



Arts Council of Northern Ireland Grant Distribution Analysis

November 2008

KEY FINDINGS

Arts Council Funding FACTS

In November 2008, the Arts Council conducted a thorough analysis of its Grant Distribution over the five-year period 2003-2008. The analysis presents a factual picture of Arts Council funding across Northern Ireland.

The importance of maintaining widespread public support for the arts in Northern Ireland cannot be underestimated at this time of economic downturn. Public subsidy ensures that the arts remain within everyone's reach and continue to make a positive and affordable (often free) difference to people's lives.

The Grant Distribution Analysis dispels two prevailing generalisations about arts funding in Northern Ireland; which are (1) *arts funding favours middle-class, middle-income interests;* (2) *arts funding is focused on Belfast interests.*

(FACT - Demographic spread):

- More than half (56%; £31.5m) of the funding awarded by the Arts Council through its main funding programmes in the last five years has gone directly to the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland.
- 97% (£5.7m) awarded in the Derry City Council area through the Arts Council's main funding programmes has gone directly to the Londonderry's most deprived areas.
- Additional Arts Council funding has been targeted directly at specific areas of social need, including 'Art of Regeneration' and 'Re-imaging Communities' programmes, helping to kick-start sustainable regeneration in local communities throughout Northern Ireland.

(FACT - Geographic spread):

- Every parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland has received grant-in-aid from the Arts Council. We have introduced initiatives such as the 'Start Up' programme to encourage applications from 'cold spot' areas.
- The level of revenue funding allocated within Belfast reflects the concentration of organisations with a national remit which are based in the city, many of whose services extend to Northern Ireland as a whole.
- Other Arts Council funding programmes show the true spread of funding outside of Belfast, eg:
 - 85% (£2.03m) Art of Regeneration Programme
 - 58% (£1.4m) Re-imaging Communities Programme
 - 95% (£3.7m) Instruments for Bands (since 1995)
 - 73% (£24.4m) Capital Building Awards (since 1995)
- In 2008 the Arts Council achieved its long-term ambition to provide a dedicated arts facility within 20 miles of every person living in Northern Ireland.

Background

- The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is the lead development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland. We offer a broad range of funding opportunities through our Exchequer and National Lottery funds.
- The vision of 'Creative Connections', our five year plan for developing the arts in Northern Ireland from 2007-2012 is, 'to place the arts at the heart of our social, economic and creative life'.
- The ambition to engage fully across all areas of society translates into the funding criteria for our programmes, which encourage organisations to develop their education and outreach services, especially in urban and rural areas of social deprivation.
- Our funding has a direct impact on the range and on the availability of arts activities throughout Northern Ireland. We tailor our programmes to meet the changing needs of our artists and of Northern Ireland society as a whole.
- The Arts Council is responsible through our grants for ensuring a fair and balanced demographic and geographic spread of arts funding throughout Northern Ireland.
- New arts facilities funded through Arts Council Lottery Capital funds are transforming the delivery of arts activities across the country. From the Market Place Theatre in Armagh to the Grand Opera House extension, to the new Braid and Alley arts centres in Ballymena and Strabane, arts facilities are playing a vital role in the cultural and economic regeneration of our towns and cities.
- Supported by the Arts Council, artists have diversified their talents to meet the increasingly wide-ranging demands of a changing society and are making a unique contribution to building a better future for all of us. Their work helps to promote Northern Ireland for all the right reasons, as a desirable place to live, work and do business.

Grant Distribution Analysis Methodology

- The data used in the Grant Analysis exercise was drawn from the Art Council's Grant Management System. The system, known as GIFTS, manages the lifespan of grants from application through to completion and holds key data on grants awarded, amounts distributed and the postcode location of recipients.
- The maps were produced using the software MapInfo Professional (Version 9.0) and were based on the postcodes of recipient organisations.
- The analysis of grant distribution by deprivation was based on the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2005 and comprises seven domains of deprivation, which combine to form the multiple deprivation measure (MDM). It was the rank of this measure that was used to examine expenditure by deprivation in Belfast and Londonderry. This data is presented at a Super Output Area level and enables a more detailed analysis than was possible at the Ward level.