

Creative Scotland Traditional Arts Funds

Evaluation of Outcomes and Impacts

Executive Summary

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Researched and delivered by

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1. Introduction

The Traditional Arts Funds were established in 2011/12 in response to the Traditional Arts Working Group (TAWG), which was set up by Scottish Government in 2009. In 2011/12, when the funds were established Creative Scotland committed £250K per year to specifically support traditional arts. This was increased in 2013/14 to £500K.

The Traditional Arts Funding programmes have included Traditional Arts Mentoring/Advanced Tutoring Fund, Traditional Arts Commissioning Fund, Traditional Arts Managed Fund, and devolved funds to Enterprise Music Scotland (EMS) to create the Small Traditional Arts Small grants.

Creative Scotland has engaged Glow Arts (Jennifer McGlone with Dr Lori Watson) to carry out an evaluation of the outcomes of the Traditional Arts Funds. The purpose of the evaluation is to look at the outcomes and impact of the Traditional Arts Funds and how they have delivered against the recommendations of the TAWG report. The evaluation includes surveys of the recipients of funding and the wider arts sector; analysis of the outcomes and impact of the projects/ individuals supported; the development of case studies from each strand of the funding programme; and recommendations to Creative Scotland on the fund going forward.

2. Summary of Support

In September 2013, Creative Scotland carried out a mapping exercise of the Traditional Arts Fund (2011/12 to 2012/13) gathering information on the number of applications applied for, the number of individuals versus organisations, art forms supported, location of applicants and total number of applications/ requests.

Between the financial years 2011/12 and 2012/13 a total of £993,669 (211 individual applications) was requested from the Traditional Arts funds, with awards of £539,249 (114 applications) being granted.

From the data available the evaluation found that between 2011 and 2013:

A total of **114** varied projects were supported by Creative Scotland's Trad Arts Funds.

The demand for Small Traditional Arts Grants funds far exceeded the funding available. While applicants to the Small Traditional Arts Grants applied for **£485,760** over the two years, only **£130,450** was made available. **3.5 times** the available funds were sought. **81** projects were supported through this fund.

17 Mentoring and Advanced Tutoring projects were supported, which assisted traditional artists in developing their skills, outputs and careers.

12 Large Traditional Arts Commissions projects were supported, resulting in new works created, or further developed, within, or drawing on, traditional idioms. The majority of these featured performances or showcases and interaction with audiences. And significant artist development took place for those involved.

9 Managed projects received funding awards. These projects were ambitious and were beyond the scope of the other available funds. The activities included international touring, extensive education programmes and resources, and coordinated events on a national scale.

Funded traditional arts activities took place in **20 out of 32** local authority areas in Scotland.

3. Outcomes and Impacts

Outcomes

As a direct result of the Trad Arts Funds there have been a significant number, and variety, of positive outcomes, as reported by the funded projects. These outcomes are drawn from survey, interview, and End of Project Reports data, and are loosely grouped here in six themes.

Engagement and inclusion

- A general increase in traditional arts activity as a result of Trad Arts funded projects
- Traditional arts events were made accessible to all age groups and social backgrounds, including those with specific difficulties due to age, health, finances or transport.
- Traditional arts reached 'unusual' venues and locations
- A *space* was created where people have easy access to, and involvement in, traditional arts
- New audiences were developed and attendance of traditional arts events increased
- There was improvement in the *quality* of events and programming in several cases

Development of practice

- Traditional and more general advanced musical and storytelling skills have improved among traditional artists.
- Artists' skills and experience were developed particularly through collaboration and repeated performance, from more experienced artists and tradition bearers
- Artists' confidence in their own practice and professional abilities has increased
- Paths for further and long-term professional development have been identified and embarked upon

- Self-awareness in relation to creativity and methods of work has increased, along with understanding of the value of this
- Focus on learning and development increased among artists
- Credibility was gained by individual artists for creative work, commitment to tradition and validation by peers and expert artists
- Artists' abilities to showcase Scottish traditional culture were improved.

Tradition, repertoire and context

- Local historical music and stories were revived
- New (traditional and original) works for performance and recording were created: traditional stories and original music; theatre works; Scottish lullabies; original artwork based on dance
- Creative exploration of challenging themes through traditional arts took place
- Established artists' knowledge, repertoire and skills were disseminated
- Local cultural heritage was transmitted more widely in several communities
- Oral tradition was collected, and disseminated more widely among young people

Profile and visibility

- The profile of traditional arts individuals, organisations and projects was raised
- Traditional arts was showcased to new audiences in other genres' arenas e.g. a Chamber music festival, storytelling at a major music festival.
- Traditional music was showcased overseas to (new) audiences including China and Sweden
- Increased promotion and visibility of Gaelic culture, music and language in local Gaelic areas and in (currently) non-Gaelic speaking areas
- The profile of Scottish traditional music and the traditional arts was raised through high profile performances linked to the Year of Creative Scotland and the Olympic Games and destinations where visitors are likely but high quality traditional arts is not common.

Connecting and strengthening

- Artists, who normally would not have the opportunity to do so, were brought together
- Art forms were combined, in some cases, in new and innovative ways
- Working relationships/partnership were developed between local organisations
- Relationships between performers and local and International promoters were developed
- Greater access to professional bodies was gained by artists

- A model for local community activity was developed that can be transferred to other areas
- Communities were brought together through oral tradition and traditional arts activities
- Venues that did not previously program traditional arts events will continue to book traditional music

Education and facilitation

- Opportunities for, and engagement with, traditional arts in education settings were increased through a large-scale education programme and education-specific materials being made available.
- Collaboration with traditional artists enabled high quality performance to be produced in an educational setting.
- Trad arts skills, and the confidence to use them, were developed in artists and community members
- Demand and employment opportunities for local traditional arts tutors was increased
- Consolidation of learned skills and knowledge through dissemination to students' families and communities, 'passing it on', was encouraged and enabled

Impact

At this stage, two years from the establishment of the funds, our ability to judge the impact of these funds is also in its infancy. However, we would like to highlight a number of observations and interpretation of the insights and perceptions shared by participants as to the longer term and wider community benefits of their projects.

The Trad Arts Funds have:

- Created new opportunities for artists, organisations and public to engage in traditional arts activities.
- Raised the profile of traditional arts in both the arts sector and public view. This has been achieved through an increase in traditional arts activity, the ring fencing of a specific budget for traditional arts, supporting projects that have been performed and showcased on a national and international stage.
- Increased skills development by supporting individual arts not only through the Mentoring and Advanced Tutoring fund but also through all funds to various degrees.
- Encouraged organisations and venues that had not engaged in traditional arts to continue to do so beyond the life of the projects.
- Helped inform changes in event design and delivery to increase income and audience numbers and support the viability future concerts and performances
- Contributed to the creation of new markets e.g. China, Sweden

- Contributed to increased youth employment opportunities, through providing training and performance opportunities
- Contributed to increased professional opportunities for developing and established artist through mentoring, skills development and opportunities to network and raise their personal profiles
- Raised the confidence and ambition of individuals and organisations

4. Recommendations

The evaluators are identified a number of areas that for improvement through their research that relates directly to the Funds and project processes:

- A clear definition of Traditional Arts is required which outlines not only the art-forms supported but also that the funds are for all engaged in traditional arts activities not just voluntary organisations but individual professional artists etc.
- A common concern the evaluators found was the lack of relationship between the funder and awardee. In the survey results and case studies interviews the lack of feedback or contact once an award was made was raised several times. Creative Scotland and Enterprise Music Scotland could review their contact with organisations and individuals post-award.
- Useful feedback was a priority among unsuccessful (or previously unsuccessful) applicants. Creative Scotland and Enterprise Music Scotland could review their feedback process to provide more specific advice.
- The transparency of how decisions are made was also highlighted as an area that respondents would like to see improvements in.
- Respondents highlighted that they would benefit from further support in the navigation and understanding of the funding available to them, in particular direct contact with funders to discuss their ideas and get advice on the most logical way forward. The evaluators suggest that in addition to direct contact, infographics could be used as a clear way to communicate current funding structures, funds available and processes involved in applying.
- The survey also highlighted the need for Creative Scotland to review its wider communication of the Traditional Arts Funds, to raise the profile of the funding available. In particular, looking at how improved promotion and clear communication of the funding available can engage more organisations who would not normally involve traditional arts in their projects.
- The evaluation also highlighted the need for optional support or advice on the project coordination, administration, marketing and delivery of

activities. Both for individual artists, who may not have the project management skills and various organisations that responded highlighted that these were areas they would like addressed.

- There is a need to support organisations and individuals in monitoring and evaluation skills. While compiling the information for this report the evaluators found that respondents often did not know the difference between an output and an outcome, or the information collected did not provide sufficient insights into the activity delivered. It is recommended that Creative Scotland look at how it can support organisations and individuals to report back on the outcomes of their projects. This may be through developing the capacity of the three traditional arts forums to support individuals and organisations from each area.
- The respondents that had engaged in the Traditional Arts Mentoring and Advanced tutoring highlighted that the main reason for them applying was that they were prompted to, through the offer of specific funding for traditional artists. Although this opportunity still exists for artists, it may not be clear to potential applicants, Creative Scotland should investigate how it can encourage and support this type of project within the existing Professional Development Funds. Given that these projects involved a significant (re)shaping of career paths, this fund might require additional time to take full effect.
- The evaluators have concluded that the opportunities offered by The Touring Network and Enterprise Music Scotland (see section 9.4) is not widely known about in the sector and more could be done to support traditional artists' engagement with these existing opportunities.
- An area that still requires development is the 'back office skills' highlighted in the TAWG report. Although the Apprentice Scheme addresses this to a small extent, there is a need to look at the training and development opportunities for project managers, promoters, agents, boards etc. to ensure that the sector and artists continue to flourish. Supporting individuals to engage with current opportunities available such as training and resources provided by Creative Cultural Skills, Arts and Business and the development of the current apprenticeship programme to include a wider age range could achieve this.
- Creative Scotland may wish to look at developing the capacity of the individual traditional arts forums and TRACS in order to address some of the areas outlined in the section above.