

Labour's Plan for the Arts


Labour

One Ireland
jobs, reform, fairness

Labour's Plan for the Arts

Executive Summary

1. The Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport has farmed out much responsibility of policy development to external consultants and semi state bodies. In the interests of value for money, achieving greater efficiencies and a more coherent policy, responsibility for policy formation should be returned to the department. The Minister and the department will be charged with devising a policy framework, in consultation with the Arts Council, which will inform the work of the Arts Council. The Arts Council will be responsible for implementing that policy.
2. While significant infrastructural gaps still exist, the focus must now be on filling the arts centres that we have with the best mix of local and touring projects, youth, senior and community work. Where refurbishment works are needed on an existing facility this will be considered, but the focus should be on current spending and filling the space in our stock of existing centres.
3. We will undertake a National Audit of Arts and Cultural Facilities to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses by location regarding arts and cultural facilities. This audit will include "soft" infrastructure and assets such as community projects.
4. We will look to capture some public good from NAMA by identifying buildings that might be suitable for artistic and cultural endeavours or indeed sporting and community facilities.
5. Initiate a full review of the areas that receive state funding through the Arts Council. Funding will be targeted in areas where it can be the most effective in terms of extending the availability of arts and cultural activities, while balancing this against innovation and endeavor.
6. Ensure that all forms of the arts and culture are supported. Artforms which are particularly popular with young people, such as music, dance and street art, should be expanded to ensure the widest possible access is available to as many artforms as possible.
7. The Artists Tax Exemption should be set at €40,000 /year but with a capacity to spread income over a period of years in recognition that some artists, such as writers, may only secure an income once every couple of years.
8. The Labour Party is prepared to examine anomalies in the social protection code that cause particular hardship for working artists.
9. Establish, initially on a pilot basis, a Local Arts Partnership, similar to the successful local sports partnerships in order to increase participation. Every citizen of this state should have an opportunity to participate in arts and culture to a level of their choosing.

10. Work with the Department of Education and other relevant departments such as Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs to identify schools and other non formal settings where the provision of arts needs to be upgraded.

11. The Labour Party supports, over the medium term, putting a proportion of funding for the arts on a multi annual footing.

12. A National Endowment Fund for the Arts to be established to provide private funding to the arts.

13. Maintain the Irish Film Board and amend its governing act to include responsibility for the video game industry. We also propose to extend the Research and Development tax relief, for the creative phase of game development.

14. Develop an accurate and comprehensive arts and culture statistical system.

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Part I

The Importance of & the Economics of Arts & Culture

Chapter 1

A Right, Not A Luxury

“We must talk about the arts not as something separate from ourselves, but as an integral part of our lives.” - Mary Robinson ¹

The consumption and enjoyment of art and culture in its many forms whether in public or private, formal or informal, is an essential part of our lives. Art and culture is an expression of our uniqueness and our shared identity.

Irish history is captured on the cultural landscape of the canvas of our art and culture. The arts played a founding role in the emergence of the new Irish State, by helping define our national identity and its cultural assertion after its foundation. The Abbey Theatre was the first State subsidised theatre in the English speaking world.² This contribution should be to the forefront of our plans to mark the centenary of the 1916 rising.

Our rich literary tradition includes four Nobel Prizes for Literature and a wealth of writers that continue to generate international acclaim. Dublin is also one of only four UNESCO City’s of Literature worldwide.³ We continue to benefit from the countless writers and performers who enrich our lives and give us a global cultural significance far beyond our size.

Art, by encouraging critical thinking and creativity, adds to our social capital and reinforces our democratic principles. Critical thinking and artistic expression hold a mirror to our society, stimulate collective debate and foster social cohesion. This freedom of expression is crucial for the health of our national discourse and never more so than in times of great societal change.

In the global economy of ideas and innovation, the potential for cultural economic activity must also be recognised and the necessity of the arts in underpinning it. While paying due respect to the economic benefits of a cultural industry we must also acknowledge the inherent societal benefits of the arts and the right to participate in the cultural life of the country.

Government policy with regards to the arts and culture should be guided by preserving and enriching the rich stock of arts and culture we have inherited, while stimulating the maximum engagement with and awareness of the arts, to ensure equal access to its personal and collective benefits to society.

The Labour party believes that every citizen of this state should have an opportunity to participate in arts and culture to a level of their choosing and every citizen should have access to the arts as a viewer as well as a participant.

¹ Seanad, 1973/74

² Available at: www.abbeytheatre.ie/behind_the_scenes/article/history/

³ Available at: www.rte.ie/news/2010/0726/dublin.html

Chapter 2

Economics of the Arts

“Ideas, knowledge, art, hospitality, travel - these are the things which should of their nature be international.” - John Maynard Keynes⁴

2.1 Economic Rationale for Government Support

Economists describe the arts and culture as having public good characteristics and say that there are both efficiency and equity arguments that can be used to justify State intervention in relation to the arts.⁵ More directly, government support for arts and culture makes society a better place.

There are benefits that arise from government support to the arts which would not be produced in the absence of government support. Economists refer to these benefits as positive externalities but one can think of them as being spill over effects that benefit society. When a person reads a book, attends a play, goes to see a film or takes part in any artistic or cultural activity, not only does that person benefit but society does too. For example, arts and cultural events are ways of informing people about other cultures or social problems. This helps people better understand the social and cultural environment in which they live and that allows for a good functioning society. Ensemble arts activities such as amateur drama groups and youth theatres promote social cohesion as well as improving quality of life through building skills such as creative thinking, self expression and problem solving.

Although some people may not wish to be involved in arts and culture at the present time, for instance, by attending a museum, they may nevertheless want the option of being able to take part in the future, perhaps when they have more free time. Some people may have no plans to participate but they see the value and importance of arts and culture to society and the economy. They simply want the option for the population to enjoy the arts & culture. Indeed, the existence of a rich stock of art and cultural heritage gives us a great sense of national pride. As well as having option value and existence value, there are intergenerational benefits from supporting the arts.

These are benefits we can leave behind for future generations; our children and our grandchildren. The art and culture that has been left to our generation by the great Irish artists of the past has informed us about both who we are as individuals and who we are as the people of Ireland. Indeed, we have been inspired by their work and there are artists today that will inspire future generations. It is our duty to provide a stock of quality art and cultural heritage for future generations.

During the Great Depression in America, the arts were used as a support to a nation suffering extreme privation. Despite being in a depression, the Public Works of Arts

⁴ Keynes has been regarded as one of the most influential economists of the 20th century. He played an instrumental role in the establishment of the Arts Council of England and was the Council's first Chairman.

⁵ Durkan, J. (1994) "The economics of the arts in Ireland." The Arts Council.

project was created - the first government program supporting the arts in the United States.⁶ Its aim was to sustain the American Spirit in a time of uncertainty and adversity.

Ireland is in a similar situation as we write this document. Our economy has been hit by a double crisis, one home grown and one on an international level. The arts and cultural sector not only drive economic development but in these times of hardship they act as a recovery asset. The arts can help us imagine a better future. *“Some men see things as they are and say why? But I dream things that never were and say why not?”* - George Bernard Shaw.

Art can remind us who we are and this can instill a sense of pride. This can help us regain our confidence even in the face of economic challenges.

2.2 Economic Impact of the Arts and Culture

It has been estimated that the turnover of the organisations supported by the Arts Council was €192m in 2008 while the total tax revenue returned to the exchequer by these organizations and individuals for the same year came to €53.7m.⁷ In terms of jobs, the organizations and individuals supported by the Arts Council provide 2,042 jobs.⁸ Taking into consideration indirect and induced jobs the figure rises to 3,034 jobs.⁹

In the wider arts sector there are many more jobs. It has been estimated that in 2006 the total number of jobs in the wider arts sector was 16,689 (0.8% of the total jobs in the economy) (Table 2.1).¹⁰ In addition to direct employment in the sector, total indirect and induced employment brings the number of jobs supported by the wider arts sector to 26,519 (Table 2.2).¹¹

⁶ Available at: www.archives.gov/exhibits/new_deal_for_the_arts/

⁷ The Arts Council (2009) Assessment of Economic Impact of the Arts in Ireland. Indecon International Economic Consultants.

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ *ibid*

Sector	Number of Jobs (2006)
Arts Council Supported Employment	1,149
Film & Video	2,202
Literature & Publishing	4,343
Library, Archives, Museums, and other cultural activities	3,884
Arts facilities including music & theatre venues	1,734
Artistic & literary creation & interpretation	3,377
Total Wider Arts Sector	16,689

Source: Indecon analysis of CSO Annual Services Inquiry, Census of Industrial Production and Census of Population as well as internal Arts Council data.

Table 2.1: Employment: Arts Council supported organisations & individuals.

Employment Impact	Number of Jobs (2006)
Direct Employment	16,689
Indirect & Induced Employment	9,830
Direct, Indirect & Induced Employment	26,519

Source: Indecon analysis of CSO Annual Services Inquiry, Census of Industrial Production and Census of Population as well as internal Arts Council data.

Table 2.2: Employment: Wider arts sector

Sector	€m (2006)
Arts Council Supported Employment (excluding literature, film and venues)	113
Film & Video	124
Literature & Publishing	661
Library, Archives, Museums, and other cultural activities	213
Arts facilities including music & theatre venues	92
Artistic & literary creation & interpretation	186
Total Wider Arts Sector	1,390

Source: Indecon analysis of CSO Annual Services Inquiry, Census of Industrial Production and Census of Population as well as internal Arts Council data.

Table 2.3: Expenditure: Wider arts sector

Sector	€,000 (2006)
Direct Expenditure from wider arts sector	1,389,935
Indirect & Induced Expenditure	389,182
Total Direct, Indirect & Induced Expenditure	1,779,117

Source: Indecon analysis of CSO Annual Services Inquiry, Census of Industrial Production and Census of Population as well as internal Arts Council data.

Table 2.4: Expenditure: Wider arts sector, indirect and induced

The level of expenditure in the wider arts sector in the economy was approximately €1.4bn in 2006 (Table 2.3)) while total direct, indirect and induced expenditure amounted to nearly €1.8bn in 2006 (Table 2.4).¹²

However, it must be recognized arts and cultural goods embody forms of value that are not easily expressed in monetary terms and the impact of artistic or cultural innovation may not be immediately observable. Public spaces are brought to life by arts and cultural activities; Arts and culture allow communities to gel together and combat social problems; an artistic and culturally rich environment adds to our tourism product; and Arts contribute to Irelands "innovation habitat" by nurturing new jobs and new forms of knowledge.¹³

2.2.1 Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism has been estimated to have contributed €2 billion to the economy in 2010.¹⁴

In 2008, 3.3m overseas tourists (45% of total overseas tourists) visited places of historical or cultural interest in Ireland (Figure 2.1).¹⁵ This is a reflection of the interconnected relationship between arts and tourism and highlights the importance of cultural tourism.

In terms of demand, cultural tourists are different from 'ordinary tourists'. On average, tourists who visit Ireland as cultural tourists spend more than other visitor types.¹⁶ In 2008, the expenditure of overseas tourists who visited places of cultural and historical interest was €2.2bn, an increase from €1.3bn in 2003 (Figure 2.2).¹⁷ Cultural tourists also tend to visit more areas while on holiday and this fact can bring significant benefits to rural communities throughout Ireland. Cultural Tourism must however be underpinned by the supports and processes which allow cultural "products" to develop.

¹² The Arts Council (2009) Assessment of Economic Impact of the Arts in Ireland. Indecon International Economic Consultants.

¹³ National Governors Association (2001) The Role of the Arts in Economic Development.

¹⁴ Available at: [www.failteireland.ie/Word_files/PUBLICATIONS-NEW-BUILD/Tourism-Matters-December-2010-\(Web\)-\(1\)](http://www.failteireland.ie/Word_files/PUBLICATIONS-NEW-BUILD/Tourism-Matters-December-2010-(Web)-(1))

¹⁵ The Arts Council (2009) Assessment of Economic Impact of the Arts in Ireland. Indecon International Economic Consultants: p.59-61

¹⁶ Tourism Ireland, "Sightseers and Culture Seekers Insights"

¹⁷ The Arts Council (2009) Assessment of Economic Impact of the Arts in Ireland. Indecon International Economic Consultants: p.62



Figure 2.1: Cultural Tourism: Visits

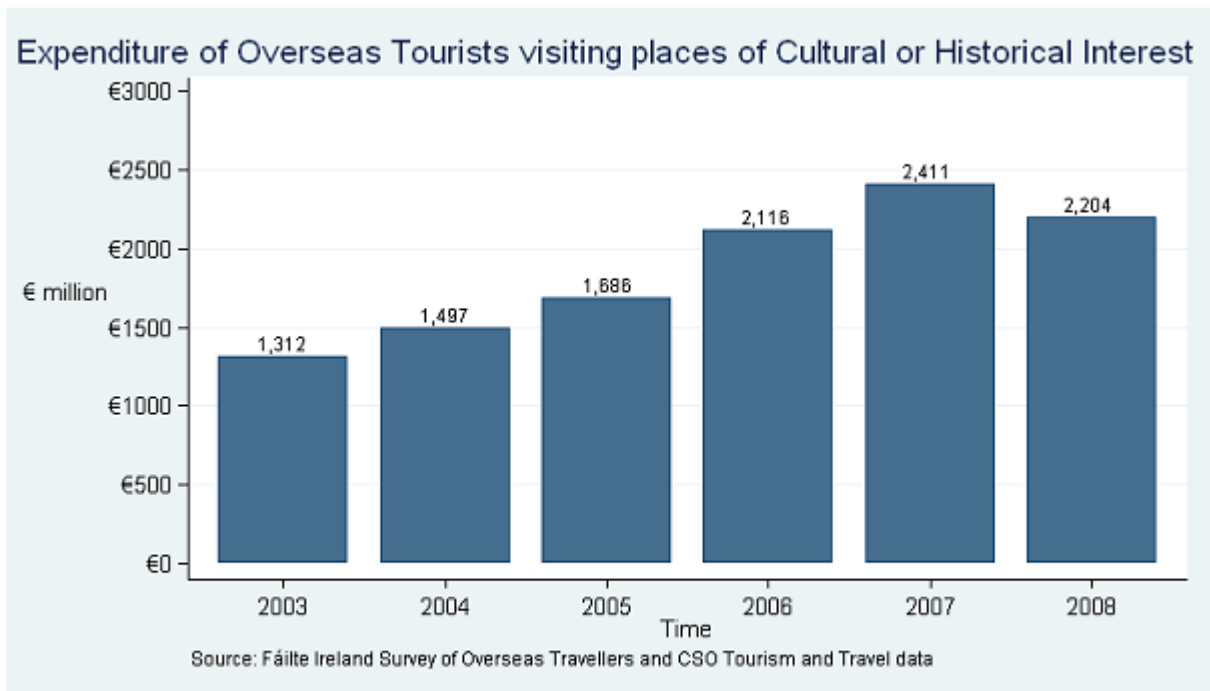


Figure 2.2: Cultural Tourism: Expenditure

Part II

Government support

Chapter 3

Government and the Arts

3.1 Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport

The Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport identifies its goal as:

“It is the objective of this Department to provide an appropriate resource, policy and legislative framework to support the stimulation and development of the Arts in Ireland, such that economic returns and employment, and access to and participation in the arts by all sections of Irish society, are maximised.”¹⁸

The necessity of having a separate Department to represent Tourism, Culture and Sport was called into question by the Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes in 2009.¹⁹ This question was raised primarily on cost grounds and it was assumed that the Department’s responsibilities could be easily accommodated within other Departments.

The Labour Party, as the first party to have a Minister for the arts, strongly believes that Tourism, Culture and Sport should be a distinct Department with senior ministerial responsibility.

The current economic challenges facing the country necessitate significant spending adjustments and associated policy alterations for many areas of Government spending and Tourism, Culture and Sport should not be immune to these adjustments. We therefore believe that the significant policy and accountability changes need to be implemented to achieve the goals of the Department in the current economic climate.

There are currently 156 staff members in the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport with 77 working in the Arts and Culture Section.²⁰ The number of people working in the Arts Council is 48 full time equivalents, in addition to the Director. Arts advisers, who provide additional expertise and strategic advice on different aspects of the arts, are retained on a consultancy basis.²¹

Under the Arts Act 2003, the Arts Council provides advice to the Minister for policy development. The Department makes decisions relating to capital expenditure, the National Archives and to the funding allocations of the Arts Council and the National Cultural Institutions.

The Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport has, in recent years, farmed out much of the responsibility for policy development to external consultants and semi

¹⁸ Available at: www.arts-sport-tourism.gov.ie/arts/

¹⁹ Department of Finance (2009) Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes: p.14

²⁰ Upton TD, Mary PQ 44022/10

²¹ Available at: www.artscouncil.ie/en/who_we_are.aspx

state bodies. In the years 2002 to 2010, the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport spent €640,000 on external consultants' reports.²²

In view of the expertise within the Department, and in the interests of value for money, achieving greater efficiencies and a more coherent arts policy, we believe that policy formulation should be returned to the Department. In the interests of value for money, achieving greater efficiencies and a more coherent policy, responsibility for policy formation should be returned to the department. The Minister and the department will be charged with devising a policy framework, in consultation with the Arts Council, which will inform the work of the Arts Council. The Arts Council will be responsible for implementing that policy.

As in the areas of Tourism and Sport, Ministerial accountability must be reintroduced into the heart of arts and culture policy formulation and to the expenditure of public funds. Indeed, the Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes or McCarthy Report recommended the same:

“In the Irish system of public administration, Government Departments are and should be the primary locus of public policy formulation, evaluation and analysis. Policy evaluation and advisory functions should not, as a general rule, be carried on by external State-funded agencies. Specialist advice and consultancy may be availed of from time to time by Government Departments, subject to the tightened Government strictures on the budgets for external consultancies.”²³

At present when Parliamentary Questions relating to arts policy and funding decisions are submitted to the Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport, the Ceann Comhairle's states “The Minister has no official responsibility to Dáil Éireann for this matter, which is one for the Arts Council.”

Although decisions made by the Arts Council can be queried under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts, we believe the current situation is detrimental to democratic accountability and should be addressed to improve public ownership of decisions relating to public policy and the expenditure of public funds.

Also given that a range of arts and culture issues integrate well with other Departments such as Education and Skills, Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, etc as well as local authorities, the Department must therefore take a lead role in coordinating work across these areas.

Labour in Government will ensure that the Minister has ultimate responsibility for Arts policy and funding decisions. We will also undertake to minimise all spending on external consulting.

Given the current challenges facing the public finances, all spending proposals outlined within this document will be met from the existing arts budget.

²² Upton TD, Mary, PQ 44012/10

²³ Department of Finance (2009) Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes: p.24

3.1.1 Prioritising Current Spending over Capital Spending

The Department provides the bulk of capital funding for building and refurbishing of arts facilities, while the Arts Council provides the ongoing revenue support for many of the facilities.

Over the past ten years the total capital spend by the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport on artistic and cultural projects was €151,002,147.²⁴ (Table 3.1) From this outlay we have fine signature buildings like the Wexford Opera House, the George Bernard Shaw Theatre in Carlow as well as smaller versatile venues like the Riverbank Theatre in Newbridge. While this investment has provided much needed arts and culture infrastructure across the country, given the straitened public finances, the focus must now be on maintaining the quality and quantity of output from our existing venues through filling them with the best mix of local and touring projects, youth, senior and community work.

The capital funding for arts and cultural facilities in 2011 not including the capital allocations to the National Cultural Institutions is €7.8m. This funding relates primarily to the ACCESS II Scheme, to improve arts and cultural capital infrastructure. All of this funding is for projects that were approved prior to this year and no new allocations have been made.

In order to address issues of efficiency and fairness we will undertake a National Audit of Arts and Cultural Facilities. A national audit would reveal the current standing of our arts and cultural facilities, including “soft” infrastructure and assets such as community projects. This audit would help us make more informed policy decisions in the future.

Where refurbishment works are needed on an existing facility this will be considered, but given the existing budgetary constraints, the focus of arts and cultural spending should be on current spending and filling the space in our stock of existing centres with quality content.

²⁴ Upton TD, Mary, PQ 44011/10

Year	Expenditure €
2002	9,777,935
2003	6,032,979
2004	6,396,658
2005	15,021,810
2006	20,049,150
2007	37,639,053
2008	32,715,664
2009	17,294,879
2010 to date	6,074,019
Total	€151,002,147

Source: PQ Ref No: 44011/10

Table 3.1: Capital Expenditure: 2002-2010

3.1.2 Culture Ireland

Culture Ireland is tasked with promoting Irish artistic and creative work internationally. Culture Ireland is wholly funded through the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport and its budget for 2010 was €4.083m.²⁵

The Labour Party supports the objectives of Culture Ireland, but we believe they could be served by giving the Arts Council an expanded mandate to promote Irish arts abroad, while ensuring that the intrinsic role of Culture Ireland is protected.

In emerging markets, such as in Asia and the Middle East²⁶- which are increasingly becoming the focus of our trade and tourism efforts, much of what is known about Ireland is derived from our cultural exports, and as such we should maintain our investment in bringing our artistic output to the world.

Similar to every area of Government expenditure, the Labour Party will conduct a detailed examination of expenditure on the promotion of Irish cultural exports, to maximize efficiency while maintaining the vital work that Culture Ireland has carried out to date.

The Arts Council with its expanded remit should further coordinate its efforts with those of Enterprise Ireland, An Bord Bia and Ireland's Tourism promotion bodies, to generate increased interest in, and trade with Ireland.

²⁵ Available at: www.cultureireland.gov.ie/aboutus/funding.html

²⁶ Department of Enterprise Trade Innovation (2010) Trading and Investing in the Smart Economy: p.24

3.1.3 Informal Arts Spaces

We will look to capture some public good from NAMA by identifying buildings that might be suitable for artistic and cultural endeavours or indeed sporting and community facilities.

Artists by their nature are inventive and adaptable and an initiative involving Limerick City Council and local artists has led to an innovative approach to maximise vacant retail space in the city centre. The Culture Limerick scheme was started by Limerick City Council while formulating their new City Development plan in 2009. A surplus of retail space was identified in the city centre and alternative temporary uses were considered for this space, including artistic and cultural uses.²⁷

The City Council negotiated temporary leases and contracts for a number of properties and then sought groups who wished to avail of the opportunity to use the units. The City Council also provides insurance for the use of the spaces. What was initially proposed as a three month scheme in the summer of 2009 has seen units being occupied on a continuous basis since then, with units being utilised for workspaces and galleries. The scheme has been enthusiastically embraced by the artistic community in Limerick as it has created a new dynamic for artistic life in the city while generating increased activity in and attraction to the city centre through premises that would otherwise lie vacant. The owners of the units also benefit from a rates break offered by the Council as an incentive.²⁸

Similar initiatives have been undertaken in Dublin through the Temple Bar arts trail and in Cork through Cork Contemporary projects. Many of these initiatives are informal agreements between artists and the property owner such as one initiated by artists in Athy, County Kildare for a project called the Wet Paint Gallery. This initiative allowed an artistic group to avail of a town centre retail space to display their artistic work for a short period while the property was vacant.

Such 'Pop up Shops' have been established in other countries such as the UK and America in the past; however they are relatively new to Ireland. They are an example of the mutually beneficial opportunities that can be created by the collaboration of artistic groups, property owners and facilitators such as local authorities.

The Labour Party supports inventive artistic schemes such as 'Culture Limerick' and will investigate the possibility of expanding similar schemes to other jurisdictions, to promote artistic and creative work in towns and cities across the Country.

3.1.4 Art Collections of Irish Banks

We plan to undertake a consultation process with the various public galleries to establish whether they would like to incorporate some or all of the collections,

²⁷ Available at: www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/features/2010/0312/1224266101681.html

²⁸ *ibid*

currently held by Irish banks in either complete or majority state ownership. We believe that as a gesture of goodwill, these state owned, or nominally private institutions should offer to transfer their collections to ensure they are available to the public on a permanent basis. This would be conditional on their being an appropriate space for them to be held in a public gallery. We note that one of the major collections, which is held by Allied Irish Bank is described as a 'working' collection and pieces are located at offices and branches across Ireland and in AIB international offices . This collection amounts to over 3,000 pieces of art, sculpture and prints from many Irish and international artists.²⁹

While we accept that pieces in the collection are lent on request to galleries for exhibitions, we feel there would be a greater societal benefit by having the pieces available on a permanent basis.

²⁹ Available at: www.aib.ie

Part III

Participation in the Arts

Chapter 4

Participation in the Arts

“All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man’s life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom” - Albert Einstein

4.1 Participation in the Arts

A study by the Arts Council in 2006, *The Public and the Arts*, revealed that a total of 17% of the population indicated that they experience difficulties in attending or taking part in arts activities that interest them. This was a significant change from the 1994 figure which indicated that 73% of people faced difficulties in attending or taking part in arts activities.³⁰ Removing obstacles to taking part in and experiencing the arts was at the heart of the Labour Party’s policy document “Arts4all” and we maintain the philosophy that the arts should be accessible to all individuals, communities, artists and the young people of Ireland regardless of their background.

In 2006, 85% of people had attended at least one arts event in the 12 months prior to the survey while in 1994 the figure was 83%.³¹ While there is a considerable public engagement with the arts *The Public and the Arts* stated that;

“Differences in attendance due to level of income do continue to exist however, suggesting evidence of ‘cultural exclusion’ for those on lower income levels.”³²

Policy should therefore be developed to include targeted measures aimed at specific groups such as outreach programs and public awareness campaigns. Specific funding should be dedicated to encourage greater inclusion.

4.1.1 Local Arts Partnerships

We propose to establish, initially on a pilot basis, a Local Arts Partnership, similar to the successful local sports partnerships in order to increase participation. Every citizen of this State should have an opportunity to participate in arts and culture to a level of their choosing.

While we note that Arts Officers in Local Authorities provide an essential service in preparing and implementing plans for the development of the arts in their functional areas, we believe this role can be expanded to achieve greater participation levels in arts and cultural activities.

In response to a Parliamentary Question on the number of Arts officers working in local authorities that are on contracts, the number that will be up for renewal in the next four years and the effect of the recruitment moratorium on the renewal of these

³⁰ The Arts Council (2006) *The Public and the Arts*: p.16

³¹ The Arts Council (2006) *The Public and the Arts*: p.8

³² The Arts Council (2006) *The Public and the Arts*: p.9

positions, the Minister for the Environment stated that, while his Department does collect quarterly figures on the numbers employed in each local authority, for practical reasons it does not routinely gather data on the numbers employed in every post within an Authority. The Minister's reply did however state that as of May 2010 there were 27.7 whole time equivalent staff employed as Arts Officers in Local Authorities.³³ It is therefore not possible to quantify the effect of the public service recruitment embargo on Arts offices in Local Authorities.

We believe that the future development of the Arts at a local level should be based on the successful Local Sports Partnership (LSP) model which aims to promote participation in sports and physical activity. Similarly we envisage the Local Arts Partnerships acting as a key participation facilitator through interaction between Local Authorities, the Arts Council and the voluntary arts and culture groups.

The success of LSP model is based on its ability to deliver projects and programmes for particular target groups. LSP's provide expertise and guidance to clubs and others for implementing plans for long term local sports development. They also establish networks at local level and liaise with existing initiatives to provide training and advice on how to increase participation amongst certain groups.³⁴ Where individual programmes are successful they can be adapted for a different area. The LSP model allows for the trial and development of programmes that can be area specific or universally applicable.

The individual Local Arts Partnership websites should be developed into one stop shop resources for individuals and artistic groups by hosting forums and advertising upcoming events in the area. Social networking tools like Facebook and Twitter should also be utilised to reach the greatest numbers possible. Some Arts officers already utilize these tools in their work, such as Clare County Council's Arts Office and Kildare County Council's Arts Office, which have Facebook sites that provide information relating to upcoming events and host discussion forums.

We believe such an approach can be effective in ensuring that all forms of the arts and culture are supported. Focus should be shifted towards reducing all barriers to participation including cost barriers and perception barriers. Art forms which are particularly popular with young people, such as music, dance and street arts have traditionally had little representation at a National level and consequently they require different organisational and communication structures, such as targeted local initiatives.

A 2007 report by the National Economic Social Forum, The Arts, Cultural Inclusion and Social Cohesion stated that;

"Equality of opportunity only exists when people have the chance to be active in all aspects of cultural activities, i.e. in consumption, production and decision-making. Participation in one area builds capacity to participate in one or both of the other aspects. It is essential to see and have the opportunity for potential involvement. The representation and involvement of individuals and groups with particular needs in

³³ Upton TD, Mary, PQ 1530/11

³⁴ Available at: www.irishsportscouncil.ie/Participation/Local_Sports_Partnerships/The_Partnerships_Explained

*cultural events can help to raise awareness of the needs of those, and of other groups.*³⁵

4.1.2 National Cultural Institutions

The main reasons cited internationally to limiting greater arts attendance and participation is difficulty in finding the time, family commitments and costs.³⁶ To address the issue of access to arts and cultural facilities we propose to ensure that all the National Cultural Institutions funded by the state are open into the evening time at least twice a week. A number of national cultural institutions, including the National Gallery, the Crawford Art Gallery Cork, and the National Library of Ireland, already remain open on certain evenings every week. Extending the opening hours to all of the national cultural institutions which are funded by the state is estimated to cost in the region of €18,000 per week or about €1m over the course of a one year period.³⁷

National Cultural Institutions remaining open in evening times is a means of providing access to the arts for people of a variety of backgrounds. This approach needs to be supported by education and community outreach programmes by the National Cultural Institutions.

4.1.3 Culture Night

Arts and Cultural festivals are ways of stimulating interest in cultural offerings throughout the Country. The annual Willie Clancy Festival in Miltown Malbay, Co Clare is world renowned as traditional music festival. As well as being cultural offerings, such festivals are also key economic drivers. The Galway Arts festival alone was worth €24.5 million to the local economy in 2008.³⁸

Stimulating public involvement in the vast array of cultural offerings in Ireland through showcase events is one initiative that will open up the arts to the general public.

Culture night has taken place annually since 2006. In its first year culture night took place in Dublin. After five years the event now takes place in towns throughout the country. On Culture night, cultural institutions including the national cultural institutions extend their opening hours until late in the evening, with many staying open until 11pm, to allow the public increased free access to the events on offer. In 2010, 132 cultural venues remained open in the evening as part of culture night.³⁹

Culture night creates a lively cultural atmosphere and brings people together to experience and enjoy the arts. Importantly, culture night informs people of the range of arts and cultural events available to them to suit their commitments and that they can be part of the arts regardless of their background or their perception of the arts

³⁵ National Economic Social Forum (2007) Arts, Cultural Inclusion and Social Cohesion: p.133

³⁶ The Arts Council (2006) The Public and the Arts: p.18

³⁷ Upton TD, Mary, PQ: 37583/09

³⁸ Higgins, O. (2008). "Economic Impact of Galway Arts Festival."

³⁹ Available at: www.culturenight.ie

in general. The event has stimulated interest and involvement in arts and cultural activities from Dublin's inner city to as far as the Islands of Tory and Inis Meáin.

The annual Culture Night should be expanded to a twice yearly event with one day in early April and one in September to build on the success, popularity, expertise and value generated by Culture Night. The cost to the Government of this additional night is approximately €150,000.⁴⁰

4.1.4 Data, Statistics and Cultural Indicators

Arts and cultural policy is at a disadvantage compared to other policy areas because a much smaller pool of data exists for the cultural sector. A 2006 report by the European Parliament, *Financing the Arts and Culture in the European Union* stated that gaps in the statistical data on the financing of culture creates serious barriers for policymaking on national and international levels.⁴¹ The case for supporting arts and culture would be stronger if there was a greater body of arts and cultural data.

Access to both quantitative and qualitative data is necessary for effective policy evaluation. For arts and culture policy to be justified and effective it should be guided by who is or is not participating in the arts, the social impact of the arts and the contribution of the arts and cultural sector to our economy.

An example of how such a model is the *Département des Études et de la Prospective*, a cultural and research service that forms part of the national official statistics system, to provide cultural research capability to the French Ministry of Culture and Communication.⁴²

In the Frame or out of the Picture? a report by the ESRI recommended that funding high quality quantitative research would provide invaluable information and would only cost a tiny fraction of the arts budget.⁴³

The Labour Party proposes to develop an accurate and comprehensive arts and culture statistical system to aid policy formation and analysis.

4.2 The Arts and Young People

When asked about what the priority should be relating to the expenditure of public funds on the arts, the top priority for people in terms of arts spending is for spending targeted at children and young people.⁴⁴ Educating our children in arts means stimulating their creativity, improving their self-esteem, and preparing them for the jobs of the future. People feel that the arts are important in education, with more than 4 out of every 5 people saying that arts education is as important as science education for children and young people.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ PQ Ref no: 37391/09

⁴¹ European Parliament (2006) *Financing the arts and culture in the European Union*: p.63

⁴² Schuster. (2002). "Informing Cultural Policy - Data, Statistics, and Meaning." MIT: p.11

⁴³ Kelly, E. and Lunn, P. (2008) "In the frame or out of the picture? A statistical analysis of the public involvement in the arts." National Economic and Social Forum: The Economic and Social Research Institute: p.66

⁴⁴ The Arts Council (2006) *The Public and the Arts*.

⁴⁵ The Arts Council (2006) *The Public and the Arts*.

Involvement in the arts, whether at school, voluntarily and/or within their community is a key ingredient to encourage our children to think creatively. Investment in arts education will build a strong workforce and in the long run, this will enable Ireland to remain competitive in the global economy. Apart from the intrinsic societal values of arts education, it is an investment in our youth and the future of our economy.

In coordination with the Department of Education, schools would be identified where the provision of arts needs to be upgraded. In particular, projects in the cultural field that are initiated by other Departments such as in the areas of Education, Local Government and Social Inclusion must accord with Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport policy.

4.2.1 Arts in Education

Creative Partnerships, a programme for schools created by the Arts Council of England, has worked with over 1 million children in over 2,700 schools and has been heralded as one of the great achievements in arts and education over the past 10 years.⁴⁶ In the United States, one of the main arts policies proposed by President Obama was to create a similar initiative called the "Artist Corps" where young artists would work in low-income schools and their communities.⁴⁷ Another notable programme is "Cultural Rucksack" is the national programme for art and culture in schools in Norway and has been in operation since 2001.⁴⁸

Such arts programs can be used as intervention strategies by providing a positive alternative for troubled youth. Young children who participate in after-school arts programs have shown decreases in negative behaviors and increases in attention span, commitment and tolerance.⁴⁹

We need to ensure that our children receive a meaningful arts education both in formal and non formal settings and the Labour Party would look at the best programmes abroad to learn from and to build upon to ensure that children receive the arts education they deserve.

4.2.2 Youth Arts

Many young people engage in arts activities in a school or formal education environment; however youth work is non-formal education. This creates a different and complementary context in that the work is not part of a curriculum. This can facilitate great creativity, innovation and personal and social development of the young people involved.

Working with the youth work sector, we will work to realise the potential of young people through good quality arts practice within youth work organisations and to develop appropriate policies and activities at local, regional and national level.

⁴⁶ Available at: www.creative-partnerships.com

⁴⁷ Available at: www.barackobama.com/pdf/issues/additional/Obama_FactSheet_Arts.pdf

⁴⁸ Available at: www.denkulturelleskolesekken.no/oversettelser/brosjyre_engelsk08.pdf

⁴⁹ Partners, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (2000) Using the Arts to Transform Young Lives.

4.2.3 Arts & Culture at Third Level

Providing educational opportunities in arts and design at third level is just as important as having arts education in our primary and secondary schools. People should have the option of being able to apply to third level courses in arts and design be it if they wish to study the arts for enjoyment, as part of life long learning, in order to go into the profession as an artist, to return to education or indeed for all of these reasons. Numerous students have graduated from The National College of Art and Design, Ballyfermot College, Trinity College and many other art schools around the country. Through their art, students and graduates play a role in shaping our cities and towns, our national image, who we are, how we think, for preparing us for the jobs of the future and helping us create the jobs of the future. The Labour Party recognises the importance of third level arts, and believes it should be championed, encouraged and allowed to thrive.

Part IV

Arts Funding

Chapter 5

Arts Funding

“Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing.” - Oscar Wilde

5.1 Working Towards A Multi Annual Framework

Figure 5.1 shows the level of annual funding provided to the Arts Council between 1999 and 2010. While the graph indicates dramatically increased funding allocations especially in the years 2004 to 2007 and a consequent decline thereafter, the graph does not take account of inflation in that period. According to a 2009 report by Marian Fitzgibbon published by the Council of Europe Compendium on Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe,

“Despite increases in allocation, international reports still place Ireland at the bottom of the European league in this domain. Arts Council funding, which increased by 14.3% from 2005- 2009, fell in real terms (inflation rate 14.6%). Similarly allocations to the National Cultural Institutions reduced over that period - by as much as 21% in the case of the National Museum.”⁵⁰

While the current public finances prevent any guarantees over budgetary allocations, the Labour Party supports, over the medium term, putting a proportion of funding for the arts on a multi annual footing. Ensuring minimum guaranteed funding within a multi annual framework would put in place an environment friendly to strategic thinking and sound financial planning.

5.2 National Endowment for the Arts

The Labour Party proposes to establish a National Endowment for the Arts to support Irish artists and to preserve our wealth of cultural heritage for future generations.

We also propose to examine alternative private funding sources to complement public support for Irish artists and future capital projects, be it through philanthropy, patronage or sponsorship.

It is our belief that this private funding should not be seen as a substitute for existing public support but as a means to generate additional funding towards worthwhile arts and cultural projects.

⁵⁰ Available at: www.culturalpolicies.net/down/ireland_092009.pdf pg.11

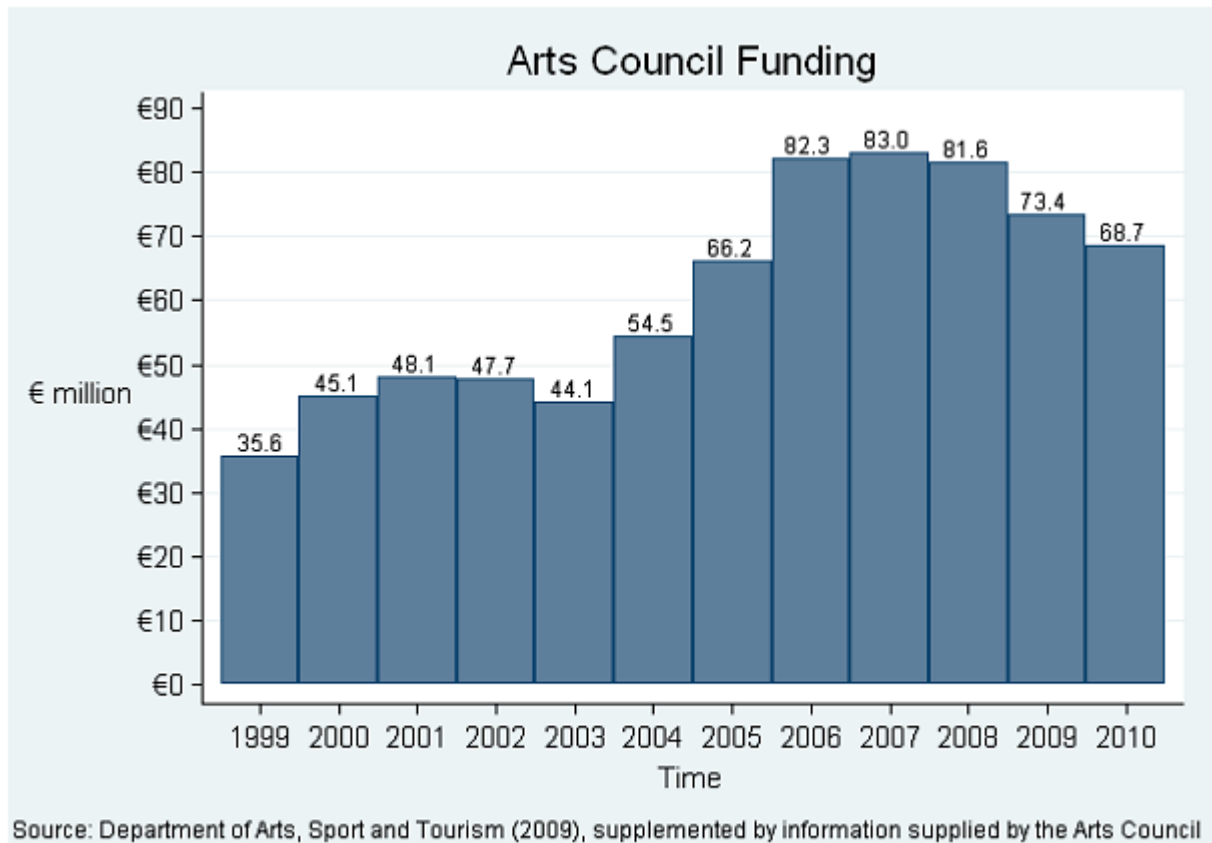


Figure 5.1: Arts Funding

5.3 The Artist in Ireland

Income from artistic work, by its nature does not generally correspond with what is normally considered a work pattern. Some artistic work is seasonal, short term contract based and in many instances income does not come in until a piece such as a painting is sold a considerable time after it is produced. It is therefore important to note that while some artists are "incomeless", they are not "job-less".⁵¹

The lack of certainty of artistic work patterns means that many artists have to take up find alternative sources of income away from their artistic work.⁵² According to the Arts Council in 2008, just under two-thirds of the time that professional artists spent working was spent working as artists (between paid and unpaid work) with the remaining third of their working time spent working either on other work in the arts or in work outside the arts.⁵³ In Ireland 70% of artists undertook work other than as an

⁵¹ The Arts Council (2010) The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland: p.28

⁵² The Arts Council (2010) The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland: p.112

⁵³ The Arts Council (2010) The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland: p.91

artist due to the need to supplement income as an artist, with only 20% of artists spending all of their time working as artists.⁵⁴

Artists can apply for social welfare payments if their income falls below the level of the social welfare benefit as defined by a means test and if they can show that they are available for and seeking work.⁵⁵

Due to the nature of artistic work and the greater proportion of artists being self-employed for tax purposes than average, artists such as actors are often put on emergency tax and do not get the benefit of accumulated tax credits until they claim a tax refund at the end of a year. This can affect an artist's ability to access Social Welfare payments. In the year before the study, The living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, was published by the Arts Council in 2010, 23% of Irish artists had been registered as unemployed in the year prior to the study with two in five artists experiencing difficulties because of their status as an artist. The reasons cited by artists in the study were a lack of understanding of artistic work patterns, issues around many artists being self-employed and a means test seen as being too intrusive.⁵⁶

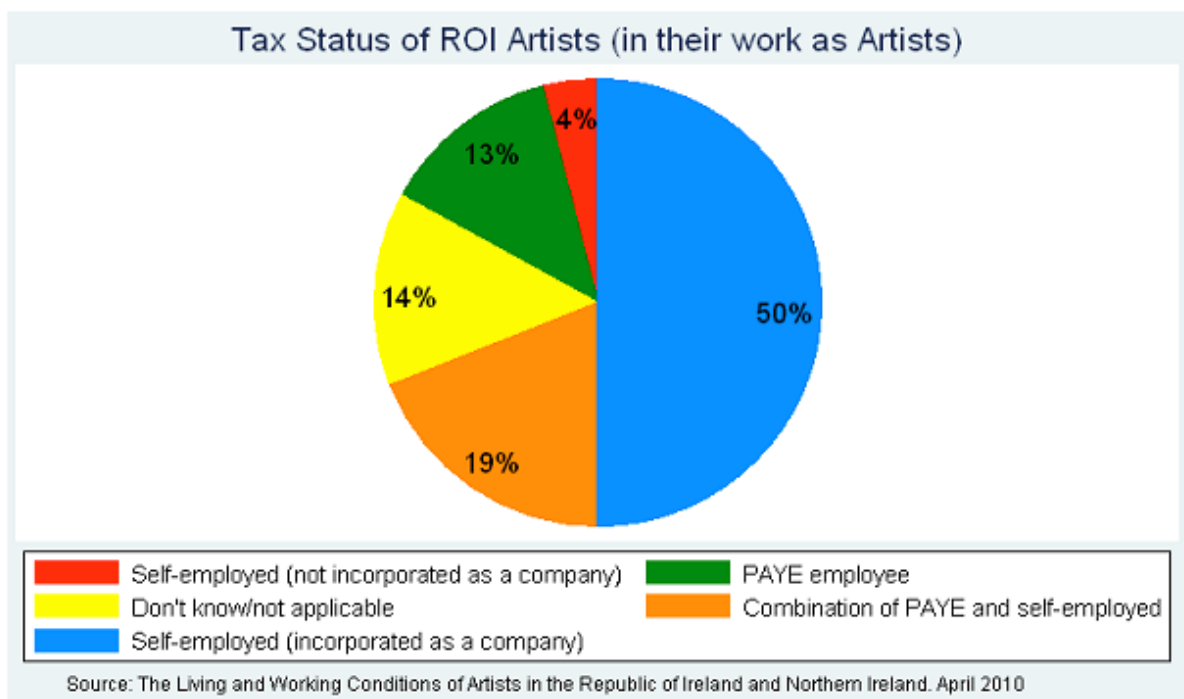


Figure 5.2: Artists Tax Status

⁵⁴ The Arts Council (2010) The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland: p.97

⁵⁵ The Arts Council (2010) The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland: p.51

⁵⁶ The Arts Council (2010) The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland: p.118

The same Arts Council report also noted that, while artists may have similar levels of education to many of those in the managerial and professional group, their earnings are closer to workers in the clerical, sales and service sector.⁵⁷ Also, as can be seen from the above Fig 5.3, artists tend to have relatively poor pension provision compared to that of the average worker.

Relatively low pay, lack of job security, poor pension provision and difficulty accessing social welfare payments are all significant barriers to Irish artists to follow their desired career path. Many of these factors also affect a considerable amount of the wider workforce as result of the economic climate and as such they can only be addressed by an improvement in the general economic situation.

The Labour Party is prepared to examine anomalies in the social protection code that cause particular hardship for working artists.

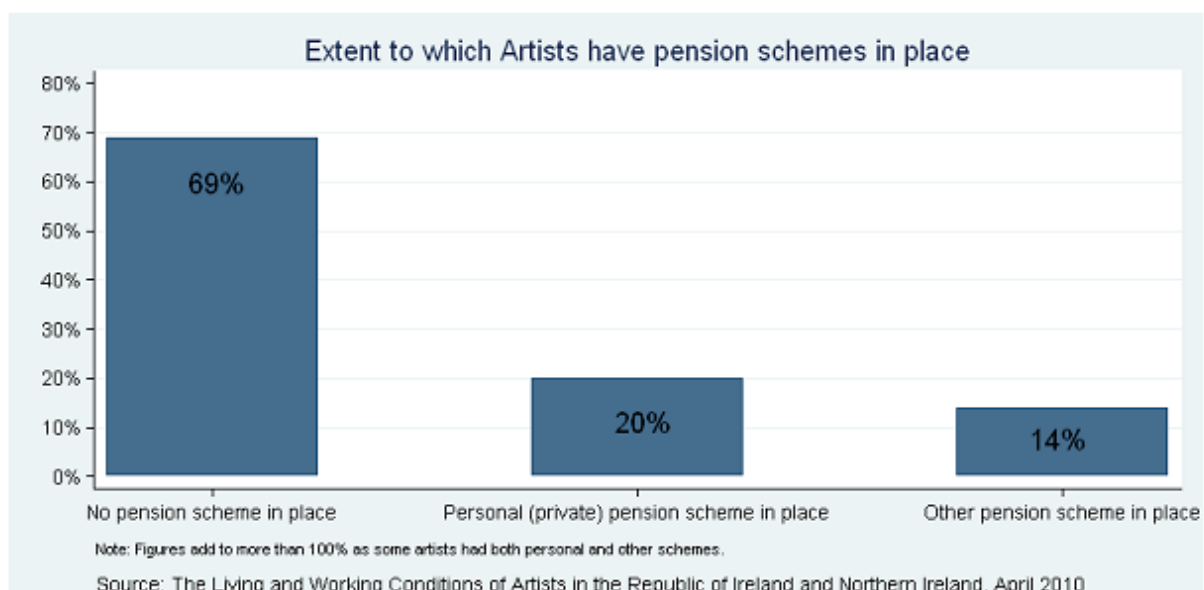


Figure 5.3: Pensions

5.4 Artists Tax Exemption

An exemption on artists' income taxes has existed in the Republic of Ireland since 1969 and its original goal was to create an arts rich environment and help Irish artists remain in Ireland rather than have to go abroad to try and earn their living.⁵⁸ In recent years, a number of high profile applications for tax exemptions under the scheme and its increased cost, have undermined public faith in the Artists Tax Exemption, in its current form.

⁵⁷ The Arts Council (2010) The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland: p.133

⁵⁸ Upton TD, Mary, PQ: 37388/09

In the Governments four year plan for economic recovery the income threshold for exemption from Income Tax was restricted to €40,000 per annum.⁵⁹ Under the scheme, income earned from the sales or copyright fees from artistic work, up to €40,000 per annum is exempt from income tax for the year in which it is earned. The scheme relates to creative artists such as writers, sculptors and composers but does not include performing artists.⁶⁰

In 2007, the latest year for which figures are available, 82% of those who benefited from the exemption had incomes of less than €40,000. In the same year 69% of artists who availed of the scheme had an income of less than €20,000.⁶¹

The Labour party has stated on a number of occasions that that the efficiency of the tax scheme could have been improved and we recommend that the Artists Tax Exemption should be set at €40,000/year but with a capacity to spread income over a period of years.

The rationale behind being able to spread income over a period of years stems from the fact that artists often have low and irregular incomes. Therefore, it is necessary that an 'income averaging' scheme is part of the mechanism in the tax system aimed at assisting artists. Income averaging schemes have been adopted in a range of countries such as Australia, Canada, France, Germany and the UK/Northern Ireland.⁶²

We believe that these alterations will reinforce public faith in the scheme while fostering artistic endeavor in Ireland.

5.5 Supporting Excellence In Art and Culture

While Government funding for arts and culture should focus on achieving greater participation across society, there is also an obligation to sustain art and culture that is not widely popular but is unique and exceptional. Art and culture that challenges our imagination and strives for excellence will not always be commercially viable but it is worth striving for. Our museums and galleries that require public subsidy are a testament to the obligation to sustain these arts.

In many cases, what is excellent and unique can be popular such as the Wexford Opera Festival which developed from a local festival to one which has generated international acclaim and has broadcast its performances to 22 countries around the world.⁶³ We will also look to utilize digital technologies and the internet as a means to screen live performances of artistic events, to the widest possible audience.

⁵⁹ Government of Ireland (2010) The National Recovery Plan 2011-2014: p.97

⁶⁰ The Arts Council (2010) The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland: p.51

⁶¹ Upton TD, Mary, PQ: 36700/10

⁶² The Arts Council (2010) The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland: p.38

⁶³ Available at: www.wexfordopera.com/news/

The Labour Party recognizes that not all art and culture is popular and commercially viable but the pursuit of excellence in the arts is worthy of public subsidy and support.

Part V

Creative Industries

Chapter 6

Creative Industries

“Are you really sure that a floor can’t also be a ceiling?” - M.C. Escher

6.1 Creative Industries

*“Difference between cultural and other sectors is that these sectors are labour intensive and therefore value creation cannot be obtained through investments in technology or other means of production. In these industries, the key for competitiveness is therefore the development of skills and depends on the workforces’ creativity. The best performing sectors in terms of productivity in Europe are design, visual arts, and film and video. The biggest increase in productivity is recorded in the video games sector, one of the fastest developing cultural industries in Europe in the last few years”.*⁶⁴

The 2006 European Commission report entitled “The Economy of Culture in Europe” classified cultural industries as video, radio and television broadcasting, video games, press publishing and music.⁶⁵

According to a 2008 report by Indecon Economic Consultants for the Arts Council, the total gross value added of the Irish creative industry in 2006 was estimated at €5.5bn, which was approximately 3.5% of the Irish economy in that year. Software as a sub sector of the creative industries, accounted for €3.3bn, the largest portion of this figure.⁶⁶ In the year of the study year the total number of jobs in the creative industries was over 95,000 jobs with 60,000 being direct employment.⁶⁷ In terms of direct employment, 23,802 jobs were in the Software sub-sector of the creative industries.⁶⁸

According to a report published by DKM Economic Consultants for the Department of Tourism

Culture and Sport, in 2008, taking into account economic multipliers, the “value added” dependent on the cultural and creative sectors was €11.8 billion, or the equivalent of 7.6% of total GNP. Employment dependent on the cultural and creative sectors combined was 170,000 or 8.7% of total employment in the economy.⁶⁹ As this study has not been published it has not been possible to establish the research methodology used to calculate these figures, to account for the discrepancy between this report and the Indecon report.

⁶⁴ European Commission (2006) The Economy of Culture in Europe: p.106

⁶⁵ European Commission (2006) The Economy of Culture in Europe: p.3

⁶⁶ The Arts Council (2009) Assessment of Economic Impact of the Arts in Ireland. Indecon International Economic Consultants: p.xvii

⁶⁷ The Arts Council (2009) Assessment of Economic Impact of the Arts in Ireland. Indecon International Economic Consultants: p.xviii

⁶⁸ *ibid*

⁶⁹ Available at: <http://www.dast.gov.ie/publications/release.asp?ID=100663>

Although these two reports both analyse the period before the onset of the current recession, the significance of creative industries as economic generators and in terms of employment should not be underestimated.

6.2 The Irish Film Industry

Bord Scannan Na hEireann/Irish Film Board is (IFB) is the national development agency for the Irish film industry. It is financed through the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport. The Irish Film Board has been successful in marketing Ireland and is a powerful tool for sustaining our cultural identity abroad.

The Irish Film industry has benefited greatly from the Section 481 Tax Relief. The incentive applies to Feature Films, Creative Documentaries, Television Drama and Animation.⁷⁰ The amount of tax forgone from 2000 to 2009 under the section 481 scheme was €257.4 million.⁷¹

The audio visual content production sector in Ireland is worth over €550 million. The sector employs over 6,000 individuals, with over 560 small and medium enterprises operating in the sector.⁷² It is a labor intensive industry that has resulted in many international blockbusters being made in Ireland like *Saving Private Ryan* and *King Arthur*. As well as being a labour intensive industry that provides both direct and indirect employment in Ireland, the production of films in Ireland is a crucial means of promoting Ireland as a tourist destination.

Irish productions such as *The Tudors* have been used by Tourism Ireland to market Ireland abroad and this approach has a substantial economic impact particularly in terms of tourism. Indeed, 18% of tourists say that they come to Ireland as a result of seeing an Irish film.⁷³ As well as showcasing Ireland abroad, the Irish film industry provides inward investment; between 1993 and 2008 projects funded by the Bord Scannan Éireann/Irish Film Board attracted €543 million in international investment.⁷⁴

The Irish Film industry is often seen simply in terms of the number of large scale productions undertaken here by foreign studios however our domestic cinematic output and the achievements of those in the Irish film industry should not be overlooked.

The animation sector is very strong in Ireland and was given a boost with recent Oscar success in the form of Richard Baneham a Graduate of Ballyfermot College of Further Education, as Animation Supervisor for James Cameron's 'Avatar', which

⁷⁰ Available at: www.irishfilmboard.ie

⁷¹ Upton TD, Mary. PQ 303610

⁷² Available at: www.irishfilmboard.ie/irish_film_industry/Facts_Figures/35

⁷³ *ibid*

⁷⁴ *ibid*

won an Oscar in the category of Visual Effects.⁷⁵ Brownbag films, based in Smithfield have twice been nominated for Academy Awards for animation. The *Secret of Kells* also won acclaim at the Berlin International Film Festival and an Academy Award Nomination in 2010 for Best Animated Film.⁷⁶ The Director of the *Secret of Kells* and of the production company Cartoon Saloon is an ex member of Young Irish Filmmakers, which demonstrates the value and benefit of investment in youth arts.

Recent Irish success in generating international acclaim such as Oscar nominations show the strength of the industry and the need to capitalise on this progress by having a comprehensive and forward thinking strategy, that generates inward investment and a develops a vibrant domestic film industry.

The Section 481 relief was recently extended until 2015. The Labour Party recognises the need to sustain this progress and the importance of the Section 481 scheme for maintaining film production in Ireland. Labour in Government will therefore seek to maintain the Section 481 tax relief.

6.3 The Video Game Industry

The gaming industry is not within the remit of the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport at present; however we believe that this creative sector should be included in the remit of the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

As well as computer programmers, engineers and software developers, games development requires the skills of amongst others, visual artists, sound recorders, animators and scriptwriters. The availability of this creative talent pool will allow for the development of the sector in Ireland.

In recent years perceptions of the video game industry have undergone a transformation with the introduction of consoles such as the Nintendo Wii which are targeted at a much broader audience than previous video game consoles. As well as the change in perception, the revenue generation potential of the industry has alerted Governments to the potential for job creation.

In 2009 employment in the video games industry sector in Ireland stood at 1,500 people in 20 companies with employment in the sector having grown in excess of 400% since 2002.⁷⁷

The capacity of the industry to create large numbers of jobs was reflected by Electronic Arts announcing the opening of a European customer service and operations centre in Galway in 2010, creating about 200 jobs.⁷⁸ While developments such as this are very welcome, Ireland should be aiming to increase the element of research and design jobs that come at the earlier stage of games development and

⁷⁵ Available at: www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2010/0308/breaking59.html

⁷⁶ Available at: www.irishfilmboard.ie/irish_film_industry/news/Oscar_Nominated_The_Secret_of_Kells_Off_To_Hollywood_as_Two_Irish_Animations_Up_for_Major_US_Award/1180

⁷⁷ Upton TD, Mary PQ's Ref No: 30654/10, 30655/10 & 30656/10

⁷⁸ Available at: www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2010/0526/breaking6.html

that add value to the development chain. Irish companies such as Havok and Demonware have developed the software that is used worldwide by games developers and there is a strong start up community of games developers in Dublin in particular.

A report *The Games industry in Ireland 2009*, stated that the availability of skilled labour was the most significant reason why foreign companies in the games industry chose to locate in Ireland. Other reasons for choosing to locate in Ireland were access to Europe, an English speaking workforce, financial incentives and links to universities.⁷⁹ The same report suggests that in terms of education it is the norm that employees in the sector have at least a third level degree.

Games professionals are highly mobile and the industry can tap into a large pool of talent in traditional IT centres. To compete and to make the industry self sustaining, Ireland must become both a creative centre itself as well as a destination for games development companies.

The issue of human capital is therefore key for the future growth of the industry in Ireland. Adding to Dublin's attraction as a games development centre is the increasing shift of games development from console based games such as those for X-box and PlayStation to internet based games such as the popular Farmville game for Facebook. Ireland is uniquely placed being the European headquarters of Google and Facebook, with in excess of 500 million users, to provide a European centre for online games development. The market for these games is also set to grow with the increasing market share of 3G phones.

This potential has been recognised by other governments notably Canada and France. Canada operates a system of tax incentives for games development and France has a 20% tax break for games development. To comply with EU restrictions on state aid to industry, the French tax incentive has had to satisfy certain cultural criteria to overcome EU rules on State aid. A similar games tax break was proposed to be introduced in the UK by the Labour Government in 2010; however the plan was abandoned by the new Coalition Government.⁸⁰ This however, may only be a temporary suspension as the Coalition Government has outlined plans for a "Tech City" in the London Docklands.⁸¹

What is clear is that this is a rapidly developing industry and for Ireland to compete globally, we must ensure we are competing on a level playing field with our competing partners.

The Labour Party proposes to expand the remit of the Irish Film Board/ Bord Scannann na hEireann to include responsibility for the video game industry. The Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the Irish Film Board will take a lead role in negotiating with other departments/ semi states on the promotion and development of the gaming industry in Ireland.

⁷⁹ Cawley, A. and Aphra, K. (2009) "The Games industry in Ireland".

⁸⁰ Available at: www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2010/nov/04/video-games-developers-david-ferguson

⁸¹ Available at: <http://www.economist.com/node/17581635>

The Labour Party will establish a consultation process with the video game industry in Ireland and with major international companies on how to develop Ireland as a hub for the development and creation of Video Game industry. We also propose to extend the Research and Development tax relief, for the creative phase of game development, similar to that currently in operation in France.

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