



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

**Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure**

# **OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)**

**Inquiry into Maximising the Potential of  
the Creative Industries in Northern  
Ireland: QUB**

**22 March 2012**

# NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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Inquiry into Maximising the Potential of the Creative Industries in Northern Ireland: QUB

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**Members present for all or part of the proceedings:**

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
Mr William Irwin (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Dominic Bradley  
Mrs Brenda Hale  
Mr David Hilditch  
Mr Michael McGimpsey  
Mrs Karen McKeivitt  
Mr Oliver McMullan  
Mr Robin Swann

**Witnesses:**

Professor Michael Alcorn	Queen's University Belfast
Professor Tony Gallagher	Queen's University Belfast
Ms Shan McAnena	Queen's University Belfast

**The Chairperson:** Our next evidence session is with Queen's University Belfast. I welcome Professor Tony Gallagher, the pro-vice chancellor for academic planning, staffing and external relations; Professor Michael Alcorn, the head of the School of Creative Arts; and Ms Shan McAnena, the director of the Naughton Gallery. You are all very welcome. Thank you very much for your written submission. Perhaps you would like to take a few minutes to give us an opening statement. Members will then follow that up with some questions.

**Professor Tony Gallagher (Queen's University Belfast):** Thank you very much, Chair. I would like to say a few brief words to start. I want to begin by thanking the Committee for asking us to come along and speak today. We are very pleased to do so. I will introduce my colleagues briefly. As you said, Shan is the director of the Naughton Gallery at Queen's, which is the only accredited university museum in Northern Ireland. We are very pleased about that. She can talk to you about the gallery and other aspects of our cultural offerings. Michael is the head of the university's School of Creative Arts. It is a relatively newly established school. Michael can talk mainly, but not exclusively, on the academic side of what we do.

In the briefing paper that we sent you, we tried to give you a sense of the broader work that we do to encourage entrepreneurship and creativity among our students through our curriculum and in other ways. We have also provided information, statistics and details on some of our specific cultural

offerings, including the Naughton Gallery, the Queen's Film Theatre (QFT) and the Ulster Bank Belfast Festival at Queen's.

In the paper, we have also tried to briefly give a sense of what we see as the main challenges in the area. I suppose that if we were to focus that, the main challenges that we see lie in the need for a long-term strategy. The problem with having so many different groups working in the area is trying to get joined-up thinking and practice in the field. We have also added in the paper a suggestion for the Committee to think about the idea of establishing a creativity hub as a way of trying to bring all these things together.

As my two colleagues are the main experts, I will bring my brief comments to a close. I look forward to any questions that you might like to ask.

**Ms Shan McAnena (Queen's University Belfast):** Thank you very much. As Professor Gallagher has said, the university not only has its academic structures, teaching and research for involvement in the creative industries but, uniquely in Northern Ireland, it has three — more than three — major cultural interfaces that have a huge external constituency, plus the academic schools' public interfaces. The three institutions of the festival, the gallery and the Queen's Film Theatre, as well as the Sonic Arts Research Centre and the Brian Friel Theatre, all attract major audiences into the university. Each year, we attract over 150,000 people through the festival, the gallery and the QFT, plus we have 2,000 other cultural events, many of which are free to the public and attract people from across Northern Ireland and beyond. Through the work of the festival, the Sonic Arts Research Centre and the QFT, in particular, there is an opportunity for audiences to experience and enjoy cultural offer from across the world. That is a major opportunity, not only for the local population but for tourism and visitors and, in fact, minority communities, who are able to experience cultural offer in their own languages. *[Inaudible.]* in Northern Ireland.

As part of that work, there is an accompanying education and outreach programme with dedicated members of staff who offer audience-development and audience-building opportunities across Northern Ireland, targeting areas of social and economic need particularly. It gives access to excellence not only in research and teaching but in offer. Major names in the creative industries have their work showcased at the university through performance, concerts, film and exhibitions. We offer incentives by allowing people discounted or free tickets and, in the case of the festival, free transport to the cultural offer.

Queen's is very proud of these institutions. The festival is in its fiftieth year. The university was for a long time one of the major cultural sponsors of the arts in the region. Until relatively recently, it was perhaps the only offer of big international artists. We work very closely with the academic schools across the university to not only allow audiences to experience our cultural offer through these interfaces but as a gateway to higher education itself. A lot of people come to the university for the first time for an exhibition, film, concert or performance. Through the links to the academic schools, they will be able to see opportunities for further study and qualification through the arts.

**Professor Michael Alcorn (Queen's University Belfast):** I will echo what Professor Gallagher said at the start. We welcome the chance to come here to talk about what the university is doing around the creative industries.

This review is very timely. I come to it with a wide range of interests, primarily as head of the new School of Creative Arts, which is responding to some of the issues that you are discussing. I also come to it as a practitioner and composer, so I am very aware of what we, as artists, are trying to do to create work in this environment. That work has included music for films and other things, so I have quite a wide range of experience on the issue.

Ten years ago, I set up the Sonic Arts Research Centre, which Shan mentioned a couple of times. It was devised primarily to bring arts and science together in one building where people do not necessarily work in separate environments but research and develop new ideas together. I still see that model as very relevant to the type of things that we are trying to do.

I heard CoderDojo mentioned in the previous evidence session. A meeting is taking place in Queen's on Friday to establish a variant of that that builds on some of the creative work that we do. It will be about not just programming but programming technology for creativity and the arts and finding ways in which those can inspire young people to learn how to programme and develop new ideas.

Within the school at Queen's, we have brought together film, music, drama and sonic arts to try to respond to some of the issues across those disciplines that come up time and time again through the creative industries. We see a great opportunity for us to develop the entrepreneurship work that has happened at Queen's already and embed it much more continuously in the curriculums of the programmes that we are delivering to encourage our graduates to go out and develop new businesses and business ideas.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you. As the term suggests, creative industries is very diverse. We appreciate the number of subsectors within it, and your paper reflects the fact that you have tried to tick off a number of those but that it is incredibly difficult to address the specific needs of each subsector. We have come across that issue. We speak to the representatives of each subsector, and they all have peculiar needs that are particular to their industry.

I am not sure that you were here for the full presentation from Digital Circle and Momentum, but Queen's was mentioned in dispatches. They feel that it is difficult to engage with Queen's and that they perhaps have a better relationship with the University of Ulster. Are you in a position to comment on that?

**Professor Alcorn:** I have worked in my own field. I come from an arts and humanities background, and I have worked very closely with Matt and others. I think that it is probably not necessarily fair to say that that is the case. It is probably a different sort of partnership. I guess that it links into different departments. I think that Queen's is as open as the University of Ulster to the types of partnerships that are being fostered here.

**The Chairperson:** You spoke about the possibility of having a creative hub, a subject which the Committee has discussed with other witnesses in previous weeks. I am not sure whether you see Queen's being that creative hub or whether you are looking at a creative Belfast or a creative Northern Ireland in which Queen's would have a particular role.

**Professor Alcorn:** I do not think that there will be a single way of doing this. It is a model that can also be adopted and used by FE colleges. It is certainly something that Queen's needs to do and sees the need to do. However, it has to be done in partnership with others, all of which points to the need to devise a model that we can all work around that will help to develop the types of skills that our graduates need to become entrepreneurs and develop new businesses and ideas or to join the creative industries structure.

**The Chairperson:** The papers that we received from the earlier witnesses cited one company stating:

*"None of the universities or colleges provide programmers with a skillset that we find immediately employable."*

Obviously, there is a feeling that there is talent in Northern Ireland, yet people do not have the particular skills and, perhaps, our universities and FE colleges are not honing in on the need for graduates to become employable.

**Professor Gallagher:** Yes. We have recently been engaging with some of the big employers on that issue. It arises, in part, because things move and change very fast in a digital economy. The speed of change sometimes makes it difficult to cope with newly emerging demands, partly because of this sort of process. It is also partly, frankly, because of pressures on students and the rising importance of employability from a student's point of view. The pressure of the increasing cost of higher education means students want reasonable guarantees that the degree they get at the end of it will give them good opportunities in the labour market.

In recent years, we have been engaging much more closely with employers anyway, particularly those in the finance sector, where the shortage of graduates with programming skills has been raised as a key issue. We have established employers' forums in different schools that directly link into that. Arising from those discussions, we have already got new courses; some of the courses are postgraduate, others are entirely new undergraduate programmes. Sometimes they looked at potential conversion courses, for example, for maths graduates, so that they can do something relatively quickly to get usefully geared up. So, we are responding to this process as quickly as we can.

The CoderDojo initiative, which Michael talked about, is on similar lines. It is about trying to develop a different culture in schools' approaches to these sorts of issues. It involves the industry and university technical experts working with young people to create a new environment in which these issues come much more to the fore.

So, we were aware of the issue. We are aware of the importance of that to the foreign direct investment (FDI) strategy, and we have been responding. New programmes are coming into place. Talk to people from the New York Stock Exchange or from Citigroup, and I think that they will indicate some of the ways in which we have responded quite quickly to some of these new pressures.

**The Chairperson:** Schools are certainly key to this. There was mention in the previous presentation that three out of 3,000 teachers who qualified had an information and communication technology (ICT) background. It is worrying that that expertise is not going into our schools.

**Professor Gallagher:** There may also be a problem in the education system because an awful lot of work around ICT has been focused on hardware rather than programming. That, I think, has been one of the gaps in the way that this issue has been addressed in schools in the past. It is part of the reason why young people who come into some of our computing science courses do not have much programming experience. Such experience is exactly what employers look for. A shift needs to happen at school level as well in relation to some of these issues.

**The Chairperson:** That comment was highlighted in and around the idea that programming should become an essential skill in school along with maths.

**Professor Gallagher:** Two main schools that are most directly involved in this in the university are the School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, which runs most programmes, and the School of Mathematics and Physics, which has developed new programmes. It was financed to take young people who had high-quality mathematical skills and link them into programming and financial experience, which are the sort of attributes and the basket of experiences that employers tell us they directly need.

**Mr Hilditch:** Thank you for the presentation. You listed a number of challenges in your paper, the first of which is the lack of joined-up thinking between agencies/structures, colleges and universities. Could you develop that point further and give us some idea of where you see it going? That probably links into your second point about duplication of activity. Who do you think should take the lead in such issues?

**Professor Alcorn:** This came up when Creative and Cultural Skills held two sessions before Christmas with a lot of the educational establishments, both FE and higher education. It was clear that there was a lot of duplication of activities and a lot of shared experiences that could have been brought together. We are missing a forum across rather than up and down through the structures, which would allow us to share experiences and, at least, to develop a coherent educational strategy around the creative industries. That is what is missing at the minute.

**Mr Hilditch:** Who should take the lead on that?

**Professor Alcorn:** I think that it could be Creative and Cultural Skills, or, indeed, Skillset is the other organisation that would be ideally placed, because that would also bring employers into the discussion.

**Mr Hilditch:** That links into what representatives from the digital industry said during the previous session. It may open a few doors.

**Professor Alcorn:** That is definitely right.

**Mr D Bradley:** The Chair asked about establishing a creativity hub and said that a number of other organisations had mentioned that. Is there a need for a more strategic approach to the establishment of hubs? With Northern Ireland being as small as it is, is there not a danger that creative efforts would be dissipated if we had a number of hubs rather than one main centre?

**Professor Alcorn:** The hub proposed here is more about how we transition people out of higher education and into employment. For example, I imagine that, in the final year of their studies, students who really demonstrate entrepreneurial skills would become part of that and that either the institution or a range of bodies would help to support them to become established in the period just beyond their studies. That can only really work on a fairly local level. I am sure that there is scope for a number of those types of hub activities around the key education providers to help people to get out beyond their studies and into employment.

**Ms McAnena:** On a more strategic level, there needs to be joined-up thinking between the providers of training and skills and the funders of product, for example, the Arts Council. We find that in the university, because we are coming at it from educators and trainers and from the people who are showcasing product. Getting the two to join up and speak to each other is, sometimes, quite difficult and that is where some of the duplication and the confusion about who is eligible for funding comes into it. Anyone — young creative people, old creative people — who wants to tap into their potential and their creativity needs to have training and experience, but they also need to see best practice and best examples. Sometimes, the two do not meet in a meaningful way. Therefore, you need to bring audiences to see the best so that they can go away and be inspired to produce and be the best. Sometimes, linking up those two parts of the creativity cycle is quite difficult. If there were an overall strategic body that brought together all those elements — investment and funding for arts product and training — that might be quite a good thing. I say that from my experience at least.

**Professor Alcorn:** We have a role to play, regionally, to open our doors and make available on a community-wide basis the skills and expertise that exist in the university. It is not just about our own graduates; it is about what we can put back into the local society as well.

**Mr D Bradley:** How do you fuse creativity in subjects such as English literature with the digital age?

**Professor Alcorn:** We have been involved in the literary Belfast app. It was partly developed at Queen's through exactly that sort of partnership. We are embedding in many of our courses a much higher awareness of new technologies and how they apply in arts and humanities, right across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Most people realise that we need to have that digital awareness if we are going to be competitive. It is finding its way into programmes such as English literature and similar degrees that you might not normally associate it with.

**Professor Gallagher:** Processes such as digitisation are providing access to bodies of documents and materials that, previously, were very difficult to access. That can make quite an important contribution in this area as well.

**Mr McGimpsey:** We had a presentation recently. As you aware, the Unlocking Creativity initiative has been running for about 12 years. The creative industries would have been one of the desirable products or consequences of a successful strategy. Looking at the Scottish experience, which we looked at 12 years ago, how do we match that? How do we keep up to that sort of pace? From listening to folks in this area, it appears that we have not done anything like keeping up with the pace that has been set in other parts of the United Kingdom — in England, Scotland and Wales — never mind other parts of the world. One of the big issues we have heard about from people is being able to recruit sufficient numbers for their workforce to fill the needs of their business. In fact, they are saying that the workforce is shrinking, which means that they have to look outside Northern Ireland, and that is fine and all the rest of it. But how do you support them in that?

I have a concern that Queen's is so vast that this issue is floating about and gets lost in the fog. How do you produce the graduates that business people need? First, they are saying that the graduates whom they are getting are not always up to the skills that they require. Secondly, there are just not enough of them. Is an organisation such as Queen's, wonderful though it is, capable of producing the type of individual who has not simply the maths or physics background but the knowledge of the digital industry and the spark of creativity and inventiveness that employers are looking for?

I see this as vital, because there are potentially huge rewards for our society and for youngsters who will never see the inside of Queen's and have no mission of achieving O levels and A levels but who have that spark of inventiveness and creativity that can be brought out to support these companies. Queen's appears to be almost taking a lead here, as far as the production of a workforce is concerned, by training folk. Frankly, the suggestion is that you are not actually producing what is required. How do you plan to do that? How do you give us more graduates? How do you get the graduates with the skills that we require? How do they acquire the wider experience or skill sets that a very rapidly changing digital industry is going to need?

**Professor Gallagher:** First, I want to reassure you that this specific issue is absolutely central to the university's priorities. We have developed and recently launched a new five-year corporate plan, and one of the key elements in it is the whole issue of graduate employability and the quality of our students' experience. I referred earlier to the fact that one of the ways in which we are addressing that is through our engagement with employers, which has been significantly cranked up in recent years, precisely because of the perceived need to ensure that we can respond as quickly as possible to change in market conditions and that we link that into the programmes we are providing and the attributes and qualities that our students are graduating with.

You need to think about the pipeline of delivery right through the system. So, at the other end of the scale in a sense, we have also dramatically cranked up our engagement with schools, even to the extent of providing a junior prospectus. Youngsters in schools who are making choices for GCSEs need to know about some of the longer-term consequences — about the doors they are opening or closing, depending on the choices they make. So we have produced a junior prospectus, which gives 14-year-olds an opportunity to say, "If I go in this direction or that direction, these are the sorts of things that will be available". We have dramatically increased our level of engagement with school principals and careers teachers, so that they can become more aware of some of the consequences of the digital economy and the information economy, where things are moving very fast, and become more aware of the new occupational or employment opportunities available there. Rather than thinking of school, university and the labour market as discrete areas of activity, which maybe happened in the past, what we have tried to do very consciously and deliberately over the past few years is to blur the edges and the boundaries between those areas, so that there is much more engagement and connection across each of the stages and it is possible for people to see some of the new routes that are opening up.

Arising out of our enhanced engagement with schools and employers, internally, we are trying to drive towards more interdisciplinary programmes. We recognise that a lot of the old disciplinary silos have particular histories and developed for certain reasons and that we need young people who have experience across a range of areas in many of the things that you are talking about. The best example I can point to at the moment is the engagement between people working in maths, computer science and management, and how those things can connect together to give graduates a range of experiences that will be immensely valuable to them, when they go out looking for jobs, and valuable to employers. Employers are taking the lead and telling us about the sort of things they need, and, as far as possible, we are trying to respond to that. That is very important to us, and we have been doing things in recent years to directly address the criticism. I think that some employers out there acknowledge that we are moving as rapidly as we can in a fast-moving situation.

**Mr McGimpsey:** OK. I want to follow up on that, because what you said is interesting. You started off talking about strategy and joined-up thinking, which is exactly what we are about and what we need. It appears that there is not enough joined-up thinking, or anything like it, between the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), the Department of Education (DE), the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL).

You talked about blurring the edges, and I strongly support that; it is very much the way forward. In respect of blurring the edges, I do not know how many years it takes for your graduates to get a qualification or a degree, but how long do they spend with business? Would it be sensible to get students to spend six months or a year working either in local business or, probably just as valuable, in Scotland or further afield? As you know, a lot of your younger graduates have to spend time away. Maybe you already do this. Maybe it is already the case that students have to spend six months in the research triangle in North Carolina or somewhere; I do not know. However, it is about blurring the edges, so that graduates have that knowledge and skill and, at least, have a sense of what it is all about before we try to get them into a job here.

**Professor Gallagher:** The role of placement opportunities, locally and internationally, has also been highlighted in the new corporate plan. A couple of years ago, we started a new course in actuarial science, because we saw that there was an opportunity and a demand for qualified actuaries. As that was one of our new programmes, we built in a placement year, and that has proved to be hugely successful. The first cohort has graduated, and quite a proportion of them got jobs with the company in which they had had a placement. Our students were placed in companies right across both islands. That has been a model for the development of other new programmes.

We have also been very keen to encourage more international placements. We already have quite a large number of students who take advantage of Erasmus opportunities, and we have a number of well-established programmes giving students the opportunity to go to North America. We think that those sorts of international opportunities are important, not just in themselves but in raising the sense of ambition among our students.

One of the challenges has been that quite a high number of graduates preferred to stay in Northern Ireland in lower-paid, non-graduate jobs than going elsewhere for higher-paid, graduate-level jobs. When people leave, we no longer think of them as going into exile. They are part of a diaspora that feeds back into Northern Ireland. Some of our biggest research investments in recent years have come from alumni working in Malaysia, the United States, or other places. They become a resource for Northern Ireland. We are very keen to raise that sense of ambition, and enhancing placement programmes is a key part of that. The new programmes that I have been talking about are the sorts of things that we are building into those programmes. The timescales are varied: for a new undergraduate programme, it will take three years before we see the direct consequences, whereas, for a new postgraduate programme, we can see the evidence of change within a year. Conversion programmes, which take highly qualified maths students, for example, and give them links to other areas of expertise, can be done even more quickly. So there are a variety of options, and we are trying to be more agile in our responses.

**Mr McMullan:** In your recommendations, you refer to establishing a low-cost, high-risk start-up fund for the creativity hub. Perhaps you could draw that out a wee bit. Low-cost and high-risk sounds good.

**Professor Alcorn:** In this sector, quite often, the most interesting ideas do not cost a lot of money. We demonstrated that in Queen's with our 'Dragon's Den' competition. That involved our arts and humanities students, who are at the centre of the whole review process, and people working in this sort of field coming up with new ideas. Some ended up establishing theatre companies and other things. That grew from a very small initial grant and was designed to get them thinking about how they take the skills that they have and make them relevant to the wider general population. However, there is a risk attached.

I will give you another example. A number of years ago, we ran a training programme for students who wanted to become recording engineers. The turnaround for that could be 10 years: it could take that long before somebody makes it. It is very high-risk, because the money is invested a long time in advance of any outcome, and it could be up to a decade before somebody makes it in that field. That is where the risks come, but, in our particular field, it is the right strategy.

**Professor Gallagher:** If you want to encourage innovation and a genuinely creative environment, you have to be prepared for a life of failure, because you cannot innovate unless you try lots of things, many of which will not work. Part of the difficulty in trying to have a genuinely innovative and creative



environment is an audit culture that takes for ever to make decisions and wants to have every i dotted and every t crossed before it is prepared to invest in anything. With a low-cost, high-risk approach, you make small amounts of money available to people to try things, knowing that a significant proportion will probably not go anywhere. By doing that, you allow opportunities for things that will have an enormous impact to flourish. That is why it is worth doing.

**Mr McMullan:** With a low-cost, high-risk approach, you could be talking about a 90% failure rate.

**Professor Alcorn:** Could be.

**Mr McMullan:** Who do you envisage funding that? Would such funding come from your sponsors?

**Professor Alcorn:** A partnership might be feasible between the institutions and, perhaps, private business. We are trying to encourage people to come up with ideas and feel that they have the confidence to come forward with them. At the minute, the fear of failure is very prevalent here. It is about how we change that culture into one of trying to encourage people to come forward with ideas and develop them into things that could be economically relevant. There may be a higher failure rate, but that is the price you pay for really good ideas, some of which will, hopefully, be very profitable.

**Mr McMullan:** I do not know whether government could, for example, fund something like that if it involved high risk and a long-term return. I see that funding coming more from sponsors or through somebody setting up a fund to protect the idea of an entrepreneur so that it could not easily be poached by an international company. Something like that would be of benefit, but you do not have that protection for entrepreneurs at the moment. You receive around £700,000 a year in sponsorship. Could any of the firms that sponsor you put up funding for something that was high risk?

**Professor Gallagher:** Potentially. However, if we are really serious about encouraging creativity and innovation, we need to rethink some of the old assumptions. Recently, there was a big story in the press about Encyclopedia Britannica. After something like 144 years, it is ceasing the production of its volumes. That is because Wikipedia has, essentially, put it out of business. Wikipedia is an example of an open access approach to knowledge. Intellectual property issues are still important. However, the point about Wikipedia and other open source approaches to development is that they mean putting everything out there and letting everyone have it for free, on the assumption that some people will pick it up and do interesting things with it. That is where the Linux operating system comes in. Even Amazon is based on an open access model, although it is a different type of commercial model. Amazon makes a lot of its money on hard-to-get products for which people are willing to pay, which allows it to discount items that people buy in large volumes. It is a different approach to the way in which we do business. The key point is that it is profitable in the longer run, even though it means having fundamentally to rethink some of the assumptions that have driven things in the past. That different type of approach is what we need for a different type of economy.

**Mr McMullan:** How do you get that, given that there are no ties to Wikipedia? It is open to everybody, so who is answerable?

**Professor Gallagher:** With something like Wikipedia, if it does not work, people will not use it, and it will collapse. Some of the biggest web-based developments, such as Google or Facebook, can generate huge amounts of income. They are all based on an open access model. You do not pay to use Facebook, but it works because so many people use it.

**Mr McMullan:** I understand.

My final question is on the creative industries. Do you see the tax differences here as a drawback?

**Professor Gallagher:** Certainly, many who come to perform at the Belfast Festival and similar events are self-employed. They take part and declare their own taxes. If they have travelled internationally, they do so locally and internationally. I do not think that it has a huge impact.

**Mr McMullan:** There are no tax breaks here for film or television. Do you see that as a drawback?

**Professor Gallagher:** I have no experience of that.

**Ms McAnena:** I have a bit of experience in film production. I think that, yes, that is a drawback for funding. Here, there is an emphasis on investing in big productions that will bring in big names to make big films, but let me go back to the high-risk, low-cost model that you and Tony talked about before, Mr McMullan. For instance, 20 years ago, in Seattle, small amounts of money were invested in experimental and locally made films. Many such films will never be seen by anyone beyond friends or family, but one or two will be hugely influential. Not only does such investment here foster creativity and skills development for young film-makers, it makes Belfast a very trendy, sexy place for people to come to. For a fraction of what might be granted to a huge production, which comes in, goes away again and might not employ that many people, you can invest relatively small amounts of money in young people, reskilling and in the practice of what can be quite avant-garde art. That might be more difficult, but people getting involved has a huge filtering and feeder effect, which is very important.

Government has a role to play in that area, even through the strategies of arm's-length organisations and how they invest their money. There are artists, actors and film-makers of international standing here who have the skills, but not the opportunity to showcase them. That also develops a sense of locale, terroir, or rooted-in-Northern-Ireland flavour, which makes people want to visit and to make and do things here. However, that is quite difficult. Across our range of interests, we pride ourselves in giving a platform to local artists, makers and musicians. However, all the time, I find that, for the want of very small amounts of money, they just do not get the opportunities to showcase their work. If you can foster that, it will mean that other bigger industries such as tourism, on which we depend massively, will be more attractive to people, and the development of property and city quarters will increase. This goes back to the Creative Scotland model of locations specifically identified as creative. All the agencies can develop those areas as centres not only for business and the creative industries but for tourism, property development and general well-being. That joined-up approach is really important.

**Mr McMullan:** Does that extend to the television industry?

**Ms McAnena:** Yes, I think so.

**Mr McMullan:** And to digital?

**Ms McAnena:** Absolutely. The amount of young people sitting in their bedrooms uploading videos to YouTube shows that the innovation is there. It would take only very small amounts of money for them to take that one step further and to have the opportunity to showcase their work at the QFT, have a concert at the Sonic Arts Research Centre or open a pop-up shop in empty premises in the city centre. It is a very small amount of money in comparison with the amounts of money spent on attracting large industries, particularly film, which can be here today, gone tomorrow — it can build, but sometimes people just take the money and run. You can get a lot more bang for your buck if you invest in those smaller ways. I feel quite passionate about that.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you all very much for coming here today and contributing to our inquiry. It was very useful.