing or whether a group could be put together and started up to achieve a goal—and once the goal was achieved, a decision would be made whether to keep it and whether to set another goal.

**Julia Amour:** There is a model that we could consider in how the Arts and Humanities Research Council has set up the creative industries research programme, which has funded three institutions in Scotland so far. Abertay University in Dundee is leading a cluster around games; the centre for cultural policy research at the University of Glasgow is leading Scotland's efforts in the policy and evidence centre that is being created as a UK-wide network organisation, as Jen Hunter mentioned, to develop our understanding in this area; and the University of Edinburgh is leading on a culture and creative industries cluster that involves bringing data innovation into those industries in a bigger way, creating new experiences, products and business models. Those are examples where the sort of thing that Jen Hunter has been talking about could work. Universities are probably the natural place to site something of that nature.

**Ken Hay:** The issue is how the others are plugged in. It was interesting to read the Culture Counts evidence, which wound the clock back by 10 or 11 years to the Creative Scotland Bill. At that point, in 2008, creative Scotland was being set up to be the big brain, with the research capability and capacity to inform itself, the sector and Government. For a variety of reasons, that has not happened in the way that was intended.

Looking forward 10 years, where might that observatory be? What will its role be in informing strategy and decision making within Government and among public funding bodies?

**Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green):** I would like to consider the need for national and local strategic co-operation. There was some interesting stuff in the Culture Counts submission on the new framework in Ireland for co-ordination between the Arts Council of Ireland and county, town and city councils. Jennifer, would you be able to expand on that?

**Jennifer Hunter:** It is ensured that, through match funding, every local authority in Ireland has an arts team, so the fundamental arts teams in local authorities are part funded or match funded. Those teams can then source other funds from

enterprise agencies, private investment and philanthropy.

Ireland understands that, if there are not some boots on the ground, it will not be able to achieve very much. There cannot just be the odd activity; people need to work to build the cultural sector locally. That is what happens in Ireland.

I think that that model would work well here, because it is very difficult for councillors to win arguments for culture locally when they are faced with a choice between emptying bins or education. Match funding would enable councillors to win a lot more arguments about funding culture locally.

**Ross Greer:** I am interested in the witnesses' experiences of the state of play in relation to the alignment of national and local priorities. It was quite different 10 years ago, when there was far more spending on arts and culture at a local level. That spending has reduced significantly, and the staff capacity in the cultural departments of local authorities has vastly diminished. Has that resulted in even less alignment, or have local authorities taken a more focused approach, resulting in something more positive in particular sectors?

**Ken Hay:** I will give the Aberdeen experience. This financial year, there has been a 19 per cent cut in funding for culture, so there has not necessarily been alignment. As Jen Hunter set out, the challenge is that local authorities, given that they have no statutory requirement to be bothered about culture, will focus on the many other things that they have to be bothered about.

We have been discussing how we can promote the idea of culture being at the table of community planning partnerships. Everybody is sat at the table except for culture representatives. That might be a route to combining the national performance framework and the cultural outcomes and indicators with what should happen at a local level. That would provide the strategic framework. Having a statutory obligation will become more and more important because, otherwise, culture will forever fall off the list. Taking that approach would create the opportunity to dovetail what we are trying to achieve nationally with what we are trying to achieve locally, and to think about how we work together to achieve that. At the moment, ambitions locally—whatever they are—are always trumped by the need to empty the bins or to ensure that kids get education.

**Julia Amour:** In previous sessions, the committee has heard witnesses talk about the fact that the City of Edinburgh Council's culture spending is lower than that of many other councils, for various reasons. The council has tried to protect, to a degree, the funding that has been allocated to third-party organisations through

grants, but over the past three years and the next two years, the funding for the festivals will have dropped by 18 per cent. That is happening at a time when there is a crunch in public funding and getting other sources of funding is becoming more competitive, which means that local authorities have a difficult conundrum to solve when supporting culture.

There has been an interesting development in Edinburgh, which started from conversations about the Edinburgh and south-east Scotland city region deal. We thought about how we could make the most of the platforms that the Edinburgh festivals provide to foster inclusive economic growth through culture. Obviously, the city region deals focus on inclusive economic growth, not on other objectives in relation to culture, hence our focus on those conversations. That got the festivals, the council, the Scottish Government and the UK Government around the table, which was very exciting. Unfortunately, at the 11th hour, the UK Government concluded that it would not invest in culture as part of the Edinburgh city region deal, because of the terms in which city region deals are drawn.

However, the positive outcome for Scotland is that we carried on those conversations. Out of them came the platforms for creative excellence—PLACE—programme, which is a place-based initiative for Edinburgh festivals. The funding that we raise is matched by the funding from the council and the Scottish Government—each partner puts in £1 million every year. The commitment to a five-year programme has been completely transformative, because leveraging additional funding through that long-term lens means that we have been able to reach out to and work in more communities than ever, in the way that they want to be worked with. We are going in and asking what is important to them and how culture can help them to achieve that.

A lot of funding is on an annual basis and communities get understandably fed up of people coming in and saying, "I have some money this year to do something with you." We are at the start of the PLACE approach and we are confident that it will transform how we can work with not only the communities but the creatives of the city region.

Also, because a lot of funding comes in annually, it is difficult to organise support for new commissions that have a tour around Scotland built in. The only organisation among our cluster that can do that is Imagineate, which has a year-round programme and produces the Edinburgh International Children's Festival. Because of where it sits in the festivals calendar, it gets 15 months' advance warning of the funding that will be available for new Scottish commissions through the festivals expo fund. That means that, in



addition to featuring in Edinburgh, it can set up a tour of locations across the whole of Scotland. If there is local and national alignment between timescales, objectives and the governance of the funds, amazing things can happen.

**Ross Greer:** That is useful. The ideal scenario for many folk in the sector is to have a statutory requirement for alignment. How well set up is Creative Scotland to deliver that? Capacity is one issue and there is an annual debate about its budget and so on, but, in terms of the structures that would be required at a national level to support alignment, what structural changes would be needed at Creative Scotland if there was to be far more focus on that support for local authority-level work?

**Ken Hay:** Blimey. Maybe you could ask the new chief executive of Creative Scotland, once they are appointed, how to deal with that.

The challenge for Creative Scotland is its starting point and how far it sees itself in a research and advocacy role—the development role—and how far it sees itself as being a funder. Certainly, my experience is that, over the nine years since its establishment, Creative Scotland's focus has primarily been on the funding aspect and therefore on the process of funding, so such a change would require quite a shift in its mindset. The consideration would then be about its capability and capacity in relation to what it needs on the ground.

The conversations a dozen years ago were partly about how far responsibilities could be devolved to either a regional or local level, so that there was no longer a central body in Glasgow or Edinburgh being viewed with distrust by anyone outside the central belt. Instead, decision makers and funding would be located in different regions or in local areas across the country. That has happened in part for small pots of money, but the issue is how far that could then be used as part of the leverage so that, if Creative Scotland puts in a chunk of cash alongside people with decision-making power, the expectation would be that those providing local or regional cash are at the table as well. There is scope for improvement.

**Jennifer Hunter:** I do not think that Creative Scotland currently has the budget to effectively match fund in the way that happens in Ireland. It would need about a £10 million minimum increase in its budget to have a place programme that really made a difference, but the money is just not there. The money would have to come out of direct funding for all the work that is currently done, that funding would have to be cut in order to do the local authority stuff and there would have to be a decision to do that. It comes back to the interpretation of Creative Scotland's remit. It does not really look as though that is its remit. It is trying

to piece together the place partnerships to make up for a huge gap but, without the money, there is only so much that can happen.

**Julia Amour:** I think that Creative Scotland shows a willingness to work on that. In the case of the Edinburgh city region PLACE programme, the Scottish Government—and, indeed, City of Edinburgh Council—have signed over their money to Creative Scotland to be the managing agent of that programme. I know that it is very excited about that as a new model. However, I take on board the comments that colleagues have made on whether it is replicable and scalable to 32 local authorities.

09:30

**Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** Witnesses have touched on the massive pressures that the whole cultural sector faces and where we go with that. Those pressures have come about through the national and local priorities that you are trying to set in your own locations and geographical areas. However, you have said that you do not have that reach locally—you are not at the table with community planning partnerships, but representatives from other areas, such as wellbeing and education, may be at the table. What role should you be given? As you have identified, education seems to be given the lion's share of the local government resource in relation to identifying cultural opportunities. What negotiation take places between the organisations that you represent and local government and education, or between you and the individuals who could give you the power to sit at the table? What is the practice?

**Ken Hay:** That is a good question. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 underpins the community planning partnerships. It lists the folk who are statutory community planning partners, such as Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage and sportscotland. It includes all the national bodies that are responsible for their respective patches.

None of us have the individual capacity or authority to sit on those community planning partnerships. We are therefore asking which body at a national level could have that position, which goes back to Ross Greer's question about the role of Creative Scotland. Again, we would ask whether it has the capacity to take on that role. Between 15 and 20 organisations all have the right and are obliged to be there, but no one from the culture sector is among them.

**Alexander Stewart:** But you have local knowledge and understanding, so you can bring something. If you are not included, you are being excluded. You are not being given opportunities—

it is blatantly obvious that your organisations are being left out. If you were given the chance to be at the table and have some influence, you would get spin-off—there is no question about that. You would make a bid for various things and you would be successful, because you would show that the potential for wellbeing, security or empowerment in the community—or all that—is there.

We seem to have a glaring omission, which has to be changed. What do you think we should be doing? We can help you, in some respects, to try to make that happen.

**Ken Hay:** The obvious solution to me is Creative Scotland, because it occupies that national position. The issues comes back to the earlier points about its individual capacity at a particular time, but I agree with Alexander Stewart that culture should be at the table. It should also have sufficient teeth. If it is there purely because it would be a nice idea to have culture at the table but everyone else is there because of a statutory obligation, that would be different. It would be great, as long as culture had that statutory heft behind it.

**Alexander Stewart:** Culture Counts talked in its submission about the lack of understanding between the layers of government. It is obvious that we do not seem to have real knowledge and understanding of what is going on. You are providing the services and facilities and doing the role. The Government has ambitions for its cultural strategy and what culture should be doing, but there is a mismatch between the two. We need to identify how that can be better managed for you, so that we can support the individuals and organisations that you represent.

If we do not do that, the situation will erode once again. As we have already heard, there are financial constraints and pressures. You have identified where we should go, but Government needs to take that extra step—a leap of faith—to ensure that you get there.

**Jennifer Hunter:** Creative Scotland would be ideal for the role, as it is the only organisation that is big enough to be able to get across all those deals. That would take serious skills and experience, and there is not a Julia Amour in every local authority. It would be a really big job even for Creative Scotland, which would have to try to bring in the skills to lead that work. However, I think that it is definitely possible.

**Julia Amour:** A great hook to enable us to achieve some of that is what is being talked about in the national cultural strategy. The new discourse about culture in particular is seen as a tool for all sorts of public policy objectives. I do not mean that in a reductive instrumentalist way—I am simply saying that we will not become a fairer,

more inclusive, outward-looking nation unless we are culturally confident and culturally empowered.

As Ken Hay said, we need to give the approach teeth. I have been struck by the national cultural strategies of some of our international comparators. Quebec and South Australia recently published their strategies—each had a foreword from their premier. If we can take a cross-Cabinet approach to the national cultural strategy, with policy proofing in all portfolios in relation to what culture can bring to the party in each area, that would set the right tone for all the local discussions that follow from it.

**Alexander Stewart:** Following on from that is the whole purpose of what the funding should be about and how it should be distributed to ensure that you get your fair share of it. At present, how funding is allocated is quite different across different areas and regions; there is no common approach. The process could be better informed. How would you consider what decisions should be taken on funding in relation to what the priorities should be?

**Julia Amour:** We are conscious that there is a whole interdependent system, each part of which needs to be respected. Independent artists, who are obviously a focus of the committee's inquiry, find it increasingly challenging to make a living, and the conditions for them need to be thought about. It is inarguable that the partnerships between independent artists and freelance producers and the cultural organisations that can help them to get their work seen, find audiences and make livelihoods are what makes our whole cultural system work.

There should be a focus on how we make more of the interdependencies in that system. Two strands of the PLACE programme for the Edinburgh festivals are about increasing creative development for artists and increasing community engagement with audiences. That balance and interdependency needs to be thought about carefully.

**Annabelle Ewing (Cowdenbeath) (SNP):** Good morning. I turn to the issue of peer review. You may have followed our debates in the committee about the evidence that we received on that subject, on which there are differing views. It will be interesting to hear what you think. Should peer review be reintroduced into the process?

**Jennifer Hunter:** Do you mean the funding processes?

**Annabelle Ewing:** Yes.

**Jennifer Hunter:** I do not have a lot of experience of peer review. However, I know that the fact that we are a very small country can make peer review difficult, as sometimes your reviewer

will be someone who is competing for the same funds as you. That is one concern that I have about peer review: I do not know how we can manage it in such a small country. I do not know if anyone else has a view on that.

**Julia Amour:** Festivals Edinburgh has not come to an official position on that. I read in the Drew Wylie Ltd report that a lot of other countries use peer review in their systems. They have protocols for managing it by regularly rotating people around panels and looking for advisers who, as well as not forming the majority on the panels, are not necessarily from our system. The decision panels on some of my individual member festivals have a mix of people from our system and international guest selectors. For example, the Edinburgh fringe runs the made in Scotland programme, which selects about 20 works a year to feature in the fringe, in partnership with Creative Scotland and the Federation of Scottish Theatre. I guess that if you were to use peer review in the funding process, those are some of the techniques that you might need to use to hedge the process and balance it out.

**Ken Hay:** I will pick up on that. The approach should ensure that peer review is part of a bigger process of understanding what is going on with individual artists or pieces of work, to inform decision making. If there is to be peer review, its role in the process should be made clear. Is it to take a decision? Alternatively, is it about looking at one viewpoint, and understanding that it is just one viewpoint? Is it about understanding that two or three viewpoints might be needed before making a decision?

The more steps that are put into the process, the more cumbersome it would become. The individual applicant—whether they are an individual artist or a small organisation—does not have the time or the capacity to navigate the process by themselves. The challenge is to keep things simple and workable while using the process as and when it is suitable, so it might be that the peer review should be of the process rather than of individual applications.

**Annabelle Ewing:** Do you foresee that peer review might co-exist along with other forms of decision making, in a hybrid form that we might call peer review plus? We would not have the current position and would not go back to the Scottish Arts Council form of peer review, but we would have something in the middle.

**Ken Hay:** I honestly do not know how the Scottish Arts Council used to do it.

**Annabelle Ewing:** It used to have a peer review system. Can you foresee a system whereby you could have a peer review approach that would be

only one element of the decision on whether an artist would receive funding?

**Ken Hay:** It would need to be appropriate. Going way back to the creation of Scottish Screen in 1997, one of the bodies that merged to form it was the Scottish film production fund. Basically, its panel was made up of the producers who were applying for the funding, so talk of a conflict of interest was quite loud. If folk did not get money they were unhappy, because their peers were making the decision. As Scottish Screen evolved, it said that it needed expert input to enable it to take decisions, but in that case those individuals were not actually taking them; instead, their expertise was used to inform the decisions. I am not sure how far that links into how the Scottish Arts Council used to do it.

**Annabelle Ewing:** I certainly take the point that was made about managing peer review in a country that does not have a huge population. Julia Amour suggested that there could be rotation of panel members and Ken Hay's point was that members should be required to declare their interests. We could have so-called high-level artists in certain sectors, diversify the membership or have rolling invitations to come on to panels. Do you see such approaches as being workable in practice? Among the people we have heard from, there has been a clamour for some form of peer review to return to the system. If that could be in a workable form that takes account of the issues that have been raised, including those that Jennifer Hunter mentioned, perhaps we could consider that.

**Jennifer Hunter:** That is not something that we have ever talked about to our members. However, I could do a survey if it would be useful to gather information on that and feed it back to the committee.

**Annabelle Ewing:** Yes, that would be great. Thank you.

**The Convener:** I have a supplementary question on peer review. As Annabelle Ewing said, the artists we have spoken to raised the issue. I think that the thing that most concerns them about the application process, particularly in Creative Scotland, is that their applications have been assessed by people who do not know their art form at all. They outlined articulately why they think that that is wrong. They do not have any confidence in decisions that have been made about their art form by people who are completely new to it. Do they have a valid point?

09:45

**Ken Hay:** I would understand their concerns—yes.

**Julia Amour:** The point that Ken Hay made about proportionality is very important. If you wanted to design a framework with peer review embedded in it, you would need to look at the size of decisions that you were applying that to. Another thing that independent artists have said, understandably, is that the burden of administration in applying for funds as an individual is too big.

**Stuart McMillan:** I have a couple of questions on marketing and branding, but I have a question on a different subject first. When we had our session in Ayr, a suggestion was made regarding a percentage for arts funding when capital projects take place in local authority areas. Do you support that?

**Julia Amour:** In Edinburgh, we have been talking to the planners about the new planning framework, and I know that Culture Counts has been doing work on the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. The opportunity for some cultural gain from developments, in the way that we are used to seeing infrastructure gain and education gain, is attractive. My understanding from talking to the planning teams in the local authorities is that the range of levers they have to make that happen is relatively limited, but we have been looking at the idea with great interest at both the national level and the city level. I do not know whether my colleagues want to comment on that.

**Jennifer Hunter:** I think that it would depend on the needs of the area. If we had a fundamental, standard level of cultural production in each area, we would not have that argument, because people would understand that and say, "Well, this is production over here, and that is the capital project."

**Ken Hay:** I agree. The other point is that we would risk focusing on a number rather than asking what we were doing, and why and how, and then considering how to construct the number. It could be 1 per cent of the total building cost, but how would that be defined? Would it include the fit-out costs? What would we then do with the money?

With a transient visitor levy, a consultation on which is under way, the challenges include, first, what we might want to spend the money on if we raise additional revenues, and, secondly, who will make the decisions. What process will be in place? Could the money go into a central pot and be spent on other things? For example, could people say that we were improving cultural amenity by filling in potholes because we were making it easier for folk to get around the city? If so, we might say, "Surely that's a different budget head," but if we leave it too vague, folk will not play ball.

If there is to be a percentage, we need to be clear about what it is, how it was derived, what the money will be spent on and who will take the decisions.

**Stuart McMillan:** An organisation in my constituency, RIG Arts, raised the idea with the committee when we had our session in Ayr. In my area, huge investment has gone into a particular part of Greenock, and RIG Arts has been hugely involved in the cultural element. It managed to obtain funds, which has helped hugely with that development and has made people feel that they have ownership of the area once again. That has been done without the formal structure of a percentage for arts. I have seen the job that has been done, so I can see the opportunity that there would be if a formal structure were in place. It could make it a bit easier for organisations to obtain funding and have longer-term plans, rather than working from contract to contract.

**Julia Amour:** On Jen Hunter's and Ken Hay's point about being clear about what it is for and having a mix of purposes, capital and recurrent funding is important. There are many innovative ways of generating community cultural assets, including asset transfer, which is talked about now and sometimes works well. However, we also have to be clear that we must not give civic-minded community citizens a pig in a poke, as it may be that something is a capital asset but there is no money to continue to run it and it is not a going concern.

Finding ways to attract more funding to support culture is the million-dollar question. If that can help, it would be very welcome. To do that, we need to look at the different ways in which culture needs long-term support.

**Stuart McMillan:** That takes me on to my question on branding and marketing. If that type of funding was there, as one example, would that help with the branding and marketing of an area, and would it attract investment to create a sustainable funding environment?

**Ken Hay:** The short answer is yes. Aberdeen has made huge strides in the past 20 years by investing more in its festivals. That has got the local community more actively involved, but it has also put Aberdeen on the map as a cultural city. Part of the challenge over the past two years is that a large chunk of that funding has gone, which sends out the message that Aberdeen is no longer that kind of city. That is high risk.

If there is sufficient and sustained investment, it can be transformative, whether at city level or more locally. As Julia Amour explained earlier, the challenge is with the funding being annual at best. Having a long-term plan is impossible, because we are constantly chasing to ensure that we have

enough to keep going a little bit longer. If there was strategic and funding commitment from national and local funding bodies, it would have the power to transform.

**Stuart McMillan:** Every local authority goes through a local development plan process and, through that process, there is an indication as to what projects will come down the line over that five-year period and what the funding will be. If you had that certainty about funding, it would help with the branding and marketing, as well as the roll-out and development of the cultural activities. Is that a fair assumption?

**Julia Amour:** You are absolutely right that there needs to be a package of measures. We have been talking to the development planning people in Edinburgh, and there are all sorts of great objectives to ensure that Edinburgh remains as affordable as possible for artists and makers, but that is a challenge as it is a city that is attractive to global capital.

It is important to have planning and zoning and an initiative with a revenue stream behind it to make it happen. The Bellevue area of Edinburgh at the top of Leith Walk was zoned for small ateliers for makers but, 15 years later—those are the lead times that we have to think in—it is filled with housing. I am sure that it is nice housing, but those plans were not realised because all the pieces were not in place. It would be great to have more support through the policy frameworks to ensure that all the pieces are in place.

**Stuart McMillan:** What other steps should be taken nationally by the Scottish Government as well as locally regarding having that collaborative funding method, looking at public, private and other types of investment?

**Julia Amour:** I will defer to Jen Hunter on planning and the work that we have been doing around the legislation.

**Jennifer Hunter:** Could you ask the question again?

**Stuart McMillan:** What other steps should the Scottish Government take towards having that type of collaborative model, looking at public, private and any other types of funding to provide certainty and achieve a better outcome?

**Jennifer Hunter:** We have established that things are very separate at the moment. At the start of the meeting, we were talking about what the data framework would look like in terms of inputs, outputs and what works. One of our ideas was to look at how culture works through health, education, the justice sector and the creative economy and have that as part of the data measurement framework. We could look at what the goals are—for example, for culture and health

or justice—through that framework model and ask how, jointly, they can be achieved. We hope that that would create partnership opportunities between the culture and justice sectors, for example, and get them working together to achieve a goal. It would be a goal-led framework that would open up partnership opportunities between the different areas, which would automatically connect to the national level from the local level.

**Julia Amour:** Another model that I have spoken about with some of your colleague members of the Scottish Parliament is the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport cultural development fund. As I understand it, that has been funded through the industrial strategy which, because of reserved and devolved matters, comes through in a very different way for prioritisation of spending in Scotland. If, heaven forbid, Brexit were to release funds that needed to be redeployed for other purposes, it is important for Scotland to be clear about how we would stimulate our economy to deal with that shock. If funding was available for place-based interventions, the programme that has been put together for Edinburgh, and other models that exist in other UK countries and abroad, might provide a framework for thinking about how national and local government could come together to make those interventions.

The commitment to place-based interventions in the national cultural strategy document is important, and Scottish Enterprise's strategy under its new chief executive could help because it is also talking about place-based partnerships. One of the important aspects of making it all stack up in the way that Jen Hunter described is having that wider view of the benefits that culture can provide for an inclusive and sustainable economy, so that the key performance indicators and the drivers are correct and business cases do not always come up with the answer that funds should be invested in new road junctions but show that it is also worth investing in communities through culture.

**Ken Hay:** I will add two very simple things to that. One goes back to the earlier point about giving culture a statutory footing. It would be good if there was something in the national cultural strategy that links it into community planning partnerships to allow that to happen. The second thing is money. I know that the inquiry is about arts funding. Quite simply, one of the reasons why this conversation is happening is that there is not enough money to allow us to do all that we want to. There is a lot less money, in real terms, than there was 10 years ago. At the time of the Cultural Commission report in 2005, it identified a need for an extra £100 million a year to go into the cultural sector and I think that it released an extra £10 million or so into the combined Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen at the time. To decide

how much we need, we would need to go away and come back with a precise number, but an awful lot of this would be much more straightforward if there was more hard cash on the table.

10:00

**Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I have just joined the committee and I am joining the inquiry in the middle, so I apologise that I am not up to speed on several of the issues.

I want to take up Stuart McMillan's point about collaborative funding. I was struck by the submission of Festivals Edinburgh that, having lost a lot of financial services sponsors, it has managed to get over that by diversifying and has now achieved a level of funding, although that was challenging. I think that you said that it is a stretch. Do I take that to mean that there are more organisations after less money? Is that the general point?

**Julia Amour:** Yes, in a big way. Broadly speaking, there are trusts and foundations, corporate donors and individual donors. In all those areas, obviously, more people are being encouraged to seek diversified funding and people are getting better at it. That is a stretch for big organisations, such as some of those that I represent; it is even more of a stretch for smaller freelancers or independent artists.

That is one of the reasons why having organisations such as Festivals Edinburgh, which operates on a national and an international scale, is an advantage to the system because we can do the legwork and then make the levered-in income available to artists—for example, nearly 90 per cent of the funding that comes in through the expo fund, both public and private, is going straight back out again to artists to commission and produce their work; it is the same with other areas of our programme—and that is one of the reasons why we invest in strategic national cultural infrastructure. We have been very successful, but the more diverse sources of funding you pursue, the more you have to invest in pursuing those sources of funding.

Many trusts and foundations have their bequests invested in the stock markets and those have not been going up in the way that they did in the previous decade. There is a finite pot to distribute. With everybody getting better at providing high-quality applications, it does not mean that the strike rate increases. You can be getting better and better and the strike rate can still decrease. It is a bit of a conundrum.

**Donald Cameron:** Do the other panel members recognise the same picture? Is it the same in Aberdeen?

**Ken Hay:** It is absolutely the same in Aberdeen as it is in Edinburgh and Glasgow. There is increasing pressure on reducing resources. The funding ecosystem is quite a fragile thing, and if one bit goes down—if local authority funds in Aberdeen go down by 19 per cent—the only way we can continue doing what we are doing is by looking at alternative sources, but that affects all the other cultural organisations as well. We all start chasing those other areas, and that puts increasing pressure on them. Unless those sums have gone up, we have that conundrum.

It also means that we spend more and more money on chasing money, which is slightly absurd. We pride ourselves on our very good development teams, who are adept at going out, raising funds and reporting on funds and so on. To go back to the beginning of the conversation, we are having to report back to five different bodies, and that is just in public sector terms. If you add in the commercial sponsors, the individual donors and the trusts and foundations, they are all asking for different outputs and different things to be reported on. It is complex. As one bit of the ecosystem shifts, we have to adapt to it, but the funding bit cannot adapt unless more money comes to the table.

**Donald Cameron:** There is another part to the conundrum because, as well as the different sources of income demanding different outcomes, it seems from the evidence that there could be an impact on artists. If there are multiple income streams, artistic freedom might be somehow constrained, which none of us would want to happen. Is that a real issue and, if it is, how do we solve it?

**Jennifer Hunter:** It is important to look at the production and distribution landscape, which is complex. Instead of thinking that some things are non-profit and just for community benefit, and other things are commercial, it is important to make the distinction that it is a big ecosystem, so it is about how you invest in the production of work and how you then distribute that work.

Stuart McMillan gave the example of a percentage of capital funds going towards activity, and that would be in my cultural production box. However, if that was how you did things everywhere, it would mean that there was no sustainability in cultural production because, if there were a building costing £2 million in one year, the percentage would be different from what it would be if there was a building costing £500,000 in the next year. It would mean that there would be no sustainability on the ground for the production of work, and if work is not being produced and there is no landscape of experimentation where people can make decisions

about what to make, commercial success will be less likely because less work is being produced.

You cannot decide in advance what will have commercial success; it does not work like that. Cultural work has commercial success because it manages to connect with people in some way and then it becomes popular, although you can make some decisions about what might work.

People have always chosen to do sponsorship work, but some people choose not to do it. However, there is not a lot of it around.

**Julia Amour:** In its submission to the inquiry, the Edinburgh International Festival said that the more its work is supported by corporate sponsors, the more corporate sponsors are likely to want to support work that is considered to be rather more safe than experimental. Jennifer Hunter is absolutely right that we have to have a mixed economy. Even as we continue to diversify, there is a foundational role for public funding in making sure that we can take risks and be experimental, and that artists can speak truth to power.

**Donald Cameron:** I find it worrying that there is a constraint on artistic expression and that these multiple funding sources, wherever they come from, create that atmosphere.

**Julia Amour:** That is why some artists do not choose to pursue the commercial route. Thankfully, we have a mixed economy so we can support all different sorts of work. However, the danger is that, if you rely wholly on the market to do your programming for you, in effect you get stuff that has mass market appeal, and the next generation's Hugh MacDiarmid or Richard Demarco—I was reading his evidence to the committee before I came today—do not emerge through a system that is dominated by commercial interests.

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** Earlier, we touched on whether funding should be put on a statutory footing. It has been nine years since the Creative Scotland Bill hit the buffers and Parliament is full of new personnel now. Should that idea be revisited?

**Ken Hay:** Yes.

**Kenneth Gibson:** Can you elaborate?

**Ken Hay:** I was in the privileged position of being involved in a lot of the discussions leading up to the establishment of Creative Scotland. The draft Culture (Scotland) Bill of 2007 absolutely intended culture to have more of a statutory footing. By the point that we got past the Creative Scotland Bill in 2008 and the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, it was just about setting up a body that had four aims, although I cannot remember what they are now. We had shifted from saying that we were going to

transform the sector because the culture body would have teeth to saying that Creative Scotland just needed to get up and running and to exist.

Nine years on from the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, I would say yes—now is the time to review whether the underpinning purposes of Creative Scotland are appropriate for what we need in the long term. However, I would suggest that the framing for that should be the national cultural strategy and what it sees as the key things that need to happen over the next 10 years.

**Julia Amour:** In my view, there is a sequencing issue. The number 1 priority for Festivals Edinburgh members and across the whole country is the question of how we maximise the amount of investment, and the connectivity of that investment, in the sector. I would be concerned if we were to go back into a massive cycle of legislative change around the governance of culture in Scotland, as that would slow down the process of putting in place measures to address the issue of getting a bigger cake—I know that a lot of cake and pie metaphors have come up during the inquiry. I would not want legislative change to divert our attention from that first-order issue.

**Kenneth Gibson:** Does Jennifer Hunter have a view on that?

**Jennifer Hunter:** It is difficult to know whether it would be possible to interpret the current legislation differently rather than having to go through the process again. One thing that never really worked was the creative industries framework agreement with regard to the roles of Scottish Enterprise and Creative Scotland. That was quite a difficult issue. At the time, Scottish Enterprise decided that it was about high-growth companies, which basically crossed out most of the creative sector. The creative industries framework agreement can never really work if the statutory duty of Scottish Enterprise can change depending on who its director is. That completely changes how one interprets Creative Scotland's job, and it leaves things up in the air. It needs to be re-examined and re-interpreted.

Whether the legislation has to be changed is another question. I do not think that the current interpretation works—it has the potential to fail, for the reasons that I have given. In addition, I do not think that there is enough money to deliver on the current remit.

**Kenneth Gibson:** It is quite clear that money is the overriding number 1 issue. The whole point of putting the area on a statutory footing would be to try to secure funding and offer a wee bit of security so that artists would know that there would be a certain amount of money and resource going forward and a statutory obligation to deliver that.

Corporate funding was mentioned in response to Donald Cameron's question. Philanthropic and corporate funding is still very important. How do we boost those funding streams and get more from the philanthropic sector in particular? There are many different ways in which people can spend their money or give it as a legacy, from cancer research to dog and cat homes—whatever it happens to be. How do the arts get a bigger portion of that money?

**Jennifer Hunter:** One reason why that does not really work in Scotland is that there are not a lot of big Scottish companies to ask. We have been wondering whether Scottish Enterprise could help to connect the cultural sector with Scots abroad who run big companies in America and so on and who might want to fund things over here. That might be something that SE or Scottish Development International could do, because they have the contacts. That area could be explored, and we could see where it might go.

One of the problems is that there are not many companies in Scotland that are the equivalent of those big companies in America and Canada to try to get hold of and get money from.

**Kenneth Gibson:** Okay, so the diaspora could possibly be approached.

**Jennifer Hunter:** Yes.

**Julia Amour:** Yes.

**Kenneth Gibson:** Witnesses in our previous sessions have talked about a cross-cutting approach in which culture should be the responsibility of everyone in the Cabinet. However, you would still want a cabinet secretary with direct responsibility for culture, of course—I just want to ensure that that is the case. Sometimes, if something is everyone's responsibility, it is no one's responsibility. We still need someone to really drive the whole issue forward.

The Drew Wylie report looked at the other 27 European Union states outwith the UK, plus Norway, Quebec and New Zealand. Although we cannot pick a cultural strategy off the shelf from another country, which country most resembles where you would want Scotland to be in delivering for the cultural sector? Which of those countries has a philosophy, strategy or approach that would best suit Scotland, if the funding was available and we could adapt it to Scottish circumstances?

10:15

**Julia Amour:** There are interesting things about all those comparator countries, and our best possible future would lie in being able to adopt the best of what we see in different countries. Obviously, we are all interested in countries that

recognise the special status of artists as creative workers. That takes a different form in different countries. In France and Germany, for example, those workers have a special status within the social security system. In Québec in Canada, there is legislation on the special status of the artist. This might have been in the Culture Counts submission, but we have talked about the fact that people can earn points towards their social security status from making funding applications for their artistic practice.

I am struck by the amount that we have heard, in the different forums that we sit on, about the generation—probably my generation—that got started through the schemes that were available in the Thatcherite 80s and about how many of those forms of support are no longer available. One area of practice that I would be very interested to examine is the status of artists and their ability to sustain themselves while doing work that is good for them, good for their communities and good for society.

**Kenneth Gibson:** Interestingly, the country that seems to contribute significantly more than any other in Europe is Hungary, yet it is a country that is not exactly known these days for its liberalism. I wonder if sometimes there can be a price to be paid.

**Julia Amour:** I was very interested to read in the Drew Wylie report that one of the observatories had done a survey of countries all over Europe about the things that they felt were shortcomings and priorities in their sectors. Some of the main concerns in central and eastern Europe were about state control and a lack of independent, high-quality arts education. That points up some of the differences between our systems. The model here very much tries to balance independence and organisations. It has an arm's-length approach embedded in it, and it seeks to free up artists to make the work that they feel they need to make. That is absolutely critical.

**Kenneth Gibson:** You have spoken about the mixed economy. It is not just corporations that can steer people towards, or fund, a certain type of art. The state can do the same—although we do not do that here.

Annex B of the Drew Wylie report, under the heading "Contextual issues", says:

"When it comes to the arts funding process, the balancing of the technical requirements of applicants required to ensure objective assessment with the barriers that can be introduced to smaller or less experienced applicants is a common challenge."

That point was touched on earlier. How do we square that circle as regards



“the need to provide longer term funding certainty to some organisations while having some flexibility of funding to reward success and respond to new developments”,

as annex B goes on to mention? How do we resolve that?

**Ken Hay:** The starting point is to recognise that one size does not fit all. The process that an individual needs to go through has to be very different from that for a large organisation. The scale of the Edinburgh festivals is much greater, on the whole, than that of a number of the arts organisations in Aberdeen. Aberdeen Performing Arts is by far the biggest cultural organisation in the city, and we are probably next, at a relative fraction of the size. Then we quickly get down to organisations with a turnover of a couple of hundred thousand pounds. In some ways, we might think that that is great, but that might amount to three or four members of staff and some activity, and that is it. If such an organisation gets £50,000 knocked off its budget, it will spend the next year trying to get that money back in, at a time when it does not have capacity because it will probably have reduced its capacity.

I come back to the question of what we are trying to achieve, why and how. The process should enable things to happen. My experience over the years is that a lot of processes are there to prevent things from happening. They are there to make it more awkward and to defend decisions, but one of the things that we are trying to achieve is an investment in risk.

**Kenneth Gibson:** Do you have a concern that having the skill to apply is sometimes more important than the artistic work that is or could be produced?

**Ken Hay:** It could happen that way. My niece is an artist and I think about the prospect of her trying to fill in an application form for anything—she is a really good artist but she would probably need to work with somebody else to fill in an application form. How would that person then get paid for their time? The process needs to be appropriate to what we are trying to achieve. I fully understand that, whether the funding body is Creative Scotland, a local authority or anyone else, it needs to be clear about what it is trying to achieve with the processes—there needs to be transparency and accountability. However, in most cases, it could probably be made an awful lot easier, depending on the scale of the organisation.

**The Convener:** I would like to cover a few areas that we might not have covered already. You represent strategic sectoral organisations and it is clear from your contributions today and from your written submissions that you bring a considerable amount of expertise to the table. However, you will be aware that the main thrust of this inquiry has been about how we support

individual artists and cultural freelancers, and it is fair to say that in their feedback about the funding process, there has been a criticism that quite a lot of the funding has gone to strategic sectoral organisations that are competing against individual artists for funds. As we have just heard, it is difficult for individuals to compete. How would you respond to those criticisms?

**Jennifer Hunter:** That ties into some of my ideas about what to take from the Drew Wylie report. It is that argument about production and distribution in the arts and creative industries. What is the benefit of all this? Who does what?

It would be interesting to have two pilot schemes for universal basic income for creative freelancers—one in a rural area and one in a city—and to see the impact of those. Ideally, we would have the ability, as Ireland does, to match fund with local authorities and get everything working.

It would also be useful to think about what a universal basic income for creative freelancers might look like. This week, Ireland has launched a social welfare scheme for self-employed artists. They have a year where they do not have to communicate with the jobcentre—they can just work on trying to get their businesses off the ground and focus on their artistic work. It stops them having to go the jobcentre and jumping through hoops applying for jobs that they are not qualified for because they are artists. That is really good news, and something similar would work really well here.

I have heard about the new enterprise allowance, but I have never met or heard of anyone who has ever received it. It would be interesting if the Scottish Parliament information centre team could find out how many people have actually received that allowance.

The other issue is diversity in the sector. If you do not have the sustainability for production on the ground, the sector will just be made up of people who can afford to be in the game, so diversity will not improve unless that fundamental production issue is fixed. The measures that I spoke about can do that, so there is a range of things that can be done. Also, now that Scotland has some social security powers, it might be time to look at what happens in Ireland and to put something similar in place to help that cultural production on the ground.

There is not a lot of statutory arts education, so it would be good to bring that up to the same level as sports in schools. We see physical education in schools, and physical activity and physical health are very important. We should also see the arts in schools; the arts are really important for mental health and for teaching kids how to express

themselves and manage emotions. The arts should have the same relevance in school curriculums as PE.

**The Convener:** Julia Amour mentioned some of the schemes in the 1980s and 1990s. A big part of the feedback that we received from older artists was about how they had benefited from those schemes, which were not designed for artists but which gave artists the freedom to explore their creative practice without having somebody constantly on their back, telling them to apply for jobs stacking shelves and so on. Have you any thoughts on how we could reinvent such schemes?

**Julia Amour:** I have very much been part of the discussion that Jen Hunter talked about, on different countries' approaches to the special status of artists and on making it possible for artists to sustain themselves while doing good for their communities. We also have a discussion under way with Scottish Enterprise about how its new place-based approach could involve artists being cultural activists within their communities.

For many years, Highlands and Islands Enterprise has had a role in sustaining communities as well as in high-growth companies. There has been closer alignment between what Highlands and Islands Enterprise has been tasked to do and what cultural activists can bring to a community. It could be very interesting and exciting to think about that practice in relation to the letters of direction to all the enterprise bodies that have been set up, and about how they pursue their objectives.

**The Convener:** I was quite taken by the suggestion from an individual artist that a sectoral organisation, or any other organisation, that gets public funding through Creative Scotland should have to prove that it puts a certain proportion of that funding into supporting artists, so that it does not all go to managers, administrators and so on. How would you, as leaders of sectoral organisations, respond to that suggestion?

**Julia Amour:** That is one of the things that Festivals Edinburgh tries to do collectively across the 11 festivals that we represent. Through our impact studies, which, every year, focus on different types of impact—economic, social, cultural and environmental—we try to ensure that we prove the impact that has been made for independent artists and arts organisations. I mentioned the 10 years of expo funding, and nearly 90 per cent of that funding flowed straight through to the commissioning and production of work for individual artists and arts organisations.

We did a local study across Edinburgh of all the artists and arts organisations that our festivals have worked with that are not funded by Creative

Scotland. There were more than 600 of them in the year that we studied, which was 2016.

It is really important that artists understand the opportunities that are available to them and how the organisations that commission them and work with them leverage the public funding that they get. About 27 per cent of our funding comes from public funds, so accountability is important.

**The Convener:** The opportunities also need to be earning opportunities. During the Edinburgh festival, I spent quite a lot of time at various receptions, and I talked to an artist who had been involved in the collaborative you are here project, which was a way of bringing people together. He said that he had been given lots of opportunities to meet other artists and to make connections, which was all terribly enjoyable, but he did not make one penny out of it. When we talk about giving people opportunities, we have to be clear that those should be opportunities to earn. Are you aware that although things can be dressed up as a way of supporting artists, they do not always give artists an opportunity to earn?

**Julia Amour:** There are different types of support for artists. The project that you mentioned would provide professional development support for artists. Our development programmes that enable artists from Scotland to meet visiting artists who come to perform at the festivals are extremely popular and oversubscribed. There is a pipeline, and those programmes are part of it. The ultimate goal is ensuring that people have livelihoods.

The way that those programmes feed into the pipeline that provides earning opportunities is by working over a timescale of perhaps two or three years. Let us use Canada as an example because, as I have mentioned, it has been very big in the past few years and it has committed to investing in the future. This year, Canada brought more than 50 presenters and promoters to connect with Scottish artists with the explicit purpose of looking for work to tour. That might not happen tomorrow or even next month, but if we look two or three years down the road, a significant number of the people whom we have been able to introduce to their counterparts will get economic opportunities out of that. It is about balancing up all those different parts of the pipeline.

10:30

**The Convener:** Again, I go back to some of the feedback that we got from the artists who gave us evidence. When Donald Cameron was asking questions earlier, you talked about the way in which commercial sponsorship can affect the type of art that is performed. However, the artists told us that all forms of funding can affect the type of

art that is performed. Some of the artists whom we spoke to were quite critical of the idea that they always had to prove that their art somehow improved some aspect of society, such as wellbeing. We all know that art is good for wellbeing, but the artists felt that some of the outcomes were particularly restrictive.

On the constant emphasis on innovation, for example, we spoke to a jazz musician who specialises in improvisational jazz, and he could argue that he is innovating every time his band performs. Should artists always be pressurised to constantly change what they do, even if they are performing at a high level of excellence? There is even the pressure to collaborate. Collaboration is a good thing, but should artists have to adapt their art to suit different funding models?

That was feedback that we got from quite a number of the artists whom we spoke to in the committee and out and about. Could you respond to that? Have they got a fair point?

**Jennifer Hunter:** I used to work at the Musicians Union and I supported around 2,000 freelance musicians, so I know that argument inside out.

One of the things that supports artists so that they can experiment and make the work that they want to make is having portfolio careers. A musician might spend a couple of days writing the music that they want to write. At the weekend, they might be in a wedding band that they do not like being in, but it is better than working behind a bar because they are at least working as a musician. They piece together a portfolio career that creates a little window for them to work on the stuff that they actually want to work on and perhaps hope will be a commercial success.

If there is no work across the board because there is nothing in education, nothing in health, no culture budget and nowhere to get any work, they get swept into different careers that they do not want to be in because there is nowhere to do the cultural production. They cannot be in that space unless they can afford it. That is why sustaining opportunities for people to have portfolio careers and for culture to cross all areas of Government is really important. It is one way of sustaining experimentation on the ground, because it gives people that time for experimentation.

If you are asking anyone for money, they are always going to have their agenda.

**The Convener:** You just reminded me of one of the artists whom we spoke to—I believe that he was a photographer in Fife—who has a commercial practice as well as his more experimental artistic practice. He was told that he should hide the website for his commercial practice and try to distance himself from it or

maybe even close it down altogether, because he would not get grants if he had a commercial practice. Is that typical?

**Jennifer Hunter:** That goes back to the remit of Scottish Enterprise and the creative industry framework agreement, or who is doing what and who is responsible and accountable. That is my opinion.

**The Convener:** Thank you for coming. We have heard a lot of evidence and it has given us a lot of food for thought.

10:34

*Meeting continued in private until 10:59.*



This is the final edition of the *Official Report* of this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

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