

# CONNECTING SCOTLAND TO THE WORLD

The value of British Council's work  
in Scotland 2011-2014



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The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation  
for cultural relations and educational opportunities.

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# Foreword

This report marks something of a first for our partners, stakeholders and other interested parties, by capturing the range, depth and impact of British Council Scotland's work. The data and case studies were gathered by independent researchers<sup>1</sup> and cover our work over a three year period, from 2011 to 2014. The report demonstrates that using Scotland's excellent cultural and educational assets to forge transnational connections enables the development of trust between nations and people for greater security and prosperity.

In preparing this report, we were clear that we wanted to present both the breadth of the organisation's work and its impact for, and in, Scotland; capturing the cultural, social and economic benefits of our work. Rather than simply cataloguing the achievements of each programme or initiative underway in Scotland, we have tried to draw out how engagement contributes to our overall objectives in education and the arts,

building international connections for Scotland.

In so doing, we have been able to identify the common beliefs that we share with our partners in Scotland: an ethos of collaboration, a strong desire to engage internationally, a willingness to link with business and commercial partners, and a collective approach to position Scotland as an international partner of choice. As the report demonstrates, British Council endeavours, by using its unique global network and professional expertise across sectors, to secure Scotland's role as a globally connected nation.

We are immensely proud of what British Council Scotland has achieved through its cultural relations work and thank our partners and stakeholders. Without their support, we would not be able to tell such a positive story.

**Lloyd Anderson**  
**Director, British Council Scotland**

<sup>1</sup> Viewforth Consulting Ltd





# About the British Council in Scotland

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British Council Scotland brings the best of international education and the arts to Scotland and promotes Scottish excellence abroad by helping Scottish students, teachers, artists and others connect professionally with people around the world. We enrich people's lives in Scotland and abroad by using the arts and education to build long-term relationships and trust through the free exchange of ideas, skills and experiences.



# Our commitment to Scotland

Established in 1946, British Council Scotland's purpose was, from the outset, to promote the best of Scottish culture and learning to the rest of the world by bringing foreign academics, students, policymakers and artists to Scotland and taking counterparts abroad. Since then, we have enabled thousands of young people from Scotland to study and work abroad, helped schools and higher education institutions to create partnerships with other countries, and supported the professional development of teachers and academics at home and abroad. We have also brought the brightest students from other countries to

study, teach and work in Scotland, helping to broaden the cultural horizons of our young people.

We have showcased the best of Scottish arts internationally and brought the best of the arts world to Scotland. By supporting performances and exhibitions at Scottish and international festivals, museums and galleries, we have shared cultural offerings from around the world. We have also supported leading cultural figures, including independent producers, festival directors, curators and cultural entrepreneurs, to come to Scotland to build relationships with

the world's leading festival city, the Scottish cultural sector, and the wider international arts community.

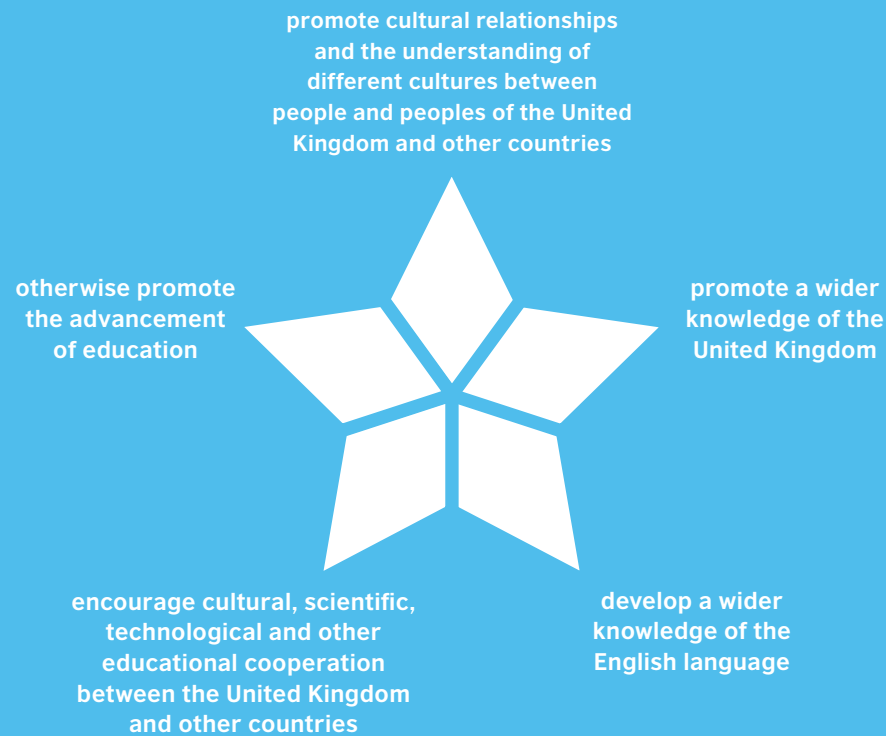
Furthermore, we have engaged with a broad range of local partners representing the full spectrum of Scottish society, such as the Saltire Society, the International Network of Street Papers, the John Smith Trust and Beyond Borders. We do so in order to contribute to the development of society, shared prosperity and mutuality, which ultimately strengthens cultural relations through inspiration and understanding. In this way, Scotland

becomes more visible and better connected to the right people and places.

Today, British Council Scotland is highly valued for its global reach. Through offices in over one hundred countries, we pull together overseas knowledge, experience and perspectives, help catalyse relationships, and comment on issues affecting Scotland's profile and standing in the world. Our overseas offices are also an invaluable source of support and assistance to visiting cultural and educational delegates from Scotland.

# Our role and structure

British Council is a registered charity incorporated and governed by a Royal Charter, which sets out five objectives, to:



We are governed by a Board of Trustees that is accountable to the UK's Charity Commission and to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator for its activities. A Scotland Advisory Committee provides advice to British Council Scotland by highlighting major developments that help to shape our programmes and projects. Members offer fresh insights and identify new opportunities to develop our work. They help ensure an appropriate Scottish contribution to our overall strategy and an effective response to the international aspirations and needs of Scotland.

As both a non-departmental public body and a charity, the British Council is impartial and at arm's length from Government. However, we endeavour to align our purpose with the Scottish

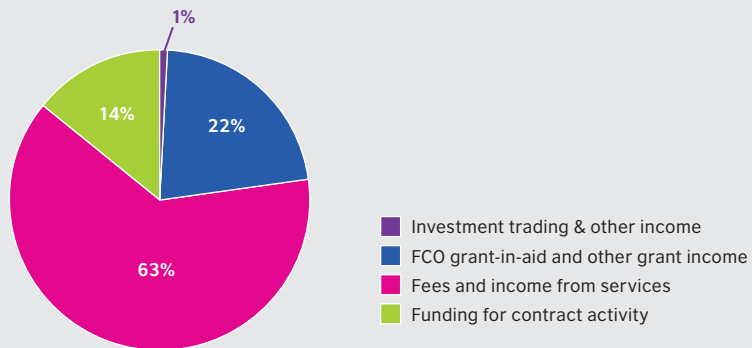
Government's cultural diplomacy objectives outlined in *Scotland's International Framework* (2012). This means that our work helps to forge connections with countries that the Scottish Government regards as being of strategic importance, such as China, India and Brazil. Building cultural and educational links with these countries creates mutual understanding and respect, which is the foundation for successful relationships in the future.

British Council is structured under three business streams: Arts, Education & Society, and English & Exams. In Scotland, we concentrate on education and the arts; specifically universities and schools, and literature, music and visual arts.

# Financial position of the British Council

In 2012-2013, the British Council had a total income of £781.3 million. Our income is not wholly dependent on the public purse. Indeed, UK public funds – which are predominantly in the form of a grant-in-aid from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office – make up less than 22% of our income (£171.5m). The remainder is earned through the teaching of English, administering of exams, contract work and partnerships.

## British Council worldwide income 2012-2013 (total £781.3m)

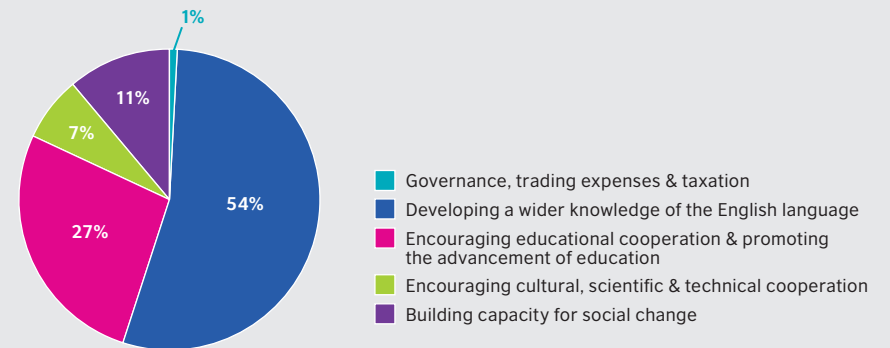


Source: British Council Annual Report 2012-2013

The grant-in-aid has been steadily decreasing as a proportion of our overall income and is projected to fall further still, to less than 20% by 2015.

In 2012-13, the British Council spent just over £785 million – slightly more than our income in that year<sup>2</sup>. The expenditure covers all of the costs associated with our worldwide operations, including our overseas staff, offices and services as well as any relevant local taxes and governance costs.

## British Council worldwide expenditure 2012-13 (total £785.3m)



Source: British Council Annual Report 2012-2013

Of the total expenditure worldwide, operating expenditure in the UK accounted for £26 million. Eight per cent of this expenditure was associated with our office in Scotland (just over £2m).

<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that we spent slightly less than our income in 2011-12.

# Connecting Scotland to the world

We operate across seven main geographical regions where we may have different priorities for engagement. The regions are:

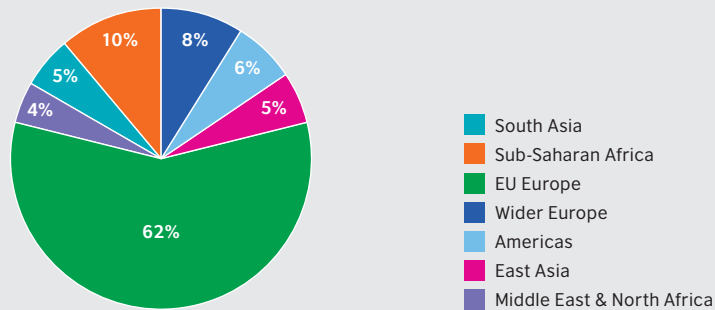
- The Americas
- East Asia
- EU Europe
- Middle East and North Africa
- South Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Wider Europe





In order to give a clear picture of where our activity in both education and the arts is concentrated, we have apportioned Scottish engagement in our programmes against these regions.

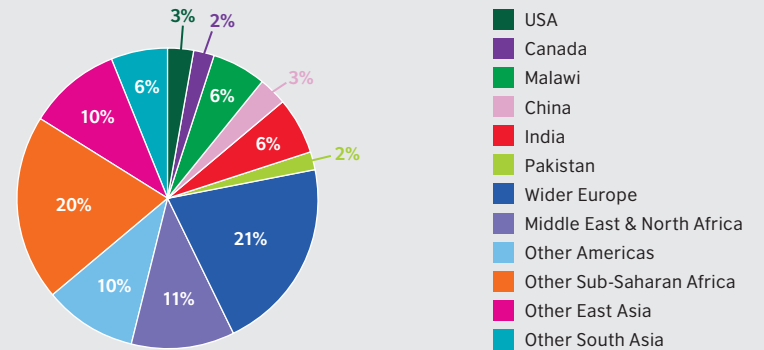
**Geographical concentration of Scottish educational engagement facilitated by the British Council in 2011-12 by region**  
(1,761 programmes/instances over 119 countries)



Source: UK: British Council Activity (2011-12)

Scottish educational engagement through our programmes is mostly within EU Europe. This reflects participation by Scottish schools and higher education institutions in programmes funded by the European Commission and managed by us (such as Comenius multilateral and bilateral partnership programmes, e-Twinning, and Erasmus for student and staff mobility). However, leaving aside EU Europe, there remains significant engagement with all other geographical areas.

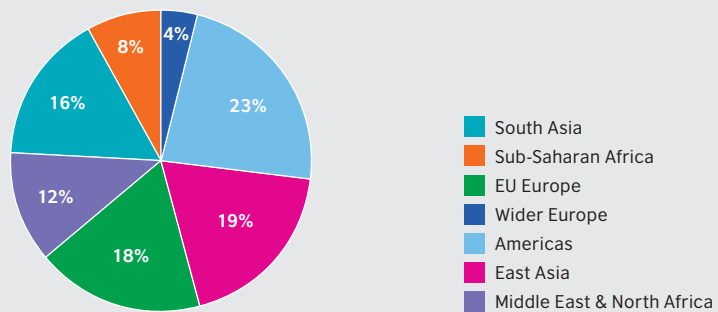
**Geographical concentration of Scottish educational engagement facilitated by the British Council in 2011-12 in countries and regions other than EU Europe**



Source: UK: British Council Activity (2011-12)

The geographic spread of engagement in the arts is equally as wide and demonstrates the global reach of Scottish culture and arts.

**Geographical range of cultural and artistic engagement in 2011-12**  
(based on 49 recorded instances in 2011-12)



Source: UK: British Council Activity (2011-12)



# Our work in education

## Working in partnership with universities and schools

The Scottish education sector demonstrates a strong commitment to internationalisation and enabling its pupils, teachers, students, researchers and staff to benefit from the opportunities on offer. In higher education (HE), individual institutions and the sector as a whole work to capitalise upon global market trends, positioning Scottish tertiary education as a collaborative entity for transnational education partnerships, research contracts, and international contract opportunities requiring an academic input. Universities also take advantage of global and cosmopolitan student bodies in order

to internationalise Scottish campuses. In schools, the interdisciplinary nature of Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence and its focus on the development of broad capabilities mean that international education is becoming an embedded, daily element of Scottish education for 3-18 year-olds.

By catalysing an unique interplay of ideas, skills and experiences, we aim to enrich education sectors in Scotland and abroad and encourage Scottish students, teachers, education providers and others to connect with counterparts around the world.

We bring best-practice examples of research collaboration and pedagogy to Scotland and support the high-profile positioning of Scottish education on the international stage.

British Council Scotland is connected with the key organisations working to support the internationalisation of Scottish higher education. As a full member of Universities Scotland's International Committee, with a shared post based in Universities Scotland, we are positioned to effect change in the higher education sector. Along with Scottish Development International, Scottish Funding

Council, Scottish Government, Royal Society of Edinburgh and Universities Scotland, British Council Scotland is a founding member of Connected Scotland. This is a strategic partnership launched in June 2014 to help the Scottish higher education sector become a world leader and international partner of choice. For our work with schools, we have created a shared post with Education Scotland to get more schools involved in international partnerships. This Scottish and international presence means that British Council Scotland is well placed to realise its ambitions in the education sector.

# Participation in education programmes

In 2012, Scottish organisations accessed 34 different British Council-managed programmes in education, with 1,761 recorded connections made with 119 countries around the globe. This included 1,000 international school partnership projects in Scotland, reaching 25 per cent of the nation's 2,700 schools. In Scotland, the Erasmus<sup>3</sup> programme enabled 1,861 student and 288 staff exchanges, 1,448 study exchanges and 413 work placements for students in 2012-13.

In the summer of 2014, the IAESTE (International Association for the Exchange of Students and Technical Experience) programme assisted 55 Scottish students to go overseas to 29 different countries, and 59 international students from 33 countries to come to Scotland. We also placed 73 language assistants from overseas in Scottish schools and

sent 294 Scottish students to teach English in schools abroad in 2013-14.

While these numbers demonstrate the level of Scotland's engagement in British Council education programmes, they do not tell the story of the impact on individual participants. Our vision is simple: to broaden young peoples' horizons and develop their transferable skills in order to increase their employability. We know that employers value the ability to work with people from other cultures as highly as they value formal qualifications. That's true of Scotland too, as demonstrated in *Keeping Pace in the Global Skills Race*, a survey commissioned in 2014 by British Council Scotland from the Scottish Council for Development and Industry, canvassing the views of employers, graduates and education providers in Scotland on the skills needed by Scotland's future workforce.



<sup>3</sup> The successor programme to Erasmus is Erasmus+. It was launched on 1st January 2014 and will run to 2020. Erasmus+ is an integrated programme, based around three key actions: learning mobility of individuals; cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practice; support for policy reform.



## Programmes to increase mobility

The Erasmus, IAESTE and Language Assistants programmes can be seen as the major drivers for promoting outward and inward student mobility and hence the development of individuals' skill-sets. They include developing cultural awareness, gaining confidence and improving language skills. These programmes also support alumni networks, which in turn create opportunities for economic, cultural and social exchanges between the participating countries.

“

IAESTE student

I am now more confident in my ability to adapt to new situations and feel I gained a lot of transferable skills, independence being a hugely important one. Having now started a PhD, I am sure that a big reason I do not feel too daunted is thanks to my IAESTE experience.

”



“

Erasmus student

I won a fully funded scholarship for my postgraduate studies. I one hundred percent believe I wouldn't have gained this without Erasmus and other study abroad programmes.

”

“

English Language Assistant

I found it very useful to see the differences in education and teaching methods in France. It was interesting to see that challenges faced by French students whilst learning [the] English language are the same challenges faced by those students here in Scotland.

”

## Our work in education

British Council is trusted by institutions to deliver safe and meaningful international exchanges:

“

Senior academic at a Scottish university

Trust is very important here. We trust the British Council to look after our students and to organise those that arrive. They do everything for them, so we have no worries at all in that respect. I suppose this comes down to their knowledge of cultures and political situations and good administration.

”

“

Senior academic involved in IAESTE

We love the programme – it really works for us. The IAESTE scholarship is held in great prestige by the students, and we also get very good students coming here from abroad. The supervisors are generally very happy. We wish we could have a larger cohort!

”

In 2013, British Council Scotland awarded four international bursaries in partnership with the Saltire Society, for creative writing, music, arts and crafts, and housing. The awards enabled talented young people from Scotland to broaden their horizons by travelling abroad and meeting international counterparts. In 2014, we awarded a fifth bursary to a graduate in civil engineering.

“

Winner of the 2013 International Travel Bursary for Music

I had an amazing time! I am so grateful for the opportunity and for the generosity shown to me by British Council Scotland and the Saltire Society. Not many people get to go abroad to study something they are passionate about – at least not with so little personal expenditure! It has let me fulfil a lot of ambitions that I didn't expect to fulfil for a long time yet, which is something very special indeed.

”

## Our work in education

In celebration of the Commonwealth Games in Scotland in 2014, we offered three scholarships to young people from around the Commonwealth to participate in the Scottish Universities International Summer School. We also brought forty 16-19 year olds with a passion for journalism from eleven Commonwealth countries to the Mitchell Library for a young people's conference on "Future NEWS".

“

Future NEWS participant

Listening to established journalists talk about their illustrious careers, and seeing Paul Ingrassia [managing editor] chair a Reuters conference call, have reaffirmed my desire to pursue a career in journalism.

”



# Meeting the higher education sector's needs

As well as supporting the delivery of mobility programmes, British Council Scotland also designs, delivers and supports bespoke initiatives to meet the Scottish sector's needs. In October 2013, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning launched *A Strategic Analysis of the Scottish Higher Education Sector's Distinctive Assets*. Commissioned and published by British Council Scotland, the report sets out the defining characteristics which, collectively, are unique to Scotland. The report tells a remarkable story about the Scottish higher education sector's world-class and highly innovative national academic system. By raising awareness of these strengths, the report affords an opportunity for Scotland to forge links with new academic partners.

## Outward visits

We delivered a market-scoping visit to Indonesia in September 2013. Twelve of Scotland's nineteen higher education institutions participated, thus planting the seed for fruitful relationships between Scottish and Indonesian institutions in the fields of research, knowledge exchange and transnational education. We also supported a strategic research alliance between Scotland and Hong Kong in the fields of life sciences and energy, framed by a memorandum of understanding signed by Scotland's

First Minister. Alongside colleagues in Hong Kong and Connected Scotland partners, we backed visits to Hong Kong in 2013 by senior Scottish academics to secure collaborative partnerships. This led to a strategic study, *A Global Priority Market Analysis in the Higher Education Sector (2014)*, which we commissioned with our Connected Scotland partners to look at new, emerging markets for student recruitment, TNE and research collaboration.



## Inward visits

British Council Scotland has supported a number of inward visits to enable overseas educationalists to learn from Scottish experts and leaders. In 2013, we welcomed a twelve-person ministerial delegation from Botswana and four leaders from Burma, including members of parliament and ministry and university officials.

The group met with a range of representatives from the Scottish higher education sector to see examples of good practice. We also received the Minister for Scientific Research from Egypt and six academics from Libya who met with the research community in Scotland.



# Meeting the needs of Scottish schools

In addition to an extensive range of opportunities in higher education, we offer a menu of activities for Scottish schools. We believe that by supporting the internationalisation of the curriculum and preparing children to take their place in a globalised world, we are building a safer, more prosperous future for all. We help to embed international activity as an everyday component of the Curriculum for Excellence in all Scottish schools with a view to improving learning outcomes.

The Connecting Classrooms programme provides Scottish schools with funding and advice to kick-start relationships with schools around the world. This programme also supports teacher study visits, professional development and online school linkages. It provides pupils with knowledge and insight into the cultures of other countries as well as awareness of issues such as their rights and responsibilities as global citizens, the skills needed to work in a global economy, and the means of building a fairer, more sustainable world.



“

Scottish local authority representative

[Connecting Classrooms provides] a global perspective and an understanding of Scotland's place in the world. On all occasions it presents the young people with opportunities to be ambassadors for their local and national community.

”

“

Scottish local authority representative

The British Council has played a role in our overall international and global education – they were also supportive of our innovations. The British Council working with us is a valuable partnership. The British Council has a role in coming in and challenging our thinking.

”

We believe that our schools programmes motivate pupils and teachers alike to engage in international activities. By supporting teachers' professional development, they in turn can better engage pupils and improve attainment.

“

Scottish local authority representative

A delegation returning to Brazil, as part of a British Council Connecting Classrooms partnership, had five schools partnered with Brazilian schools and collaborated on enterprising learning and teaching, leadership, planning and self-evaluation. Progress was made and evidence of impact includes: greater numbers of pupils gaining employment when they left school, the sharing of learning intentions and objectives, an increase in partnership working with local enterprise. Pupils' views are valued and students evaluate courses and learning styles.

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## Our work in education

Schools can also bring language and culture alive in the classroom and across the school community by employing language assistants. As native speakers of foreign languages, their role is to motivate students to develop their language skills and cultural awareness.

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### Language assistant

I think it is important to have an authentic representative of the country. It allows the pupils to encounter a different culture through the eyes of a person living there.

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“

### British Council programme coordinator

In Scotland, language assistants give school students real insights into another language, culture, and the linguistic benefits of hearing a native speaker speak that language, like different accents etc. On a cultural level, you get an insight in up-to-date cultural issues from a person that is often near the age of school students. And they can update the teacher's knowledge as well. In some cases the visiting assistant can provide a role model for the pupils. A lot of the outgoing language assistants say “I had a language assistant and that's what has inspired me to be a language assistant and teach languages”.

”



In January 2014, we supported a visit from Indian education officials and connected them with Scottish arts organisations and education providers in Scotland with a view to enhancing arts education provision across India.

Across our work in education, British Council Scotland will continue to engage policymakers and practitioners to enhance Scotland's international connectedness and international opportunities. As the evidence demonstrates, we are building upon a strong foundation of meaningful support to the sector.



## Our work in the arts

The arts are a cornerstone of the British Council's mission to build trust and understanding between people worldwide. By linking individuals working in the arts and the creative industries in the UK and abroad, we facilitate exchange, collaboration and creativity. In Scotland, we build partnerships with the major national art institutions, festivals and companies. Particular attention is paid to flagships such as the Edinburgh International Festival, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and Celtic Connections. We also work closely with Creative Scotland, the development body for the arts and creative industries in Scotland, with whom we have a partnership agreement for international arts focusing on Brazil, India and South Africa.

The main aims of our work in the arts lie in internationalising major Scottish cultural events, helping manage Scotland's contribution at important international events, ensuring that Scotland is represented in UK bilateral programmes, negotiating cultural partnerships for Scotland, and strengthening cultural diplomacy.





## Our work in the arts

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Our objective is to draw attention to Scottish excellence and give people an opportunity to experience first-hand the country's strong cultural offerings. Our programmes encourage people to see the talent and expertise that Scotland has in the cultural sphere both at home and abroad.

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Musician

In many ways when you go out with British Council you feel more like an ambassador for Scotland than you would normally, because there are all of these interactions and it is encouraged that way. This is an advertisement for the country.

”

We also work with partner organisations to provide an international dimension to their projects. We collaborate on events and artistic exchanges and pull together resources to best promote the interests of Scottish artists and society.

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Music manager from a partner organisation

Scotland's music industry has benefited enormously from the assistance given by the British Council, for example Showcase Scotland at Celtic Connections which grosses £3m annually.

”

Much of our activity takes place overseas in collaboration with our colleagues and local partners such as festival and artistic programmers, venues, producers and other arts organisations. We tend to work with networks, agencies and on occasion individual artists. We design specific programmes appropriate to the regions in which we work. These are planned according to local objectives, interests and needs.

# Internationalising major Scottish events

Momentum and Celtic Connections – where Showcase Scotland takes place – are prominent yearly features of our work in the arts. We always adopt a two-way approach; promoting and showcasing Scottish arts to international audiences and connecting key international players with the industry and artists in Scotland.

By presenting the best of Scottish culture to international audiences and providing opportunities for Scottish artists to engage with counterparts and audiences around the world, the British Council Scotland's arts team aims to cross-fertilise ideas, knowledge and information, leading to social innovations and long-lasting relationships.

## Momentum

The Edinburgh Festival is the world's largest cultural festival and generates over £260 million for Scotland annually. The British Council promotes it worldwide by bringing high-level delegations from selected countries to the city during the festivals.

Momentum, the Edinburgh Festivals delegate programme, runs throughout August, creating bespoke itineraries for cultural leaders from nations that have been identified as strategically important. In 2013, we hosted over 100 international delegates from 15 countries. More than 70% of the 2013 delegates have initiated a project or

are currently developing a programme. For example, New Zealand presented a season of work across six of Edinburgh's festivals in 2014 as a result of 16 delegates participating in Momentum in 2013 (as part of a broader partnership with Creative New Zealand).

Momentum makes a distinct contribution to promoting Scotland's cultural assets abroad. It facilitates international dialogue, exchange and collaboration, which are particularly valuable to individuals as well as smaller or newly established companies.

“

Scottish writer/filmmaker

**There is nowhere else in the world where I would have been able to make the three essential contacts I established in the space of an hour, creating relationships that it might take two years to build normally and which have fed into my subsequent trip to the Caribbean to progress my current film.**

“

Artistic director of a Scottish arts company

**I think it is a fantastic initiative. It offers a platform for smaller organisations from Scotland who do not have the resources or capacity to develop international connections themselves.**

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## Our work in the arts

### Celtic Connections

Celtic Connections is an annual folk, world and roots music festival that takes place in January. It typically brings over 2,000 musicians from across the world to Glasgow. In 2000, British Council Scotland and Creative Scotland (then the Scottish Arts Council) founded Showcase Scotland, the industry event which runs for six days as part of Celtic Connections. As a prominent and well established programme, it functions to introduce international delegates to the UK music sector with a view to giving international exposure to Scottish artists. Produced by Active Events, Showcase Scotland has become the biggest music industry event in Scotland. We contribute by supporting over 200 international delegates to attend showcases, trade fairs and networking events in order to develop new audiences for Scotland's rich contemporary folk music sector. As part of Showcase Scotland 2014, twenty five nations were introduced to an array of Scottish musical talent through sixty live concerts. This resulted in £2.2 million of income and a wealth of international collaborations for Scotland's musicians.



Each year, Showcase Scotland has an international focus country. In recognition of Glasgow's Commonwealth year, India and Australia featured as the 2014 guest countries. As part of this partnership, Scottish artists have enjoyed showcase opportunities in both countries; at the Woodford Folk Festival in Australia, the Australasian World Music Expo, the Rajahstan International Folk Festival (RIFF), and British Council's Folk Nations programme in India.

“

Musician

It's given me an opportunity to work with musicians from totally different backgrounds, to collaborate. I went to India through British Council and Showcase Scotland [where] we worked with other musicians [and] held workshops. It just broadens your palate, it gives you other ideas. As a composer it opened up new doors, gives you more ideas, it's endless.

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“

Musician

The British Council have a role in spreading the word and have so much access to different parts of the world and they seem to invite the right people. I know of a lot of really young artists, just out of college who have gone over to India to collaborate through British Council and have come back with this great wealth of knowledge and confidence because they've worked with more experienced Indian musicians. They are willing to take risks and create opportunities for young musicians.

”

“

Musician

The British Council seems to want you to get more involved. We did three workshops, one was with school children in Mumbai, and the next one was with folk musicians in Calcutta. One of these things was a panel discussion on 'what is folk music'. This was in British Council offices in Calcutta and involved my band and maybe 20 industry people, some professional musicians and festival organisers – it was an amazing example.

”



## Our work in the arts

**GENERATION: 25 years of contemporary art in Scotland**  
As part of the cultural programme for the Commonwealth Games, 'GENERATION: 25 years of contemporary art in Scotland' is a landmark, nationwide exhibition. British Council has added an international dimension by bringing thirty curators from Europe, the Commonwealth and the Americas to see the exhibition, which showcases some of the best and most significant artists to emerge from Scotland in the last 25 years, *in situ*. Throughout 2014, more than one hundred of Scotland's leading artists will have their works shown at more than sixty galleries across Scotland.



# Positioning Scotland at major international events

## The Edinburgh International Culture Summit

The Edinburgh International Culture Summit is a partnership between Edinburgh International Festival, the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and British Council. It brings together culture ministers from around the world to discuss topics of common interest under the broad heading of cultural policymaking. The inaugural summit in 2012 was a great success, with 32 countries attending and a host of leading international artists and cultural commentators taking part. In 2014, the Summit welcomed ministerial delegations from across five continents to discuss the theme of “Culture, a currency of trust” at the Scottish Parliament during the Edinburgh festivals.



## Our work in the arts

### Scotland + Venice

In visual arts, we support Scotland's contribution to the Venice Arts Biennale, in partnership with Creative Scotland and National Galleries Scotland. Three young Scottish artists were exhibited in 2013: Corin Sworn, Hayley Tompkins and Duncan Campbell (who was shortlisted for the Turner Prize in 2014) in a showcase that was opened by the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs. Graham Fagen will be representing Scotland in Venice in 2015.

In alternate years, we support Scotland's presence at the Venice Architecture Biennale, in partnership with the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland. The Edinburgh-based firm Reiach and Hall will be representing Scotland in 2014, while in 2012 four architectural practices – DO Architecture, GRAS, Pidgin Perfect and Stone Opera – ran parallel exhibitions under the title "Critical Dialogues". The title refers to a common connection between the four architectural practices regarding people, the ordinary and the street.



## Strengthening cultural diplomacy

### National Youth Orchestra of Iraq

In 2012, we helped the National Youth Orchestra of Iraq come to Scotland, overcoming immense bureaucratic barriers, and perform concerts in Glasgow and Edinburgh during the August festivals. The orchestra was established in 2008 in Baghdad by Zuhail Sultan, who was 17 years old at the time. Despite the lack of access to music and instruments, Zuhail and musical director Paul MacAlindin personally recruited members of the orchestra, drawn from various ethnic backgrounds, via YouTube. The young people, aged 16 to 29, spent two weeks in rehearsal at Edinburgh's Jewel and Esk College, where they received musical tuition from select teachers. They were joined by the Edinburgh Youth Orchestra and cellist Julian Lloyd Webber, and their repertoire included a concerto for the oud by Scottish composer Gordon McPherson.

“

Head of the Iraqi Cultural Centre in London

**The National Youth Orchestra is proof that young people from different backgrounds can work together in harmony, helping to show the real face of Iraq to the international community.**

”

British Council Scotland worked in partnership with the Scottish Government to make this project come to life and had been involved with the orchestra from the start. Teams in London, Edinburgh and Baghdad had provided the orchestra with initial funding, helped the orchestra leverage further finance, enabled it to hold summer schools in Erbil (Iraqi Kurdistan), and provided mentoring and advice.



# Conclusions

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British Council's mission is to develop international connections for Scotland through the exchange of knowledge, ideas and information. Such connections are important for future competitiveness, prosperity and security because they help build long-term international relationships and trust.

In education, we work with national academic systems to internationalise young people and help Scotland forge links with new partners in emerging markets. In the arts, our work is centred on major events in Scotland and elsewhere. We promote Scotland's contribution at important international events and ensure that Scotland is represented in UK bilateral programmes.

This report demonstrates that our stakeholders highly value our networks and contacts around the world and our local knowledge and expertise on the ground. Our partnerships are therefore built around mutually compatible objectives. We use the excellence of the Scottish education and cultural sectors to build strong international links, while our partners want to access international networks in order to build strengths in their respective sectors.

The research work carried out for this report has revealed the breadth and depth of our impact in and for Scotland. We present a contemporary image of Scotland to the world, catalyse mutually beneficial connections, and provide opportunities for young people to be successful in a globalised economy.

Culture can build trust and explore challenges within societies. British Council's work in cultural relations aims to create the space where individuals can express, explore and re-imagine complex and difficult issues. We act as conveners so that people can build genuine understanding and new communities.

As the creation of the Edinburgh International Festival in 1947 epitomises, culture can help heal the wounds of conflict and bring huge economic and social benefits. We want to further this, using the arts and education as tools to create new flows of knowledge and creativity worldwide. This matters for social cohesion, economic development and mutual understanding.

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