



Press Release - July 27th 2009

Bring Back Thatcher's Enterprise Scheme for the Arts

A report published today by New Deal of The Mind and the Arts Council is calling for the return of the Enterprise Allowance Scheme to foster the UK's creative and entrepreneurial talent.

"Do It Yourself: Cultural and Creative Self-Employment in Hard Times" calls for an Enterprise Allowance Scheme for the 21st century. Under Margaret Thatcher's government, the EAS, launched in 1983, gave people £40 a week for a year to come off the dole and set up their own businesses.

The EAS helped a diverse range of artists, musicians and business people including Alan McGee, the founder of Creation Records, Julian Dunkerton of the Superdry fashion label and Turner Prize nominees the Wilson Sisters.

In its first three years, 200,000 previously unemployed people had entered the scheme and 65% were still in business three years later. Government figures reveal that in 1989, 65% of those who completed their first EAS year were still in business three years later.

Martin Bright, founder of NDotM says, "We need to revive this scheme if we are to foster the inspirational and innovative talent which will be vital to the regeneration of the UK economy."

According to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the sector's exports hit £16 billion in 2006, while the numbers of people employed rose from 1.6 million in 1997 to two million in 2007.

The success of Britain's creative industries is driven by freelance and self employed people. It is estimated that 41 per cent of people in the creative sector are self-employed. The Arts Council believes that up to 70 per cent of staff in the organisations it funds are employed on a freelance basis.

The report's authors call on the Government to reconsider its strategy for job creation. For example, the flagship scheme for the long-term unemployed, the £1 billion Future Jobs Fund, is not open to those who want to set up a business.

"The implications of our report are clear," says Martin Bright, "The cultural and entrepreneurial spirit of the UK needs to be unleashed if we are to prevent a generation being lost to the recession."

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Martin Bright is available for interview



Please Contact :

Kate Taylor

kate.taylor@gmail.com

07866 853 401

Notes for Editors

1) New Deal of the Mind is a coalition of entrepreneurs, teachers and individuals working in the creative industries who believe immediate action is needed to combat the current economic crisis. NDotM borrows from elements of Franklin D. Roosevelt's original New Deal, such as the Works Progress Administration, which put millions back to work during the Depression. It is inspired by the words of the WPA's founder Harry Hopkins: "Give a man a dole, and you save his body and destroy his spirit. Give him a job and you save both body and spirit."

For further information and a copy of the report please see <http://www.newdealofthemind.com/> or become a fan on Facebook.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/New-Deal-of-the-Mind/103865364881>

2) NDotM aims to serve the visual arts, design and architecture, film and television, writing and publishing, theatre and dance, as well as those involved in technological and scientific innovation.

3) Ideas under consideration include establishing Cultural and Creative Hubs that will deliver a local and regional network of placement opportunities targeted at creative graduates and long-term unemployed people aged 18-24 years. NDotM is also working to create Pop-Up Centres in empty or disused buildings that will contain studio, rehearsal and gallery spaces for young artists and musicians and drop-in centres for designers. They will also provide employment and business advice for innovators and creative people in partnership with Jobcentre Plus and University Career Services.

4) For examples of national press coverage please see:

<http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/martin-bright/2009/01/deal-work-fdrgovernment>

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article5955621.ece