



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Non-governmental Funding for the Arts:
Northern Ireland Assembly Research and
Information Service

16 October 2014

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Nelson McCausland (Chairperson)
Mr Gordon Dunne (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Leslie Cree
Mr David Hilditch
Ms Rosaleen McCorley
Mr Basil McCrea
Mrs Karen McKeivitt
Mr Cathal Ó hOisín

Witnesses:

Dr Dan Hull Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service

The Chairperson (Mr McCausland): I invite Dr Dan Hull, an Assembly research officer, to brief us on non-governmental funding for arts organisations.

Dr Dan Hull (Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service): Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon, Members.

The paper seeks to provide some information on the range of funders of the arts for which organisations here in Northern Ireland are eligible to apply. I have focused particularly on charitable trusts and donations. As members may appreciate, it is quite a slippery subject on which to get a very precise figure for the number of trusts that may be available, so we looked at three specific sources. First, GrantTracker is a local funding tool provided by the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA). Under the category of "arts, culture and heritage", it lists 342 individual funds, although some of those are public sector sources, such as local councils and so on. We also looked at GRANTfinder, which is a wider UK-based source of funding information. It provides details of 7,000 sources. Under "heritage and the arts", 143 grants are present. Another one is 'The Directory of Grant Making Trusts'. It provides details of individual grant-givers, as opposed to the grants themselves.

The table gives a breakdown of the kinds of arts funders that are available. In total, there are about 340. It is difficult to get a precise figure, but I think that it is fair to say that there are between 300 and 400 sources available to arts bodies at any time. Rather than list all of those, we have picked out in annex 1 about 15% of them to give you an impression of the range of specifications, the deadlines that they might have and the different application processes. There are 47 examples that you can browse through.

We can make a number of general conclusions about them. Many funding organisations state explicitly that they will not fund statutory services. Some of them, such as the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and a number of others, have an incredibly broad remit. Others, such as the Wellcome Trust's arts grants, are much more specific. The Wellcome Trust provides funding to arts individuals or organisations to promote biochemistry through the medium of the arts. That is really quite specific. Many such bodies have a very clear ethos and intention that successful applicants must convey or adhere to through their work.

Often, the timescales for funding periods can be short. The Esmée Fairbairn, for example, is quite rare. It generally offers three-year grants, but most grants are offered over just a one-year period. It is often stated that repeat applications for the same project cannot necessarily be made. The amounts can vary a great deal. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation, for example, made 26 grants last year totalling £3.2 million, which is an average of about £120,000. That contrasts with, for example, the Manifold Charitable Trust, which generally offers funds of between £1,000 and £5,000. Another example is the Skinners' Company, which offers grants of up to £1,000. Those are really quite small and for very specific tasks. We have given 47 examples in the annex, and the average amount offered is about £17,700.

Some examples are not specifically aimed at the arts, but, when you look at them closely, they could conceivably be used for that purpose. For example, the Peter De Haan Charitable Trust has a wide-ranging remit in the fields of social welfare and the environment. With a degree of innovation, arts bodies could conceivably apply, but it must be borne in mind that, with such a wide remit, competition for those funds would be very intense. For 23 or roughly half of the organisations listed, it states that support can be offered only to organisations that are legally charities or exist for charitable purposes.

In the last section of the paper, I have picked out four specific examples that might be of particular interest. I will briefly cover two of them, mainly because they have offered grants to Northern Ireland-based bodies in the past. First, there is the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, which is a very large fund. In 2013, it provided £11.8 million to the arts specifically. Each year, 36% of its grants go to the arts. It has a very broad remit of:

"addressing the needs of people in society who suffer the effects of institutional injustice or those who have not enjoyed the kinds of opportunities in life that many of us take for granted."

You can see that that is a very broad remit indeed. Under the arts specifically, it really just provides some examples of the things that it has funded in the past, such as projects that sustain the viability of the arts going forward, what it calls new and more sustainable business models and arts projects that look to reach hard-to-reach groups. Again, it is very flexible. Esmée Fairbairn will often cover things like project costs, as well as staff salaries, overheads and other core costs, which is relatively rare for trusts and foundations. They tend to be much more project-focused. To give you a Northern Ireland example, in 2009, ArtsEkta received a grant of just under £60,000 over a three-year period, and that was specifically to cover the salary and costs of an administrator. Since 2008, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation has made grants to 66 projects in Northern Ireland, with a total grant value of £5.5 million. That is much wider than the arts; it includes all categories. In 2013, we received £3 million, compared with just £2 million in Wales, so you can see that we use that fund relatively well. Twenty of those grants were made for projects or schemes related to the arts. The foundation says that it receives about 3,000 applications per year overall and gives out just 350 grants, so there is a one-in-nine application success rate.

Let us move to the last example. We have put in some that are international in focus, just to provide a contrast. This last example is the Kresge Foundation which is a private, philanthropic foundation based in Michigan, USA. It

"seeks to improve the quality of life for future generations through seven programmes"

one of which is specifically for arts and culture. In 2009, it granted \$850,000 to the Lyric Theatre rebuild and, in 2005, \$1.4 million to the new Queen's University Library. Those are just some specific examples.

In conclusion, though over 300 individual grants are available, many have strict criteria that run over quite short timescales and often will explicitly not fund what are perceived to be statutory services. However, in the paper, we have tried to provide some examples that might be of interest, particularly as some of those have funded Northern Ireland-based groups in the past.

Thank you, Chair. I am happy to try to answer questions, if there are any.

The Chairperson (Mr McCausland): The Committee asked for the report because, obviously, we are interested in the opportunity to derive money for arts organisations in this way so that they are not entirely reliant on public funding. That has been helpful. Are there any questions, or are we happy to note the report? I think we should note it and express our appreciation of the information, which I am sure will be widely disseminated.

Mr Cree: It is a good job.

Mr B McCrea: I will ask a quick question. The report seems to be mainly UK-orientated with some international examples. Did you have a look at the Dublin-based funders?

Dr Hull: Not specifically. Some UK-based organisations offer funds to both the UK and Ireland. We did not look at any that are specifically based down South.

Mr B McCrea: I will pick that point up with you separately; there may be something in it.

The Chairperson (Mr McCausland): Thank you, Dr Hull. I seek members' agreement to include the paper in the inquiry folder.

Members indicated assent.