



## **Engender and EMCC Response to the Scottish Government Consultation on the International Culture Strategy**

Engender is Scotland's feminist policy and advocacy organisation, working to secure women's political, economic and social equality with men. Our aspiration is for a Scotland where women and men have equal access to and enjoyment of rights, resources, decision-making and safety.

The Equal Media and Culture Centre for Scotland provides research, monitoring and advocacy for gender equality in the media, creative and cultural industries across Scotland.

### **5. WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE RATIONALE SET OUT FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CULTURE STRATEGY?**

The Equal Media and Culture Centre (the Centre) at Engender supports the rationale to increase opportunities for the Scottish culture and creative sectors to collaborate internationally and make cultural connections. It is critical in developing a new International Culture Strategy to consider those groups who have historically experienced exclusion, including women and within this marginalised groups of women from Scotland's rich creative and cultural sectors, both in terms of seeking their perspectives in this consultation and also in terms of mapping the skills, capacity and potential within these sectors for export activity.

### **6. WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE VISION OUTLINED ABOVE? IS THE VISION CLEAR? IS THERE ANYTHING THAT YOU THINK IS MISSING?**

The vision and primary themes are clear.

The Centre is chiefly concerned with addressing inequalities that prevent women and marginalised people in Scotland from participating in our creative and cultural sectors to the fullest extent possible. The four themes, while clear and pertinent, do not explicitly consider the lack of parity in Scotland's arts and cultural

industries, and therefore how these inequalities will be addressed in the new Strategy.

In exploring how to support the cultural sector to internationalise (including associated activities such as developing new markets, accessing networks or navigating the regulatory landscapes of other countries), it remains critical to consider how current structural barriers to inclusion impact international ambitions and potential.

## **7. WE HAVE IDENTIFIED 4 THEMES (CULTURAL CONNECTIONS, ECONOMIC IMPACT, DIPLOMACY AND REPUTATION). HOW DOES YOUR WORK CONNECT WITH EACH OF THESE AREAS?**

### **Cultural Connections**

As outlined under *Economic Impact* below, there remain significant barriers to women and minoritised people having access to Scotland's rich arts and culture sectors. Due in part to the increased digital affordances available to creators, there has been an increase in grassroots-led, independent or community-supported endeavour, which falls outwith traditional industry and sectoral infrastructures. It is key to reimagine Scotland's cultural offering and ensure that support for international collaboration extends proactively outwards, providing cultural connections to groups, initiatives and individuals not housed under the usual organisations and networks.

### **Economic Impact**

Despite the creative and cultural sectors contributing more than £5 billion to the Scottish economy every year, enhancing Scotland's international reputation, there remain key economic barriers to inclusion within its industries. While nearly half the 1,500 respondents to Creative Scotland's *Diversity in the Arts* survey stated that their work had international reach, the analysis of income revealed that earnings for those working in the sector are below the national average, despite high levels of education.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, jobs in these industries decreased by 10.3% between 2020 and 2021, undermining progress against the National Performance Framework Culture indicator.

Structural barriers continue to disproportionately affect women's representation and participation in Scotland's creative and cultural sectors. Research has shown

---

<sup>1</sup> Creative Scotland (2017) Understanding Diversity in the Arts Survey Summary Report. Available at: [https://www.creativescotland.com/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/42920/Arts-and-Diversity-Survey-Summary.pdf](https://www.creativescotland.com/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/42920/Arts-and-Diversity-Survey-Summary.pdf).

how recent challenges (Brexit, Covid-19, the cost of living crisis) have further cemented these entrenched inequalities.

Barriers to women's employment and progression in the creative and cultural arts include (but are not limited to):

- fewer funding opportunities<sup>2</sup> alongside the precarity of the job market<sup>3</sup>, casualisation of contracts in the arts<sup>4</sup>, and project-based models of cultural production,<sup>5</sup> leading to fewer opportunities for steady, well-paid opportunities and an increase in those (often women) relying on freelance work;
- societal expectations of women to assume caring roles;<sup>6 7</sup>
- barriers to career progression<sup>8 9</sup> leading to a lack of women in leadership positions and boards within the sectors;<sup>10 11</sup>
- normalised exclusionary practices within the industries, such as masculinist work cultures, inflexible working policies, and lack of safety.<sup>12</sup>

Intersectional analysis reveals that for black and minoritised women, economic and employment obstacles outweigh any other in maintaining a career in the creative and cultural sectors, with lack of access to paid job opportunities, lack of

---

<sup>2</sup> Creative Scotland (2022) Budget Scrutiny 2023-2024: Funding for Culture. Available at: [https://www.creativescotland.com/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/92653/Committee-Submission-Final-CEEAC-August-2022.pdf](https://www.creativescotland.com/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/92653/Committee-Submission-Final-CEEAC-August-2022.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Kenny, M., Liu, S., McKay, F., and Thomson E. (2021) Women's experiences in Scottish media, creative and cultural industries. Available at: <https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/7.-I-Just-Didnt-See-Anyone-Like-Me.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Aspinall Priest, R (2023) Blog. Cost of Living Crisis: How are Rising costs affecting women in the arts? Available at: <https://www.engender.org.uk/news/blog/cost-of-living-crisis-how-are-rising-costs-affecting-women-in-the-arts/>.

<sup>5</sup> Eikhof, D.R., and Warhurst, C. (2013) The promised land? Why social inequalities are systemic in the creative industries, *Employee Relations*, 35(5), 495 – 508. Available at: [https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/19543/1/Eikhof\\_Warhurst\\_Employee\\_Relations.pdf](https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/19543/1/Eikhof_Warhurst_Employee_Relations.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Creative Scotland (2017) Understanding Diversity in the Arts Survey Summary Report. Available at: [https://www.creativescotland.com/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/42920/Arts-and-Diversity-Survey-Summary.pdf](https://www.creativescotland.com/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/42920/Arts-and-Diversity-Survey-Summary.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Masso, G. (2021) Report: Two thirds of women in theatre have considered leaving due to pandemic. Available at: <https://www.thestage.co.uk/news/two-thirds-of-women-in-theatre-have-considered-leaving-due-to-pandemic-report>.

<sup>8</sup> Hobson, C. (2019) Why don't more women enter creative industries? Available at: <https://luminare.prospects.ac.uk/why-don-t-more-women-enter-creative-industries->.

<sup>9</sup> NACWG (2021) Gender Inequality in the Creative Arts. Available at: <https://www.generationequal.scot/app/uploads/2022/03/NACWG-paper-Gender-inequality-in-creative-industries-FINAL-PAPER-5-August-21.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Voices of Culture (2019) Gender Equality: Gender Balance in the Cultural and Creative Sectors.

<sup>11</sup> Engender (2020) Sex & Power in Scotland 2023. Available at: <https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/Engenders-Sex-and-Power-2020.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Engender (2022) The Status Quo of Inequality in Scotland's Media and Cultural Sectors. Available at: <https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/6.-Gathering-Attitudes-Report.pdf>.

consistent well-paid work, and lack of permanent positions named as major challenges.<sup>13</sup>

Ambitions for internationalisation should consider how sectoral development can place equality of participation in cultural activity at its heart.

#### **14. IN WHAT WAYS CAN INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY HELP TO MITIGATE CURRENT CHALLENGES? (E.G., BREXIT, PANDEMIC, COST CRISIS)**

International activity has the potential to create diverse funding opportunities for Scotland's rich creative sectors, to open up new markets for cultural output by minoritised Scottish creators, including women, and provide spaces for knowledge exchange on sectoral policies and procedures which could benefit those most disadvantaged by current structures and norms.

The Strategy should, therefore, explicitly seek to improve employment and participation in the creative and cultural sectors by groups who are most likely to be disadvantaged by inequality. This is particularly important at a time of economic precarity within the sectors, compounded by additional pressures as a result of Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis, where women and marginalised groups are disproportionately impacted.

#### **22. ARE THERE ASPECTS OF ENGAGING IN INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL ACTIVITY THAT CAN AFFECT EQUALITIES GROUPS DIFFERENTLY? (IN YOUR RESPONSE, PLEASE REFLECT ON BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS)**

Engaging in international cultural activity from within organisations and institutions will affect equalities groups differently due to persistent exclusionary structures. Specific issues differentially affect Black and minoritised women, disabled women, older women, young women, single parents, LGBTQI women, women with insecure immigration status, and pregnant women, amongst other groups. Practices, policies and conditions, many of which remain industry norms, remain barriers to participation and progression. Those producing cultural content in Scotland are not representative of the country's population.

The creative and cultural sectors in Scotland are largely based on a project model, the infrastructure of which relies upon inflexible, short-term, low-paid work, with

---

<sup>13</sup> Kenny, M., Liu, S., McKay, F., and Thomson E. (2021) Women's experiences in Scottish media, creative and cultural industries. Available at: <https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/7.-I-Just-Didnt-See-Anyone-Like-Me.pdf>.

irregular working hours, alongside unpaid work<sup>14</sup> and contracts with no security or benefits.<sup>15</sup> There is a discrepancy of rights and job security between those in salaried positions<sup>16</sup> and those working as freelancers - which will, in turn, affect engagement in international cultural activity.

Those attempting to engage internationally as either self-employed individuals or freelancers (disproportionately women) are unprotected from further precarity in a challenging international infrastructure, with less access to resources, skills and career development opportunities. They are required to become their own advocates to ensure fair and timely payment; this is more challenging for women who are less likely to do so as a result of the ways in which women are culturally required to behave.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, such uncertainty of employment affects women's economic autonomy, increasing their vulnerability to gender-based violence.<sup>18</sup>

To address the intersectional impact on socio-economic status, island communities and young women, this precarity of the cultural labour market particularly affects those without access to alternative financial support or additional employment, either due to inadequate employability support, geographical distance or age. Men who are not from working class backgrounds are three times more likely to be working in a creative occupation than working class women.<sup>19</sup>

Disabled women face underemployment cross-sectorally in Scotland;<sup>20</sup> without access to consistent, high-quality, flexible part-time work in the creative and cultural sectors their ability to participate in – and contribute to – international cultural engagement is curtailed.

---

<sup>14</sup> Arts Professional (2018) Almost 90% of arts internships are unpaid. Available at: <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/almost-90-arts-internships-are-unpaid>.

<sup>15</sup> Panic! It's an Arts Emergency (2018) Available at: <https://createlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Panic-Social-Class-Taste-and-Inequalities-in-the-Creative-Industries1.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> Culture Radar (2023) Review of Fair Work in the creative and cultural sectors in Scotland. Available at: <https://shorturl.at/jkFK5>.

<sup>17</sup> Indeed (2023) The Self-Advocacy Gap for Women (Plus How to Overcome It) Available at: <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/women-self-advocacy#:~:text=Race%20and%20gender%20barriers%20to,advocate%20enough%20or%20at%20all>.

<sup>18</sup> Open Democracy (2019) Precarious work makes women more vulnerable to gender-based violence. Available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/precariou-work-makes-women-more-vulnerable-gender-based-violence/>.

<sup>19</sup> Culture Counts Useful Facts. Available at: <https://culturecounts.scot/useful-facts>.

<sup>20</sup> Close the Gap Submission to the Economy and Fair Work Committee disabled employment gap inquiry (February 2023). Available at: <https://www.closesthegap.org.uk/content/resources/Close-the-Gap-submission-to-the-Economy-and-Fair-Work-Committee-disabled-employment-gap-inquiry.pdf>.

The burden of unpaid care that rests disproportionately on women in Scotland affects their engagement in international cultural activity, particularly where this requires irregular hours, evening and weekend work, or travelling for extended periods of development or performance away from home. This particularly affects single parents and unpaid carers.

Aside from employment models, pay and policies, other aspects of international cultural activity affect women and minoritised people differently, including the abuse faced disproportionately by women, in particular queer, Black women and women of colour on- and offline in cultural spaces. Yet, often cultural creators face a requirement to be visible online in order to amplify their work and gain employment.

Scottish traditional and folk culture remains heavily dominated by white, non-disabled men decision-makers, gate-keepers and creators. For example, piping and drumming, a popular international symbol of Scots culture, remains deeply patriarchal due to its heritage and traditional recruitment pipelines of pipers.<sup>21</sup>

There is an urgent need to tackle well-reported structural barriers that prevent women from progression in the creative and cultural fields, including a lack of guaranteed hours, frequent travel, expectations of undertaking unpaid internships, long, inflexible shifts, and inadequate parental rights for freelancers. In order for there to be parity of opportunity in engaging in international cultural activity, the creative and cultural landscape in Scotland needs bold interventions to ensure the right to participate is upheld for marginalised people.

### **23. IF YOU IDENTIFIED ANY NEGATIVE EFFECTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK COULD BE DONE IN THE FUTURE TO TRY AND PREVENT THIS FROM HAPPENING?**

There are a number of ways in which the Strategy could counter such negative effects, some of which are listed below. Uppermost is the need to engage with equalities groups working across the creative and cultural sectors. Many of these have arisen out of a need for women and other marginalised creators, recognising that they must widen participation for themselves in a context where the need for systemic change is not being addressed.

---

<sup>21</sup> Engender (2021) Gathering Attitudes: The Status Quo of Inequality in Scotland's Media and Cultural Sectors. Available at: <https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/6.-Gathering-Attitudes-Report.pdf>.

- Take an intersectional, human-rights-based approach to participation in domestic and international cultural activity, acknowledging culture as valuable to communities and the country as a whole;
- Require bodies in receipt of public funding to be accountable for their internal equalities policies and external-facing practices and partnerships;
- Ensure that applications are required to submit clear EDI strategies and targets alongside budgets and that resources are available to support them in doing so;
- Follow up on multi-year funded projects and organisations to provide EDI data, and accountability for achieving targets;
- Include financial incentives for bodies and organisations to recruit proactively beyond the usual avenues and elicit applications from multiply-marginalised creators;
- Attach fair work conditions to procurement and funding contracts;
- Encourage transparency of data around funding, employment and reporting mechanisms for enhanced monitoring and scrutiny.

The Strategy has an opportunity to integrate women’s needs and the diverse realities of women’s lives into the relevant thematic rhetoric, gendering the aims from the outset, and basing the strategy on a widening of participation in international – and domestic – creative and cultural pursuit.

### **ABOUT ENGENDER**

Engender is Scotland’s feminist policy and advocacy organisation, working to secure women’s political, economic and social equality with men. Our aspiration is for a Scotland where women and men have equal access to and enjoyment of rights, resources, decision-making and safety.

### **ABOUT THE EQUAL MEDIA AND CULTURE CENTRE**

The Equal Media and Culture Centre for Scotland provides research, monitoring and advocacy for gender equality in the media, creative and cultural industries across Scotland.