



— The Collective Voice of Scotland's Cultural Sector.

Education and Skills Committee Inquiry: The impact of experiencing poverty on young people at school, including their attainment and their achievement.

How has your work supported the educational attainment of children and young people? What has worked well and what barriers have there been to success?

- 1 Culture Counts works on behalf of a group of core members to place culture at the heart of policy making. The organisation and its members are committed to working openly and collaboratively.
- 2 We understand that the Scottish Government are working to close the gap in attainment particularly where there is a significant gap between those living in the most disadvantaged areas (bottom 20% SIMD) and the least disadvantaged (top 20% SIMD). We were shocked to see an 80% gap in exclusion rates between the most disadvantaged (95.2%) and least disadvantaged (15.2%) in secondary school age children. The cultural sector has an important role to play in Education and we can contribute to attainment in English and Maths; while making an important contribution to improving the mental health of young people which we understand to be a major part of how exclusion happens¹. Cultural education is not an additional but an essential component to ensuring that our young people achieve and that they are confident, responsible effective contributors who can express themselves well and in a range of ways.
- 3 The charity Sistema Scotland works in deprived areas of Glasgow, Stirling and Aberdeen. It provides an intensive orchestral programme for school-age children and young people with the aim of changing lives fostering confidence, discipline, teamwork, pride and aspiration in those taking part. Entry to and participation in the programme is free and includes instruments, lessons, snacks and day trips. The key findings of a recent evaluation were that participation in the programme increased school attendance and attainment rates, improved emotional wellbeing and aspirations to healthy living, and supported the acquisition of skills for work and life including self-discipline, time management and organisation².

1 <https://www.ippr.org/files/2017-10/making-the-difference-summary-october-2017.pdf>

2 http://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/5059/Sistema_summary_updated.pdf

- 4 The Scottish Government allocates £10 million per year to deliver the Youth Music Initiative. This aims to create access to high-quality music-making opportunities for young people aged 0-25 years, particularly for those who would not normally have the chance to participate. A recent evaluation of the YMI concluded that it is contributing to building a fairer Scotland and tackling inequalities by engaging those who wouldn't normally get involved, particularly young people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage³.
- 5 There remains a disparity of opportunity in one-to-one instrumental music instruction (for those studying for standard grade and higher grades) at secondary school level. Music as a subject is non-statutory; this creates localised disparity of opportunity as those in more affluent areas enjoy music instruction as paid for by parents and guardians whereas those in areas of deprivation have little access to one-to-one tuition⁴. Scottish Government Teacher Census data shows that Scottish schools have lost over three hundred and fifty music instruction teachers since 2007⁵.
- 6 Evidence points to gains in attainment in a range of subjects because of studying the arts. A 2015 literature review commissioned by CASE found that the evidence points to a positive relationship between arts and educational impacts⁶. This study highlights a link between increased self-esteem and attitudes towards education, improved educational values and relationships with teachers.
- One-third of young people in the youth justice system who completed Summer Arts Colleges moved up a level in literacy and numeracy⁷.
- Young people using libraries read above the expected level for their age; young people who don't use libraries read below the expected level⁸.
- In the US, large cohort studies of 25,000 students undertaken by James Catterall show that taking part in arts activities increases student attainment in maths and literacy, with particularly striking results for students from low- income families^{9&10}.
- Teenagers and young adults of low socio-economic status (SES) who have a history of in-depth arts involvement show better academic outcomes than do low-SES youth who have less arts involvement. They earn better grades and demonstrate higher rates of college enrolment and attainment¹¹.
- Other studies echo these results, with Ruppert finding that students who take arts classes have higher maths and verbal SAT scores than students who take no arts classes¹².

 3 http://www.creativescotland.com/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/32754/YMI-Evaluation-ExecutiveSummary.pdf

4 EIS Councillor Briefing Music in Schools January 2018

5 <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/teachcenssuppdata>

6 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416279/A_review_of_the_Social_Impacts_of_Culture_and_Sport.pdf

7 Stephenson, Martin, Adams, Maree and Tarling, Roger. The Art of Engagement: Outcomes and Impact of the Summer Arts College Programme 2007 to twelve (Norwich: Unitas, 2014) Page 83

8 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED515944.pdf>

9 https://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/docs/21545-Doing_Well_and_Doing_Good.pdf

10 <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-At-Risk-Youth.pdf>

11 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529766.pdf>

12 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ695662.pdf>

Are there any services that you / your organisation has not been able to provide that you believe would work?

Those working across the cultural sector are frequently brought-in (as additional support) for short-term or one-off visits within the education system. Culture Counts members would like to work more closely and strategically with the education sector to enable practitioners to work for longer with targeted young people so that they are able to pass on skills as well as the opportunity to experience and participate (in a long-term accessible structured way). Young people who are part of the exclusion statistics are less likely to choose arts subjects which is unfortunate as they could possibly have the most to gain from taking part¹³.

Culture Counts would be interested in working with the Education and Skills Committee to try to better align equality of access to cultural skills; supporting the sector to work regularly, strategically and long-term within the most deprived areas within Scotland would be to the benefit of everyone.

13 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/25/squeezing-out-arts-for-commercially-useful-subjects-will-make-our-culture-poorer>