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Northern Ireland Assembly

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Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland

The *Creative Citizens* Programme: Local Government involving citizens in arts development

Victoria Durrer (QUB) with Kevin Murphy (Voluntary Arts Ireland) and Rosalind Lowry (Mid and East Antrim Borough Council)
9th March 2016

INTRODUCTION

- Context
- Creative Citizens 2014, 2015—
Case Study
 - Aims
 - Method and rationale
- Lessons for Community Planning
- Conclusion



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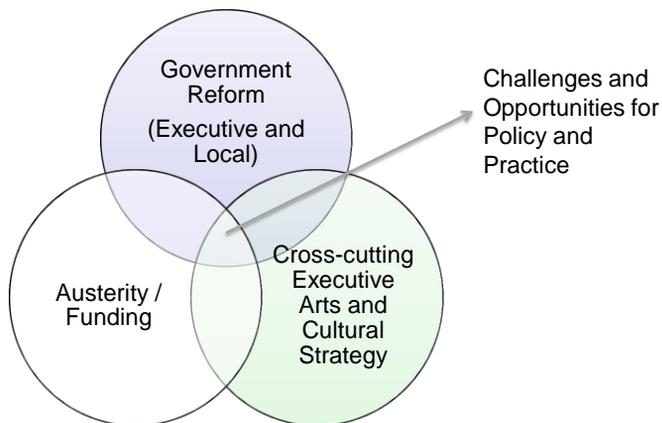
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CONTEXT



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CONTEXT

- *Inquiry into Inclusion in the Arts of Working Class Communities (2014 – 2016)*
- *DCAL Strategy for Culture & Arts 2016-2026, Consultation Document*
- *Community Planning Framework*
- *2011-2015 Programme for Government*
- *Delivering Social Change*
- *Together: Building a United Community*



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CONTEXT

“Arts and culture mean many things to many people...There is no single definition of arts and culture”.

(DCAL *Strategy for Culture & Arts 2016-2026*, Consultation Document (2015, p. 13)

“a significant number of citizens are not engaging with arts and culture”

(DCAL *Strategy for Culture & Arts 2016-2026*, Consultation Document (2015, p. 13)



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CONTEXT

- *Inquiry into Inclusion in the Arts of Working Class Communities*
- DCAL *Strategy for Culture & Arts 2016-2026*, Consultation Document
- Community Planning Framework
- *2011-2015 Programme for Government*
- *Delivering Social Change*
- *Together: Building a United Community*
- The value placed on arts and culture is limited
- Understanding of arts, creative and cultural activity is vague and ill-defined
- Approach to measurement limit our understanding of value, impact and potential
- Hierarchical structuring of arts, creativity and cultural activity in policy and practice



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CREATIVE CITIZENS—Features

- Public-facing, festival-like programme, March – June 2014, 2015
- Planning from Sept previous year
- **New Approach:** 'what are you doing that's creative?'
- **New initiatives** developed from the programme including the **online Ballymena Cultural Directory** for over 100 local groups
- **Health & Wellbeing partnership** programmes with NHSCT, **sheltered housing groups, Women's Aid and local charities.**
- Delivery of **award winning** arts intervention programme called **Shutters Up Night** aimed at generating night time economy and developing safe towns project **with Ballymena Town Centre Development** group
- Programme with **Inter Ethnic Forum** to provide arts and cultural opportunities and delivery of new Cultural Map for Borough
- **Free access to arts and cultural opportunities** including tickets to events and shows for **new attenders**
- **Awarded first All-Ireland Carnegie Trust Award 2014 for Arts, Design & Well-being.**



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CREATIVE CITIZENS—Features



Arts & Cultural Conversations – including an Arts Hall of Fame event, Cultural Debate Pod for artists, architects and town planners, developing into a new Cultural Walking Map for the town centre



Music on the Map Day – offering free music performances through the Borough such as a Piper at the foot of Slemish at 6.00am or a classical Harpist playing in a local Barber Shop or a bell ringing performance by local churches

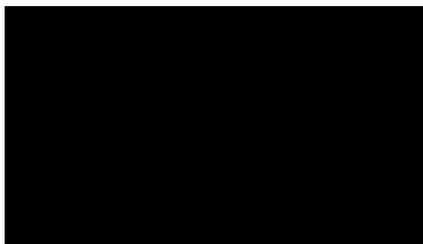


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CREATIVE CITIZENS—Features

2014

2015

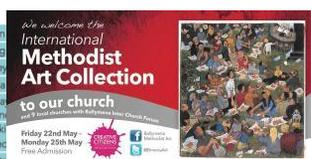


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CREATIVE CITIZENS—Features

Saturday 23rd May 2015

9am - 1pm	High Kirk Presbyterian Church	'Cain and Abel' by John Reilly on display in
10am - 10.30am	All Saints Parish Church	Morning Mass with painting 'The Washing
10am - 12.30pm	St. Patrick's Church, Ballymena	'Crucified Tree Form (The Agony)' by Thye
10am	Ballymena Methodist Church	Bread Making Demonstration with Wenda
10am - 4pm	West Presbyterian Church	'The Ascension' by Peter Rogers on display
10.30am - 4pm	First Ballymena Presbyterian Church	Refreshments tea/coffee, homemade scones
11am - 5pm	St. Patrick's Church, Broughshane	'The Arts Space' Artists in Residence works
		Tea/coffee and tray bakes will be provided
		Photographic exhibition in Parish Hall. Exhibition of Children's Art. Tea/coffee served in Parish Hall.
12.30 - 2.30pm	St. Patrick's Church, Ballymena	Wedding Service, church closed to public.
1.30pm - 2.30pm	All Saints Parish Church	Wedding Service, church closed to public.
1.30pm	Ballymena Methodist Church	Come and hear The Singing Chaff
2pm - 4pm	Wellington Presbyterian Church	'Storm over the Lake' by Eularia Clarke on
2.30pm - 3.30pm	St. Patrick's Church, Ballymena	Reflection and music by Living Faith. Tea/co
3pm	St. Patrick's Church, Broughshane	Short talk on Social History.
3pm - 4.30pm	St. Patrick's Church, Ballymena	Short intermittent periods of song and refl
3.30pm	Ballymena Methodist Church	A Musical Feast (Church Hall).
4pm	Ballymena Methodist Church	The Sacrament of Holy Communion.
6pm - 7pm	All Saints Parish Church	Evening Vigil Mass.
7.30pm	First Ballymena Presbyterian Church	'The Cross over the City' by Michael Edmo
		music with First Ballymena Choir and friends
8pm	All Saints Parish Church	Reflection and Prayer on theme of 'The W



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CREATIVE CITIZENS—Partners

2014 Creative Citizens (Ballymena)	2015 Creative Citizens (MEABC)
Main partner – Voluntary Arts Ireland Making Music Association of Irish Choirs Northern Ireland Photographic Association The Pastel Society of Ireland Big Big Sing Art Take Part	Main partner – Voluntary Arts Ireland Northern Regional College Ballymena Arts Partnership Arts Council of NI ArtsCare and NHSCT FabLab NI Ballymena Inter Ethnic Forum Ballymena Churches Forum Hope Centre, Ballymena WOMAD, Ireland



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CREATIVE CITIZENS—Reach

Public Programme	2013 (previous festival format, Ballymena)	2014 Creative Citizens (Ballymena)
Number of Events	30	150
Engagement Figures	6,000 individuals	20,000 individuals
Percentage of Population (2013 figures)	Approx. 11% of population	Approx. 32% of population



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CREATIVE CITIZENS—Spend

Public Programme	2013 (previous festival format)	2014 <i>Creative Citizens</i> (Ballymena)
Spend	£20,000	£12,000 Ballymena
Engagement Figures	6,000 people	20,000 people
Spend per population	Approx. £3.33 per head of who took part £0.33 per head of whole population	Approx. £0.60 per head of who took part £0.20 per head of whole population



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METHOD

- Case study Approach / Action Research
- Co-Produced
 - Period of focus presented today: March – September 2015
 - Focus: development and delivery of programme
- Literature: existing Creative Citizens evaluations, local authority policies, academic research
- Observation and Interviews



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Policy lessons:

1. Creating a tangible idea that allows a range of personal, organisational, and community motivations to be realised in 'real time'



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2. Creating the pathways for citizens and partners to opt in

Open and personal invitations that emphasise positive value:

"What are you doing that's creative?"

Creative Citizens call to participation, 2014 & 2015

"...the fact that you were asked initially meant that someone thought you could do the job."

Arts Ambassador (4) for the Methodist Arts Collection, Creative Citizens, 2015

"....there was no pressure whatsoever...."

Arts Ambassador (4) for Methodist Art Collection, Creative Citizens, 2015



An Arts Ambassador in the Braid's exhibition of the Methodist Art Collection



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2. Creating the pathways for citizens and partners to opt in

Mutually perceived value

“... *the whole thing about the town centre group is about trying to attract people into the town centre and you know it **makes sense** of business and for the arts to work together to do that...if you **work together** then you're going to have more of an impact*”

Local business employee and member of the Town Centre Development Group, *Creative Citizens* 2014



Visitors to the Methodist Art Collection at the Braid enjoy Afternoon Tea afterwards at the Adair Arms Hotel, partnership between Local Authority and McKeever Hotel Group

“.....*I was getting so much back too... I found it just sort of, just really opened my mind.*”

Arts Ambassador (2) for Methodist Arts Collection, *Creative Citizens* 2015

“...I think it just **gave us a fresh start....**”

Arts Development Service Staff (1)



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3. Making connections to networks, physical infrastructure and services already familiar to people

“*The **church connection** was very big ...[and] **probably instilled a lot more interest than maybe just people coming off the street.***”

Arts Ambassador (4) for Methodist Arts Collection, *Creative Citizens*, 2015

“*In some ways, Ballymena is **not a natural arts place** but more of an industrial place...yet when you look there, are all sorts of arts groups doing things.... **The uncovering of groups and activities has been really positive** and them realising that they are not the only ones here”.*

Local Councillor on *Creative Citizens*, 2014



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4. Be open to participatory knowledge exchange and recognised that the distribution of power shifts in exchanges

Approaches to arts programming and leadership are changing

*"...[we don't need] to feel that it's us that has to provide all these creative opportunities for people....**getting out of that mindset** of 'I've got to programme a 400 seat theatre here....'...there's so many people out there...everybody in your borough has creative potential.*

Arts Development Service Staff (3)

*"So we **turned the tables completely** from being a programming machine to being a marketing machine. ... 'tell us what you're doing, **we'll help you with it**, whether its through **funding** or whether it's through **marketing** it for you, or whether it's through **getting you an artist** to help you, or **giving you space**, or **putting you in touch with another organisation** who might help'..."*

Arts Development Service Staff (3)

*Because you're in an office. You can become very sort of focused on what's going on there and then and **not see the bigger picture**... it's **really helpful for us** to go out and talk to people and find out what they're doing"*

Arts Development Service Staff (1)



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CONCLUSION

- Rethinking the relationship between public servants and citizens
- Redefining what is understood as 'culture', 'arts' and 'creativity' in policy
- Re-imagining our perception of local infrastructure as cultural



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