

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu / The Culture, Welsh Language
and Communications Committee
Rôl celfyddydau a diwylliant wrth fynd i'r afael â thlodi ac allgáu
cymdeithasol / The role of arts and culture in addressing poverty and social
exclusion
CWLC(5) CP20
Ymateb gan Datblygu Celfyddydau Caerffili / Evidence from Maindee
Unlimited.

Introduction

Maindee Unlimited welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee inquiry into how publicly funded bodies can use culture to tackle poverty and social exclusion in Wales.

John Hallam is the programme manager for Maindee Unlimited, a CIO formed by a group of local organisations in 2014 to deliver of place-based social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits in the Maindee area of East Newport. He is also the Chairperson of GARTH, an arts and health charity attached to the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

How effective has the Welsh Government been in improving participation in and access to culture for people in poverty?

The adoption of the Donaldson Reportⁱ recommendation that expressive artsⁱⁱ should be included as one of the six “areas of learning and experience” within a new curriculum in Wales is the most significant and effective recent policy decision in improving participation in and access to culture for people in poverty. The inclusion of “creativity and innovation” a one of the four wider skills that all the areas of learning and experience should support is further evidence of this.

The Welsh Government’s Cynefin Projectⁱⁱⁱ, although not specifically aimed at increasing access to culture, produced relevant local benefits for communities such as Maindee. In particular it laid the groundwork for subsequent cultural developments, such as the maintenance and creative refresh of Llyfrgell Maindee Library +.

A community-wide workshop held in July 2013 produced a summary list of local issue and ideas for improvement. The list was used as the source for planned benefits from Maindee Unlimited’s programme.

A distinctive strength of the Cynefin Project was that it acted as a broker, building better connectivity and understanding between existing local organisations, groups and individuals. This approach, which follows the ABCD/Asset Based Community Development^{iv} model, left a good legacy that we could further build on in Maindee. This could well be adopted by other community development projects, which can sometimes founder by focussing on services delivery rather than community building.

How effective have the efforts of Welsh Government sponsored bodies (namely the Arts Council, National Museum, National Library and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales) and local government been in using culture to tackle poverty?

The Arts Council of Wales, via its “Ideas People and Places”^v or (“IPP”) programme, invested £365K in *Finding Maindee*, a 3 year arts-led regeneration project that ended in February 2019.

The formation of Maindee Unlimited in 2014 was an important in securing this investment and helping to keep it focused on clear local benefits.

The seven funded projects that resulted from the IPP programme are currently being evaluated by Arts Council for Wales. Maindee Unlimited is also still evaluating *Finding Maindee* but there are already some benefits to note, which can be summaries as:

- Improved sense of local Maindee identity and place-recognition within Newport and Wales.
- More attractive outdoor public spaces
- Indicators of increased footfall and business confidence in local shopping centre.
- increase community spirit - centring on Llyfrgell Maindee Library
- better developed and connected civil society

What impact has the Welsh Government’s Fusion programme had on using culture to tackle poverty?

We have had no direct experience of the Fusion programme and so are not well placed to comment.

How effective have the Fusion pioneer programmes been in stimulating local collaboration?

We are not able to comment on this.

ⁱ <https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/successful-futures-a-summary-of-professor-graham-donaldsons-report.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Defined as Music, Dance, Drama, Art, Film and Digital Media

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/cleanneighbour/cynefin/?lang=en>

^{iv} Kretzmann, John; McKnight, John (1993). Building Communities From the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets.

^v <http://www.arts.wales/77361> See also: <http://www.maindee.org/blog>