



Westminster City Council

An Overview 解説

Support for the arts by public organizations in Britain

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イギリスの公的機関の芸術援助

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The British system of support for the arts through public organizations lies somewhere in between the continental European systems relying mainly on government funding and the American system which relies mainly on money from the private sector.

The main reasons for this are historical. Britain was one of the first countries in the world where people, led by ideals of freedom and equality, took the power of government into their own hands through citizen revolts, beginning in the 17th century. This was followed by the industrial revolution, which propelled Britain into the position of what could be called the world's first modern nation. In contrast to continental Europe, where patronage for the arts came from the royalty and nobility or the church, Britain early on developed a historical precedent in which an increasingly prosperous middle class was able to support the arts to a considerable degree.

Public support that is not government driven

The British Museum was created when the doctor and naturalist Sir Hans Sloane donated his collection of specimens to the British government in 1753. Money was raised through a nationally run lottery and in 1759 the British Museum opened as the world's first museum open to the general public.

The Tate Galleries that stand on the north bank of the Thames River in London is a museum of modern and contemporary art that was created in 1897 when the wealthy sugar merchant, Sir Henry Tate, donated his contemporary art collection and a fund of £80,000 for construction of a museum to house it provided that the government provide the land for it to be built on.

In the still evolving central area of London there are about 40 theaters, most of which were built from the latter half of the 19th century into the early 20th century as privately financed commercial theaters. From these examples we see that, historically, support for the arts in Britain has basically not been government directed. The basic format is one in which the various arts organizations draw up their annual plans of activities and if those projects are considered worthy they will receive some degree of public funding.

The history of the Arts Council of Great Britain

The Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) is a nationwide organization now independent from the national government that was founded in 1946. This organization is an outgrowth of The Council for the Encouragement of Music and Art (CEMA) founded in 1940 and its reorganization as the ACGB enabled British art organizations to pursue their activities in a more stable and supportive environment.

There was a time when the ACGB was quite a generous supporter of the art, but in latter half of the 1980s former Prime Minister Thatcher put an end to the expansion of funding for the arts and put in place a policy that in effect reduced the amount of

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government funding for the arts. This forced the art organizations to strengthen efforts to solicit funding from corporations and individuals.

In 1994, when a national lottery was reinstated for the first time in 170 years, some 28% of its profits was designated to the support of programs for the arts and sports that could no longer be supported sufficiently by tax money. As a result of this new source of funds, the Arts Council of England (ACE) was able to allot some one billion pounds to projects for refurbishing the major organizations, redevelopment and construction between March of 1995 and June of 1999. This included large-scale construction projects for the Royal Opera House, the Tate Riverside Museum and the British Museum that are now either finished or ongoing.

Re-evaluation of support for the arts

The end of the 1990s brought reviews by the various arts organizations in Britain concerning what forms support for the arts should take in the future. One of the reasons for the start of these reviews was that, more than a half century after its founding, the ACGB was hearing criticism that its system was out of date.

Another factor is the trend toward a shift of governance from the central government to the regional governments that began in the mid-80s. When we speak of Britain we are actually speaking of the largely Anglo-Saxon England and the traditionally Celtic Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with their distinctly different historical, religious and cultural backgrounds. The desire of the latter group to achieve greater autonomy from the central government has been growing in recent years.

In light of this, the ACGB divided itself into four bodies in 1994, the Arts Council of England (ACE), the Scottish Arts Council (SAC), the Arts Council of Wales (ACW) and the Arts Council of North Ireland (ACNI). Until this split, the ACGB had received its lump budget from the national government and proceeded to allocate funding to the various regions, but under the new organization the four councils began to receive their funding for the arts directly from their respective regional governing bodies.

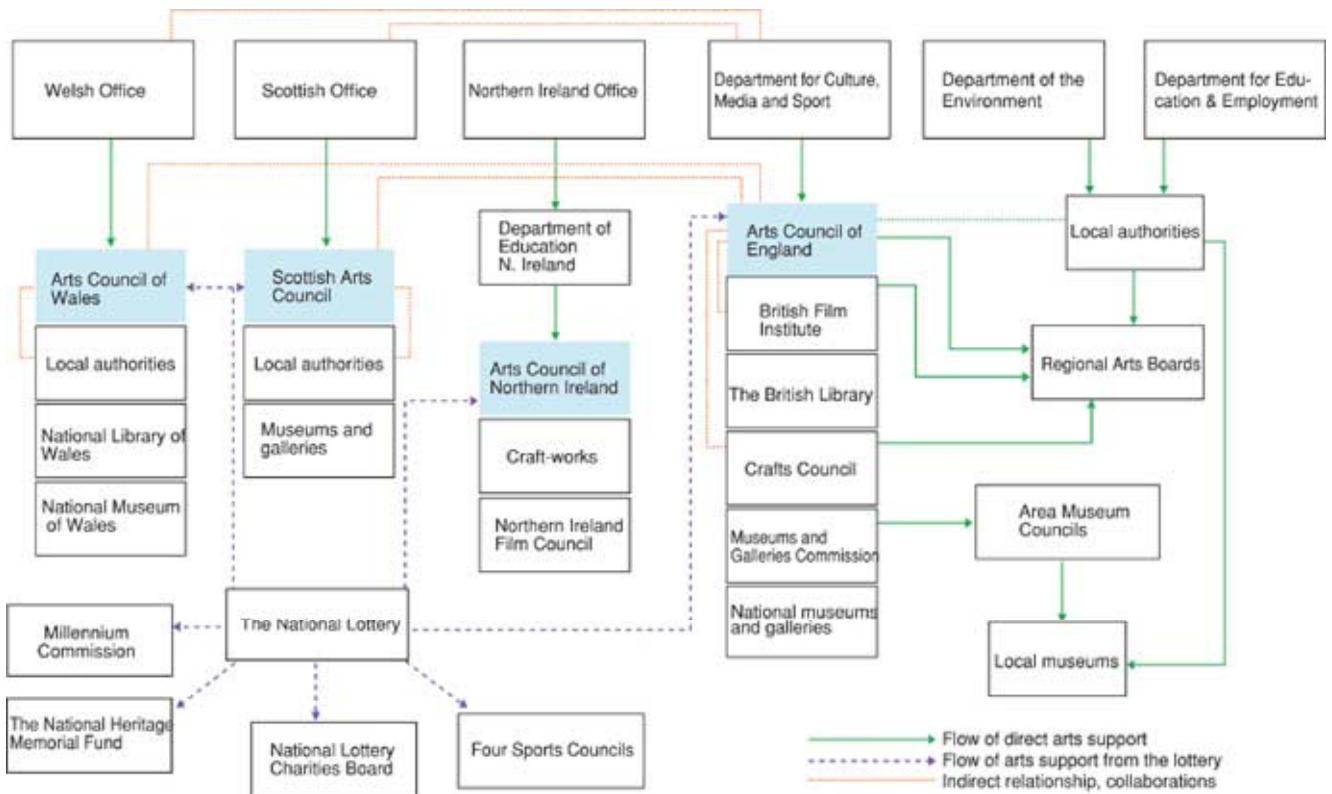
Meanwhile, the arrival of the Blair government in May of 1997 brought a new policy line that involved both a strengthening of the power of the central government and an increase in the practical governance responsibilities asked of the regional governments. This shift had an influence on support for the arts. The biggest change was that the role of Ace became mainly one of deciding on and implementing policy for support of the arts for all of England and the organization itself began to slim down. Under the new system, the actual job of allocating funds has been shifted to ten Regional Arts Boards (RAB) in the different districts of England, and in the future these RAB will surely play a primary role in the allotment of funds for the arts. These changes are based on the idea that allocating funds by an organization that is closer to the actual artists, art organizations and local audiences will result in more timely and efficient use of the funds available.

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Main organizations of the British arts support system



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The case of London

Let us take the example of London to see what kinds of activities ACE, the RAB and the regional governments are engaged in and under what kind of policies they are functioning.

ACE (Arts Council of England)

ACE is a non-governmental organization operating with a good degree of independence from the national government. It is operated with the aim of distributing funds from the national government and the national lottery revenue throughout England for the purpose of developing, maintaining and encouraging the arts and making them accessible to the citizens for enjoyment.

The mandate of the ACE under its royal charter includes the following three roles: To further knowledge and understanding of the arts and understand their practical implementation. To make the arts more accessible to the populace. To cooperate with the national and regional governments, the ACW, SAC, ACNI and the related organizations both directly and indirectly and to serve an advisory role for them.

ACE has eight arts departments including dance, theater, literature, music, visual art, regional performance, audience development, broadcasting and new media, and each of these departments is staffed by specialists in the respective fields. Sitting on the ACE committees are active artists from fields like sculpture and literature and system encourages free discussion with artists about how best to distribute funds.

Among the organizations that receive funds from ACE are the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal Opera House the South Bank Centre and others, and 30% of the ACE budget is distributed by the RAB. The budget received from the Ministry of Culture in 1999 was £22.7 million.

London Arts Board (LAB)

After its start as a subcommittee of ACGB in 1991, the London Arts Board became one of the ten RAB that went into operation nationwide in 1992. LAB is an agency that supports the arts in London and the surrounding areas and its main role is building the arts infrastructure and encouraging the development of artistic activities in the London area.

In 2000, there were 18 people working in the arts department of LAB, including specialists in the fields of theater, cross-over arts, visual arts, literature, dance and music. After that the staff was expanded to accommodate expanded ACE commissions. On the organization's committee sit representatives from the arts, economics, broadcasting, education and management fields.

The organization's funding comes primarily from ACE and the Craft Council, with the 1999 budget totaling £15.74 million. The LAB makes annual allotments to organizations that range in amount from £5,000 to £50,000 and it is presently supporting some 128 arts organizations and artists and monitoring the results of that support. Compared to ACE, LAB supports middle to small scale organizations and community based arts activities.

Westminster City Council (WCC)

The WCC is a regional government agency with jurisdiction over the central part of London where the largest number of arts organizations are concentrated among the 34 districts of the city and its surrounding area.

Until 1986, support for the arts in the London was conducted by the Greater London Council (GLC), a local government office for the city and its surrounding areas,

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through its affiliated Greater London Arts (GLA) and the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). However, Thatcher regarded the GLC as a left-leaning body that generally opposed government policy and therefore proceeded to eliminate most of the GLC functions in 1986. This move made it necessary for the local government offices of London and the surrounding areas to quickly pick up the responsibility for supporting the arts organizations that had relied until then on the GLA and ILEA, and that situation continues.

The area of jurisdiction for WCC is the central part of London, which puts it in the unique position where its area includes numerous large-scale art organization that function on a national level as well as organizations that function only in London and local community groups. For this reason, when allotting its art support, the WCC takes into consideration not only the residents of the districts under its jurisdiction but also the people who come to London from other regions. The WCC provides support for organizations that base themselves in the WCC districts, as well as projects and events, educational programs like artists in residence and initiative funds that generate new ideas.

The WCC's budget for 1999 was £1.2 million, and its arts budget is one of the largest in London. This is because the WCC traditionally considers the arts to be important and recognizes the ability of the arts to contribute to the local community by attracting tourists and the like.

The decision to give art support is based on whether the organization or project is related to the local community and whether or not there are requests from people who want to see it. Notices telling how to apply for support are posted at places like libraries. Four or five different times a year, applications are accepted for projects that are planned to be held within the following two to three months.

One of the unique things WCC does is to issue special "less cards" to local citizens or people interested in the arts through an external card company. With this card, people can get discounts of 10% to 50% on tickets for museums or theaters participating in the program. The museum and theaters then bill the WCC for the discounted amounts and the WCC pays for it with arts support funds. Presently about one in four of local residents hold one of these cards and the system is said to be greatly appreciated.

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Arts Council of England reference materials		
Funds for support for the arts allotted by the government to ACGB/ACE since 1979		
1979/80	63,125,000 £	ACGB
1980/81	70,970,000°	°
1981/82	80,450,000°	°
1982/83	91,300,000°	°
1983/84	96,080,000°	°
1984/85	101,900,000°	°
1985/86	106,050,000°	°
1986/87	135,600,000°	°
1987/88	139,300,000°	°
1988/89	152,411,000°	°
1989/90	155,500,000°	°
1990/91	175,792,000°	°
1991/92	205,000,000°	°
1992/93	221,200,000°	°
1993/94	225,830,000°	°
1994/95	185,990,000°	to ACE
1995/96	191,100,000°	°
1996/97	186,100,000°	°
1997/98	186,100,000°	°
1998/99	189,600,000°	°
1999/2000	227,300,000°	°
2000/2001	237,300,000°	°
2001/2002	252,300,000°	°

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Data

Websites for reference

British Ministry of Culture
<http://www.culture.gov.uk>
Arts Council of England
<http://www.artscouncil.org>
Scottish Arts Council
<http://www.scottisharts.org.uk>
National lottery
<http://www.lottery.culture.gov.uk>
London Arts Board
<http://www.arts.org.uk>
British Film Institute
<http://www.bfi.org.uk>
Crafts Council
<http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk>
British Council
<http://www.britcoun.org>
Westminster City Council
<http://www.westminster.gov.uk>

Specific examples of public support

Now, let us look at some actual examples of arts support to see how the system functions in the cases of large, middle and small scale organizations. (See "Example of aid revenue breakdown")

Example (1) shows the revenue breakdown of one of Britain's representative opera companies, the English National Opera (ENO). Since the ENO is an important national institution, ACE supplies about half of the funds necessary for the company to operate. Since the ENO is located within WCC's area of jurisdiction it also supports the company to a small degree by paying 10% of the ticket cost for WCC card holders. But we can see from this that the ENO has to depend on ticket sales for most of the other half of its revenue.

Example (2) is the case of one of London's most important photographic art galleries, Photographers' Gallery, which is run by a non-profit organization. More than half of the gallery's revenue is provided by LAB in its role as supporter of important London arts organizations. But the WCC also pays for 5% of the galleries revenue.

Example (3) is the case of a youth dance group in the WCC's district called the Westminster Youth Dance Scene. Since this group operates for the benefit of the young people of the local community, WCC donates roughly 70% of the group's operating cost.

When the end finally came to 18 years of conservative governments in Britain and the Blair government came to power in 1997, the budgets for support of the arts has increased and many of Britain's arts organizations feel like a long hard winter has finally ended.

However, with the failure of ACE to slim down its operation as much as it was hoped to, the RAB are faced with the problem of a growing number of responsibilities but insufficient funds to increase the number of staff to accommodate the increased work load. Also, in the case of London, the capacity of LAB and the local government offices to support the arts will be influenced greatly by the policies instated by future governors of the city.

It may take several years before a state of stability is reached in terms of arts support policies and systems in Britain.

Examples of support revenue breakdowns

(Source: Annual Review of Westminster's Support for Arts, 1999)

ACE:Arts Council of England

LAB:London Arts Board

WCC: Westminster City Council

Earned: Ticket sales, revenue from workshops, etc.

Trusts:Donations and interest from trusts endowments if a non-profit organization

Commercial:Revenue from book stores, cafes, bars, etc.

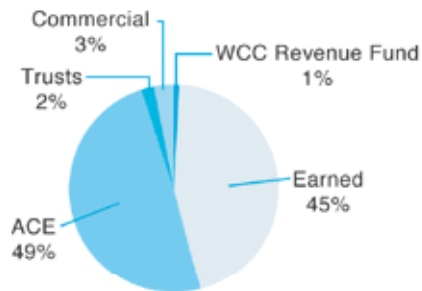
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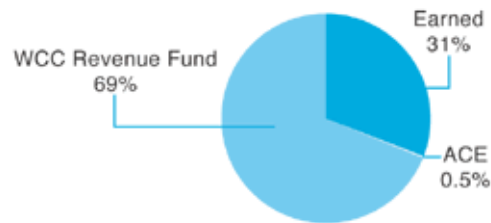
Example (1) English National Opera

A company that presents opera in English using the ensemble style



Example (2) Photographers' Gallery

The London gallery presenting a domestic and international photography in genre-specific shows



Example (3) Westminster Youth Dance Scene

A youth dance group in the Westminster district of London

