

The Creative Imperative

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The Creative Imperative

A Report on Support for the Individual Artist in Ireland

by Anthony Everitt

February 2000

For the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon
and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

Preface

This report was commissioned by the two Arts Councils in Ireland. The reasons for undertaking this joint project were fundamentally

- to provide some benchmark information about the impact of existing programmes of support for artists by the two Arts Councils
- to make recommendations to the two Councils, collectively and/or individually, about future trends in support of the individual artist

The background to this work was the sense shared by both Councils that the individual artist played a central role in the fabric of cultural and artistic life. To make a larger study of the living and working conditions of artists, without first studying the effects of our own intervention or influence on the marketplace in which artists work, seemed a waste of time.

Equally, however, we were conscious of the differences and distinctions between the role of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and that of An Chomhairle Ealaíon/The Arts Council. We therefore gave a complex brief to the review consultants to provide an analysis and a series of recommendations to the two Councils severally (a) and (b), and (c) to make such recommendation as were appropriate to the two bodies collectively.

This reflects a style of working together which the two Arts Councils intend to explore even more in the future, reflecting the extent to which our developmental work reflects common agendas and priorities. In particular, this piece of research is seen as helping the Arts Councils to meet the challenge of supporting artists in a way that meets their real needs, in the context of broader cultural, economic and legislative trends.

Clearly, even within Ireland, the environment in which the artist makes and publishes his or her work varies considerably from artform to artform, and as between one part of the country and another. The two Arts Councils must also be alert to the wider European and indeed the international context that, for most artists, now influences to a significant extent the nature of their working lives.

This research paper is not a study of the living and working conditions of the artist in Ireland, although it draws on a detailed survey, undertaken in 1999, whose results are published in a separate volume (*Research into Support for the Individual Artist* available from the Arts Councils). Before embarking on any such larger analysis, the two Councils wished to develop a deeper understanding of the impact of their own interventions on the working conditions for artists in Ireland. The study does signpost productive areas for further possible research, and these, together with all of the report's recommendations will be carefully considered by the two Councils and by practitioners and other interested parties.

Consultation with others will inform the Councils in deciding on the next steps in what is, for both the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, a central plank in the raft of programmes provided in support of the arts in all parts of Ireland.

Patricia Quinn

Director

An Chomhairle

Ealaíon

Brian Ferran

Chief Executive

Arts Council of

Northern Ireland

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Executive Summary

The report was commissioned by the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland to help them ascertain the most appropriate model and mechanisms for supporting the individual artist.

The context in which arts policy is made is changing. The emphasis on the arts as a discrete field of activity is giving way to a broader conception of culture, that places them in a social and economic setting. Governments are insisting on transparency and accountability and expect policy to be expressed through dynamic planning with quantifiable targets. Arts funding agencies are entering into partnerships with other institutions both in the public and private sectors. The concept of subsidy is giving way to one of investment and the purchase of services.

Unless such partnerships and accompanying systems of evaluation are carefully handled, this new approach could threaten the autonomy of art and place it at the service of extraneous and utilitarian purposes. There are no simple answers to this growing challenge, but this report seeks to find ways of ensuring that support for the individual artist retains its relevance in the new funding environment.

Following a historical review, an account is given of current mechanisms of support in the Republic of Ireland (RoI) and in Northern Ireland. An important distinction between them is that tax exemption is available for original and creative works of art in the Republic. Arrangements for the support of Irish performing arts students are highly unsatisfactory. Arts funding by local government in the Republic is low and it appears that, with the exception perhaps of the visual arts, it brings relatively few direct benefits to artists.

The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon sees support for the individual artist as crucial to its mission. In dance, drama and music it places a primary emphasis on artistic development and devotes substantial resources to filling the gap in career training in the performing arts. In literature and the visual arts the leading priority is the making of art. Aosdána provides annuities for established creative artists in literature, music and the visual arts but does not support interpretative artists.

The Council mainly supports the arts as traditionally defined and few awards are made to traditional or folk artists, community artists and those working in popular culture. It has a particular concern for the international promotion of Irish artists and travel grants are widely available (including the admirable ARTFLIGHT scheme).

In Northern Ireland there is less support proportionally for the individual artist; most of the available funding is devoted to visual artists. Awards programmes are less client-led than in the Republic of Ireland and the criteria for subsidy stress community benefit. Although there is an emphasis on the "high" arts, eligibility for support is somewhat more widely drawn.

*The Research into Support for the Individual Artist*¹ survey demonstrates that awards and bursaries are successful (more so in the Republic of Ireland than in Northern Ireland) in achieving two key objectives - the making of art and professional development. They are highly valued by recipients, not only for financial reasons but because of the endorsement they confer.

Support for the individual artist is consistent with the Councils' new or developing cultural objectives and should be maintained. Awards should not be directly linked to outreach, educational or community-based activity. However, criteria should be developed to ensure equality of access (for example, for artists with disabilities and women). Also, in the Republic awards should be opened to community artists, traditional/folk artists and those working with popular cultural forms. More attention should be paid to the encouragement of innovation.

Although artistic and career development is an appropriate objective the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon should not find itself obliged to contribute to third-level education costs. The Irish

1 Jackson, Annabel, *Research into Support for the Individual Artist*, Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and Arts Council of Northern Ireland, 1999.

government should establish a means of supporting performing arts students in non-designated institutions, so relieving the Council of the burden.

Unfortunately, according to the survey, subsidy has made little impact on the economic status of artists. This is a fundamental issue, because many artists live on the edge of poverty. Average annual earnings in the Republic of Ireland are IR£12,000.

Awards to individual artists cannot, by themselves, rectify this situation. In the long run, the institutional infrastructure needs strengthening; more immediately, arts organisations should be given additional incentives to commission and present artists' work. Increased effort should be invested in international promotion. The arts sector should take advantage of the new climate of public agency partnerships to encourage economic regeneration and, in this way, create an environment more favourable to artists' employment.

Artists criticise the funding system for lack of transparency. There is some truth in this, especially at the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, whose Arts Plan recognises the problem. The Council becomes subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act in October 2000. Reform is necessary.

Evaluation processes and mechanisms need to be developed. Objectives need to be more explicit and measurable, but care must be taken to complement quantitative indicators with a methodology that allows for qualitative judgement and self-assessment. There should be periodic overall reviews of awards and bursaries.

Some of the recommendations that follow entail increased expenditure. If the fundamental challenge to improve the economic situation of artists in Ireland is to be met, substantial investment will be required, not in direct subvention to artists so much as in the institutional infrastructure of the arts, international promotion and economic development partnerships. Increased resources by themselves will not be enough unless guided by a clear and comprehensive policy. When reviewing their support for the individual artist, the Arts Councils should recognise that their primary purpose is the establishment of a thriving and, in large part, self-sufficient artistic community, within which other priorities such as formation and the making of art are essential but subsidiary components.

Recommendations

Recommendations are tagged as referring to the Republic of Ireland (RoI), Northern Ireland (NI) or both (BOTH).

It is recommended that:

Economic Status of the Artist (see 5.2)

1. when pursuing their mission to support individual artists to achieve their full artistic potential, the Arts Councils should identify as a core objective a measurable improvement in their economic status (BOTH)
2. the Arts Councils should agree long-term strategies which include specific costed targets for the improvement and enlargement of the performing arts infrastructure (BOTH)
3. in order to foster the creation of a thriving artistic economy, arts organisations should be encouraged to increase their commitment to new work; during the terms of the Councils' current or forthcoming arts plans, consideration should be given to accompanying some awards with additional grants available to arts organisations willing to commission/present award-holders' work (BOTH)
4. research should be conducted with a view to the enhancement of the international promotion of Irish arts (RoI)
5. the Arts Councils should co-operate with other relevant agencies to improve employment opportunities for artists (BOTH)
6. consideration should be given to the introduction of multi-annual grants and bursaries (BOTH)
7. the Arts Councils and other providers should help artists to acquire business, financial and marketing skills as well as offering them an

induction into the expectations of possible partners/employers in non-arts sectors; this would entail both the provision of appropriate financial support, the identification of relevant training opportunities and, if they do not exist, the encouragement of appropriate agencies to provide them (BOTH)

8. the Arts Councils should consider seeking to persuade their governments to adopt the following reforms:
 - permission for interpretative artists to pay tax on income averaged over three years (BOTH);
 - the desirability of the establishment of the *droit de suite* (BOTH); the institution in the Republic of Ireland of a Public Lending Right;
 - a review of employment legislation in relation to artists who are registered unemployed;
 - the institution of an early pension scheme and retraining opportunities for dancers;
 - the introduction of a blank tape levy scheme and a related cultural fund;
 - the establishment of copyright collecting societies across the complete range of artistic practice, funded by top-slicing a proportion of their fees income (RoI)
9. there should be greater financial and management support for artists' associations so that they can develop a role as advocates of their art form (RoI)
10. a case should be put to government to extend tax exemption to choreographers (RoI)
11. assistance should be provided for post-graduate students of the performing arts; and training grants in stage technicianship, stage management and lighting design (RoI)
12. the achievements of Aosdána should be more effectively promoted and publicised. In addition, consideration should be given to the extension of eligibility for membership to choreographers and the full range of creative artists. Aosdána should also consider giving recognition to interpretative artists (RoI)
13. the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon should help to ensure the continuing development of the government's Per Cent for Art Scheme by establishing a public art training and awareness-raising scheme for visual artists and those managing government-funded construction schemes. It is also essential that, alongside the other recommendations of the Public Art Research Project, the Arts Council appoint a public art officer (RoI)

Access to Awards (see 5.3)

14. awards and bursaries for individual artists should be maintained as a discrete area of subsidy, aimed at the making of art, the formation of artists and the improvement of their economic and social status (BOTH); the Arts Council of Northern Ireland should consider adopting these aims and setting aside the criterion of direct community benefit (NI)
15. the objectives of awards and bursaries should be more clearly spelled out than at present so that their success or failure can be explicitly ascertained (BOTH)
16. in the light of the fact that women receive a smaller number of awards and disabled people face specific additional obstacles, great care should be taken to ensure that the principle of equality of opportunity is applied to all aspects of the administration of applications (BOTH)
17. consideration should be given to offering more awards for community artists and those who work in the field of the traditional arts and popular culture, in addition to existing support schemes (RoI)
18. Awards to community arts and artists working in the community should be dealt with inside artform departments (RoI)

Innovation (see 5.4)

19. in the light of developing cross-art form work and the opportunities provided by the new information technologies, awards should be made available which target the encouragement of innovation and, more especially its electronic dimension (BOTH)

Evaluation (see 5.5)

20. a methodology and set of procedures should be established to monitor the impact of awards and bursaries for individual artists; this methodology should recognise a range of criteria for assessing excellence (including creator/producer quality, expert- assessor/critic quality, enrichment of the community, quality in variety and quality as "fitness for purpose") (BOTH)
21. the procedures for assessment should include relevant quantitative measurements (BOTH)
22. qualitative judgements should involve self-assessment by award holders and peer advisers through the use of written reports and periodic meetings (BOTH)
23. there should be a periodic (perhaps five-yearly) overall review, not only of awards, but also of the economic status of the artist against quantitative financial and other targets (BOTH)

Education (see 5.6)

24. the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon should advocate to government the strategic need for it to improve the quality of third-level performing arts education and training in the Republic (RoI)
25. the Council should also seek to persuade government to assume responsibility for funding free tuition fees and means-tested maintenance grants for students at performing arts courses run by appropriate private or commercial educational establishments (RoI)
26. once the previous two recommendations are implemented, the Council should withdraw from contributing to students' fees as at present (RoI)

Increasing Transparency (See 5.7)

27. the Arts Councils should consider practical ways of making the assessment of awards and bursaries to individual artists more transparent (BOTH)
28. the Arts Council should consider, where they are not already doing so,
 - publishing the names of assessors or peer advisers and those attending panel meetings;
 - providing explanations of its decisions to applicants;
 - publishing minutes, or summaries, of committee meetings;
 - opening up its procedures for appointing assessors;
 - and in general should seek to harmonise its decision-making procedures with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (RoI)
29. the Arts Councils should consider recruiting more international peer advice, or in the case of Northern Ireland from the rest of the United Kingdom (BOTH)
30. the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon should consider simplifying its awards programmes by consolidating them under general, non-artform headings; this would facilitate improved marketing and publicity. However, applications should continue to be processed, as at present, by artform departments (RoI)
31. the Arts Councils should examine ways of further co-ordinating their programmes of support for the individual artist, but the process of integration should be developed over the long term. (BOTH)

1 | Introduction

Terms of Reference

1.1 The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland commissioned a detailed appraisal of their direct and indirect support for the individual artist, whether creative or interpretative. The Councils wished to assess the effect of their policies on the professional formation and career path of artists and to ensure that they had an appropriate infrastructure in which to practise their profession. They were also concerned to help artists seize the opportunities which the new electronic technologies offered.

1.2 In September 1998 the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon debated an important discussion paper, *Support for the Individual Artist*,² which paved the way for the current research project. It noted: "While at first glance the situation in Ireland seems positive, the evidence of submissions to the Arts Plan from individual artists and from their representative organisations would suggest that the majority of artists with whom it has contact appear to live either in poverty or in conditions which reflect neither their status nor the public and critical acclaim generated by their work within the international platform of the contemporary arts...it is not unknown for even prominent artists to rely on the goodwill of their local social welfare officer to interpret the nature of their livelihood so as to allow them to continue to draw the dole."

1.3 The paper went on to list a number of questions which called for address. What are the purpose, duration and value of the Council's awards to artists for third and fourth-level training and education? To what extent are the Council's means of ongoing support for artists (chiefly the *cnuais* to members of Aosdána) integrated with other means of support? What is the appropriate balance between direct support for the individual artist and grant-aid to arts organisations which enable him/her to produce and present his or her work? To what extent do resources for artists, funded by the Arts Council, meet their true needs? Do artists' representative organisations do a good job? How can the Arts Council influence the position of the artists in society? What level of priority does the Arts Council give to the artists working in the community? Can the Arts Council identify particular categories of artists with special needs who merit support? What are the values which inform a programme of support for a critical and documentary framework for the arts?

1.4 A number of specific areas were identified for further discussion. These included: the desirability or otherwise of introducing fewer higher-value awards; the introduction of clearer assessment procedures and evaluative criteria for funding decisions; rewarding arts organisations which commission, present and further the careers of artists; the development of residencies; clarification of education and training objectives in association with the Department of Education and Science; the development of a clearer understanding of the role and function of Aosdána; ensuring that awards schemes keep pace with changes in contemporary practice; a review of ARTFLIGHT; and a clearer specification of the purposes for which funding is given to artists' resource and facilities providers.

1.5 A brief was drawn up for *Research into support for the individual artist from Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland*. The objective was to undertake a detailed appraisal of direct and indirect support for the creative and interpretative artists and to assess the impact of these supports. The rationale underpinning the research was two-fold:

- a. To assess the effect of Councils' policies on the professional formation and career path of the individual artist
- b. To assist the Councils' in ascertaining the most appropriate models and mechanisms for supporting the artist.

1.6 The brief sets out the issues to be studied under two headings. First, the impact of support to the artist is to be measured, both in terms of direct support through bursaries, awards and ARTFLIGHT schemes; and indirect support through such schemes as residencies and commissions, resource organisations, artists' retreats and other facilities for the individual artist, and the Arts Councils' subsidies to arts centres/venues,

² *Support for the individual artist: discussion paper to the policy meeting of the Arts Council, Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and Arts Council of Northern Ireland, September 1998.*

production companies, promoters and other relevant funded organisations.

1.7 The second focus of the research is to review the environment in which the artist operates. Factors to be taken into account include the profile of a typical artist's income; the legislative framework in which the artist operates in Ireland, north and south, including the interaction with social welfare systems; the tax regimes, copyright laws and royalty payments; training and career development; and the promotion of artists both at home and abroad.

Methodology and Approach

1.8 The conduct of the research project was divided into two stages. The first was an evaluative sample survey of individual artists who have successfully applied for and received Arts Council awards or had applied and been rejected. Artists who had not applied for awards but had received support indirectly through association with an arts organisation funded by the Arts Councils were interviewed as a control group. In total 216 artists were interviewed (by means of a telephone survey) - 77 from Northern Ireland and 139 from the Republic of Ireland.

1.9 The survey was conducted by Annabel Jackson Associates. As well as offering a descriptive account of the situation of individual artists from their own points of view, it contains a set of 21 recommendations for future action by the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

1.10 Annabel Jackson was guided in her work by a working group of staff from the two Councils. It comprised Tara Byrne, Mary Cloake, Phelim Donlon, Marian Flanagan, Richard Guiney, Dermot McLaughlin, June Tinsley, together with an external research consultant, Sue Leigh Doyle, for the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, and Nick Livingston for the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. The working group had an independent chairperson, Professor Anthony Everitt. It met five times, once in Belfast and otherwise in Dublin.

1.11 As the research project's second stage, Professor Everitt was commissioned to write the present report, the object of which is to offer an analysis from a policy perspective, based in large part on the outcome of the survey. It sets Annabel Jackson's findings in the wider context of cultural policy in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, with particular relation to the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon's new Arts Plan and the policy document, *Towards the Millennium*, published by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.³ It not only addresses the focussed issues set out in the research brief, but also considers some of the questions in the discussion paper cited above. It offers recommendations and options which the two Councils may wish to take into account as they continue the process of policy development.

1.12 The intention is not to suggest revolutionary nostrums, but to propose reforms which build on the achievements of the past while responding to changes in policy and creative practice. The underlying aim is to secure the interests of the individual artist in a volatile environment.

1.13 The author is extremely grateful to the staff of the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland for their unvarying helpfulness and their willingness to answer any question with courtesy and efficiency. He is especially indebted to Richard Guiney and June Tinsley for the omniscient research support they provided.

3 At the time of writing, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland is preparing an arts strategy, and a draft operational plan for 1999 was available for use in this report.

2 The Changing Context

2.1 The funding context in which artists find themselves is undergoing profound and rapid change. In some quarters this is arousing fear and anger - fear that state support is coming with new strings attached and anger that creative work is no longer valued for its intrinsic qualities, but can be used as an instrument at the service of extraneous, utilitarian purposes.

2.2 A contrary view welcomes current policy developments on the grounds that they properly recognise the interactions between art and society and foster a democratisation of culture in civil society.

2.3 This chapter summarises these changes with special reference to the situation in Ireland, for they are the backdrop against which future support for the individual artist must stand. They are expressed with constructive clarity in the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon's Arts Plan 1999-2001 and in the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's policy document, *Towards the Millennium*, together with its Draft Operational Plan for 1999. It will be argued that, if the matter is handled with care and sensitivity, artists will be able to benefit from new opportunities to enhance their status and to move towards greater economic self-sufficiency.

From Arts Policy to Cultural Policy

2.4 The Arts Councils in Ireland, and indeed those in the United Kingdom, have traditionally seen their fundamental business as the encouragement of the arts as traditionally defined - live drama, ballet and dance, literature, painting and sculpture, classical music and opera (with film also receiving support).⁴ Their aim has been to encourage the highest standards of professional excellence and to make them available to as many people as possible. Artists have been at the heart of their vision, whether the Councils supported them directly or through organisations that employed or commissioned them.

2.5 Over the past 20 years, policy-makers in Europe and farther afield have gradually come to place the arts in a cultural setting. According to UNESCO: "In its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group."⁵ According to this view, the arts are not so much a separate sphere of activity as a nexus of interactions which reaches from its creative and reflective core into people's everyday lives.

2.6 It has become clear that culture in this definition is an essential component of civil society. Governments which are concerned to foster voluntarism, community engagement and a vigorous "third sector" (characterised by civic participation and the coming together of citizens in autonomous clubs, societies and associations) see an important role for the arts.

2.7 This thinking has led to a number of consequences, both practical and theoretical. First, an emphasis on the arts in relation to society as distinct from an exclusive concern with their value as free-standing works of the imagination has stimulated a debate on what ministries of culture and arts councils see as the purpose of funding artistic activity.

2.8 The amateur arts are moving from the periphery of public policy to a more central position. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has a record of support in this field and, in its *Arts Plan 1999-2001*, the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon explicitly acknowledges the value of voluntary and amateur practice: "Imagination and creativity are not the preserve of the few...We recognise that amateur arts have a value in themselves for practitioners, provide access to the arts for others, and can be a first introduction to the arts for yet others who go on to specialise professionally."⁶ The plan promises to research and develop a policy for the amateur arts.

2.9 Also in some European countries greater attention is being paid to the mass popular arts (the popular music industry, film, video, television) and to the cultural or creative industries.

4 The Arts Act 1951 in the RoI defined the arts as "painting, sculpture, architecture, music, drama, literature, design in industry and the fine arts and applied arts generally". The Arts Act 1971 added cinema. The Arts Council also supports dance, but has not addressed design in industry or some aspects of applied arts (e.g., fashion)

5 Cited in *In from the margins: A contribution to the debate on culture and development in Europe*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1997, p 28.

6 *Arts Plan 1999-2001*, Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, Dublin, May 1999, pp 3 and 19.

2.10 Secondly, a new interest is being shown in the external impacts of the arts. Broadly defined, they are a significant economic and financial sector and create jobs. They contribute to urban regeneration. They generate overseas earnings. It is interesting to note that local authorities in Ireland, although starting from low investment bases, are spending more money on the arts - in part, at least, for economic and social/community reasons.⁷ Expenditure on public art is sometimes found from such budgets as housing and building and transportation and safety.

2.11 A key theme of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's *Draft Operational Plan* is "unlocking the economic potential of the arts by drawing more people into the arts (as producers and consumers) through the promotion of cultural tourism".⁸

2.12 Agencies concerned with social issues find the arts to be a useful tool for the attainment of their own objectives - often social or personal development outcomes. The Arts Plan notes that in the Republic of Ireland the rapidly growing field of community arts has attracted "the support and attention of many government departments and agencies, including the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, the Combat Poverty Agency, Department of Social Welfare, Area Partnerships, FÁS [Foras Áiseanna Saothair], Department of Education, VECs [Vocational Education Committees], Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation, as well as many local authorities".⁹ Governments, which are increasingly interested in holistic and preventive solutions to social problems, support these kinds of partnership.

Accountability and Planning

2.13 Faced with the ever-rising costs of the Welfare State and, at the same time, by a growing reluctance of citizens to accept high levels of taxation, governments in Europe are imposing planning regimes both on their own directly managed civil services and on the public sector agencies which they support. Their aim is not only to ensure financial transparency and value-for money, but also effectiveness. Seeing the importance of a dynamic approach to governance, they have borrowed from the private sector the techniques of management by objectives. They insist on evaluation according to measurable targets and performance indicators. Funding agencies face difficult challenges as they seek to apply these new methods to a field of activity where qualitative rather than quantitative criteria lie at the heart of their operations.

2.14 The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland recognise the need to change their methods of working. The former's Arts Plan announced a "significant proposed shift in the functioning of the Arts Council itself. It is a radical proposal for a new era harnessing the techniques of strategic management initiatives in the service of the arts."¹⁰ The latter's *Draft Operational Plan* promises that "the Arts Council will implement far-reaching changes to its systems of support and planning process. This will enable the Council to strengthen its emerging role as a development agency and, correspondingly, determine strategically focussed priorities for its grant support... a comprehensive framework must be in place capable of supporting the arts, credible in the eyes of government and capable of winning widespread commitment amongst artists and key stakeholders".¹¹

From Subsidy to Investment

2.15 It has not always been clearly explained in the past what subsidy of the arts has achieved. As a recent Council of Europe report notes: "The state's role in culture may seem to be firmly established, but as long ago as the 1960s doubt was cast on whether the state should be directly involved in the arts at all. The social objectives of making the arts available to all were not being convincingly attained; indeed, they remained the preserve of the affluent and well-educated. The debate took on a sharper political relevance with the rise of neo-liberal economic policies in Europe. State-owned industries were privatised, industrial subsidies reduced or abolished and monopolies (for example, broadcasting and telecommunications)

7 See paragraphs 3.5.1 to 3.5.6 below for further discussion.

8 *Draft Operational Plan*, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Belfast, 1999, Unpublished, p.1.

9 *ibid*, p 50.

10 *ibid*, p 3.

11 *Draft Operational Plan*, *op.cit.* p 1

deregulated. Support for the high arts was maintained, but a more commercial approach to fund-raising and management was encouraged."¹²

2.16 In response to a rising scepticism about the value of arts subsidy, decision-makers moved to focus their expenditure more precisely in an attempt to demonstrate its effectiveness.

2.17 If subsidy for the arts is to be spent in order to meet a funding agency's targets as well as the aims of the applicant artist or arts organisation, the purpose of the expenditure necessarily changes. The enabling grant, determined exclusively on the grounds of perceived artistic quality, is giving ground to something that more closely approaches an investment or the purchase of a service.

2.18 The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon sees itself as "the State's development agency for the arts" and intends to work through "projects aimed specifically at refining or replacing existing programmes, system and structures so they reflect better the development needs of the arts".¹³ It follows that this is "the right moment for a major conceptual shift in arts support to the more dynamic and forward-looking of investment in peoples' creative potential and achievement".¹⁴

Implications for the Individual Artist

2.19 For some artists, this transformation of the funding environment poses threats. In his famous BBC radio talk in 1945, Maynard Keynes, the first chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain, said: "Everyone, I fancy, recognises that the work of the artist in all its aspects is, of its nature, individual and free, undisciplined, unregimented, uncontrolled. The artist walks where the breath of the spirit blows him."¹⁵

2.20 For many years this view has found a powerful echo in funding mechanisms which place few explicit demands on artists in return for their grants. The principle of buying time for artists is widely accepted. In some Nordic countries multi-year or even lifelong bursaries are available.¹⁶ In Ireland tax concessions are open to certain categories of professional creative artist (in literature, music and the visual arts) and membership of Aosdána, an affiliation of artists, can be accompanied by means-tested five-year annuities.

2.21 The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon has a proud tradition of providing direct support for artists and the question has to be asked whether its award programmes will need modification or even abandonment in the new planning regime. Are there any inherent contradictions between a more conditional philosophy of subsidy and the free creator? This report proposes that there is a constructive answer to the question.

2.22 There is a danger that artists' freedom of expression, or at least of action, runs the risk of being compromised and "instrumentalised". They may find themselves being dragooned into alliances which appear to subordinate their aesthetic concerns to social priorities and where they are working with partners who are insensitive to their needs. They argue that these kinds of constraint will lead to work of lesser quality and originality.

2.23 An important joint project between the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Combat Poverty Agency illustrates some of the challenges involved in seeking to marry social objectives with artistic endeavour. In *Poverty: Access and Participation in the Arts*, a report by a joint working group, it was stated: "At the very least, major arts funders, arts organisations and institutions in receipt of public funding should, for reasons of equity and as part of their overall accountability in relation to public expenditure, be asked to consider

12 *In from the margins: A contribution to the debate on culture and development in Europe*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1997, p 63.

13 *ibid*, p 9.

14 *ibid*, p 13.

15 *Cited in The Glory of the Garden: The Development of the Arts in Britain*, Arts Council of Great Britain, London, 1984, p iii.

16 In Finland nine specialist arts commissions are responsible for awarding one-year, three-year and five-year grants; there is also a project grant system for materials, equipment, training, and gallery and studio rents. In Norway about 500 established artists receive a guaranteed minimum income until their retirement and, for younger artists, there are various special fellowship programmes, grants and allowances. In Sweden the state supports about 150 artists with lifelong salaries "for excellent achievements" and a guaranteed income is paid to about 200 writers.

basic questions as to how the outcomes of their activities will impact on those affected by poverty and disadvantage. It is the responsibility of the arts community to recognise and acknowledge the issues as a challenge at a policy level."¹⁷

2.24 Although artists who facilitated particular projects/artwork with low-income groups gave positive feedback, the report noted the lack of specific policies among arts providers which related directly to people on low incomes. A quotation from a representative of an arts venue was perhaps indicative of the anxieties felt by those who were sceptical of socially-oriented arts policies. "Our business is an artistic business and we try to create images, stories and visions. These visions do empower people, but their function is not to empower people, but to be creative. It's about cultural democracy and doing art for its own sake and not as a tool for doing something else."¹⁸

2.25 Some artists, perhaps a growing number, see their mission as being to work in social settings, but others do not. It does not fall within the remit of the current report to seek to adjudicate in this debate.

However, practical issues arise. If artists are to play an increasing role in partnership schemes of one type or another with non-arts institutions, are there safeguards that will protect the artist's liberties while enabling partners to achieve their objectives? Is there a case for training artists and their non-arts collaborators so that both sides are more aware of and sensitive to each other's expectations and needs?

2.26 Although both Arts Councils are moving towards a broadly-based cultural vision, officers in both agencies place great weight on continuing to support those who do "art for its own sake". They have no wish to abandon this role. However, they recognise the importance of showing the governments which finance them - and, indeed, taxpayers - that subsidies to individual artists do attain agreed policy goals and are in the public interest. The findings of the survey conducted by Annabel Jackson Associates provide a sound basis for offering such a demonstration of value, although a number of procedural reforms and the explicit articulation of objectives will be necessary.

17 *Poverty Access and Participation in the Arts, a report by a Working Group on Poverty Access and Participation in the Arts, Combat Poverty Agency and Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, p 5*

18 *ibid, p 66*

3 Mechanisms of Support

Introduction

3.1.1 The island of Ireland has a total population of about 5,200,000 (3,626,087 in the Republic of Ireland, according to the 1991 census and 1,577,836 in Northern Ireland). This is less than that of many European conurbations and is about the same as that of Finland and Denmark.

3.1.2 Although Irish artists have exerted an immeasurable influence on Western culture in general, and on British and American culture in particular, and have asserted a distinctive cultural identity, they have suffered in certain practical ways from the numerical smallness of the society from which they sprang.

3.1.3 The domestic market for their work is too restricted to maintain as many professional careers as there are talented and productive artists - both creative and interpretative. The film, television and music publishing industries offer comparatively limited opportunities for actors, musicians and writers. There is only a handful of well-financed building-based theatre companies and no year-round ballet company or opera house. There are insufficient galleries and exhibition/performance spaces for visual and live artists. Opportunities for classical musicians and composers are restricted.

3.1.4 At the same time, artists at the outset of their careers often feel obliged to go abroad to undertake or to complete their training.

3.1.5 Some European governments of equivalent size, which suffer from similar difficulties in relation to cultural development, invest significantly larger sums in the arts at home and their promotion abroad. Whereas the Republic of Ireland's direct public spending on the arts *per capita* was IRE10.36 (1997), that of (for example) Finland was IRE38.51 (1997).

3.1.6 It is not surprising, then, that the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon has long been concerned with the social and economic status of artists and has devoted much time and money to seeking ways of improving their situation. This chapter opens with a historical perspective and marks some of the milestones in the Council's developing support of individual artists. It then sets out in summary form the main features of government and Arts Council support for the individual artist.

Republic of Ireland

A Historical Perspective

3.2.1 The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon was founded in 1951 and almost from the outset concerned itself with improving the condition of artists in Irish society (in 1957 it excluded from consideration traditional and amateur arts). It supported a proposal which was put to the government in 1952 that a fund be established to enable compassionate grants to be made to distinguished writers and artists who needed financial assistance, but it was not until 1966 that the Ciste Cholmcille (the Cholmcille Fund) was created, but without government finance. Although the Council opened and administered a number of trust funds designed to benefit certain categories of artist, it was not for some years that it gave direct support to the individual artist. From late in the 1960s the government and the Council erected the four pillars which still support their commitment to creative endeavour - direct awards, income tax relief, travel grants and direct intervention in arts training at tertiary education level.

3.2.2 In 1969 a Finance Act was passed in the Republic of Ireland giving tax exemption on earnings from "original and creative" work of cultural and artistic merit and the Council provided the authorities with a list of eligible artists. The Council agreed to support both creative and interpretative artists, but on more than one occasion set its face against providing financial assistance for the amateur arts. Thus a Council minute of a meeting held on 22 February 1974 recorded: "It is the opinion of the Council that Irish Dancing, by which is meant step-dancing and general dancing such as takes place at *ceilidhes*, does not come within the terms of the Arts Act, 1951, and that Ballet does come within the terms of the said Act." At a major policy meeting in September 1978 it was remarked that "there are dangers in concentrating too much time and energy on the folk-arts [and] that an arts council must cater primarily for the

higher and elite works". In 1989 the Council debated a proposal to fund amateur drama, but it decided to continue supporting professional organisations (today the Council provides financial assistance for professional participation in amateur drama and funds one of the sector's umbrella bodies, the Drama League of Ireland). However, one important area of voluntary practice, youth drama, has received growing support since 1980 and is now well developed.

3.2.3 In 1974 the Council agreed a five-point plan, which said that "ideally a sum of money, possibly IR£100,000, should be made available every year for bursaries to both creative and interpretative artists", although the government did not respond to the proposal. During the early 1970s discussions took place on the importance of increasing opportunities for artists abroad and contact was made with the Cultural Relations Committee of the Department for Foreign Affairs. Travel bursaries were established. It was recognised that in a small country such as the Republic artists would need to attend training courses or develop their careers in foreign countries.

3.2.4 In 1975 a scheme of bursaries for creative writers was established and was soon extended to a programme of scholarships and awards in music and the visual arts together with a film script award. The annual report for 1976 noted: "Provision for the individual artist and musician was identified as a major priority for the Council". In June of that year an important debate took place on the arts in education; the Council was largely concerned with primary and secondary schools, but questions were raised about the inadequacy of tertiary provision for career training in drama and music.

3.2.5 In the same year the Irish Marketing Survey was commissioned to conduct research into the Status of the Artist in Ireland and a report was presented to the Council in 1979.¹⁹ Amongst items agreed by the Arts Council was the promotion of Irish composers and performers abroad, and criticisms were expressed of the Cultural Relations Committee of the Foreign Affairs Department: "A dynamic approach was necessary if Irish creative and interpretive [sic] talent were to be promoted abroad effectively." In addition, contacts were to be established with residential institutions in Europe with a view to establishing an artists' exchange programme.

3.2.6 Support for the principle of *droit de suite* for visual artists was agreed four years later and a proposal for the establishment of resale rights for painters and sculptors was submitted to the government. However, no action resulted and a copyright bill currently before the Dail contains no measure to introduce it although the implementation of a European directive may result in its introduction.

3.2.7 The Arts Council agreed that literature bursaries could be awarded for more than one year and that one annual award to a writer should approximate to a living wage; and that a hiring fee should be payable to artists who loaned work to touring exhibitions promoted by the Arts Council (which today encourages art galleries to follow the same practice).

3.2.8 It was also decided to make representations to the Department of Social Welfare that entitlement to retirement pensions for self-employed artists should be included in any forthcoming schemes for social welfare insurance for the self-employed and national income-related pensions.

3.2.9 In 1980 the monies set aside for individual artists doubled to IR£150,000. In September the Council returned to the question of the economic status of artists in Ireland and discussed the desirability of providing continuing financial support for artists at the end of their careers. Following a survey of the living and working conditions of artists, it considered a proposal by Anthony Cronin, a special adviser to the Taoiseach, which "envisaged a major scheme for providing on-going support for creative artists who had already achieved distinction or were on the way to doing so". Concern was expressed lest any such scheme should weaken "artistic incentive" or compromise artistic freedom.

3.2.10 This led, in due course, to the creation of one of the Council's most innovative projects, Aosdána, an association of artists engaged in literature, music and visual arts, which was established by the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon in 1983 "to honour those artists whose work

19 *Status of the Artist*, Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, Dublin, 1980.

has made an outstanding contribution to the arts in Ireland, and to encourage and assist members in devoting their energies fully to their art".²⁰ Its regulations may only be changed by unanimous decision of the Arts Council, which also administers the organisation; but in other respects it is self-governing.

3.2.11 A decade of policy development had a decisive impact on the thrust of the Council's activities. In September 1981 the Director reported on "the growing emphasis on helping individuals rather than groups", not only through award schemes, but through Aosdána and organisations such as the Contemporary Music Centre, the Association of Irish Composers, the Society of Irish Playwrights, the Artists' Association and the National Film Institute.

3.2.12 In succeeding years the balance of the various aspects of the Council's work was debated. There was a growing acknowledgement of the amateur, community and traditional arts and they were supported through a separate bundle of schemes which provided financial assistance to festivals, arts centres, community arts projects, regional development programmes and the arts in education. In due course an award for a person or persons who had rendered exceptional service to traditional music was created. In 1987 an Artists in Schools scheme was established on a pilot basis, together with an Arts Educator's Award. In 1990 an Artist in the Community scheme was launched. In response to the Dublin Arts Report²¹ of 1992 it was decided to "examine the position of the amateur arts in Ireland" and to "re-confirm the Council's stated commitment to community arts as of prime importance to the development of the arts". In 1994, during a debate on Music Awards and New Music Commissions, Council members argued that there was a need for a more participatory and community-based approach to the commissioning of new music.

3.2.13 Continuing efforts were made to enhance opportunities for Irish artists abroad and a proposal to establish a centre for Irish arts in London was progressed (no such centre is currently in existence). Travel grants in the visual arts were extended. In 1991 the Council set up ARTFLIGHT, a ground-breaking travel scheme in association with Aer Lingus, investing the substantial sum of £100,000 in its first year - and which is now a valued component of Council programmes. In 1997 the Council considered a paper on the Promotion of Irish Arts Abroad. In the same year the Go See Fund was established on a pilot basis to promote cultural exchange and interaction between arts personnel in Ireland and the United Kingdom.

3.2.14 Meanwhile discussions continued on the employment of artists and their tax status. In 1989 a survey into employment in the arts was commissioned (to form the basis for a request for increased government funding).²² The Council committed itself to advocating the introduction of a Home Recording Royalty/Blank Tape Levy Scheme. In the event this did not take place; the Council would have agreed to such a levy if a proportion of the funds were to be assigned to socio-cultural application, but those concerned with the promotion of music rights disagreed. In 1994 the Revenue Commissioners revised income tax guidelines in relation to section 2 of the Finance Act 1969.

3.2.15 During the 1990s the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon responded to developments in artistic practice and extended the range of artforms it covered. Many awards schemes, especially in the performing arts, sought to make up for inadequacies in the arrangements and funding for career training in Ireland.

3.2.16 In 1994 an Interdisciplinary Collaboration Scheme was adopted to encourage innovation and create opportunities for artists to create new work and to work collaboratively with artists in other disciplines. A scheme of awards for choreographers, dancers and dance teachers was approved. In 1996 a new opera commissions scheme was created, with an emphasis on workshops/ masterclass programmes for composers and singers. From 1997 support for architecture was significantly increased and a consultant architect engaged.

3.2.17 A number of underlying themes can be detected in this record of commitment to individual creativity over three decades. The first is a fluctuating debate on the relative priority to be given, on the one hand, to professional arts

20 *Aosdána*, published by Aosdána, 70 Men-ton Square, Dublin 2, Ireland, 1996, p 5.

21 *Dublin Arts Report*, Dublin Promotions Organisation, Dublin, 1992.

22 *Employment in the Arts*, CIRCLE Conference 1989, Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, 1991.

practice and, on the other, to the amateur arts and the community arts sector. The latter have been accorded greater importance in recent years. Secondly, the Council has taken on more and more responsibilities over the passage of time; this may be one reason why, despite substantial increases in government funding, its capacity to respond to the financial needs of the arts community has not kept pace. Thirdly, both its efforts, and those of government through tax legislation, have failed to improve significantly the economic status of artists in Ireland. Fourthly, a significant part of its funding for individual artists has been devoted to the interlinked issues of career development, cultural exchange and the promotion of Irish arts overseas.

The Government

3.3.1 The Irish government takes special account of the needs of artists in its taxation legislation.²³ Under section 2 (2) of the Finance Act 1969, artists may get tax exemption on income from the sale of any "original and creative" pieces of work. In 1994 new guidelines were published regarding eligibility for Tax Exempt Status. These state that in order to secure Tax Exemption Status a work has to be both original and creative and must have either cultural or artistic merit. Eligible works are: a book or other writing; a play; a musical composition; a painting or picture; or a sculpture. The 1994 revisions to the Act also introduced changes in the rules determining the residence of an individual for tax purposes. Artists must apply to the Revenue Commissioners who then grant exemption on income from sales and copyright fees.

3.3.2 The Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) Class S scheme is designed to give cover for self-employed people, including artists, without a means test. The contribution includes a social insurance element and provides cover for: widow's and widower's contributory pensions; orphan's contributory pension; old age contributory pension; maternity benefit; and adoptive benefit. Under the Social Welfare Act 1988 all self-employed people, over the age of 16 and under the age of 66 and with a reckonable income of more than IR£2,500, are liable to pay PRSI Class S. This includes artists who are exempt from tax under section 2 of the Finance Act 1969.

3.3.3 Artists are also able to receive Unemployment Assistance (UA), which is means-tested and linked to not having previously paid PRSI contributions. To qualify for UA one must be available for, and actively seeking work, and this has been problematic for artists, who may, under the current criteria, be pressured into looking for work outside of their creative field. Many drama companies cannot afford to pay actors during rehearsals. They are, therefore, "unavailable for work" and should not draw the dole.

3.3.4 Current copyright legislation dates back to 1963 and is similar in scope to the United Kingdom's 1956 Copyright Act. The Copyright Amendment Act primarily brought the previous legislation up to date in terms of film distribution. Generally copyright lasts for the life of the author, plus 70 years after his/her death. This was extended from 50 years in July 1995 as a result of a European Union Directive harmonising the term of protection of copyright and certain related rights. The Directive also introduced a 25-year period of protection for the benefit of the first person to publish or communicate to the public a previously unpublished literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work or film in which copyright has expired. It further required a 50-year period of protection for "related rights" (e.g. sound recordings, broadcast and cable programme and the rights of performers). Authorship is not synonymous with ownership - the author can transfer it in whole or part to another person or agency such as, for example, a collecting society.

3.3.5 Legislation also includes design rights, protecting three-dimensional designs from being commercially copied, lasting 10 years from when the design was first marketed. In addition, it makes provision for moral rights, which aim to protect the artistic, intrinsic value of a piece of artwork and the reputation of its author/creator.

3.3.6 There is no comprehensive system of artists' collecting societies in Ireland and therefore many artists have to rely on individual (as opposed to collective) collection of copyright fees. The existing collecting societies are Irish Music Rights Organisation (for composers, writers and publishers) and the Irish Copyright Licensing Agency (reprography fees on copyright material).

23 This section is indebted to a report commissioned by Annabel Jackson Associates on copyright, royalties, taxation and social security in the Republic and in Northern Ireland, from the International Arts Bureau.

3.3.6 One of the government's most successful direct interventions is the Per Cent for Art Scheme, administered by the Department of the Environment and the Office of Public Works. Initiated in 1985, new guidelines were issued in 1997 which allow for a visual arts component for all construction projects financed or recouped by the government (most of which are managed by local authorities). Depending on the scale of the project maximum sums for the commissioning and installation of new works of art range from IR20,000 to IR£50,000. The scheme has burgeoned and is transforming the visual arts economy - and, indeed, the nature of much creative practice.

Education

3.4.1 The funding arrangements for career education in the arts is complicated. If a student is given a place on an approved undergraduate course at an educational institution in the Republic of Ireland which is included in the Free Fees Initiative (i.e. institutions which are publicly funded, and a number of non-publicly funded religious colleges which are approved for the purposes of the Higher Education Grants Scheme and part of the Central Applications Office system of entry), tuition fees are paid to eligible students by the State in full and without means-testing. Maintenance grants are means-tested. At post-graduate level, local authorities will pay the fees up to an annually approved limit of those attending approved courses, but on a means-tested basis. Those studying at commercial, non-approved colleges will not qualify for either form of assistance. However, section 6 of the Finance Act 1995 provides for tax relief on tuition fees paid by students who are attending private third-level colleges. Such students or their parents, as appropriate, can avail themselves of tax relief, at the standard rate, on tuition fees paid in respect of full-time undergraduate courses of at least two years' duration in such colleges, provided that both the college and the course satisfy the prescribed Codes of Standard.

3.4.2 In the performing arts the limited range of courses currently on offer in the Republic of Ireland may not suit the needs of a particular student or match the reputations of those in other countries. So a number of Irish students go abroad for their studies, often to England. In such cases, the Republic of Ireland government will continue to provide means-tested maintenance grants for approved undergraduate courses in the United Kingdom, but will not make any contribution to the payment of fees. These UK fees are payable at a flat rate of £1,025 per annum. Provided students are EU nationals, have been resident in the European Economic Area (which includes Ireland) for a minimum of three years and the course attended is eligible, the UK Department for Education and Employment (DFEE) will make grants to defray these fees on a means-tested basis.

3.4.3 So far as UK post-graduate courses are concerned, intending students and the educational institution at which they hope to be awarded a place submit an application to the Arts and Humanities Research Board established by the DFEE. The sum of applications in a given discipline is then competitively assessed by an expert panel. Those candidates who succeed are offered a contribution to tuition fees up to UK£2,675. This is not means-tested, but no UK-funded maintenance grants are available. The success rate in the competition is up to 80% and it is understood that few students are awarded places who have failed to obtain a fee contribution from the Research Board. EU nationals may apply.

3.4.4 In summary, then, it would appear that Irish students wishing to attend recognised undergraduate courses will obtain funding, if necessary, both in the Republic of Ireland and in England. Means-tested maintenance grants are available to eligible students on approved full-time undergraduate courses of not less than two years' duration provided in approved third level institutions within the E.U. In Ireland under the Free Fees Initiative the Exchequer meets the tuition fees of eligible students who are attending approved third-level courses at approved third-level institutions. Eligible students are third level students who are (a) first-time undergraduates and (b) are E.U. nationals and have been ordinarily resident in an E.U. Member State for at least three of the five years preceding their entry to an approved third-level course. Contributions to the payment of fees are means-tested in England.

3.4.5 Unfortunately, a major difficulty arises for students of dance and drama. While both in the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom under-graduate music and visual arts courses mainly fall within the public sector, many performance courses in the United Kingdom are offered by private (non- accredited) schools, such as the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts or the Royal Ballet School in London. These charge substantial fees, but until now they have been non-accredited and so the UK government has not offered to contribute to student costs. However, local authorities have discretionary power to do so. In the Republic of Ireland, drama and dance education is also primarily private and almost entirely non-designated. Neither the Irish government nor local councils help students with fees and maintenance for performance courses offered by private institutions, whether at home or abroad. This means that intending actors or dancers have to finance their education with no state assistance.

3.4.6 As is shown below, the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon has sought to fill the gap by offering discretionary awards to drama and dance students who wish to study in the United Kingdom or elsewhere. However, it seems clear that it is not necessary for the Council to intervene in music and the visual arts, whether at undergraduate or post-graduate levels.

Local Government

3.5.1 Spending on the arts by local authorities in the Republic is discretionary and low. They are allowed but not required to provide for the arts in their areas. As a recent Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon report remarks: "Until there is a more permanent legislative base for the arts at local level continued funding will be discretionary and, as such, under threat of cutbacks or, indeed, extinction."²⁴

3.5.2 The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon has done a great deal to encourage local authorities to support the arts. Since 1985 when the first arts officer was appointed to a local authority, 30 local authorities have introduced arts officer posts. The Arts Council has supported this policy by sharing the costs of salaries with each local authority. In addition, it has awarded substantial grants to support the programmes of county arts offices.

3.5.3 Authoritative and comprehensive figures for local authority spending on the arts are hard to come by. According to an Arts Council survey, in 1997, total gross expenditure (i.e. inclusive of grants and earned income) was IR£5,164,015 and, although this represented a 58% increase since 1994, it was an improvement from a very low base. Of the net figure Irish local authorities spend a little more than £1 per head of population, as compared with IRE7.67 in England and more than IR£15.08 in Finland.²⁵

3.5.4 Local authorities devote a large part of their available budgets to municipal venues and direct spending on arts programmes and the provision of arts grants is a small (although in most art forms rapidly rising) proportion of their overall expenditure. In 1997 it amounted to IR£1,280,000. When divided by the number of art forms and other categories such as arts centres and visual arts, specialist budgets for local authorities in aggregate ranged from nearly IR£70,000 for dance to nearly IR£180,000 for festivals. There is a noticeable emphasis on community arts and the voluntary/amateur sector.

3.5.5 One budget head of direct financial value to artists is Public Art. According to the Arts Council survey expenditure in 1997 by the five local authorities which submitted returns under this heading was IR£241,300. Of the 31 authorities which responded to the survey only 15 claimed to utilise the Per Cent for Art Scheme.

3.5.6 It seems that, outside of the visual arts, individual artists receive comparatively little in unmediated benefit from the local government sector, although they may, of course, be able to make use of venues and facilities. This is in sharp

²⁴ *Local authority expenditure on the arts - a four year perspective*, Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, Dublin, May, 1999, p 5. It should be noted that international comparisons need to take into account the fact that Irish local authorities do not have the power to raise local taxation; there are commercial rates, but no domestic rates. In other words, councils in Ireland are not entirely their own financial masters.

²⁵ *Local authority expenditure on the arts: A four year perspective*, Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon Dublin, May 1999, p 12 International comparisons need to be interpreted cautiously The high level of expenditure in Finland is partly attributable to its decentralised form of government; however, central spending is also much higher than in Ireland

contrast to the situation in some other European countries where municipal councils and regional authorities recognise the importance of culture in terms of community development, civic prestige, tourism and economic development - and, within that, a valued role for artists and workers in the creative industries.

The Arts Council

3.6.1 The section that follows does not purport to offer a comprehensive description of the various schemes by which the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon supports individual artists; that can be found in *Research into Support for the Individual Artist*. Rather, it seeks to identify the key trends and aims that underpin them, as well as giving some indication of the indirect ways through which artists benefit from Council expenditure.

3.6.2 In 1998 the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon spent IR£910,601 on direct support for individual artists, of which IR£185,870 was attributed to ARTFLIGHT; additionally, IR£943,402 in *cnuais* (this was broken down by artform below; it should be noted that IR£4,107 was devoted to architecture and IR£3,234 was spent on ARTFLIGHT Awards under the heading of Local Authorities). Total provision by government stood at IR£26 million (including a capital provision of IR£2.5 million), from which the Council was able to offer financial assistance to about 300 arts organisations and facilitators. Most support schemes are artform specific, but two are available across all the arts - Artists in Residence (in primary, post-primary, special schools and the education units of prisons) and Artists in Residence - Youthwork (designed to encourage collaborations between artists and the youth service agencies). In 1998 they were budgeted under the heading of multidisciplinary arts.

3.6.3 There is a clear division of primary objectives between the performing and the other arts - with the former seeing career education or training during their professional lives as the leading priority and the latter the making of art.

Dance

3.7.1 In 1998 IR£81,275 was spent on awards to choreographers, professional dancers, undergraduate dance students, professional dance teachers, travel awards, a dance commission scheme and ARTFLIGHT. The all-embracing aim was to encourage training and career development. A Dance Artists in Residence scheme encouraged collaboration between dance artists and the community, with the aim of benefiting the dance development programmes of arts centres and local authority officers.

3.7.2 Peter Brinson and Andy Ormston noted in 1985: "There are very few centres in Ireland which train young dancers to a level which would make them competitive in auditions for classical or modern dance companies abroad and it is against standards abroad that we must look...to measure professional standards in Ireland. Hence young Irish dance talent continues to be sent overseas to complete its training, often ... never to return".²⁶ A more recent report remarks that "this unhappy situation is still true today".²⁷

3.7.3 Most direct support goes to those in early career (for example, through informal apprenticeships for choreographers or study visits and short courses for professional dancers). Because of the gap in funding from the education authorities in Ireland, help is given to those wishing to pursue tertiary education study abroad, especially in the United Kingdom.

3.7.4 The Arts Council welcomes the success of Irish commercial dance and commends the lively traditional dance sector. Support for Irish traditional dance, as with other traditional arts, has long been forthcoming from a range of State Departments, in particular from the Gaeltacht Section of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands and the Department of Education and Science. Ballroom dance is popular. Youth interest in dance is high, no doubt particularly in pop genres as well as ballet and contemporary dance.

3.7.5 The Council's policy for dance is all-embracing, including traditional and sean nós (literally, old style). Support has been given to dance artists-in-residence in Gaeltacht areas and

²⁶ Brinson, P. and A. Ormston, *The Dancer and The Dance*, Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, Dublin 1985, pp 10,11.

²⁷ Leatherdale, A., and V.Todd, *Shall We Dance?* Ms Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, Dublin, 1998.

the Dance Commission scheme has supported two new works informed by the sean n6s genre. A recent report on dance education and training in Ireland, published by the two Arts Councils, was all-embracing in approach and included Irish traditional dance. However, in reality, attention is concentrated on ballet and contemporary dance, perhaps reflecting the provision available for traditional arts within other government agencies. Of the 38 Awards in 1998, 19 went to contemporary dance practitioners, 15 to ballet practitioners, one each to practitioners in flamenco, tap, musical theatre and a dance writer. There is a need for the Arts Council to pursue actively the involvement of traditional artists and genres in all areas of its dance awards scheme. It should also look to the popular and social dance genres (e.g., ballroom, jazz and pop, so bringing a wider diversity to its funded programmes.

3.7.6 Although a ballet training (along with experience in contemporary dance) can provide a basic foundation for attainment in all kinds of dance, there may be a case for further considering the development needs of those who work in the commercial sector or who achieve high standards in traditional dance.

3.7.7 A dancer's working life is short, but no dancers' pension scheme and retraining opportunities exist in the Republic. At some point this may need to be rectified (the dancers' pension scheme in the United Kingdom might be a useful model). Although dancers' welfare requirements are mentioned in the Arts Plan, no specific actions are listed to satisfy them. A step in the right direction would be for the Revenue Commissioners to extend to dancers a concession they make to athletes, a group which also is characterised by short working lives. They allow athletes to pay more than 15% of their income into a pension fund while the athlete is still in his/her twenties and claim tax relief (for other individuals, tax relief is only available up to a ceiling of 15%).

3.7.8 Apparently, choreography does not qualify for tax exemption. This may be because it is supposed that dance cannot be recorded in written form; this, of course, is not the case, for the techniques of choreology enable a work of choreography to have a life as long as that of a play or a book.

3.7.9 The ballet and contemporary dance community in Ireland is small and, the Arts Plan notes, "there are no dancers professionally employed full-time as creative or performing artists".²⁸ Many supplement their earnings through teaching. The institutional infrastructure is weak: five dance companies received general grants, but the scale of investment is very low (the largest grant in 1998 only being I R£145,000).

3.7.10 There can be little doubt that, as claimed, the awards offered expose Irish dancers to new techniques, enlarge the pool of artists available to choreographers and increase the range of artistic skills.

3.7.11 They also open opportunities for Irish dancers to work in the United Kingdom and the Unites States. However, it is permissible to question whether this is an altogether desirable outcome so long as dance in Ireland remains infrastructurally weak. It seems unlikely that the development of Irish dancers and choreographers through awards will have much cumulative impact on the dance scene until there are at least two well-financed dance companies (perhaps one for ballet and another for contemporary dance) and a high-quality dance school in the Republic. As will be suggested later in relation to the other performing arts, an essential means of supporting the individual artist may be through substantially increased institutional investment. Clearly, this is beyond the Council's power to consider at the present level of arts funding by the government, but (although this is to stray beyond this report's terms of reference) without a long-term development strategy it is hard to envisage much progress being made.

Drama

3.8.1 In 1998 IR£134,425 was spent on awards for training in acting, designers for the stage, play directors and studio rental assistance (for set, costume and other designers) and on Travel Awards and ARTFLIGHT. The key priority is the provision of adequate career education and training. As with dance, there is a heavy emphasis on filling a perceived gap in third level education. Few resources are devoted to drama professionals in mid-career, but it has been noted that travel grants and ARTFLIGHTS have been sought by this category in order to attend both short and longer-

term training courses. This may be an area which merits further enquiry.

3.8.2 Nearly half of the budget is devoted to training in acting. Awards are open to aspiring actors who have completed one year's study on a recognised course. The Council's awards booklet recognises that the course may be in Ireland, but it is accepted that there is a strong probability that the applicant will be required to study abroad. The Council identifies a reluctance on the part of both the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to offer the type of education or vocational training and certification that is available for other professions and trades.

3.8.3 So far as play directing is concerned, support is concentrated on "on the job" training. The Play Directors in Residence scheme enables theatre companies in Ireland to offer placements of at least three months for young directors with professional companies.

3.8.4 Playwrights benefit from a Playwrights' Commissioning Scheme, for which theatre companies in receipt of annual funding of less than IR£150,000 may make application. Eleven Awards were made in 1998, although the number of unsubsidised commissioned plays by companies in receipt of Council funding was higher. Playwrights are also eligible for Literature Awards.

3.8.5 The Arts Council's Drama Department acknowledges that there are gaps in its provision, which it would fill if it could afford to do so. No funding is currently available for post-graduate study. Despite the increasing sophistication of stage technology, there is a shortage of professionally and formally trained stage technicians in the Republic of Ireland (which is being made up by imported UK technicians); most Irish people engaged in these activities have been trained on the job. Their lack of formal training becomes most evident in cases of co-productions between Irish and foreign companies. At present, there are no Arts Council schemes to encourage their recruitment and training. With increased financial resources, awards could be offered for training in stage management and lighting courses available in the United Kingdom. It would also be useful to provide increased developmental assistance to stage designers and training for front-of-house staff.

3.8.6 Ireland's achievements in theatre are one of its glories. The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon funds 45 companies, which present about 120 productions annually, and there is a wide diversity of creative and interpretative talent. Audiences have risen in recent years. However, although less seriously so than in dance, there are institutional weaknesses which adversely affect the situation of individual artists. For such a substantial sector the inadequate provision for career education in Ireland as well as further training/skills development is surprising. Because of the low level of capital investment and refurbishment, the physical infra-structure of theatre buildings is fragile. Most theatre companies are small and the subsidies which the Council is able to offer are, with a handful of exceptions, low. Although the Abbey Theatre receives an annual subvention of more than IR£3 million, the Gate Theatre IR£600,000 and Druid Theatre Company IR£300,000, grants for most of remainder range from IR£50,000 and IR£100,000. The consequence is that there appear to be insufficient career opportunities in Ireland in the subsidised sector for the talent available and theatre artists find themselves obliged to work abroad or in commercial film and television. This reduces their availability for work with Irish theatre companies, especially outside of Dublin.

Film

3.9.1 The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon shares responsibility for film support with a number of other state bodies - the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, Bord Scannán na hÉireann, RTÉ, TG4, FÁS (Screen Training Ireland is under the auspices of FÁS) and the Irish Screen Commission. Its broad aim is to help the development of a dynamic film and video culture in Ireland; more specifically it is concerned with film as an artform. As well as supporting resource organisations for film makers, festivals and educational activity, it makes resources available to individual film makers.

3.9.2 In 1998 IR£132,000 was allocated to awards to both established and emerging film makers (individuals or production companies) for the production of short dramas, experimental film and video and community film and video. In addition,

the Frameworks Awards for animation are co-funded with RTÉ and Bord Scannán na hÉireann and Splanc with TG4. A further IR£24,529 was spent on training schemes and ARTFLIGHT.

3.9.4 While more assistance is given to film makers at the beginning of their careers, support is also consistently given to those in mid-career. Although there are no exclusions, the Council aims to help individuals familiarise themselves with an artform in which costs are high and to provide support for those working in the visual arts, film and video, and multi-media.

3.9.5 The Council works to meet the particular needs of the individual film maker within the context of its artistic remit and with a consciousness of the broader film environment within which the individual is placed. To date, this has meant the development of particular award schemes to meet particular needs at particular times (e.g. the development of Film Training Awards in 1996, which met an identified need in advance of Screen Training Ireland taking on responsibility for this area).

3.9.6 The Council is well placed, if not well financed, to fill the gap between the arts as traditionally defined and the film and television industries at a time when more and more artists are crossing the old artform boundaries.

Literature

3.10.1 In 1998 IR£149,249 was spent on awards to writers through bursaries, travel and ARTFLIGHT grants. Also 42 writers received IR£352,454 in *cnuais* as members of Aosdána. Bursaries are allocated to buy time, to give status and to encourage new and emergent artists and to foster talent. Awards can be fairly substantial, rising to £10,000 over two years, although on occasion they are much smaller. Multi-annual bursaries in literature have been on offer from An Chomhairle Ealaíon since 1995 with an average of four being awarded each year. Assessments are carried out by peer assessors and from 1999 this panel is to include an international expert. A separate panel, which came into being in 1999, assesses Irish language applications.

3.10.2 In all cases it is expected that a publication will result from the Council's assistance, although this is not a formal condition. So while the formation of the artist is an aim of literature awards, the more important purpose is the making of art.

3.10.3 In the current year the eligibility criteria for awards are being revised in order to focus them more precisely and with a clearer differentiation between support for emergent and established writers.

3.10.4 The Council encourages the development of literature programmes by financing writers in residence (in association with local authorities and universities), the aims of which are to benefit both communities and the artists, and provides financial support and advice to the Department of Justice for its Writers in Prison scheme. It also funds literary festivals and a number of literary organisations, including the Irish Writers' Centre in Dublin (which funds a writers in the community scheme) and Poetry Ireland (which operates a writers in primary and secondary schools scheme in association with the Arts Council). Irish publishers, which face increased competition from the few multi-national corporations that now own most London publishing houses, are assisted and the Literature Department is anxious to encourage the international promotion of contemporary Irish writing.

3.10.5 A number of other state agencies share responsibility with the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon for the promotion of literature, including Bord na Leabhar Gaeilge, The Library Council and An Gum. Some language-development agencies such as Bord na Gaeilge also support writing in Irish. Funding for translations of Irish literature (from both English and Irish) into other languages is provided by The Ireland Literature Exchange, which is supported by the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the Department of Foreign Affairs, an Bord na Leabhar Gaeilge.

Music

3.11.1 In 1998 IR£128,069 was spent on awards and bursaries for advanced instrumentalists and singers, composers, composers' apprenticeship schemes, composers' postgraduate study courses, conductors' study, jazz development, the Skidmore Jazz Award, travel and ARTFLIGHT. Eight members of Aosdána received IR£77,616 in *cnuais*.

3.11.2 The main emphasis is placed on training and career formation, with less direct concern to promote the making of art. As with the other performing arts, the Council sees the need to bridge gaps in the education sector. (The availability of recognised public sector music departments means that student funding is easier to obtain than in drama and dance and awards are not offered at undergraduate level.)

3.11.3 The *Arts Plan* notes that "the inadequacy of education and training provision relative to demand at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels seriously constrains the development of music in Ireland [RoI]".²⁹ After that musicians have little choice but to pursue their studies abroad. Bursaries for advanced instrumentalists and singers facilitate high-level development and training, in principle for all forms of music, by undertaking fourth-level study abroad. Composers are funded to pursue composition studies at post-graduate level.

3.11.4 Bursaries for composers buy time by providing a period of sabbatical leave for those who wish to complete a specific piece of work or undertake a particular course of study. Likewise, awards are available for conductors who wish to pursue studies in Ireland or abroad.

3.11.5 Apart from jazz, with its two award schemes, classical music is the genre that receives most support. It is argued that this may partly be because opportunities in classical music are more limited than in other genres, although those who work in such genres may well disagree, and that classical music attracts the largest amount of applications (which could, of course, be the consequence of an accurate awareness of the Council's preferences). It is also pointed out that traditional music received IR£270,000 in 1999 from the Council as well as support from other quarters. Rock and pop musicians make extensive use of ARTFLIGHT as well as receiving support from the State and from the music industry.

3.11.6 Interestingly, the *Arts Plan* notes: "The professional infrastructure is constrained by the fact that outside of Radio Telefís Éireann there is little full-time or long-term employment in music, and the working conditions in traditional and classical genres tend to be uncertain. This inhibits the development of specialist performance ensembles in early, contemporary or jazz music, and limits traditional and popular or rock music performance to those areas which have a potential for commercial exploitation."³⁰

3.11.7 This all-embracing analysis is not yet fully reflected in the Council's music funding programmes. It is the leading state agency for the arts and it is widely recognised that its support confers status as well as money. Perhaps the time is approaching for the Council to endorse a broader range of music-making by extending the range of creative and interpretative musicians who receive awards and bursaries.

Opera

3.12.1 Until recently the only tailor-made scheme offered to artists in opera has been the Opera Training Award, which is open to creative and/or technical personnel and which in 1998 had a budget of IR£10,000. Singers are catered for through music bursaries (in 1998 they received IR£5,750).

3.12.2 Following a review of opera provision during the term of the Council's first *Arts Plan* a fund for commissioning new opera was created (amounting to IR£10,000 in 1998) and now provides project funding to broaden the range of opera practitioners and expand opera audiences.

3.12.3 As with drama and dance, training opportunities in Ireland are inadequate and are limited to basic vocal training. There is little scope to develop skills as *repetiteur*, director, producer or designer. The institutional infrastructure is restricted to three main companies, which receive operating grants which ranged from IR£320,000 to IR£527,000 in 1999 - sums which fall well below what is needed to support an internationally competitive opera culture.

Visual Arts

3.13.1 In 1998 IR£228,781 was spent on awards and bursaries, travel and ARTFLIGHT. Awards are available for major projects and also for studio rental, materials, equipment, documentation and postgraduate scholarships. Most are aimed at professional artists who have been practising for more than three years, and whose main objective is to

²⁹ *Arts Plan, op.cit.* p 41.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p 41

buy time and make a work of art. An award, offered in association with the Irish American Cultural Institute, makes studio space available for an Irish visual artist in New York. Some 51 visual arts members of Aosdána received IR£447,732 in *cnuais*.

3.13.2 An analysis of awards by genre shows that by far the largest number go to painters and sculptors.³¹ According to the Annabel Jackson Associates survey, some artists criticised the Council for not responding adequately to "cross-over" creative practice, a point particularly relevant to visual artists who wished to experiment with film, video and new media. It is indeed the case that relatively little support is offered to those working in new media, installation, live art and film/video (but see Film and Video Awards 3.9.4). Few applications are received. This may be because few artists work in these fields in Ireland, but perhaps the Arts Council should review the range of its visual arts funding and make any necessary changes to its decision-making process/advisory systems either to ensure a "level playing field" or to foster innovation.

3.13.3 Uniquely in the art forms the Visual Arts Department invests in a scheme to enable artists to make their work accessible to people with disabilities. It also funds an artists in prisons scheme in association with the Department of Justice.

3.13.4 In a joint initiative with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in conjunction with *CIRCA* magazine, an annual bursary is awarded in contemporary visual arts criticism with a view to encourage the development of standards in critical writing. There is an as yet unresolved debate as to whether this is a more effective policy than investing in visual arts journalism in the daily press.

3.13.5 Materials and equipment grants are very small. However, bearing in mind their constrained financial circumstances, many visual artists receive them gratefully not only for their practical value, but for the endorsement that a Council grant is felt to confer.

3.13.6 Although there is a limited number of post-graduate courses in Ireland, some artists wish to study abroad and for this reason the Council offers visual arts and architecture post-graduate scholar-ships (but see 3.4.4).

3.13.7 Compared with other art forms, the infra-structure in Ireland both for third-level training in the visual arts and for exhibition spaces is well developed. The Council funds support and resource organisations, galleries, group studios and residency facilities, visual arts publishers and major open exhibitions. It also subsidises arts centres, which curate their own shows or host touring exhibitions.

Community Arts

3.14.1 "Community arts" is not an artform, but a form of arts practice. It has won the support of many government departments and agencies, including the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, the Combat Poverty Agency, the Department of Social Welfare, Area partnerships, the Department of Education, the Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation and local authorities. However, it attracts little attention from the Council's arts departments and, although there has been a rapid growth in demand for community art form projects, they offer comparatively little support for the work of the individual community artists.

3.14.2 The *Arts Plan* notes: "The formal professional education of most artists does not include the development of specific skills in group work, facilitation and collaborative process. The opportunities for artists to work in community arts are considerable, but a limited pool of artists with requisite skills and experience has meant an unsustainable level of demand. This in turn has meant that artists, unsupported and with little experience of this work, have become involved, leading to some variable quality arts outcomes and, for the artists, some disillusionment with community arts practice."³²

3.14.3 Although there are no community artists' awards as such inside artform budgets, the Community Arts Department operates a Community Arts Development Fund with two strands. The first helps community artists to address their professional development needs and the second encourages critical reflection and evaluation. Other schemes

31 See *Research into the Individual Artist*, *op.cit.*, Table 3, and Table 24.
32 *ibid.*, p 50.

benefit community artists - the Artist in the Community scheme, the Artist in Residence in Schools, the Artist in residence in Youth Work and the US-Ireland Residency Exchange Scheme.

3.14.4 It is an appropriate time to re-balance the relative priority which the Arts Council gives to the community and participatory arts and to the professional arts as traditionally defined, and to assert an equality of esteem for all the activities it supports. If the reported demand for community arts projects and the priority given by the *Arts Plan* to the encouragement of participation are borne in mind, there would appear to be a strong case for further developing its investment in this field of creative practice and integrating it with mainstream art form policies.

Aosdána

3.15.1 As already noted, the Council spent IR£943,402 in *cnuais* for more than 90 artists in 1998, more than the total spent on awards and bursaries. Membership of Aosdána consists of not more than 200 creative (as distinct from interpretative) artists from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, who have distinguished themselves by the quality of their work. There are birth and residency eligibility qualifications and members must be not less than 30 years old. Particular achievement in an art form is also recognised by an honour known as *Saol*, of which there are not more than five at any time. Members qualify for *cnuas*, a means-tested annuity of IRES,720 for a term of five years to help them practise their art on a full-time basis.

3.15.2 At present the only artforms recognised are literature, music and the visual arts. It is not clear how a restriction, which does not recognise the arts of film as a distinct artform (although four film-makers appear in the Visual Arts list and one under Literature) and choreography, can be readily explained. Aosdána has approved a resolution to enfranchise choreographers, but the final decision rests with the Arts Council, which has yet to make a ruling.

3.15.3 It is also argued in some quarters that the exclusion of interpretative artists is inequitable. This merits careful discussion. An acknowledgement of the prestige which distinguished actors, singers or dancers bring to Irish culture would be of no small value in the continuing battle to develop these art forms (even if, as presumably successful performers, they would be unlikely to need *cnuas*).

3.15.4 Aosdána is self-regulated by a supervisory board of ten members elected every two years by a general assembly, which also selects new members and reviews the affairs of the association.

3.15.5 Annabel Jackson Associates' survey revealed a low level of knowledge of the organisation (27% of her sample of artists in the Republic had not heard of it). There was some suspicion of what was perceived as "elitism, secrecy and stagnation".³³ Many respondents wanted to limit the period of awards and to see younger and more innovative artists receive *cnuais*.

3.15.6 There does not appear to be explicit integration between *cnuais* and Arts Council awards and bursaries, except in so far as they free the latter to concentrate attention on artists at the outset of their careers.

3.15.7 Aosdána is a remarkable innovation in European arts funding and is recognised to have done much to enhance the status of artists in Ireland as well as providing practical support for writers, visual artists and composers in late and mid career. It seems clear, though, that it would be helpful if it raised its profile in the arts community and, it is to be supposed, more widely.

Northern Ireland

The Government

3.16.1 There are no tax exemptions for artists in Northern Ireland. If anything, the reverse: under a 1979 judgement from the Inland Revenue grants given to artists to produce work (for example, commissions) are taxable, whereas grants which are given to support artistic development (for example, to "buy time" for residencies or training) and do not result in an "end product" are not. There are no special social security arrangements for artists in the United Kingdom under current legislation.

3.16.2 At present there do not appear to be any plans to grant the Northern Ireland Assembly

powers to change the taxation system, but it could conceivably have jurisdiction over social security and the power to change copyright through legislation.

3.16.3 The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 protects works in nine categories - original literary; dramatic; musical; and artistic works; sound recordings, films, broadcasts and cable programmes; and the typographical arrangement of published editions. Once an original work is recorded in writing or in some other form copyright arises automatically - there is no need to register formally. Performance art is not protected unless recorded on video or described in writing.

3.16.4 The general arrangements for copyright, design rights and moral rights and those determined by the European Commission Directive harmonising the term of protection of copyright and certain related rights are as described above (see 3.3.5 and 3.3.6).

3.16.5 Royalties are paid for the use or reproduction of copyrighted works. These are collected through societies such as the Performing Rights Society

3.16.6 Under the Public Lending Right (PLR) system, payment is made from government funds to authors whose books are borrowed from public libraries. The amount payable is proportional to the estimated number of times that an author's books are borrowed nationally during a year. The maximum anyone may receive is £6,000; earnings that total less than £5 a year are not paid (this money is returned to the fund and redistributed). Authors must apply to have their books registered.

3.16.7 Experience in the United Kingdom suggests that this is a modestly useful scheme and could be a constructive addition to support for writers in the Republic of Ireland, where no such arrangement exists. Some have resisted its introduction on the grounds that it would give an unfair advantage to non-Irish writers, thereby further distorting the market for books published in Ireland by Irish writers as compared to the market for books published by British houses. However, a residency qualification could exclude the benefits to UK authors.

3.16.8 Individual artists are able to benefit indirectly from various National Lottery Schemes, especially the New Work programme administered by the Arts Council (see below). The Millennium Commission administers a Millennium Awards Scheme which provides grants of about £2,000 to enable individuals to develop their ideas or fulfil personal goals.

3.16.9 The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) is a UK-wide body which has been established with an endowment of UK£200 million from the National Lottery which is expected to generate an annual income of up to £12 million. This will be spent on the following objectives: to help talented individuals achieve their potential in the fields of science, technology and the arts; to help turn inventions or ideas into products or services which can be effectively exploited with rights adequately protected; and to contribute to public awareness and appreciation of science, technology and the arts. The funding programmes became effective in 1999. It is expected that NESTA will be of substantial benefit to individual artists.

Local Government

13.17.1 There are 26 District Councils in Northern Ireland with statutory powers to provide cultural activities (under Article 10 (1) of the recreation and Youth Service (NI) Order 1986). As is noted in *To the Millennium*: "As district councils are the principal democratic agencies responsible for the planning and development of services at a local level, their role is a strategically important one. They are key players in local arts provision because of their role in overcoming the problems of geographical isolation, their awareness of the needs of the communities they serve, their economic support for the mechanisms for delivery and their level of service which broadens public appreciation of the arts". Total local government expenditure on the arts in 1997/98 was £7,645,587, but the pattern of support varied widely with a pronounced emphasis on the larger towns and cities and (in some cases) very little activity in the countryside. Thus Belfast spent a little more than £3,000,000 and Derry just under £900,000. By contrast, the arts budget in Moyle was £19,000 and Lame £5,000. Clearly, there is some way to go before this imbalance is rectified.

3.17.2 By far the largest proportion of the available financial resources is devoted to institutions and facilities and there is comparatively little direct assistance for individual artists. Most councils have arts committees (nine do not), but their expenditure budgets are usually small, ranging from £5,000 to £16,500. Nineteen councils employ specialist arts officers.

Education

3.18.1 The situation in third-level education and career training is very different from that in the Republic of Ireland. Course opportunities in the United Kingdom are more comprehensive. The responsibility for education rests with five Education and Library Boards, whose costs are met in full by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland. These bodies administer student awards and have the power (as local authorities do in England and Wales) to make discretionary grants to those wishing to undertake career training in the performing arts in private schools or colleges. Broadly speaking, the eligibility criteria are the same as those elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The Boards also give support for schemes such as assistance to children taking music lessons.

3.18.2 Existing funding arrangements by the UK Department for Education and Employment are discussed in 3.4 above. A reform which promises to ensure state support for performing arts students is described in 5.6.4 below. In common with the other United Kingdom Arts Councils no support is given to students undertaking academic studies or professional training. Registered students may not apply for visual arts awards.

The Arts Council

3.19.1 The Arts Council of Northern Ireland was founded in 1962 (although from 1943 until that date there was a Northern Ireland wing of the Arts Council of Great Britain's predecessor, the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts). The Council became a statutory body in 1995. Its first funds were provided by the Pilgrim Trust and matched by the Ministry of Education for Northern Ireland. Its annual budget has risen from an initial £3,000 to £8,236,150 in 1997/98. It is funded by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

Since the 1960s there has been growing contact with the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon. In its strategy for the arts in Northern Ireland, *To the Millennium*, it sets as the sixth of 11 Objectives - "to encourage artistic creativity and innovation". Three of the ways it intends to meet it is "to encourage innovation and experimentation in the arts", "to support creative artists by promoting their work abroad, establishing an open competition for Northern Ireland, and increasing studio space" and "to offer greater opportunity for new writing from local or locally-based playwrights".³⁴

3.19.2 However, with the exception perhaps of literature and the visual arts, direct support for the individual artist is accorded less importance as a means of achieving its aims than in the Republic of Ireland. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland does not provide distinct award schemes for individual artists, but manages a single General Art Award scheme for creative and performing artists active in the fields of drama and dance, music and jazz, literature, traditional arts, community arts and visual arts and to those engaged in the direction and presentation of artistic events. The eligibility and other rules do not differ by art form.

3.19.3 Awards are made on the basis of the perceived artistic value to the individual applicant and the "potential artistic development and welfare of the whole community".³⁵ It appears that this latter criterion is not so much designed to foster community development (although that would be a natural interpretation) as to ensure that applicants live and work in Northern Ireland. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland applies a residency qualification of one year at some stage in applicants' lives, but not necessarily in the present; accordingly, artists who have left Northern Ireland and settled abroad or elsewhere in the United Kingdom are eligible for support.

3.19.4 Grants range from as little as £50 to a rarely reached ceiling of £5,000. A special bursary of £1,000 in the field of jazz is available. In 1997/98 fifty seven General Art Awards were made in the visual arts (amounting to nearly £37,550 from an overall budget for the artform of £538,128); in literature eleven awards (amounting to £13,550 from an overall budget of £237,857); in the traditional arts, there were no individual awards; in

³⁴ *To the Millennium: A Strategy for the Arts in Northern Ireland*, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Belfast 1995, p 15.

³⁵ *Arts Council of Northern Ireland Report 1996/97*, p 49.

music and opera 16 awards (amounting to nearly £12,027 from an overall budget more than £1,758,503); in drama and dance five awards to individuals amounting to £4,679 from an overall budget of £1,662,426); and in community arts no awards. Pictures were purchased from twenty four artists at a cost of £19,688. While the Arts Council of Northern Ireland provides some funding for film production through its National Lottery programmes, the primary agency with responsibility for film in all its aspects in Northern Ireland is the Northern Ireland Film Commission.

3.19.5 The Council participates in the ARTFLIGHT scheme, but on a much smaller scale than in the Republic. In 1997/98 £20,000 was spent.

3.19.6 There are a number of other awards. The Alice Berger Hammerschlag Trust Award subsidises travel and is open to Irish artists living anywhere in the island and practising in one of the visual and plastic arts. The Thomas Damman Junior Memorial Trust makes awards to students in either Northern Ireland or the Republic for the purpose of travelling abroad to visit exhibitions, museums, galleries and buildings of architectural importance. The Council and the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon jointly fund a place at the summer Jazz Institute of Skidmore College in the United States.

3.19.7 Bass Ireland funds one major award in Northern Ireland which provides financial assistance to creative individuals or groups in all branches of the arts. The Bass Ireland Award is worth £5,000.

3.19.8 Until 1999 the Talented Child Scheme gave assistance to children talented in music and dance to attend specialist schools in Great Britain, but has now been discontinued. Applications were assessed the by the Council and finance made available by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland. A comprehensive listing of Awards offered by the Council can be found in Appendix 1, *Research into Support for the Individual Artist*.

3.19.9 The Council has integrated community arts into artform expenditure although it has also established a number of separately managed schemes. All artform budget holders may fund clients on a revenue or project basis which have a dedicated outreach programme or undertake occasional arts-in-the-community projects. At the same time the Strategic Development Department holds a community arts budget which enables community arts organisations to bid for revenue support and for groups to seek project awards. This administrative method-of support has much to be said for it, in that, while the sector's specialist needs are recognised, community arts are not seen as a distinct form of creative practice. It is a model which the Arts Council/ An Chomhairle Ealaíon may wish to consider when reviewing its own support for community arts (see 3.14).

3.19.10 The Strategic Development Department also manages a very small budget for community artists' bursaries (as noted above, nothing was spent under this heading in 1997/98). Its policy echoes the general Arts Council of Northern Ireland approach in that it is more oriented to organisations than individuals. Thus, the Artists in the Community Scheme supports short term residencies by artists (as individuals or in groups) in areas that have been under-served and to counter social exclusion; but applications are made by host organisations. An unpublished note written for the author of this report observes: "In deploying its resources for community arts, the Arts Council has not opted for the long term artist-in-residence concept. This decision not only reflects the limitations on finance, but also the developmental role that the arts can have in a community which should benefit from a range of experiences rather than enjoy the contact with one artist."

3.19.11 Changes in the regulations for the expenditure of National Lottery funding has radically transformed the Council's financial support of the individual artist. After an interim funding scheme, the Council drew up a strategy to increase the opportunities for access to, participation in and practice of the arts by all the people of Northern Ireland.

3.19.12 One of its lottery programmes, *New Work*, piloted in 1996, has been confirmed as permanent with a budget of £1 million in 1999. This is having a profound impact on the development of opportunities for artists in Northern Ireland, and indeed on the practices and policies of the Arts Council. The programme has been established to support original work in all art forms: it seeks to "encourage

the creation of new work and adaptation of existing works where there is proven demand", to encourage touring of new by performing arts companies, to "enhance the range and quality of artistic activity by encouraging the commissioning of new artists" and to "encourage new work projects to deliver an education and/or community access element." Adaptations will need to be sufficiently innovative to create a cultural asset that has an identity distinct from the original. Major exhibitions of visual arts or performing arts productions of work not previously seen in Northern Ireland may be considered. It should be noted that applications can only be made by commissioning organisations, not by artists themselves.

3.19.13 A very wide range of arts organisations across the art forms have received National Lottery funding for new work (including film and public art). Grants have ranged in size from £250,000 for the Royal Hospital Trust, £40,300 for Opera Northern Ireland, £31,120 for the Playhouse, Derry, to £1,350 for the Orion Quartet and £4,500 for the Armagh Rhymers. The programme supports the touring of first productions and as well as seeking to enhance the range and quality of artistic activity aims to encourage projects which deliver education and/or community access.

Arts Organisations and Commissioning

3.20.1 In addition to direct funding by the Arts Councils, arts organisations both in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland commission work from artists. Sometimes this is an explicit Arts Council expectation in return for subsidy, as in the case of the Council's new music commissioning scheme. Large drama companies, such as the Abbey, commission plays from their own resources, which include substantial revenue grants. Unfortunately, this is an area where aggregated information is not readily available and where little is known about fee levels.

3.20.2 Until 1999 the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon ran an Arts Centres Commissioning Scheme, from which organisations such as the West Cork Arts Centre, Arthouse and the Droichead Arts centre have benefited (sometimes in production with performing companies). For 2000 it has built commissioning funds into arts centre grants, the aim being to consolidate funding for historically under-resourced organisations. The Council places an emphasis on finding the right balance between new work and traditional fare with in-built audience appeal.

3.20.3 The Irish Theatre Handbook, which covers Ireland as a whole, lists a large number of new drama titles and a substantial list of new dance pieces created over the last ten years, not all of which were the result of direct or indirect support by the Arts Councils.

4 Impact of Award Schemes

4.1 This chapter is a reading, or an interpretation, of the survey, *Research into Support for the Individual Artist*. It does not restate in detail its comprehensive findings. It addresses the impact which Arts Council awards have had on enhancing the economic status of artists and the barriers which they face in the development of their work and their careers. It also examines the effectiveness of award schemes in relation to Arts Council objectives and reviews the Arts Councils' operational relations with artists.

The Artistic Career

4.2.1 The single most important finding about the situation of Irish artists is their poverty. A large number subsist on what is hardly a living wage. The average income of the sample of artists in the Republic of Ireland was IR£12,000. A handful earned more than IR£30,000 (of whom one earned more than IR£150,000). This obviously has an inflated impact on the average of the remainder. Half the sample lived on IR£10,000 or less in 1998.

4.2.2 Artists face the additional difficulty that such income as they do earn fluctuates sharply from year to year, especially earnings from the sale of art. One of the most successful of those surveyed made IR£4,000 in one year and IR£65,000 in another. In 1998 another earned IR£20,000, of which the art component was about IR£5,000, but two years earlier his art sales had amounted to IR£40,000. More typical shifts would range from IR£2,000 a year to £8,000 or from IR£1,000 to nothing. The value of these art sales shows that many artists produce highly appreciated work, yet in Ireland "the average income we have calculated of around IR£12,000 is across a sample of mainly experienced artists, well into mid-career, with the family responsibilities to be expected of people in their thirties and forties, and typically receiving 15 to 20% of their income as grants."³⁶

4.2.3 More than half of the sample was wholly or partly self-employed; the figure is higher in Northern Ireland, where it is also reported that it is common for artists to say that they depend on their partners' earnings to maintain their households. Few artists can live on their art and many support themselves by taking other work. A quarter of the sample has to work outside the arts to get by. In Northern Ireland about 6% register as unemployed and about 5% do so in the Republic.

4.2.4 Unsurprisingly, the problems are greatest for those setting out on their careers and most respondents believed that, while the Arts Councils should support artists at all stages of their development, priority should be placed on the young.

4.2.5 Artists in the Republic of Ireland face other perceived, sometimes less tangible, obstacles (which, nevertheless, can have a negative effect on their capacity to make a living). These include in some cases a "feeling that their working class backgrounds and education have been against them"³⁷ and for artists outside of Dublin a sense of geographical isolation. Women report prejudice against them; among examples cited are a lack of female roles in the theatres of Northern Ireland, a predominance of men on publishers' lists in the Republic, and a frequent refusal to acknowledge difficulties caused by child care and family duties. More female applicants for Arts Council awards are rejected, although the aggregate sum of money sought is about the same as that for rejected male applicants (because the latter tend to ask for larger grants).

4.2.6 Arts Council support had relatively little direct effect on the ability of artists to earn more money or even to help them feel financially stable. Is this evidence of a failure of policy? It is a complex question. If the Arts Councils had the resources to make up the shortfall in earnings on a continuing basis so that all recognised artists could maintain a more sufficient standard of living, it is not self-evident that they would be right to do so. Some would argue that the effect would be to detach artists entirely from their public and create a "dependency culture" remote from demand.

4.2.7 One survey respondent said: "I would like the Arts Council to help develop an artists' self-employment scheme."³⁸ While recognising the importance of grants, many artists also say they need greater access to training, practical business and administrative advice, more information on awards and training opportunities, and greater

36 *Research into Support for the Individual Artist, op.cit.*

37 *Research into Support for the Individual Artist, ibid*

38 *ibid*, 3.3 11

opportunity for cultural exchange. There is much to be said for this thinking. Many artists are, in effect, running micro or small businesses and would benefit from tailor-made training in such areas as marketing, financial management, the business use of new technologies and so forth.

4.2.8 There is also a perceived need for improved external resources and facilities - for example, affordable workshops, adequate rehearsal spaces and studios and help for specialist publishing houses. The Arts Councils already invest to varying extents in these areas. However, local authorities with their planning powers and property holdings are well placed to play a helpful, indeed perhaps a central, role as well.

4.2.9 Although awards make a contribution to the economic status of artists in the sense that they amount to a not insubstantial proportion of recipients' incomes, the size of most grants is small. The impact is mainly one-off rather than dynamic. Despite the scale of the problem, the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon does not seek explicitly to address it. Its *Arts Plan* speaks of the need to improve the capability of arts organisations through "cross-sectoral support programmes to strengthen organisational capability (including marketing, concentration of resources and the generation of non-grant sources of income)"³⁹, but does not specify the equivalent need for similar capability among individual creators.

4.2.10 By contrast, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland does show interest in the question of employment. Its *Draft Operational Plan* sees "unlocking the economic potential of the arts by drawing more people into the arts (both as producers and consumers) through the promotion of cultural tourism as a catalyst for economic growth" and argues that increased access to and engagement in the arts will lead to "increased employment for those engaged in the cultural sector".⁴⁰ However, the Key Actions it proposes do not include any measures that directly influence the economic status of artists; the Council evidently believes the best way forward is through improving the infrastructure within which artists work.

4.2.11 These questions receive further discussion in the following chapter.

Focus and Impact of Support

4.3.1 The fact that awards and bursaries have only a limited economic effect does not mean that they are without impact. Quite the reverse: according to the *Research into Support for the Individual Artist* survey, those in the Republic are remarkably effective in attaining their objectives, in so far as these are stated.

4.3.2 The survey suggests that the reach of both Arts Councils is good but channelled. Most artists who have received formal training or belong to assisted associations have applied for Arts Council support at some point in their careers. The support programmes are well known and the small scale of the awards and the range of activities that qualify for funding make the system accessible. In Northern Ireland there is a concentration on visual artists and in the Republic there is more support for creative artists rather than interpretative artists, such as actors and musicians.

4.3.3 The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon places a high priority on support for the individual artist, which it regards rather as an end in itself than a route to some further policy objective. The existence of Aosdána is seen, and admired, as evidence of this commitment. The Council's key aims are to encourage the making of art, to assist career development and to enhance the status of the artist. Most programmes are named by the type of artist eligible, or by an activity that is easily understood, such as travel or education, rather than by strategic concerns. There are a large number of small programmes - 48 in all. Conditions are relatively unrestrictive and flexibility is emphasised.

4.3.4 The Arts Council of Northern Ireland takes a less client-led approach. The language of its plans and grant programmes is rooted in community benefit and it applies a general condition of eligibility that the artist should "contribute regularly to the artistic activities of the community". There is some attempt to target the relatively under-provided rural areas.

4.3.5 These different priorities have produced some inconsistency in patterns of funding. All of the programmes of the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon are available in Northern Ireland, but the

39 *Arts Plan, op. cit.*, p 12.

40 *Draft Operational Plan, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, 1999, Unpublished*, p 1.

smaller General Arts Awards programme of Northern Ireland does not reciprocate by entertaining applications from the Republic of Ireland. Furthermore some artists' organisations in the Republic are funded to support artists from Northern Ireland, but demand exceeds the finance supplied.

4.3.6 So far as the Republic of Ireland is concerned, the study reveals that the Council's expenditure largely achieves what is intended. More than 80% of the sample of artists surveyed said that they produced a work of art as a direct result of the money they received and nearly 60% claimed that they would not have been able to produce it without financial assistance. Most award winners were enabled to spend more time on their art. There was also widespread agreement that they were helped to pursue their artistic development.

4.3.7 The figures in Northern Ireland are also positive, although not as strikingly so. More than 40% of those who undertook a piece of work as a result of Arts Council support said they could not have completed it without their grants, compared to just over 30% who could. The awards allowed artists to concentrate more on their art, complete their work more quickly, with better methods or on a larger scale. Several claimed they would not have started their project without the assistance provided.

4.3.8 Many survey respondents belong to support or professional organisations. The only groups in Northern Ireland to have large memberships are the All-Ireland Artists' Association of Ireland and Actors' Equity. Although 60% of the sample in Northern Ireland were members of relevant bodies less than 30% commented on their strengths and weaknesses, which, as Annabel Jackson Associates observe, suggests that they do not play a powerful role for individual artists.⁴¹ Apart from the visual arts, where studios offer useful space, their main function lies in providing financial, legal and business advice.

4.3.9 In the Republic of Ireland two-thirds of respondents belonged to an association of some type. They received a mix of benefits (newsletters and bulletins, contacts, technical and moral support). Direct help (for example) with helping artists to promote their work was less frequent. Some acted as business support agencies. In general, they were widely perceived by artists as poorly resourced and expectations of what they could achieve were limited.

4.3.10 Experience in other European countries suggests that artists' associations can, if properly financed, act as powerful advocates and lobbyists, energetically promote their members' interests and attract the respect of arts funding systems.⁴² This is certainly what many artists in Ireland would like to see happening. One feature of a thriving arts community is when it is effectively organised and, like interest groups in other sectors, can influence decision-makers. However, until the capacity of artists' associations in Ireland is built up, both in terms of finance and management, progress in this direction is unlikely to be made. One way forward would be to follow European precedent and fund artists' associations by top-slicing a proportion of artists' copyright earnings.

4.3.11 It should be noted that all-Irish associations raise complex difficulties in Northern Ireland. On the one hand, there is a widespread desire to work with and support all-Irish institutions but on the other, in the light of the fact that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, there is also an obvious appropriateness in making use of UK-wide bodies. There is no obvious way out of this conundrum, but the Arts Council of Northern Ireland may find it useful to look further into the matter and examine if some accommodation of these conflicting claims on its attention (and that of artists in Northern Ireland) can be found.

The Artists / Arts Councils Relationship

4.4.1 The research into support for the individual artist was received with great enthusiasm by many of the artists who were contacted. However, the warmth of their feeling contained an element of surprise, which exposed a certain sense of estrangement from the two funding bodies, whose methods and procedures they did not fully understand.

41 *Research into Support for the Individual Artist, op.cit.*

42 Denmark offers an example of the important role which artists' associations can play in cultural life and the delivery of cultural policy. The Danish Artists' Society, the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, the Danish Authors' Association and the Danish Artists' Council not only represent their members, but also administer subsidy schemes on behalf of the government.

4.4.2 Although the two Councils engage in more consultation than in the past, publish reports and commission research in an attempt to reflect more sensitively the needs of the arts community as well that of citizens, they still seem opaque and bureaucratic institutions. As artists watch the agencies become more and more involved in complex planning processes, they fear that their distance from decision-making processes works to their disadvantage. They feel that their needs should be understood more through their art than through the administrative mechanisms of formal application.

4.4.3 Many favour some form of one-to-one discussion, as they had in the telephone survey; indeed, they prefer it to face-to-face interviews and group debates, which are seen as not always representing the views of everyone present, either because of the wide variety of individual ideas or because of habits of "in-fighting". Perhaps some types of artist are better able to speak as a group than others.

4.4.4 The artists surveyed appreciated being able to talk from their place of work. This, or some neutral location, was important to all of them, but especially those in rural areas who felt that their remoteness usually cut them off from making any contribution to debate.

4.4.5 So far as their working relationships with the Arts Councils was concerned, there was a strong desire for more personal contact with Arts Council officers. In Northern Ireland it was argued that this should be initiated by the Council itself "because artists are reticent about taking the initiative or appearing to put themselves forward as spokespersons for their art form".⁴³ In the Republic of Ireland such linkages would engage officers more directly in the world of creative practice. This would help to resolve two particular problems - the first being a perceived need to give greater priority to artists outside Dublin where they detected a "golden inner circle"⁴⁴.

4.4.6 Secondly, it would foster more flexible views about the nature of art and about the latest forms of innovation. This reflected an impression many artists in the Republic of Ireland had of a certain elitism at the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon; in addition, its reliance on traditional categories of artistic creation seemed to indicate that it was not sufficiently responsive to the cross-art form manner in which many practitioners were now said to be working.

4.4.7 There were few complaints about the procedures of application in themselves, although most wanted to see them speeded up and for there to be a larger number of application deadlines through the year. This is understandable, but in the Republic of Ireland the Council sets itself an eight-week turn-round target for the handling of applications, which seems in all the circumstances commendably speedy. More deadlines would bring with them increased administrative costs. The more familiar a respondent was with Arts Council processes the more patient they were with the length of time involved.

4.4.8 However, there was irritation at a perceived tendency for the Arts Councils to cut back the value of awards in ways that did not seem to correspond with an objective assessment of need. When money is short, there is a natural temptation to offer the minimum sum that will ensure that the project, whatever it is, will go ahead even if at a reduced level, for this will make it possible to stretch the available funds further. It is an understandable stratagem, but has the disadvantage of leading to a vicious circle where applicants inflate need in order that the reduced sum offered is closer to their real requirements. It is hard to see a way out of the conundrum until, and unless, the Councils' budgets are significantly enlarged.

4.4.9 There was a widespread appeal for greater transparency (in Northern Ireland, to "remove accusations of nepotism and favouritism"). Artists would appreciate more feedback, with explanations for rejection. In the Republic there was a call for personal interviews to be instituted as part of the assessment process, with the resultant art produced by award-holders being part of any subsequent request for second-stage funding.

43 *Research into Support for the Individual Artist, op.cit.*

44 *ibid.*

5 Options and Conclusions

5.1 Arts funding systems do not produce good art nor can they ensure that it is produced. It would be a false aim if they sought to do so. What is within their power is to encourage the making of art. They can help to ensure a favourable economic environment for artists, to advocate the importance of art, and to demonstrate the role of the arts and culture in public policy. This chapter addresses these questions and makes recommendations which build on the analysis in the preceding chapters and are aimed at fostering a financially vigorous arts community; at opening wider and more equitable access to artists' awards schemes; and at promoting innovation. It proposes an evaluation methodology and changes to third level career education in the performing arts. It argues for greater transparency in the grant-making procedures of the Arts Councils.

5.2 An underpinning implication of much of the following discussion is that the shift from arts policy to a more broadly-based cultural policy (reviewed in chapter 2, *The Changing Context*) offers opportunities for the Arts Councils to address the key issue of the economic status of the individual artist. A climate which encourages co-operation with other agencies in the social and economic spheres and a growing understanding by government of the economic significance of the creative industries will make it easier than in the past to devise, resource and implement effective strategies to improve artists' financial standing.

Economic Status of the Artist

5.2.1 The Arts Councils, and especially the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, have worked to improve the economic conditions of artists. In the Republic, tax exemptions and other regulations have been devised for their benefit, and awards for individual artists have been at the heart of the Council's policy. Support for artists at the outset of their careers, often through subvention of the costs of training, has been balanced by encouragement of their artistic development throughout their lives and by the establishment of Aosdána to meet the needs of established artists.

5.2.2 However, from a purely financial perspective, the *Research into Support for the Individual Artist* arts survey indicates that these measures, often imaginative and ground-breaking, have failed to create a thriving artistic economy. Likewise, tax exemptions have not functioned as incentives (as they do in commerce and industry), but as a fragile shield against indigence. Most artists live perilously on the edge of insolvency. The opportunity for them, even for those work is in demand, to make a reasonable living simply does not exist. There are many reasons for this state of affairs. But five factors, in particular, merit comment and suggest further actions which the Arts Councils could consider taking and which would go some way to ameliorate the situation. These are (1) infrastructural development, (2) international promotion, (3) Arts Council partnerships with other agencies, (4) redesign of support schemes and (5) self-sufficiency training.

5.2.3 First, in the performing arts (drama, dance, music and opera), the institutional infrastructure is weak. Although it is beyond the remit of this report, the production of talented and experienced artists, both creative and interpretative, will be of little value if the dance companies, theatres, orchestral ensembles and opera houses are not in place to commission and present their work. Unfortunately, most of them are funded at too low a level for them to play the full part they would wish in the encouragement of new work. This position is most severe in dance.

5.2.4 The only way forward is expensive - namely a concrete and costed long-term development strategy which would (for example, after ten years) aim to establish adequate funding for a number of companies across the performing arts. However, the general level of state funding of the arts is low by international standards and unless and until this is rectified progress on this front will not be made.

5.2.5 In the shorter term, there may be relatively inexpensive ways (as the survey of artists suggests) by which awards and bursaries could be integrated with a strategy to encourage performing arts companies, festivals and arts centres to present more new work. One possible mechanism would be to accompany appropriate awards or bursaries with a further sum of money which would be available to a designated institution that agreed to present an exhibition or performance of the artist's work. This additional grant could contribute to a fee or to presentation costs.⁴⁵

45 An exclusion should be made for the handful of arts organisations, such as the Abbey Theatre, whose annual subvention is large enough for them to implement new work policies from within their own resources

5.2.6 Secondly, stimulation of the domestic market will not be enough in itself. The population of Ireland is too small to sustain the requisite number of careers. So attention needs to be paid to the international promotion of Irish arts. It is a topic which has exercised the Arts Councils for many years (as the long-ago plan to set up a Centre for Irish Arts in London testifies).

5.2.7 This is an area for further research. Examples of good practice in other European states of a similar size could be suggestive, where free-standing promotions agencies actively encourage national artists around the world. Thus, in the field of music in Finland (contemporary classical, jazz, rock, pop and folk), the independent but state-funded Finnish Music Information Centre promotes new music across the genres at home and abroad; with the help of public investment, Finnish record companies publish and promote new music inter-nationally; and a state-funded but independent touring and promotions agency organises foreign concert tours. In Denmark there is also an active Music Information Centre and influential artists' associations, financed by top-slicing copyright fees. It is worth noting that the Contemporary Music Centre in the Republic of Ireland is modelled on Nordic examples, although much less well funded.⁴⁶

5.2.8 Thirdly, the arts sector could take advantage of the new climate of public sector partnerships designed to promote economic regeneration and employment. Here the role of local authorities is crucial and, although they have made great progress in recent years both in Northern Ireland and the Republic, there is more that they could do to provide support, both in cash and kind, to individual artists. If artists can work where they live or find employment opportunities there (e.g. through commissions), they are much less likely to migrate and will be in a position to make a positive contribution to the cultural, social and economic well-being of their local communities.

5.2.9 The economic potential of the arts and culture is increasingly recognised by governments, as a promising initiative involving the Arts Council of Northern Ireland illustrates. The contribution that culture and the arts can make to the tourism industry has been recognised both by the Council and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), which published an important report, *The Cultural Sector: A Development Opportunity for Tourism in Northern Ireland* in 1998 and later in the same year appointed a jointly funded arts/tourism liaison officer. It is hoped that a Cultural Tourism Partnership will be formed to promote the arts through tourism. The NITB's annual report for 1996/1997 (the latest available) speaks of the need for a new all-Ireland brand identity "based on the 'emotional experience' visitors enjoy on holidays in Ireland". EU investment in "developing Northern Ireland as a quality holiday destination" has included spending on culture.

5.2.10 The arts and culture have a part to play in environmental concerns and in the sustainable development of rural areas. So far as Northern Ireland's heritage is concerned, the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside Commission has made common cause with the Historic Buildings Council and the Historic Monuments Council, but there is also a role for living artists and craftspeople which is yet to be fully developed.

5.2.11 Fourthly, both in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, there are ways by which the existing grant structures could be redesigned to take account of artists' financial circumstances. The first, acknowledging that small sums of money may have only a limited effect, the Councils may wish to enlarge the size of the grants even if, at current levels of government subsidy, the consequence will be fewer in total. This would be to replace reach with depth. The advantages would be that a more substantial contribution would be made to an artist's financial well-being and more extended or more ambitious work could be attempted.

5.2.12 The subject is under discussion at the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and is consistent with a comment by Indecon in its review of the Arts Plan that "greater resources should be targeted on assisting established individual artists...who are capable of creating world-class work, to realise their potential".⁴⁷ Respondents to the *Research*

46 For further discussion see Everitt, Anthony, *In Pursuit of the New, A study of systems of support for new music in some European countries*, Arts Council of England, London, 1995.

47 *Succeeding Better, Report of the strategic review of the Arts Plan 1995-1998*, Indecon International Economic Consultants in association with PricewaterhouseCoopers, The Stationery Office, Dublin, 1998, p xxiii.

into the *Support for the Individual Artist* survey were asked for their views. Although several could see the benefits of such an approach, most interviewees were wary. There was a real concern that art is an elitist, middle-class activity in Ireland and that concentrating grants on recognised artists would perpetuate this. In Northern Ireland, where grants were smaller, there was stronger approval (although Council staff were concerned that larger grants would increase the concentration of resources on urban at the expense of rural areas).

5.2.13 To enhance the artistic development and careers of artists is already a concern of the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, but to focus on a selected handful, as Indecon suggests, sounds a risky and invidious business. As argued above, to realise the potential of a few individuals may be of less importance than creating circumstances in which a community of artists can thrive. Taken together with Aosdána, the effect would be to over-emphasise those in mid-career as distinct from young artists.

5.2.14 The argument for few, larger grants would be more powerful if it could be shown that small awards were ineffective on their own terms; but the survey provides conclusive evidence that this is not the case.⁴⁸ The current arrangements produce concrete results as well as conferring the much-valued Arts Council *imprimatur*. Radical change would be deeply unpopular, would reduce the amount of art made and limit the opportunities for career development on which many artists depend. It should not be attempted until substantially increased funds are at the Arts Councils' disposal.

5.2.15 Another way of addressing the same issue is to institute multi-annual grants. Bursaries for two or three years would address the issue of the fluctuation of artists income. It would reduce the number of artists supported but, if cautiously introduced, not to the same extent as would be the case if the existing annual cake were to be divided among few recipients. It would be essential that such awards were accompanied by concrete conditions; experience in some Nordic countries where three and five year grants to individuals are widespread suggests that otherwise aesthetic complacency can set in.

5.2.16 **Fifthly**, artists in the survey recognised that the encouragement of self-sufficiency was as important as adequate levels of subsidy. Indeed, it would not be in the public interest to foster a "dependency culture" remote from the marketplace and the citizen. Training in business skills, financial management and marketing would equip artists to make their way in the world. So would an induction into the expectations of potential partners in the education, social services and economic development sectors with whom many artists now work. These are not things that can be appropriately provided by the Arts Councils themselves, and, if they are to intervene in these areas, it is important for them to ensure that training opportunities are in place (and, if they are not, to encourage appropriate institutions or agencies to provide them).

5.2.17 In addition, there are a number of minor but potentially useful measures which the Irish government and the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon could usefully consider. The Revenue Commissioners in the Republic of Ireland could help to alleviate the problems caused by fluctuations in artists' incomes if they allowed them to average their income for taxation purposes over three years, as they do in the case of farmers; for those whose incomes vary greatly from year to year, this would result in considerable tax savings. It should be noted that such a concession would apply only to interpretative artists, for creative artists do not pay tax. (So far as Northern Ireland is concerned, perhaps the UK Inland Revenue could consider a similar permission for individual professional artists.) There is also evidence that the Revenue Commissioners interpret artists' residencies as "work other than creative" and so treat residency fees as taxable income. Other measures meriting consideration include the establishment by law of the *droit de suite* (a proposal to do so was recently defeated in the Dail, but the European Union is still reviewing its attitude to the subject); the institution, as in Northern Ireland of a Public Lending Right; a review of employment legislation to alleviate undue pressure being put on registered unemployed artists to accept unsuitable jobs; the institution of an early pension scheme for dancers and retraining opportunities; the introduction of a blank tape levy scheme and the establishment of copyright societies across the complete range of artistic practice.

5.2.18 As well as producing money for creators, the last two proposals could make a useful contribution to the strengthening of artists' associations, if a fraction of what was collected could be attributed to their operating costs. As already noted, this is what is done in some Nordic countries with the result that such associations are in a position to be proactive in the promotion of their art forms. In Ireland under-funding means that artists' associations are relatively weak. Increased investment, whether through top-slicing copyright fees or realistic levels of subsidy from the Arts Councils, would enable them to develop a valuable role as advocates.

5.2.19 A case should be put to the Róil government to extend tax exemption to choreographers. The Drama Department should be funded to enable it to assist post-graduate students and the training of stage technicians, stage managers and lighting designers, both new entrants and those who are inservice.

5.2.20 Aosdána is a remarkable institution which gives valuable financial support to established artists. However, too little is known about it in the arts community, and presumably among the public at large. Its achievements should be more effectively promoted and publicised.

5.2.21 As has already been noted (see 3.3.7), the Róil government's Per Cent for Art Scheme has made considerable progress. Some visual artists are becoming specialists in public art practice. Although it has not been measured, there can be little doubt that a thriving new niche economy is being created. However, events may be running ahead of themselves and there is a need for the training of artists and those involved in commissioning their work (in methods of public or community consultation, decision-making and evaluation, in the range of possible work and so forth). There is an important role here for the Arts Council; it could help to ensure that artistic standards in public art are maintained at a high level by investing in appropriate training and awareness-raising schemes. It would also be useful if the recommendations of the Public Art Research Project were implemented, including the proposal that the Arts Council appoint a Public Art Officer.⁴⁹

5.2.22 Some of the recommendations that follow entail increased expenditure (although at this stage it is not possible to quantify what is needed). If the fundamental challenge to improve the economic situation of artists in Ireland is to be seized, substantial investment will be required, not in direct subvention to artists so much as in the institutional infrastructure of the arts, international promotion and economic development partnerships.⁵⁰ Increased resources by themselves will not be enough unless guided by a clear and comprehensive policy. When reviewing their support for the individual artist, the Arts Councils should recognise that their primary purpose is the establishment of a thriving and, in large part, self-sufficient artistic community, within which other priorities such as formation and the making of art are essential but subsidiary components. This purpose can be advanced both through its Awards schemes and also through the arts organisations they support. They will not succeed, though, on their own and it will be necessary to elicit the co-operation of government and other agencies both in the public and private sectors.

5.2.23 It is recommended that:

- when pursuing their mission to support individual artists to achieve their full artistic potential, the Arts Councils should identify as a core objective a measurable improvement in their economic status (BOTH)⁵¹
- the Arts Councils should agree long-term strategies which include specific costed targets for the improvement and enlargement of the performing arts infrastructure (BOTH)
- in order to foster the creation of a thriving artistic economy, arts organisations should be encouraged to increase their commitment to new work; during the terms of the Councils' current or forthcoming arts plans, consideration should be given to accompanying some awards with additional grants available to arts organisations willing to commission/present award-holders' work (BOTH)

49 *Public Art Research Project, Steering Group Report to Government*, The Stationery Office, Dublin 1997.

50 For a further discussion of cost implications, see 5.7.11 below.

51 Each recommendation is tagged - those referring to the Republic of Ireland (Róil), to Northern Ireland (NI) and to both (BOTH).

- research should be conducted with a view to the enhancement of the international promotion of Irish arts (Rol)
- the Arts Councils should co-operate with other relevant agencies, including local authorities, to improve employment opportunities for artists (BOTH)
- consideration should be given to the introduction of multi-annual grants and bursaries (BOTH)
- the Arts Councils and other providers should help artists to acquire business, financial and marketing skills as well as offering them an induction into the expectations of possible partners/employers in non-arts sectors; this would entail the provision of appropriate financial support, the identification of relevant training opportunities and, if they do not exist, encouragement of appropriate agencies to provide them (BOTH)
- the Arts Councils should consider seeking to persuade their governments to adopt the following reforms:
 - a. permission for interpretative artists to pay tax on income averaged over three years (BOTH);
 - b. the desirability of the establishment of the *droit de suite* (BOTH); the institution in the Republic of Ireland of a Public Lending Right;
 - c. a review of employment legislation in relation to artists who are registered unemployed;
 - d. the institution of an early pension scheme and retraining opportunities for dancers;
 - e. the introduction of a blank tape levy scheme
 - f. the establishment of copyright collecting societies across the complete range of artistic practice, funded by top-slicing a proportion of their fees income (Rol)
- there should be greater financial and management support for artists' associations so that they can develop a role as advocates of their art form (Rol)
- a case should be put to government to extend tax exemption to choreographers (Rol)
- assistance should be provided for post-graduate students of the performing arts; and training grants in stage technicianship, stage management and lighting design (Rol)
- the achievements of Aosdána should be more effectively promoted and publicised. In addition, consideration should be given to the extension of eligibility for membership to choreographers and the full range of creative artists. Aosdána should also consider giving recognition to interpretative artists (Rol)
- the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon should help to ensure the continuing development of the government's Per Cent for Art Scheme by establishing a public art training and awareness-raising scheme for visual artists and those managing government-funded construction schemes. It is also essential that, alongside the other recommendations of the Public Art Research Project, the Arts Council appoint a Public Art Officer.

Access to Awards

5.3.1 During the course of the research project the author of this report held fruitful discussions with members of staff of the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Among some of them, anxiety was palpable about the impact of forthcoming strategic developments, and the perceived shift from an arts policy as traditionally defined to a broadly-based cultural policy.

5.3.2 Support schemes for the individual artist in the Republic are largely client-led and (by and large) pursue three key aims - the making of art, artists' formation and the improvement of their economic and social status. They are not explicitly designed to attain most of the Council's strategic aims, except those which pursue artistic excellence in selected areas of creative practice. In Northern

Ireland "community benefit" is a criterion for support; if that were to be rigorously applied as a direct expectation, there would be a risk that some categories of artist would be excluded. But this degree of coherence with social objectives is unnecessary, for it is self-evident that a thriving creative community will be essential to a thriving culture.

5.3.3 There is, after all, little novel in the fact that partners engaged in joint enterprises often come together from a variety of motives. That they may apply different criteria for a successful outcome and expect different benefits is of little significance - provided that everyone concerned understands each other's position. An "art for art's sake" policy for individuals sits logically enough inside a framework which sets other goals, nor is it necessary to expect artists *qua* artists (as distinct, say, from arts promoters) to share the same motives of public benefit as those who fund them. In a word, the conflict between a more conditional philosophy of subsidy and the free creator (see 2.21) is based on a misapprehension. Any attempt to "instrumentalise" the work of the latter is likely to be counterproductive.

5.3.4 However, although it is right that support for the individual artist through awards should be maintained, the objectives which they are expected to attain are not always articulated clearly enough, nor are they accompanied by appropriate targets. This makes it difficult to be certain whether they are achieving the intended impact.

5.3.5 That said, the question arises whether it is desirable to attach further criteria to award and bursary schemes and to open them up to categories of professional artist who do not currently benefit from them. The risk in doing so is that it may limit freedom of expression and pressure artists to work on targeted projects with which they may not be in complete sympathy. This is clearly a fear in the artistic community. A speaker at an Arts Plan Consultative Meeting held on 31 August 1998 made the point when he referred to a "tendency...that there is a divergence of interests arising between people who are artists, be they called interpretative or creative, and the interests of administration/management and that I think is largely coming about because increasingly in this society there is an emphasis being on culture where we want a sort of culture coming out [of] every orifice, but under no circumstances the creation of art".⁵²

5.3.6 The answer to the question is probably, first, yes, and, secondly, no. If universal access to the arts and culture is a fundamental objective of public policy, this applies as much to creators as consumers. Should there be communities of artist or genres of creative practice that do not as a rule receive awards and bursaries or who have special needs that are not recognised in practice, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the principle of access is not being fulfilled.

5.3.7 Thus previous reports and research relating to the arts and disability, including a report by Mary Duffy which involved consultation with six disabled artists, indicate that while most of the barriers which hinder artists in their practice are shared by disabled artists, they face a number of additional ones, both qualitative (expectations) and physical (transport, adapted equipment, support structures).⁵³

5.3.8 The *Research into Support for the Individual Artist* survey recommends that the Arts Councils should gender-proof their procedures, because the report indicates that women have a lower success rate in attracting financial support.

5.3.9 It may be desirable to set targets to address these imbalances over time. One approach would be to incorporate a commitment to affirmative action by devising awards and bursaries, perhaps for fixed terms, which are specifically aimed at encouraging disabled artists and women. It may be countered that achieved excellence ought to be the only criterion with which to judge applicants for support. But a commitment to excellence, in cases of unequal opportunity to attain it, should properly respond to potential as well as to achievement. In any event, it is essential that application procedures are carefully examined in order to ensure that they embody the principle of equal access to public funds.

52 Transcript of *Arts Plan Consultative Meeting, The Individual Creative and Interpretative Artist*, convened by Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, 31 August 1998, p 5.

53 *Disability and the Arts Council, A Discussion Document, The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, Dublin, 1998. Also, Arts, Disability and the Arts Council, A Report to The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon by the Working Group, 1997*, and an unpublished report by Duffy, Mary, of the associated consultation process.

5.3.10 The Arts Councils have formidable powers of endorsement as well as of financial supply. A consequence, whether intended or not, of artform departments' focus on the arts as traditionally defined is to imply a lesser value for traditional or popular forms of artistic practice. If the Councils assert an inclusive definition of creativity (as they do in principle), it is an insufficient response that traditional artists can find support elsewhere or that artists in the field of popular culture do not require recognition on the grounds that they work in commercial industries. Awards to individual practitioners are a high-profile and relatively inexpensive means of asserting and demonstrating inclusivity.

5.3.11 Once again, the issue of quality raises its head, and with it that of expectations. In a note to the author of this report, an Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon officer wrote: "The difficulty is that established artists of high quality do not consider a community arts residency a good thing in career terms. They believe it diminishes them in the eyes of the Arts Council...If they want to do this sort of work they do it quietly and tend to separate it out from their work as 'an artist' producing individual work...This is very problematic for the future development of high-quality community arts and changing the perception of what it is 'acceptable' to pursue as an artist is essential to this." This observation illustrates the impact which low expectations by an arts funding agency can have on an area of creative practice and the way in which they can set off a descending spiral of artistic quality.

5.3.12 Accordingly, it may be appropriate for the Councils to ensure that awards and bursaries for individual artists are genuinely open to all by targeting inequality of opportunity where it exists and by adopting an inclusive definition of eligible creative practice.

5.3.13 However, the basic remit of support should not be altered. There may be a temptation, at a time when scarcity of funds coincides with the establishment of new cultural priorities, to move from or modify current arrangements by emphasising residencies, educational projects and community-based projects at the expense of awards and bursaries for the individual artist. Encouraging artists to work in new contexts or to assist the attainment of the Councils' larger objectives can lead to exciting new work and can foster new, participatory relationships between them and local communities. Indeed the *Research into Support for the Individual Artist* survey shows that in Ireland many artists would like to work more in the community and see the Arts Council as having an important role in facilitating this; more art in libraries and galleries and artists and writers in schools is seen as laying the foundation for a stronger arts sector in the future.

5.3.14 However, this is a different (if sometimes overlapping) thing from promoting artists' career development and productivity. It is important not to elide or confuse varying objectives. The basic aims of awards and bursaries, are clear and rational, and should not be disturbed. The priority is to ensure that they are being achieved, not to abandon them or to confuse them with the instrumental uses of creativity.

5.3.15 It is recommended that:

- awards and bursaries for individual artists should be maintained as a discrete area of subsidy, aimed at the making of art, the formation of artists and the improvement of their economic and social status (BOTH);
- the Arts Council of Northern Ireland should consider adopting these aims and setting aside the criterion of direct community benefit (NI)
- the objectives of awards and bursaries should be more clearly spelled out than at present so that their success or failure can be explicitly ascertained (BOTH)
- in the light of the fact that women receive a smaller number of awards and disabled people face specific additional obstacles, great care should be taken to ensure that the principle of equality of opportunity is applied to all aspects of the administration of applications (BOTH)
- consideration should be given to offering more awards for community artists and those who work in the field of the traditional arts and popular culture, in addition to existing support schemes (RoI)

- the objectives of awards and bursaries be more clearly spelled out than at present so that their success or failure can be explicitly ascertained (BOTH)
- awards to community artists and artists working in the community should be dealt with inside art form departments (Rol)

Innovation

5.4.1 The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon's new *Arts Plan* sets as one of its central objectives "to promote artistic excellence and innovation".⁵⁴ Innovation is not the same as quality and is not equivalent to the simple production of new work.⁵⁵ Rather, it signifies experimentation, whether technical or formal, and the exploitation of new means of expression. In an age when more artists are mingling, or hybridising, the conventional art forms and when the rapid advance of new communications technologies promises to revolutionise the means of creative production and distribution, support for innovation is a highly relevant objective.

5.4.2 Although awards and bursaries for the individual artist are likely to lead to innovative work, their terms of reference at present have little to say on this subject (the *Mise-en-Scene Awards* offered by the Drama Department are a rare exception). It may be appropriate for the Arts Councils to determine what they mean by innovation and where the most important opportunities lie. Having done so, they may then wish to focus some of their awards and bursaries to ensure that these opportunities are grasped and that artists who wish to work in technically or formally experimental ways are given tailor-made support.

5.4.3 It is recommended that:

- in the light of developing cross-art form work and the opportunities provided by the new information technologies, awards should be made available which target the encouragement of innovation and, more especially its electronic dimension (BOTH)

Evaluation

5.5.1 Artistic excellence is not a singular but a multiple quality. In a strategic policy document, the Arts Council of Great Britain identified some of the facets of quality cited during extensive consultations with artists, "(i) Creator or producer quality. The creator's gut feelings...It is intimately bound up with issues of artistic freedom and is essentially subjective, (ii) Expert assessor/critic quality This is similar to (i) but the assessment is now carried out by someone - however expert or well informed - who is outside the work in question; again subjective, (iii) Consumer quality. At its crudest, this is purely a numbers game... But if 'consumer quality' is to be a useful concept, it must be at least as much about the nature of the artistic experience as about the numbers involved, (iv) Enrichment of the community The public attitudes research⁵⁶ demonstrated that the arts can be powerful agents for bringing people together in communities defined by geography, ethnicity, gender, religion or simply shared interest. An artistic activity which has succeeded in conveying a shared vision - giving voice to what had previously been silent - might be said to have had its quality enhanced, (v) Quality in variety. This is a concept based on the overall availability of the arts rather than on individual works of art. The argument runs that in a society of many different interests, cultures and experiences, an essential test of artistic quality is that the arts reflect that diversity, (vi) Quality as 'fitness for purpose'. The essence of this approach to quality is that it is not an abstract issue but one which arises from its context: in certain places, at certain times, opera is more appropriate than rock music, and vice versa. As to what constitutes great opera or great rock music, one of the earlier tests will have to apply!"⁵⁷

5.5.2 This slate of definitions may be helpful to the Arts Councils if they decide to extend the range of individual artists whom they support (see the

54 *Arts Plan*, op.cit, p 11.

55 "New work" is itself a debatable term; the Arts Council of Northern Ireland definition in its Strategy for the Distribution of National Lottery Funding in Northern Ireland, p 19, is helpful - "new and original works in all art-forms, first time productions in Northern Ireland of plays, ballets, contemporary dance, exhibitions and opera as well as... the adaptation of existing works."

56 *RSGB Omnibus Arts Survey, report on a Survey on Arts and Cultural Activities in G.B., Research Surveys of Great Britain Limited for the Arts Council of Great Britain*, Arts Council of Great Britain, London, 1991.

57 *A Creative Future, The way forward for the arts, crafts and media in England*, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1993, p 53.

discussion above, 5.3). But it also illustrates the complexity of evaluation in the cultural sector. The imperatives of accountability and transparency, and of dynamic planning, have brought increasing pressure to bear on arts funding agencies to improve and make more explicit their processes of evaluation. At present in both Northern Ireland and the Republic, there appears to be little in the way of formal assessment of the outcomes of awards and bursaries (although less formally staff keep a close eye on the impact of their expenditure).

5.5.3 Governments place much emphasis on quantifiable, 'objective' and measurable performance indicators and outputs. The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon was criticised by external assessors, Indecon Economic Consultants, appointed by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, for the lack of specificity in its first *Arts Plan*. "Several of the measures relating to quality in the *Arts Plan* were not implemented and, common with other areas, many were difficult to assess due to lack of explicit performance measures...objectives have been specified in a manner which makes quantification and evaluation very difficult and in some cases near impossible".⁵⁸ Unsurprisingly, some artists have shown alarm at this approach. In the *Arts Plan* meeting in August 1998, one characteristic comment was: "I filled out the Indecon questionnaire and while some of it I'm sure is very useful there are areas of it that are kind of outrageous - which is asking people to evaluate how much better art is getting ... Works of rare excellence and genius I don't think get better because of money."⁵⁹ On the other side of the coin, the *Research into Support for the Individual Artist* survey reveals that a number of artists interviewed were "relatively sympathetic" to the idea that outputs and processes needed to be measured in some way.⁶⁰

5.5.4 It is interesting to observe that Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Draft Operational Plan makes a determined effort to set out its strategies by relating its Corporate Objectives to Key Actions and, then, to specific Outputs. Likewise the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon commits itself in its current *Arts Plan* to "research, design and implement a range of appropriate performance indicators, to be reviewed annually, for assessing the impact of the Council's contribution to the arts".⁶¹ The word that needs emphasis in this quotation is "appropriate" - what are appropriate ways of measuring creative achievement?

5.5.5 The Indecon report offers a thorough and convincing critique, but in an important sense the stress it lays on what can be measured misses the point which the categories of quality listed above demonstrate - that, for the most part, the appreciation of excellence is essentially subjective. This is not a problem confined to judgements about the arts.

5.5.6 Politicians and decision-makers across the full scope of public policy are becoming increasingly exercised by an awareness that the problems of contemporary life are not susceptible to simple solutions, readily measured by quantitative indicators. This is not so surprising, for most of the things we really care for in life are qualitative and are no more to be absolutely determined than an aesthetic judgement on a work of art or the moral evaluation of someone's behaviour.

5.5.7 Governance that seeks to prevent problems rather than react to them as and when they arise will only succeed if it concentrates on objectives rather than service functions. A recent research pamphlet, *Holistic Government - Options for a Devolved Scotland*, makes the point well. "Government by policy goals is less about changing this departmental machinery than changing the way in which it used...Government by outcomes, or by policy goals, ... has far wider implications for how government operates and how it perceives its role in a wider system. Ideally, it will refocus government away from the measurement of activity to the measurement of results, away from the palliative and the curative to preventative action."⁶²

58 Succeeding Better, op.cit., 1998, p hi.

59 *Arts Consultative Meeting*, op.cit., p 27.

60 *Research into Support for the Individual Artist* op.cit.

61 *Arts Plan op.cit.*, p 26.

62 Leicester, Graham, and Mackay, Peter, *Holistic Government - Options for a devolved Scotland*, Scottish Council Foundation, Edinburgh, 1998,p22.

5.5.8 The tendency only to value what can be measured can mean that real issues are left out of account. More weight needs to be placed on immeasurable activities, or at least they should not be ruled out of consideration before careful thought. There is some evidence that this is beginning to happen. In the ongoing debate on the nature of sustainable economic development, it is widely accepted that "the notion of development [has] broadened as people realised that economic criteria alone could not provide a programme for human dignity and well-being. The search for other criteria had led United Nations Development Programme to elaborate the notion of human development - 'a process of enlarging people's choices' - that measures development in a broad array of capabilities, ranging from political, economic and social freedom to individual opportunities for being healthy, educated, productive, creative and enjoying self-respect and human rights."⁶³

5.5.9 What is now required is a concerted effort to establish more sensitive means of measuring the outcomes of policy - and, in particular, the "establishment of causal efficacy of services in bringing about change in quality of life" and "more composite measures that integrate objective indices of observable behaviour with reported dimensions of well-being".⁶⁴ In other words, two steps need to be taken. First, there should be more attention paid to what citizens say they feel about the services government offer and, even more so, about their own lives. Secondly, there should be an attempt to relate those objective consequences of policy implementation that can be measured to people's statements about their sense of well-being or otherwise. If that could be convincingly achieved, it would be possible to install a mechanism for paying due weight to the subjective dimension of citizens' reactions to state intervention in their affairs,

5.5.10 There is a further difficulty with evaluation in the public sector, to which sufficient attention is seldom paid. It is discussed in detail in *Appendix Two of Research into Support for the Individual Artist*. Just as in ethics moral goods can conflict with one another, so one set of priorities or programme of support may have unexpected consequences elsewhere. As Annabel Jackson Associates note: "All programmes have strengths and weaknesses; all are relevant in some contexts but not in others. Evaluation has a central role in providing feedback to enable programmes to continually adjust in tune with the changing pressures placed on them."⁶⁵ A model is proposed which sets out the dimensions of possible programmes as spectrums which highlight the different consequences of programme choices and the "predictable side effects of structural choices and trade-offs in establishing programmes".⁶⁶

5.5.11 In other words, there is no straightforward road to incontrovertible judgements. When public money is being spent, it is right, indeed essential, to ask what the expenditure is intended to achieve. The question deserves an answer, but it is unlikely to be a simple one. Before an organisation decides an evaluation methodology, it needs to come to a view, as clear as possible but necessarily flexible in the light of changeable circumstances, on what type of an organisation it is. Is it purely a project-based development agency, or is its primary duty the long-term provision or funding of on-going services or both? In other words, is it policy-led or client-led? Is its strategy long term or short term? To what extent is it stand-alone or does it work in partnership with other bodies, whose objectives it has to bear in mind?

5.5.12 To return to the arts in general, and support for the individual artist in particular, these are relevant issues to address. The difficulty facing Arts Councils is that they cannot opt for one or other of the listed options, but are obliged to accommodate both. So, for example, talented artists cannot be produced like doctors, nor is it possible to say how many a society needs. To some extent, an arts funding agency has to respond to what it finds and so cannot avoid being client-led. On the other hand, when it takes into account the rights and needs of citizens, the state legitimately expects it to set itself access goals and the like. Most people accept that a work of art has some kind of intrinsic value or, to borrow the language of economics, is a merit-good. But, as has been seen, it is also clear that art can contribute to all kinds of social and

63 *Our Creative Diversity, report of the World Commission on Culture and Development*, UNESCO, Paris, 1995, p 8.

64 *Perri 6, Holistic Government op.cit.*, p. 67.

65 *Research into Support for the Individual Artist, op.cit.*

66 *ibid.*

economic development strategies. So both policy and its evaluation are a balancing act. The temptation to adopt one approach or another has to be resisted if the complex dimensions of a thriving culture are not to be damaged.

5.5.13 That said, there are plenty of quantifiable outcomes on which the Arts Councils could - and should - report. Improving the economic status of the artist and fostering a climate of greater self-sufficiency are unlikely to be achieved unless concrete indicators, both short and long term, are established by which to measure progress - for example, increases in average income and in the number of arts jobs. If the making of art and the formation of artists are key objectives, it should not be difficult to articulate the contribution which expenditure on Awards and bursaries has made.

5.5.14 However, these things will be of little use if the art is poor or the training ineffective. What lies at the heart of the artistic experience, whether by creator or consumer, is the growth of critical understanding as felt and thought by those involved. This is an internal process. The Arts Councils would be wise to insist on this point and complement quantified measurements with an evaluation methodology that takes subjectivity into account. Traditionally, they have concentrated on "expert assessor/critic quality", but they may be well advised also to consider "creator or producer quality" as well as perhaps "enrichment of the community" and "quality as fitness for purpose".

5.5.15 How can this be done? It may not be so difficult as it seems. The creator's gut feelings (equivalent to the sense of "well-being" among citizens) is inaccessible to the external eye and can only be measured indirectly through self-assessment. One way forward would be to require applicants for awards to set out in advance what they hope to achieve and then for them to report later on their opinion of their success. This is already happening in the Republic of Ireland, but the system could be improved by providing successful applicants with guidelines which ensured that their reports focussed on the Arts Council's expectations. The arrangement could be complemented by the provision of brief reports by expert assessors or critics. "Spot-check" personal meetings with selected award winners would have not only the advantage of humanising the Arts Councils to their clients (something artists would welcome - see below 5.7), but would also enable staff and advisers to enter into critical debate with the artists they are supporting. Such an iterative arrangement would have the double benefit of ensuring that artists were genuinely engaged in self-assessment and enable the Arts Councils to react to the perceived impact of their policies and programmes.

5.5.16 This could profitably be complemented by a periodic (perhaps every five years) review of support for artists - not only of specific award schemes but also of the economic status of the artist against financial and other quantitative targets. One component of the review could be a national survey of artists, preferably conducted by telephone (a method which has shown itself to be both informative and popular with the arts constituency). A major underlying purpose of the exercise would be not only to allow the Arts Councils to assess the specific medium to long-term impacts of their support, but also to check that the balance between a client-led and policy-led approach, between quantitative and qualitative indicators and so forth was correctly set and to make any necessary adjustments.

5.5.17 It is recommended that:

- a methodology and set of procedures should be established to monitor and evaluate the impact of awards and bursaries for individual artists; this methodology should recognise a range of criteria for assessing excellence (including creator/producer quality, expert assessor/critic quality, enrichment of the community, quality in variety and quality as 'fitness for purpose') (BOTH)
- the procedures for evaluation should include relevant quantitative measurements (BOTH)
- qualitative judgements should involve self-assessment by award-holders and peer advisers through the use of written reports and periodic meetings (BOTH)
- there should be a periodic (perhaps five-yearly) overall review, not only of awards but also of the economic status of the artist

against quantitative financial and other targets (BOTH)

Education

5.6.1 The Irish government is strongly committed to cultural and arts development, so it is (to say the least) curious that its Department of Education does not help drama and dance students either with maintenance grants or tuition fees. To support the performing arts while making no contribution to the formation of young performers seems a contradiction in public policy.

5.6.2 It is fortunate that the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon has been willing to help such students, who otherwise have no choice but to subsidise their own training as professional artists (or whose parents do so). But, although an arts funding agency has a responsibility to encourage closer links between the arts community and the formal education sector, especially at primary and secondary levels, it is not appropriate for it to enter a field for which the government has the prime duty to make provision. The task of ensuring access to further and higher education falls squarely within the remit of the Department of Education.

5.6.3 One of the failings of the cultural scene in Ireland has been the inadequate institutional infrastructure for professional career training in the performing arts. It is understood that a proposal for an Academy of Performing Arts in the Republic of Ireland has been agreed in principle - a potentially exciting development, which could go a long way to address the problem. It is important that the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon is fully involved in the planning process for its establishment. It would be well advised to enter into discussions with the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, the Department of Education and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment with a view to the establishment of a long-term government strategy to improve third-level training in dance, drama and music; also with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment regarding in-service vocational training.

5.6.4 In the short term, the Department of Education (RoI) should take over responsibility for offering the same maintenance and free fee arrangements as are available for students in recognised educational institutions. A possible model is suggested by the new Dance and Drama Scholarships which the Department for Education and Employment is due to introduce in the United Kingdom from September 1999. Some 820 new scholarships a year will be available for performance courses at a nominated list of private drama and dance schools. They will cover tuition fees, although students will be charged the means-tested fee of £1,025 as are students at recognised colleges and universities. These scholarships will be open to applicants from European Union countries and may offer a useful opportunity to aspirant Irish actors and dancers.

5.6.5 It may be worth considering whether some similar arrangement would be a constructive first step in strengthening training in the performing arts in Ireland. It would eliminate the present discrimination against those young men and women who want to pursue a career in the performing arts and releasing some of the Arts Council's scarce resources for purposes more relevant to its core mission.

5.6.6 It is recommended that:

- the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon should advocate to government the strategic need for it to improve the quality of third-level performing arts education and training in the Republic (RoI)
- the Council should also seek to persuade government to assume responsibility for funding free tuition fees and means-tested maintenance grants for students at performing arts courses run by appropriate private or commercial educational establishments (RoI)
- once the previous two recommendations are implemented, the Council should withdraw from contributing to students' fees as at present (RoI)

Increasing Transparency

5.7.1 The artists surveyed criticised the opaqueness of the funding system. Secretiveness is a common charge against Arts Councils in general and, in so far as it justified, the reason for it

is understandable. They depend for advice on unpaid peer advisers; asked to make judgements on their colleagues in the field, these people are wary of having the responsibility for particular decisions revealed. In addition, the nature of the decisions taken, dependent as it has to be in part on subjective judgements, means that awards of subsidy and, even more so, rejections can be hard to justify in rationally defensible terms.

5.7.2 Nevertheless, with greater openness becoming a feature of public governance, it is necessary to find ways of responding to requests for explanation. This can be an especially acute issue for arts funding agencies which serve small populations; in such cases the number of appropriately qualified peer advisers is limited and charges of cronyism can be plausibly, or at least readily, made. By the same token, peer advisers may feel particularly exposed to criticism from the arts community.

5.7.3 In the Republic few concessions are made to transparency. Peer advisers attend panels meeting by meeting on an ad hoc basis and their identity is not revealed. The object is to make sure that the personal responsibility for decisions is kept confidential. Written explanations are seldom given to unsuccessful applicants. Until recently comprehensive records giving reasons for decisions were not kept, with the result that it might not have been easy to defend any grant allocation or refusal, if legally challenged for want of due process. A Freedom of Information Act has been introduced in Ireland and in July 1999 the Arts Council was brought within its terms; it was allowed between 12 to 18 months to prepare for compliance. At the end of the lead-in period people will be able to obtain details of personal data, back-dated to April 1998. So it is now a pressing matter to examine its procedures and consider how they might be brought in line with the legislation.

5.7.4 In Northern Ireland panels have permanent members appointed for three years and their names are publicly available (although not published). The Council provides explanations to applicants of its grant decisions.

5.7.5 International comparisons (for example, throughout the United Kingdom, in Nordic countries and, further afield in Hong Kong and Australia) demonstrate that as a general rule the names of peer advisers are published. They also suggest that there is little good reason why minutes of meetings, or summaries, should not be publicly available. Some arts funding agencies open their meetings to the press and public, although often for policy debates rather than those at which grants are agreed. In certain cases advisers file written reports of arts events and performances, which are made available, on a basis of authorial anonymity, to applicants; anything more than that is felt, with some reason, to run the risk of diminishing the supply of advisers willing to volunteer their assistance. Letters of explanation, although difficult to compose, are routinely sent to those whose applications have been rejected. To ensure that the appointment of peer advisers is transparent, some countries have established systems of public nomination. Experience in the United Kingdom shows that while sometimes cumbersome to administer such arrangements are workable and there is little evidence that peer assessors are deterred. The Arts Councils should give consideration to adopting a similar approach (in so far as they are not already doing so).

5.7.6 The pool of qualified advisers is limited in a country the size of Ireland and there would be value in introducing expertise from abroad, or in the case of Northern Ireland also from the rest of the United Kingdom. This would have the benefit of blunting any accusations of cronyism and provincialism, with the additional advantage of complementing or enriching "local" expertise if the Arts Councils were to extend the scope of their policies into new areas (e.g. arts and disability, cross- artform innovation, etc.).

5.7.7 Two important recommendations in the survey, *Research into Support for the Individual Artist*, merit discussion. The first proposes that the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon should consider consolidating its support programmes to reduce duplication, perhaps by structuring them by function (e.g. education, training, new commissions and residencies). This would bring the advantage of simplicity of presentation and would make awards easier to market and publicise. However, the needs of artforms differ and, if this course is followed, applications should continue to be processed by artform departments with their peer advisers. Some arts funding bodies in other

countries (for example, Regional Arts Boards in England) have replaced artform departments with administrative structures determined by function: this undoubtedly allows them to act in a more strategic and corporate manner, but can have the consequences of losing the confidence of the arts constituency and making it more difficult in practice to pursue artform development. One constructive way of squaring this circle would be to establish functional support programmes, but arrange for them to be separately administered by artform departments.

5.7.8 Secondly, it is suggested that the Arts Councils should consider ways of further co-ordinating support for the individual artist across the Republic and Northern Ireland. There is already considerable co-operation between the two bodies and the recommendation makes good sense. There may be room for consolidating the all-Ireland reach of some arts organisations, arranging joint publicity and the linkage of more arts programmes. However, as Annabel Jackson Associates point out, there may be resource implications for the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. At present, all the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon programmes and some indirect support from arts organisations are available to artists from Northern Ireland. Closer ties would be likely to be accompanied by pressure for reciprocation. The two funding bodies have very different histories and traditions and it would be wise not to hurry the process of integration. The fact that they are both developing a more strategic cultural approach to their work suggests that a harmonisation of their activities will become easier with the passage of time. All in all, it is probably best to hasten slowly.

5.7.9 It is recommended that:

- the Arts Councils should consider practical ways of making the assessment of awards and bursaries to individual artists more transparent (BOTH)

32. the Arts Council should consider, where they are not already doing so,

- a. publishing the names of assessors or peer advisers and those attending panel meetings;
 - b. providing explanations of its decisions to applicants;
 - c. publishing minutes, or summaries, of committee meetings;
 - d. opening up its procedures for appointing assessors;
 - e. and in general should seek to harmonise its decision-making procedures with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (RoI)
- the Arts Councils should consider recruiting or international peer advice, or in the case of Northern Ireland from the rest of the United Kingdom (BOTH)
 - the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon should consider simplifying its awards programmes by consolidating them under general, non-art form headings: this would facilitate improved marketing and publicity. However, applications should continue to be processed, as at present, by art form departments (RoI)
 - the Arts Councils should examine ways of further co-ordinating their programmes of support for the individual artist, but the process of integration should be developed over the long term. (BOTH)

Suggestions for Further Research

5.8.10 At various points in this report the desirability of further research is proposed. The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon is planning to follow the present research project with a further study of the economic situation of individual artists (building on the survey, *Research into Support for the Individual Artist*). It is suggested that the terms of reference of the study should be centred on a long-term strategic objective to improve their earnings and opportunities for employment; this report has suggested a number of actions that need to be taken and it would be useful if they were examined in depth.

5.8.11 The development of an effective and sensitive methodology for evaluation will be a complex matter and it may be wise for the Arts Councils to review a variety of models before establishing new systems.

5.8.12 It will be noted that a number of research projects are also proposed in the following chapter, which is concerned with the implementation of the report's recommendations. These include, so far as the Republic of Ireland is concerned: research into arts education (see 6.2.1) and into the development of the arts infrastructure (see 6.2.6). In Northern Ireland, it is likewise suggested that research be conducted into the development of the arts infrastructure - and there may be case for co-ordination of the two pieces of work.

5.8.13 It should be recalled that *Recommendation 4* proposes research with a view to the enhancement of the international promotion of the arts in the republic of Ireland.

6 Next Steps

6.1 Some of the report's recommendations are long term and others short or medium term. Some can be implemented by the Arts Councils on their own and others (including many relevant to the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon) will need to be negotiated with government or call for action by other agencies. This chapter analyses the recommendations into separate groupings for implementation and suggests time-scales; it could form the basis of an Action Plan for the Support of the Individual Artist. It is composed on the working assumption that the Arts Councils accept the report.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Consultations with Government

Strategic Issues

(Recommendations 1, 5, 8,10, 23, 24 and 25)

6.2.1 The most substantial topic for discussion concerns the provision and funding of third-level career education in the performing arts. The Arts Council should seek to launch a quadripartite debate with the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, the Department of Education and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Complex and perhaps sensitive interdepartmental issues may be at stake and it is suggested that the Council's first objective should be to win the co-operation of all the parties to enter into a discussion, rather than press immediately for an outcome which the Council has already pre-determined. The object would be to work towards a consensus. One possible mechanism would be to obtain agreement for some action-research (which would analyse existing documentation and policies), which could lead in due course to a conference designed to chart a way forward. Agreed changes could be timed to coincide with the onset of the next Arts Plan (i.e. from 2002).

6.2.2 A second thrust of the Arts Council's negotiations with government should be to obtain its endorsement of the core objective to address the economic status of the artist. It would be helpful to obtain government approval for this new policy thrust, especially in relation to partnerships with other agencies, and to ensure that it locks constructively into government economic strategies.

6.2.3 A number of other recommendations call for advocacy to government - the international promotion of Irish arts, *droit de suite*, a public lending right, a pension scheme and retraining opportunities for dancers, blank tape levy, the establishment of copyright collecting societies and tax exemption for choreographers. These will require *ad hoc* negotiations, but it is important that they are seen as elements in a larger economic development strategy.

Additional Funding In the Short to Medium Term

6.2.4 Finally, the Arts Council will need to estimate the cost of implementing the report's recommendations and putting a case to government for increased funding. Most of the recommendations could be implemented in the coming 18 months and do not require substantial additional resources, especially if the Arts Council is relieved of the need to support students in tertiary education, which is estimated to have cost a little more than IR£300,000 in 1998. The main recommendations, which are neither cost-neutral nor whose costs can be found from within existing budgets, include 3 (*accompanying new work grants for arts organisations*), 5 (*collaboration with other agencies in the economic field*), 6 (*multi-annual grants*), 7 (*business/management training*), 9 (*artists' associations*), 11 (*stage technician training*), 15 (*awards for community and traditional artists*) and perhaps 18 (*innovation*). Recommendation 4 (*research into international promotion*) would presumably bring with it in due course some financial implications, although not necessarily for the Arts Council. Any decision to increase the average size of awards without significantly reducing their number could be expensive, but should, at least at the outset, be best handled under 6 (*multi-annual grants*). Overall, a very good start could probably be made for a gross increase of between IR£350,000 and IR£500,000. It should be noted the recommendations concerning evaluation - 19, 20, 21 and 22 - are likely to create extra work and may necessitate in due course a review of staffing levels at the Arts Councils.

The Arts Infrastructure (Recommendation 2)

6.2.5 The Council will wish to present government with its views on the enhancement of the country's arts infrastructure, because these will undoubtedly imply a substantial long-term increase in state investment in the arts.

6.2.6 The report argues that an essential component of a thriving and more financially self-sufficient artistic community is the up-grading of the Republic of Ireland's infrastructure of arts institutions. The first step to the attainment of this ambitious goal should be a major research and planning effort, involving consultations with all interested parties and leading, eventually, a long-term (perhaps five-year), costed development strategy. This could form a central component of the Arts Council's next, post-2001 Arts Plan.

Action by the Arts Council

6.2.7 Subject to financial considerations, many of the recommendations can be implemented by the Arts Council, independently of government.

Reform of Award Schemes (Recommendations 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 1, 16,17, 1B, 19, 20, 21, 22)

6.2.8 These recommendations propose, in summary, a clarification of objectives, the establishment of evaluation procedures and changes to the awards schemes. They could be handled by a process of internal review. However, it would be wise to involve artists and arts organisations in a consultation process. Agreed changes could be brought into effect from the 2001-2 financial year. However, those which have resource implications, may need to await the Arts Council's withdrawal from financing students' third-level education (see above).

Transparency (Recommendations 26, 27, 28, 29, 30,)

6.2.9 Following the decision that the Freedom of Information Act be applied to the Arts Council and the establishment of a time-table for compliance, the process of reform is already under way. The recommendations are comparatively straightforward, but consultation with peer assessors will be advisable.

NORTHERN IRELAND

6.3.1 The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is currently engaged in preparing a new Corporate Plan and there may be time to incorporate some of the report's recommendations in it.

Consultations with Government

Strategic Issues (Recommendations 1, 5, 8 and 13)

6.3.2 Two major recommendations affecting the Arts Council will need discussion with the Department of Education in Northern Ireland, the first of which is the identification of the economic status of the artist as a core issue that should inform arts planning. It should be noted that this policy change would be consistent with the Arts Council's general direction, for it is already committed to economic targets both in its Lottery strategy and its Draft Operational Plan.

6.3.3 Secondly, the proposal that awards to individual artists be uncoupled from the community benefit criterion (which will, of course, remain applicable to other schemes and policies) and should be focused on the making of art and artists' formation, may be a more controversial change. The Arts Council may wish to demonstrate to government that these objectives are relevant to its overall strategic approach.

Additional Funding in the Short to Medium Term

6.3.4 Some of the report's recommendations have cost implications and these will need to be carefully assessed and a case put to government for increased funding. Those which are neither cost-neutral nor whose costs can be found from within existing budgets, include 3 (*accompanying new work grants for arts organisations*), 5 (*collaboration with other agencies in the economic field*) (the Arts Council of Northern Ireland is, of course, already engaged on a relevant tourism project), perhaps 6 (*multi-annual grants*), 7 (*business/management training*), 9 (*artists' associations*) and perhaps 18 (*innovation*). A net (because there would be no tertiary education saving as in the Republic) increase of resources for the individual artist of perhaps £250,000 would enable the Arts Council of Northern Ireland to make rapid progress.

6.3.5 The further co-ordination of co-operation with the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon will have resource implications, because the Arts Council of Northern Ireland has not been able on every occasion to provide reciprocal finance for the all-Ireland schemes and organisations which receive funding in the RoI. A commitment to produce a costed proposal could form part of the forthcoming Corporate Plan, for implementation in the later years of its operation.

The Arts Infrastructure (*Recommendation 2*)

6.3.6 The report argues that an essential component of a thriving and more financially self-sufficient artistic community is the up-grading of Northern Ireland's infrastructure of arts institutions. The first step to the attainment of this ambitious goal should be a major research and planning effort, involving consultations with all interested parties. This could be presented as a commitment in its forthcoming Corporate Plan and leading, eventually, to a long-term (perhaps five-year), costed development strategy. This could form a proactive development of the Arts Council's existing National Lottery capital development programme.

Action by MM Arts Council

6.3.7 Subject to financial considerations, many of the recommendations can be implemented by the Arts Council, independently of government.

Reform of Award Schemes (*Recommendations 3, 6, 7, 9, 14, 15,18,19, 20, 21 and 22*)

6.3.6 These recommendations propose, in summary, a clarification of objectives, the establishment of evaluation procedures and changes to the awards schemes. They could be handled by a process of internal review. However, it would be wise to involve artists and arts organisations in a consultation process. Agreed changes could be brought into effect from the 2001-2 financial year.

Transparency (*Recommendations 26, 28, 29 and 30*)

6.3.9 The administrative and decision-making procedures of the Arts Council are more transparent than those of its counterpart in Dublin. However, there are still significant improvements to be made and account will, no doubt, need to be taken in due course of impending Freedom of Information legislation planned by the UK Government. An action plan should be agreed for consultation with the arts community and government for implementation during 2000-2001.

Glossary

An Chomhairle Ealaíon	Irish Arts Council
An Gúm	Publisher of Republic of Ireland documents
Aosdána	Affiliation of Irish creative artists in literature, music and the visual arts
Approved courses	Courses at undergraduate level of at least two years' duration, recognised by the Irish government Those undertaking them qualify for Free Fees and means-tested maintenance grants Students on Non-approved courses are not eligible for financial support
Bord na Gaeilge	State-sponsored body engaged in the promotion of the Irish language
Bord na Leabhar Gaeilge	Agency for the promotion of books in the Irish language
Bord Scannán na hÉireann	Irish Film Board
Cnuas, cnuais	Means-tested annuity for Aosdána members (singular and plural)
Ceilidhes	Evening of traditional Irish music and dance
Comisiun na Rinci Gaelacha	Irish Dance Commission
Cumann Leabharfoilsitheoirí Éireann Teo (CLÉ)	Irish Book Publishers' Association
Droit de suite	Resale "royalty" rights for visual artists
Foras Áiseanna Saothair	Training and Employment Authority
Gaeltacht	Designated Irish language-speaking area
NI	Northern Ireland
Radio Telefís Éireann	The national broadcaster
Rot	Republic of Ireland
Saoi	An honour conferred by Aosdána on distinguished artists
Sean nós	Term referring to traditional singing or dancing
TG4	Irish language television station
VEC	Vocational Education Committee

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The Arts Council is committed to developing its understanding of the development of the arts by research and dialogue. Research outcomes will be disseminated by various means, including this publication, to help develop debate and to promote wider public recognition of the arts.

The Arts Council is committed to supporting individual artists to achieve their full artistic potential, and to improve the viability of the arts as a career, in Ireland and abroad.

This report has been commissioned to analyse the impact and effectiveness of existing Arts Council programmes in direct support of artists, and to develop a new implementation strategy for both Arts Councils.

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Number 1: Local Authority expenditure of the arts – A four year perspective

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