

wales arts international
celfyddydau rhyngwladol cymru

International Strategy Framework 2024-2034

The arts and well-being
in Wales and the world



Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales



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Accessibilty

Arts Council of Wales is committed to making information available in large print, easy read, braille, audio and British Sign Language and will endeavour to provide information in languages other than Welsh or English on request.



Jony Easterby, *Garden of Shadows - The Trees*, Dublin 2023

Art is part of the daily lives of the people of Wales, connecting us to each other, integral to our well-being, and inspiring us for generations to come.

Arts Council of Wales' vision

Connecting Wales' international artistic, creative, and cultural potential with the world, ensuring fairness to people and the planet.

Wales Arts International's purpose

CYMRU . GLOBAL . KIND .

This international strategy is a ten-year framework for Arts Council of Wales' international investments, led by our agency Wales Arts International (WAI).

It bridges three areas of work:

- 1** To support the development of the arts in Wales through international engagement.
- 2** To nurture Wales' international cultural relations and support the Welsh Government's Team Cymru diplomacy agenda.
- 3** To enable artists from diverse and diaspora communities to engage with our international work.

WAI provides information, advice, digital tools and funding support for the sector and presence at events. We host Arts Infopoint UK (Mobility Information Point) in partnership with our sister Arts Councils across the UK and through the On the Move international network. We also engage with our UK partners in strategic and multi-lateral programmes that provide new momentum for our international collaborations.

With additional investment by Welsh Government and a longstanding partnership with the British Council, we nurture Wales' cultural relations. We work in strategic partnership with other organisations in Wales and internationally,

including the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Academi Heddwch (Wales Peace Academy), and many companies and individuals whose work we fund through multi-year funding and lottery awards.

The Team Cymru approach, initially developed as part of Cymru's campaign at the FIFA Men's World Cup 2022, focuses on shared values which help to guide our collaborative efforts in a challenging environment. This model of Sports and Cultural Diplomacy will be used in various events across the life of this strategy starting with Cymru competing in the UEFA Women's EURO 2025.



Qweirín - FIET, Mallorca

The value of **chwarae teg** (fair play) has been at the core of Wales' international collaborations for centuries. Cultural icon Iolo Morgannwg, in the early 19th century, led the way in searching for fair trade and cultural relations rooted in anti-slavery principles. A renowned poet, Iolo used his creativity to re-imagine a different, more equitable and peaceful future, something which artists across the world can relate to today.

Shared humanity, peace and respect are still the values driving Wales' cultural relations, along with a renewed sense of global responsibility that has been enshrined into law by the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#). Through the act, Wales has made culture a cornerstone for environmental, economic, cultural and social justice.

The Well-being Culture and Welsh Language Goal is the first of its kind in the world and puts a legislative duty on all public bodies in Wales to consider their cultural commitment, alongside social, economic and environmental commitment when meeting the Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Act gives the same weight to cultural well-being as environmental, social, and economic well-being, recognising the significant role it plays. The mission to achieve global and local justice through a cultural approach has inspired our definition of cultural well-being.

Cultural well-being is when people and communities take part in artistic and cultural activities that create a sense of place and belonging and lead to health and other benefits.

Cultural well-being helps everyone in Wales to meet the well-being goals which include culture and Welsh language, health, diversity and inclusion, the climate and nature emergency and the economy. For cultural well-being to flourish, the well-being of artists and cultural workers is critical. Investment in the arts and participation is a co-investment in the cultural well-being of the nation and the world.

Our diverse diaspora communities connect Wales to the world and contribute to Wales’ vibrant tapestry of languages and cultures. The WAI commissioned report, [Smooth Seas don’t make Skillful Sailors](#), by Watch Africa Cymru asks, “Why are we so interested in a Welsh presence abroad, but not in the international presence within Wales?”

Disability Arts Cymru’s manifesto, [Bring Us Our Creative Rights](#), demands that we take action to remove barriers faced by disabled artists who work internationally.

Our core values to prioritise equality for women and LGBTQ+ communities will continue to guide our work at home and internationally over the next decade.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act was inspired by Indigenous systems which value passing on knowledge, language, culture and tradition and their connection to land to future generations. In Wales, tradition bearers and storytellers are using their art today to address the climate and nature emergency. In 2024, artists, environmentalists, policymakers and policy users co-designed the [Arts Council of Wales’ Plan for Climate Justice and the Arts](#). This well-being culture is nurtured and shaped by our environment and a commitment to our Indigenous language, Cymraeg.

Wales’ leadership around language transmission is an international calling card in terms of bilingual arts. As part of the UN Decade of Indigenous Languages, Cymraeg is an experience that has global resonance. We believe that every Indigenous language is valuable and is the carrier of the culture and knowledge of the land where it is spoken. With the numbers of speakers of our own Indigenous language, Cymraeg, [down to less than 20% of the population](#), we want to listen and learn, whilst also sharing our experiences and hopes for our language’s survival, as we strive to support the Welsh Government’s goal of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 through innovative practice.

As part of our Gwranddo (listening) journey, WAI has developed a set of Guiding Principles to deepen our understanding of Indigenous languages and to help shape our commitments towards linguistic and cultural diversity.



Jukebox - Men's Rugby World Cup 2023, Marseille, France

Strategic Priorities

2024-2034

This strategy focuses on three strategic priority areas:

- Creating international opportunities for artists living in Wales to sustain and enrich their practice in a way that is fair to people and to the planet.
- Supporting arts and culture within Wales' international and cultural relations in a way that is fair to people and to the planet.
- Welcoming and respecting international cultures, languages and influences into Wales (including diaspora communities and Indigenous cultures) and decolonising artistic practice.

These will be tested in year 1 using our draft well-being indicators ([see table on page 16](#)).

These activities will be delivered through the associated ACW and WAI Annual Plans.

Strategic Priorities	Activities
Creating international opportunities for diverse artists living in Wales to develop their work in a way that is fair to people and to the planet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information and Advice• Grants, including the International Opportunities Fund• Share digital content and opportunities (curated, commissioned & re-purposed)• Exhibitions, promotion and showcasing• Facilitating networks and collaborations• Creating networks that enable international artists to tour sustainably• Development, promotion and support of sustainable practice and climate justice
Supporting arts and culture within Wales' international relations in a way that's fair to people and to the planet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leading on cultural component and context for Team Cymru initiatives at international delegations and events• Nurturing cultural relations that advance Wales' cultural diplomacy efforts through shared values• Promotion of Wales through digital communications campaigns• Developing international partnerships and agreements• Advocacy and policy development
Welcoming and respecting international cultures, languages and influences into Wales (including diaspora communities and Indigenous cultures) and decolonising artistic practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Targeted support for artists in diaspora communities in Wales that connect and encourage dialogue with communities worldwide• Support festivals, venues and galleries to present relevant international work for communities in Wales• Working in partnership with third sector international organisations in Wales, supporting displaced artists (e.g. Nation of Sanctuary)• Engage with international Indigenous thought leaders and cultures connected to language and the land

Goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act



WAI’s new impact framework will guide and measure the impact of our investment against the Seven Well-being Goals.

In this Cultural Well-being model, the Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language goal contributes to all the goals.

The framework embeds ACW’s Well-being Objectives (also called the Six Principles) and is aligned to the [Climate Justice Action Plan](#) and Welsh Language Action Plan.

International Work and Arts Council of Wales' Six Well-being Objectives (the Principles)

International work doesn't happen in isolation. It's a cross-cutting strategic area of work for Arts Council of Wales and contributes towards each of the six corporate principles (our Well-being Objectives).

Most of what becomes international work is incubated through support from multi-year funding, Lottery schemes like Create, Creative Steps and the International Opportunities Fund, investments made into the work of artists visiting Wales, or through international collaborations.

In relation to Arts Council Wales' Six Well-being Objectives, the impacts and outcomes we want to achieve are laid out on the following pages.



Aleighcia Scott in SXSW 2024 with FOCUS Wales (Image: Lauren Hartmann)

Creativity

Art has the power to connect and help us understand each other and the world around us. Our programme of work across Wales have both global and local creative and economic relevance. We invest and support artists to engage with international talent, networks and partnerships.

Through collaborations and a mixture of investments from within Wales and internationally, we enable artists and companies to nurture and grow Wales' creativity in a sustainable way, sharing good practice and benchmarking their work to gain recognition and peer review. Our investment supports bilingual and multilingual practice that is international in terms of outlook and respectful of Indigenous cultures and communities.

Equalities and engagement

The arts reflect the lives of all citizens and communities in Wales. Our approach to widening engagement recognises the intersectionality and inter-connectedness of all those who face discrimination and disadvantage in Wales and internationally. This approach is one of zero tolerance to racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia.

Our work reflects and inspires the lives of all citizens and communities we serve, works to eliminate all forms of discrimination relating to protected characteristics and language barriers in international work, and supports a sense of global citizenship in the arts in Wales.

The diverse languages spoken in Wales connect us to other cultures and other Indigenous and minority



Siri Widgef, Gwranddo - 'Govleddi' (Image: Yngvid Borg Keilen)

languages in the world. We encourage multilingual work and translation services to increase access for the communities we serve and to connect with communities internationally.

Artists in Wales engage meaningfully with initiatives such as Nation of Sanctuary and Disability Arts Cymru's

'Bring us our Creative Rights' manifesto, and foster good relations across communities, including with refugees and asylum seekers. Our work acknowledges Indigenous lands, languages and communities when we work internationally.



Cymraeg (Welsh language)

We are committed to learning from and sharing our cultural experience of bilingualism and multilingualism internationally. Our investments tell the story of the Welsh language in ways that are of interest internationally, and our experience in this field is used meaningfully as an international calling card. Gwranddo, an Arts Council programme delivered by WAI, and its Guiding Principles, support artists to make a clear deliverable commitment to listen to and engage with other Indigenous languages as part of the UN Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032.

Our multilingual approach lends itself well to other Indigenous languages and cultures, connecting to international practices that benefit the Welsh language. By engaging in honest conversations around language diversity, through listening, learning and sharing best practice on language survival, language transmission and the arts, we will learn from each other. Both ‘Synhwyr’r Iaith’ and ‘Llais y Lle’ are gaining international interest in learning to foster confidence in Indigenous languages through the arts.

Climate justice

Our action is environmentally sustainable, decarbonised and globally responsible. Our investments in international work reflect the shared beliefs identified in our Climate Justice Action Plan.

We enable artists to create work that inspires people to take action for climate justice and Indigenous rights, recognising that the effects of climate change are most severely felt by people in marginalised communities and countries that are least responsible for causing it.

We support artists to connect with relevant international networks to learn and progress in this area, particularly in Indigenous thought leadership. Artists' individual and shared values are at the heart of their work and guide their decisions around with whom and where they want/don't want to work. We will monitor and reduce our carbon footprint, by supporting artists and organisations to develop clear carbon mitigation plans for international travel and to recognise their global responsibility – e.g. fair pay for artists; being aware of possible cultural appropriation.



Gareth Bonello, India 2024

Nurturing talent

We invest in pathways that allow artists from all backgrounds to develop their creativity, skills, and leadership internationally. Our international programme and investments support the development of creativity, skills and leadership by expanding horizons and potential.

Pathways are not limited by barriers and borders, and the local context is enriched through international engagement. Artists are paid fairly for their international work, and barriers to engagement, such as visas, are addressed. New models of sustainable international work are reported and shared with others, for future learning.

Transformation

Our investments help to seize new and relevant international opportunities and enable artists to take some risks, being resilient and responsive to the changing world, while remaining relevant to the people and communities of Wales.

Artists are supported to embed international engagement into their practice and to act in a globally responsible way. They are engaged in and contribute to global discussions that transcend borders, sharing an understanding of global trends and international best practice with the arts ecology in Wales. Our international programme enables artists to engage with world leaders in transformative practices, which in turn activate change in local circular economies in Wales.

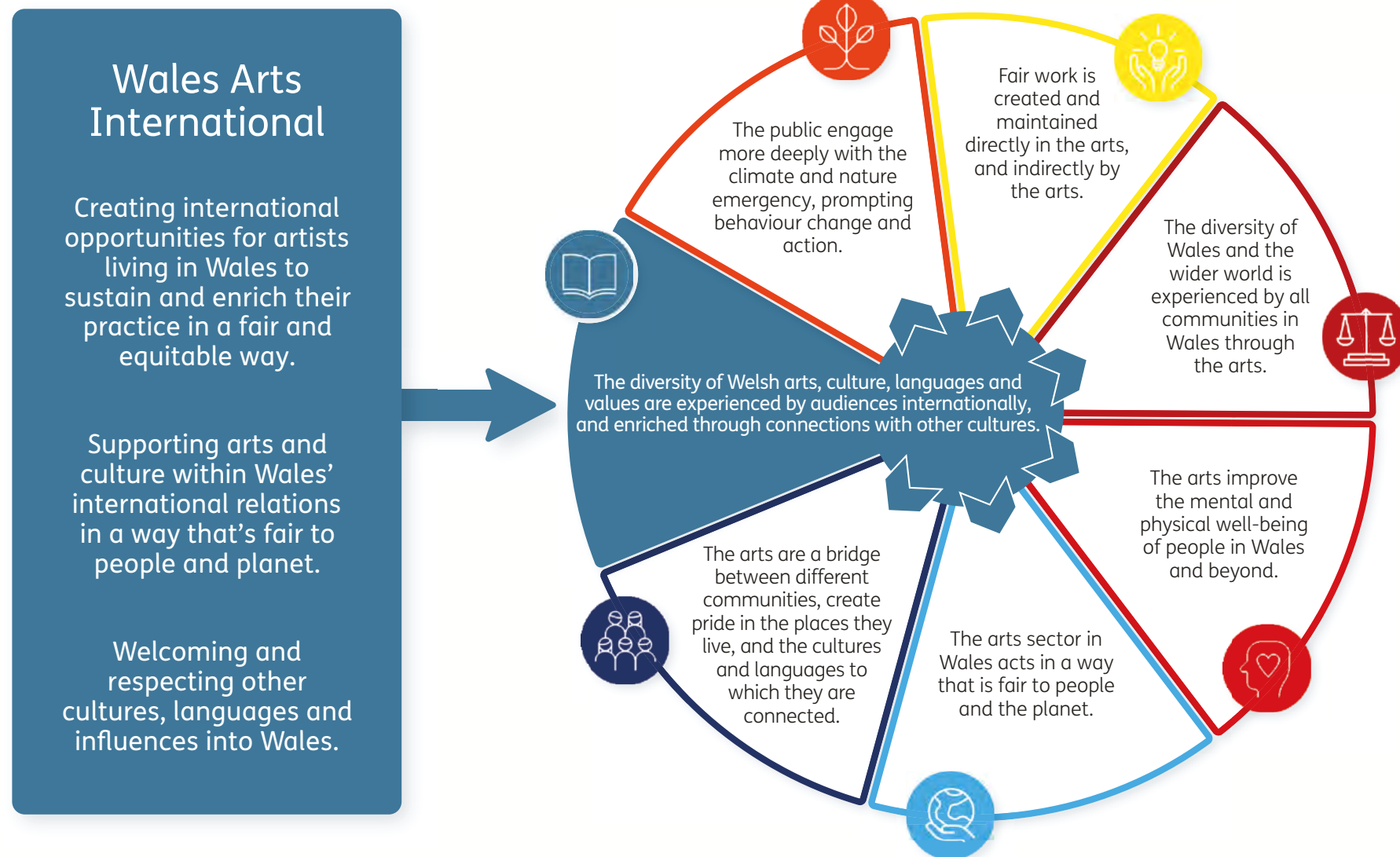


HJINX, Meet Fred (Image: Kirsten McTernan)

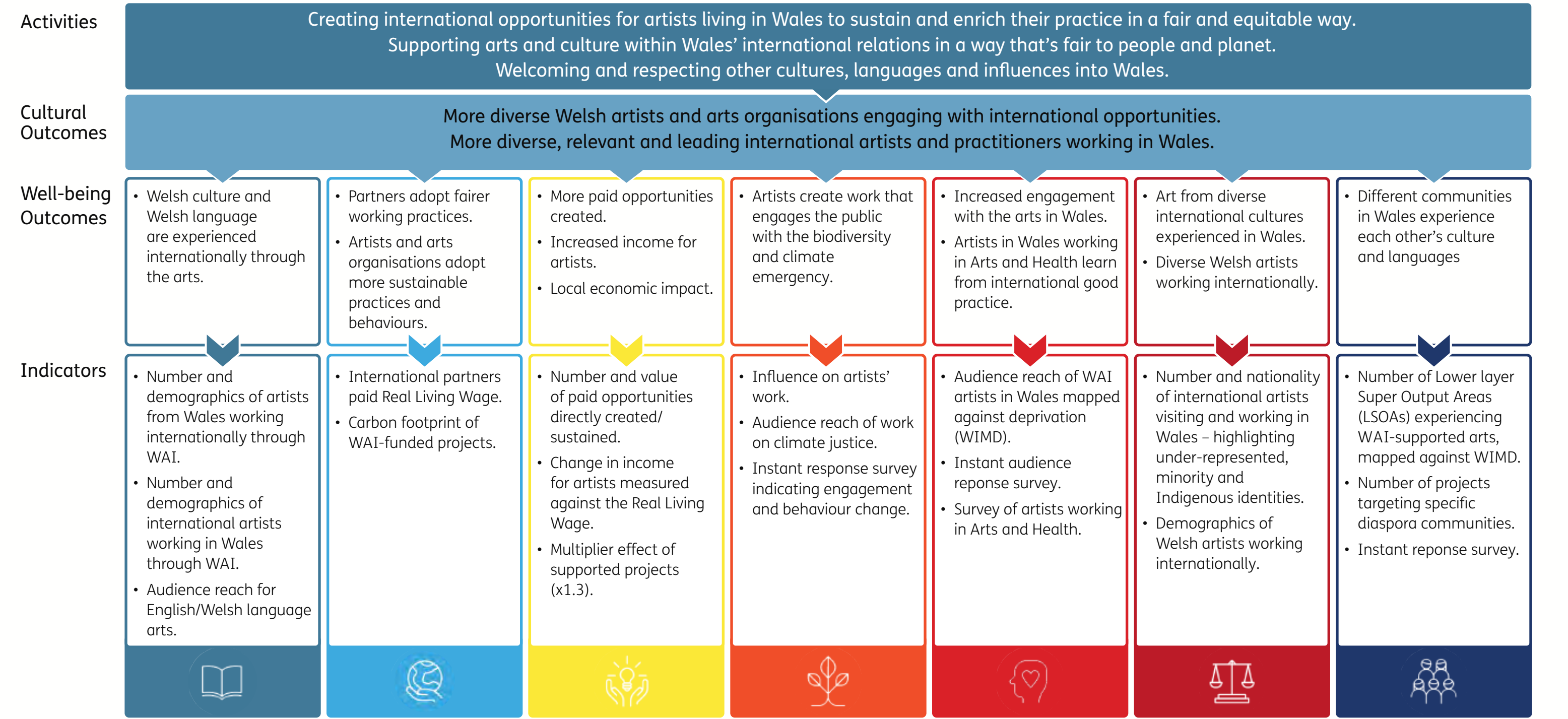
WAI Well-being Outcomes

Wales Arts International priorities will lead to seven overarching well-being outcomes associated to each of the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

We want to ensure that there are clear links between what we do (our priorities and activities) and what we want to achieve (outcomes and impact). We will be reviewing and measuring our work across the period of this strategy.



In 2025-26 we will be testing a set of indicators against our Well-being Outcomes. This table is the first edition of the Evaluation and Impact Framework which will be reviewed annually.



How WAI’s Well-being Outcomes meet the Arts Council’s Six Principles (the Well-being Objectives)

WAI Outcomes	Creativity	Equalities and engagement	Welsh language	Climate justice	Nurturing talent	Transformation
More diverse range of Welsh artists and organisations engaging with international opportunities	○	○	○		○	○
More diverse, high-quality, international artists working in Wales	○	○			○	
Welsh culture and the Welsh language is experienced internationally through the arts			○			
Partners adopt fairer working practices						○
Artists and arts organisations adopt more sustainable practices and behaviours				○		
More paid opportunities created					○	
Increased income for artists					○	
Local economic impact					○	○
Artists create work that engages the public with the biodiversity and climate emergency	○			○		
Increased engagement with the arts in Wales	○	○				
Artists in Wales working with Arts and Health learn from international good practice						
Art from diverse international cultures experienced in Wales	○	○				
Diverse Welsh artists working internationally	○	○			○	
Different communities in Wales experience each other’s culture and languages	○	○				

References

[The Well-being of Future Generations Act](#)

[Welsh Government International Strategy](#)

[Welsh Government Draft Priorities for Culture in Wales 2024-2030](#)

[Anti Racist Wales Action Plan](#)

[The Arts Council of Wales' Corporate Strategy](#)

[A Plan for Climate Justice and the Arts](#)

[Smooth Seas Don't Make Skillful Sailors](#) – a Report by Watch Africa Cymru, commissioned by Wales Arts International

[The UN's Decade of Indigenous Languages](#)

[Bring us our Creative Rights](#) – Disability Arts Cymru's manifesto



Cultural Mobility Forum 2024, Nant Gwrtheyrn (Image: Iolo Penri)