

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales’ response to the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee inquiry into ‘[The role of arts and culture in addressing poverty and social exclusion](#)’.

First Part (specific to Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales):

1. Amgueddfa Cymru’s experience of tackling social exclusion through culture and heritage

1.1. Amgueddfa Cymru’s Vision

Amgueddfa Cymru’s Vision – ‘**Inspiring People, Changing Lives**’, makes tackling social exclusion through culture and heritage core to the work of the Museum.

We are committed to embedding a cultural rights based approach, inspired by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. In that sense, we aim to be an activist museum; working towards changing the way we contribute to and influence civic society. The Welsh Government sets out its expectations of Amgueddfa Cymru as a Welsh Government Sponsored Body in an annual Remit Letter. Addressing the need to tackle social exclusion through culture and heritage and supporting the *Fusion* programme is identified as a priority.

The following provides a range of examples of our experience of tackling social exclusion through culture and heritage over the past seven years.

1.2. Refugee House, 2012

In 2012 *Refugee House* was exhibited at St Fagans National Museum of History (St Fagans), a collaborative project between, refugees, asylum seekers, artists and the Museum to recreate the living conditions of those going through the immigration system. Outcomes included increased confidence, organisational skills, and language skills amongst participants, and an increase in awareness amongst staff and visitors.

1.3. Creu Hanes – Making History, the redevelopment of St Fagans, 2012-19

Participatory ways of working was central to the redevelopment of St Fagans. The physical building work was complemented by engagement and participation of schools, communities, charities and third sector organisations in all aspects of the project, from architecture and design, content and interpretation, to activities and events.

The Museum remained open throughout the redevelopment with over 120 third and public sector partners and 3,000 volunteers collaborating on all aspects of the redevelopment. Skills based opportunities for work-placements and apprenticeships

were embedded throughout and the construction company was requested to deliver a Community Benefit Plan as part of their work. Deeper engagement work focused on supporting people who were experiencing disadvantage or were in some way excluded. With support the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for example, we significantly diversified our volunteer base, working in partnership with third and public sector organisations to develop new experiences and programmes.

1.4. *Fusion* specific initiatives

In October 2013, 34 participants from a wide range of professional backgrounds across the UK attended a research seminar at National Museum Cardiff to explore the theme of cultural participation for children and young people experiencing poverty. The published report, *Cultural Participation for Children and Young People Experiencing Poverty* (2014), was produced as a useful tool for practitioners developing work in this area, see <https://museum.wales/media/31210/transforming-futures-research-seminar-report.pdf>

Following the publication of Baroness Kay Andrews' report, *Culture and Poverty* (2014), Amgueddfa Cymru played a central role in developing and delivering the pilot phase of *Fusion*, through membership on the Cultural Inclusion Board (CIB) and Operational Steering Group. Over the past three years we have continued as a key strategic partner. We also lead the evaluation of the *Fusion* Programme, in partnership with the Knowledge and Analytical Services in Welsh Government, to monitor and report on progress, impacts and challenges, see <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/research-fusion-creating-opportunities-through-culture-programme/?skip=1&lang=en>

In 2018 we successfully delivered Youth Voice, a celebration of the effect of culture and heritage on young people's lives, developed and delivered by young people. We have facilitated evaluation training sessions for *Fusion* Coordinators and local partners in the eight delivery areas and developed an advocacy film to be displayed on the *Fusion* website.

Amgueddfa Cymru is also responsible for delivering *Fusion* initiatives. There are a wide range of examples which include:

- **Who Decides (National Museum Cardiff, April 2017-September 2018)**

Inspired by the participatory and political work of socially-engaged artists, Amgueddfa Cymru worked with a group from the Wallich - a Welsh charity supporting homeless adults - to curate an exhibition of recent acquisitions of contemporary art from the Museum's collections. Delegating the curation and organisation of the exhibition to people with experience of homelessness generated a fundamental debate around the value of art.

Over 6 months, 10 volunteer curators worked with the Senior Learning Officer and the Head of Fine Art to curate and develop the exhibition. Through a series of workshops the participants were involved in all aspects of the exhibition and were empowered to take the lead in selecting objects, producing interpretation, developing the exhibition's graphic and three-dimensional design, choosing the exhibition title, installing the show and delivering the public programme. The exhibition welcomed over 40,000 visitors. The process embedded participatory practice across the organisation and developed staff skills. Five of the volunteers achieved accreditation on "An Introduction to Welsh Art". The methodology was seen as innovative and is being introduced to other organisations as good practice. Amgueddfa Cymru and the Wallich continue to work collaboratively and the Wallich are now curating a garden at St Fagans.

- **GRAFT: A Soil Based Syllabus (National Waterfront Museum Swansea, January-September 2018)**

This project was linked to a large scale art work happening across Swansea in September 2018, 'Now The Hero'. Working with artists and local charities, individuals were able to design, create and maintain a garden at National Waterfront Museum Swansea, dramatically changing the way the Museum utilized a previously underused space. It changed perceptions of linking art and the collections with a green space. One partner was Cae Tân CSA, a community supported agriculture project who gave support and advice on the horticultural element. They provided workshops for the groups and schools so that people were gaining knowledge about organic gardening techniques and skills as well as knowledge about healthy food lifestyles. Attendees engaged with the project through seven courses which covered woodwork, metalwork/welding, willow weaving, kimchee making, seed saving and crop rotation. Nine qualifications were gained, and four projects received vegetables to feed those in need as well as the learners/volunteers. see

<https://www.nowthehero.wales/graft-a-soil-based-syllabus>

- **Learning programmes (St Fagans and National Waterfront Museum, 2015- ongoing)**

A number of initiatives working with young people at risk of exclusion from formal learning have taken place at St Fagans. Alternative learning opportunities were developed with the Pethabridge Unit, an alternative curriculum provider based within the community, for young people in danger of exclusion from school. When the Unit folded the provision was brought within the school and we continued to work with the schools as part of the Step 3 programme. Both sets of provision were focused on using Museum resources to support practical and social skill development with an emphasis on providing positive role models and raising aspirations. The current programme, in partnership with Cardiff West Community High School, is the Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative, and Communication scheme (LORIC). It aims to work with younger children to develop alternative qualifications,

raise aspirations and develop confidence in a learning environment outside the classroom. The Museum has also supported Cardiff West Community High School with the delivery of its Ambition project, providing learners with the opportunity to develop skills and relationships outside of the school setting.

My Primary School is at the Museum, an initiative with King's College London's Cultural Institute, delivered museum based school residencies with far reaching results at the National Waterfront Museum Swansea. Amgueddfa Cymru partnered with St Thomas Primary school, a school based in the Swansea Pioneer Area and part of the *Fusion* partnership. Two Foundation Phase Classes from St Thomas Primary School were based at the National Waterfront Museum for the majority of the spring and summer terms. Dedicated family days were also organised to share the children's work with their families. The initiative demonstrated a significant change in the pupils' ability to discuss their own learning, their aspiration and interest in learning, and an improvement in their oracy skills, see

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/-/projects/my-primary-school-is-at-the-museum.aspx>

- **Cultural Ambition (Big Pit, St Fagans and National Waterfront Museum, May 2018-21)**

Amgueddfa Cymru is a key delivery partner in this Heritage Lottery Funded initiative led by MALD and Cultural and Creative Skills. The project is a core part of the *Fusion* programme with the aim of creating 33 annual training placements over a three-year period. The trainees are aged 18-24 and non-graduates who are not in education, employment or training. Amgueddfa Cymru hosted the training day for all partners at St Fagans in September with Creative and Cultural Skills, and Cardiff and the Vale College delivering the training. We also participated in the launch event held at Caerphilly Castle. The first cohort of trainees started in October 2018. We are supporting placements based at Big Pit, St Fagans, National Waterfront Museum and National Slate Museum.

- **Volunteering (All museums, ongoing)**

National Museum Cardiff is working with Oxfam Skills for Future scheme, to support vulnerable women by providing progression to employment to women of refugee background. The Museum is also working in partnership with local special schools to offer placement opportunities to young people with autism.

National Slate Museum has supported a local individual with autism on a volunteering programme for 17 months, he now has a placement at Ysbyty Gwynedd through the Engage to Change project. The Museum is also working with Agoriad Cyf. to develop employment possibilities for disabled people and those facing disadvantage.

At Big Pit, volunteers have been recruited as part of the Intergenerational Group in partnership with Ageing Well in Wales and Torfaen Council. They help to run the monthly meetings and activities for the older Dementia patients, and will develop underground dementia tours.

- **Youth Engagement (2018-22)**

Hands on Heritage is an Amgueddfa Cymru initiative, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, to make heritage relevant to the lives of young people, aged 11-25, now and in to the future. Working in collaboration with our Youth Forums and partners Llamau, Barnardo's, Promo Cymru and Children in Wales means that this work does not occur in isolation, but, is part of the wider provision for the young people involved. The aim is to ensure that a greater number and diversity of young people benefit from high quality engagement with Amgueddfa Cymru.

1.5. What works

Developing a Corporate Vision and Values that align with the aims of the *Fusion* programme has been essential in providing involvement across the Museum and in working towards long term strategic outcomes.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has also been important in shaping our objectives and ways of working. Tackling poverty and social exclusion cannot be done in isolation and partnership working with a view to integrating programme delivery, policy and strategy is key.

Collaborative working with national bodies and agencies especially Cadw, Creative and Cultural Sills, Archaeological Trusts and Arts Council Wales has provided opportunities for aligning programmes and work on for example youth engagement initiatives and placement opportunities. Partnerships working with local and national charities and third sector bodies e.g. Llamau, Barnardo's, Down's Syndrome Association, Adult Learning Wales, NewLink Wales, Innovate Trust, Groundwork North Wales, the Wallich and Mantell Gwynedd, has provided programmes that better meet the needs of participants. This approach to partnership working has increased Amgueddfa Cymru's understanding of the needs of people facing disadvantage and the needs of organisations that support them. This has also improved our procedures and policies. It has also enabled us to work together towards removing barriers to participation.

Staff learning and development across organisations has also been beneficial with the sharing of expertise, knowledge and understanding. Developing the *Fusion* evaluation with the Knowledge and Analytical Services in Welsh Government has also worked well, especially reflecting on what has worked and the challenges involved. Having a dedicated researcher has been important in ensuring that the

impacts of the *Fusion* programme are understood and the learning from the evaluation is embedded in the development of new initiatives.

1.6. What doesn't work

Lack of resources or staff capacity limits the number of initiatives which can be undertaken and the areas we are able to work in across Wales. The short term funding has at times led to lack of continuity in terms of personnel, knowledge and expertise.

Longer-term funding from the onset would have allowed relationships and trust to develop over time and learning from annual evaluations to be embedded. Taking a longer term view is essential as developing trusted relationships between partners takes time and needs investment up front. This allows organisations to move away from short term project delivery to longer term initiatives, leading to changes in working culture, shared outcomes and sustainable impacts.

1.7. Any barriers you have encountered in your outreach work

Targeted work, especially with protected characteristics communities, requires a lot of input and continued investment. Sometimes a gatekeeper or individual contact can act as a barrier to engagement rather than a conduit. There is also a danger of working primarily with one community being perceived as preferential treatment by other groups.

Initial approaches to Communities First contacts were problematic as the benefits of culture and heritage in addressing poverty and social exclusion were not recognised as readily as other major issues such as housing, job creation, or health. Once that barrier had been overcome however, individuals and groups returned on a regular basis to experience the benefits culture and heritage can have on social skills, health and well-being, and access to job creation opportunities, amongst others.

Lack of free and or adequate transport remains a barrier to participation in a number of communities. Evidence shows that lack of access to suitable transport prevents many people from getting to cultural sites, or makes it more difficult. Access to affordable transport is a more significant barrier for people living in disadvantaged communities than for the population as a whole.

1.8. We are particularly interested in the resources needed to make these efforts successful, both staff and funding.

Having a dedicated team of staff focused on engagement is essential to enable organisations to develop deeper understanding and expertise. It is also important to have a dedicated researcher to ensure the impacts of programmes are clearly understood and that strategies are research based. The role of the co-ordinator in the *Fusion* programme is also important in providing strategic leadership and enabling different areas in Wales to share best practice and learn from each other. The current *Fusion* grant of £200,000 (2017-18) covers the costs of the co-ordinator a part time research and provides a small operating budget for the eight partnership areas involved across Wales. Organisations have worked well together to deliver impactful activities on relatively small budgets. This has proved challenging as most partners involved have faced a reduction in the core budgets over the past five years.

More funding would be required to extend the *Fusion* partnerships to other areas in Wales. Additional external funding should be explored from other providers to supplement the funding provided by Welsh Government.

1.9. We would also like to know what sort of evaluation you carry out regarding your outreach work

As noted over the past three years we have lead the evaluation of the *Fusion* programme, in partnership with the Knowledge and Analytical Services in Welsh Government, to monitor and report on progress, impacts and challenges, see <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/research-fusion-creating-opportunities-through-culture-programme/?skip=1&lang=en>

Quantitative Key Performance Indicators and qualitative reports against objectives set in our Annual Operational Plan are presented to Welsh Government quarterly, with an annual end of year report. We also provide twelve qualitative annual case studies on our work to Welsh Government and an annual report on our engagement work is presented to our Board of Trustees. A six-monthly report on our *Fusion* work is also submitted to the CIB.

All externally funded projects are evaluated in detail. For example our recent work with the Paul Hamlyn Foundation as part of their *Our Museum: Communities and Museums as Active Partners* programme, to facilitate a process of development and organisational change within museums and galleries committed to active partnership with their communities, has been published, see <http://ourmuseum.org.uk/>

Amgueddfa Cymru has just embarked on a four year initiative called Kick the Dust, a youth engagement initiative funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. External evaluators are monitoring the programme through a Common Measurement

Framework, which will also be employed by us, initially for Kick the Dust, but it could potentially be wider used across our outreach work.

2. Second part (general consultation):

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

By commissioning Baroness Kay Andrews' report 'Culture and Poverty', Welsh Government displayed initiative and a commitment to improving participation in, and access to culture for people in poverty. In subsequent years, 11 of the 33 recommendations have been completed and 3 superseded due to changes to Communities First and the National Curriculum in Wales. The remaining 19 continue to steer and influence the work of Welsh Government sponsored bodies, local government, third sector and other organisations, mostly through the work of *Fusion* (see below for more detail).

Further legislation such as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, strategies such as Prosperity for All, and the new National Curriculum for Wales, all underpin this work.

More could be done perhaps to align this work strategically across portfolios, so that culture and heritage, health, education, communities, and economic development all contribute to a common goal. This could be done as part of meeting the goals and five ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

2.2. 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 Welsh Government sponsored bodies have all embraced the 'Culture and Poverty' recommendations, and have strengthened their partnership working between each other, with local government and with the third sector. Examples include embedding approaches to make institutions more community and child friendly; expanding efforts to place their institutions at the heart of communities and widen access to all through strategic direction and funding; and to 'go local' and 'stay permanent' by giving greater priority to shared projects in local communities and identifying and using shared space for displays and activities. Detailed examples have been provided in the CIB reports.

2.3. What impact has the Welsh Government's *Fusion* programme had on using culture to tackle poverty?

Fusion has been central to transforming the way culture and heritage are used as core resources to support the aim of tackling poverty in Wales. Prior to *Fusion*, there were well documented academic studies and practical examples of the positive effect culture and heritage could have on tackling poverty (e.g. Jermyn, H., 2011. *Arts and Social Exclusion: a report prepared for the Arts Council of England*; Museums Association, 2013. *Museums Change Lives: The MA's vision for the impact of museums*). *Fusion* is innovative, as it puts these studies into action, embodies these principles on a national level, and brings national and local organisations together to tackle and resolve issues. In many ways it embodies the philosophy of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, although it was developed before the Act become legalisation. This way of working has become embedded since the pilot year and second year. The presence of local co-ordinators over the last two years, has enabled organisations to become more efficient at delivering activities, with participants reporting more benefits. Information collected for the 2018-2019 evaluation report (to be published during the Spring of 2019) demonstrate an exponential growth in numbers engaged, significant impacts on people's lives, and increased collaboration and partnership working across sectors.

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

Evaluation has shown that stimulating local collaboration has been the main benefit of *Fusion*. Before *Fusion*, the benefits of culture and heritage in tackling poverty and the cause of poverty in Wales was not fully understood by many in the third sector and local government, including organisations supporting people:

- living in communities without access to culture and heritage venues
- in danger of exclusion from education
- not in education, employment or training
- volunteering
- gaining access to job creation
- experiencing physical or mental ill health.

One of the main outcomes of *Fusion* has been to highlight the benefits participation through culture can have on people. It has signposted organisations who would not otherwise have considered accessing culture and heritage to use these as resources to help their beneficiaries. This has had significant impact on the participants, with impact in terms of: learning outcomes; access to training and volunteering opportunities; increased employment opportunities; and improved physical and mental health.